SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE: TABLE FELLOWSHIP

AND TEACHING IN LUKE-ACTS

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SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE: TABLE FELLOWSHIP

AND TEACHING IN LUKE-ACTS

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I dedicate this thesis to the Lord Jesus Christ, for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things; and to my beautiful wife, Amy, "a lily among thorns," who has persevered with me through all things and has consistently encouraged me to obey and love Christ in all things.

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PREFACE

A work of this kind is never an individual effort. Many people enabled this project. Dr. Michael Wilder was a wise and helpful supervisor. I also appreciate my second reader, Dr. Shane Parker. My doctoral cohort was a constant encouragement to me. Other faculty members throughout my educational journey also were helpful, including Dr. Jerry Johnson, Dr. Roy Metts, Dr. Barry Creamer, Dr. Everett Berry, Dr. Alan Streett, and the late Dr. James Bryant.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important developments in leadership research to aid the church in Great Commission work is the study of organizational culture. Leaders neglect the reality of their church's organizational culture to their own detriment. In fact, in his groundbreaking work on organizational culture, Edgar Schein notes, "leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin."[1] Recent research in church organization and leadership has begun to include studies in organizational culture.[2] Yet no research has been conducted that examines organizational culture creation in the New Testament. What does organizational culture creation look like biblically? This research study examines Luke-Acts to discover if culture was intentionally embedded by Jesus and early church leaders, and if so, in what ways and to what effect.

Introduction to the Research Problem

The subject of culture has been explored for some time as a study in the fields of anthropology and sociology, categorizing the way humans relate to one another.[3] Ward

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[1]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 3.

[2]See, for instance, Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013); Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008); Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church From the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005); and Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

[3]Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 18.

notes, "Wherever two or more human beings are gathered, there is culture."[4] A seminal

definition of culture comes from anthropologists Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde

Kluckhohn:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.[5]

According to this definition, culture is both inherent and expressed. It can be

observed by decoding certain symbols and artifacts present within groups of humans.

Understood this way, culture can be present among any group of humans, whether in a

nation or ethnic group bound by common language or geography, or a trans-national

organization such as a business or a church. It is the latter category, culture that is present

in organizations, that is the concern of this project.

Leaders in secular organizations have realized the importance of understanding

and shaping organizational culture. Within an organization, culture "consists of such

things as shared values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, norms, artifacts, and patterns

of behavior."[6] Culture can be expressed and unexpressed, often denoting "'how things are

done around here.' It reflects the prevailing ideology that people carry inside their

heads."[7] Naturally, organizational leaders have been concerned with how organizational

culture can be created and changed as needed. Many methodologies exist, including

Harvard scholar John Kotter's eight-step process of change, which encourages strategies

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[4]Angela Joan Ward, "Church Organizational Culture: Construct Definition and Instrument Development" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 1.

[5]Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1952), 357.

[6]J. Steven Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective* (Pacific Grove, CA: The Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1989), 1.

[7]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 19.

such as creating an increased sense of urgency about what changes need to occur, successful vision-casting, communication, and the importance of creating short-term wins.[8] The ability to understand this underlying organizational ideology is often the difference between a leader's success and failure.

As noted above, recent work has been done on church organizational culture and change, though often with an exclusively practical focus. A church's culture is "the combined effect of the interacting values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions that define the life" of the church.[9] A few significant church leaders grasp the importance of understanding and shaping their church's culture.[10] In fact, some pastors now claim that culture is "the most important social reality" in the church.[11] Yet despite the recent progress in understanding church organizational culture from a practical perspective, little research has been done on the biblical and theological foundations of organizational culture and change.[12] Is intentional organizational culture creation something that is modeled in Scripture? While shaping church culture makes practical sense to many church leaders, does it have a biblical precedent? This thesis seeks to fill the void in the research by demonstrating the presence and intentional creation of organizational culture

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[8]John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 6.

[9]Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 7.

[10]Several prominent pastors have written books aimed at creating church culture, even though they may not frame their work in precisely that way. See, for instance, Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004); Mark Driscoll, *The Radical Reformission: Reaching Out without Selling Out* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004); and Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

[11]Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church From the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 3.

[12]Angela Joan Ward includes a brief overview of the biblical and theological nature of organizational culture in Ward, "Church Organizational Culture," 10-29.

in Luke-Acts.

The research concern for this thesis is to examine Luke-Acts in order to ascertain if and how Jesus and the early church intentionally embedded organizational culture, and to discover how to apply those methodological approaches in developing organizational culture in the modern church. Organizational culture, as it relates to the church, will be defined as a church's "beliefs, values, and their expression (some form of outward behavior)."[13] This definition closely parallels Edgar Schein's three-part conception of organizational culture as an organization's artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions.[14] One of the research assumptions for this project is that the nascent Christian movement in the first century A.D. in its various developments (i.e., the early disciples of Jesus, the early church, etc.) can be categorized as a formal organization with leaders, followers, and purposes, and can be examined through the rubric of beliefs, values, and behaviors.

This project will include an inductive survey of Luke-Acts. First, the Gospel of Luke will be surveyed to discover the culture Jesus created among his disciples. The methodologies Jesus employed and their effectiveness also will be examined. Second, a survey of the book of Acts will be conducted to discover the presence and creation of organizational culture in the early church. These texts will provide evidence of organizational culture creation in the first century church, and will provide an argument for shaping organizational culture in the modern church. These texts will be considered as a representative sampling of organizational culture creation methodologies in the New Testament.[15] Other Old Testament and New Testament texts may be referenced but only

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[13]Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 20.

[14]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 24.

[15]The rationale for selecting these texts is that they are broad enough to give a sweeping overview of both Jesus and the early church, but narrow enough to be thorough. Luke details the practices of the earliest Christian community. Acts is the most detailed account of early church life. Although the

in support of the main texts under consideration.

Specifically, the texts under consideration demonstrate the expected culture of early Christianity from an organizational perspective and demonstrate the various means employed by early Christian leaders to create organizational culture. When these texts are taken together, they provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the organizational culture of the early church.

The first section of Scripture, the Gospel of Luke, demonstrates how Jesus shaped the culture of his followers by clearly communicating what they should believe, what they should value, and how they should act. There are many ways Jesus embedded culture among his followers. For instance, Jesus outlined a kingdom manifesto in the Sermon on the Plain, explaining the way His disciples needed to live and creating a unique culture distinct from that of the surrounding society (Luke 6:17-49). This contrast between cultures is observable, for instance, in the way Jesus confronted the evil practices of the Pharisees (Luke 11:37-54). Additionally, Jesus corrected His disciples' wrong thinking about what involvement in the kingdom entailed. He taught them that following Him involved serving, humility, and deference (Luke 9:46-48). This clearly established a cultural expectation among His followers that challenged their assumptions. As this thesis will bear out, of the many ways Jesus shaped the culture of his followers there is no more prominent means than through table fellowship. Table fellowship is a dominant motif in Luke. It was through the exertion of personal influence in the context of eating that Jesus most prominently shaped the culture of his followers.

The second section of Scripture, the book of Acts, details the life and culture of the early church. For instance, Acts 2:42-47 explains how the early church had a culture

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Pastoral Epistles and other New Testament books are helpful writings to examine, much has been written examining early church culture in these books already; see, for instance, James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), and Gordon D. Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 2 (June 1985): 141-51.

of teaching, fellowship, prayer, hospitality, unity, generosity, community, and worship. These "artifacts" of culture display the early church's beliefs and values. Additionally, intentional culture shaping is observable in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35). This thesis will trace the prominence of the speeches in Acts as a primary means for shaping church culture.

These texts clearly demonstrate the usage of intentional methodologies for organizational culture creation. Church culture in the New Testament was shaped through various means. In Jesus and the early church, evidence of intentional culture creation is seen through embedding mechanisms such as lifestyle example (i.e., welcoming of the children to demonstrate the nature of the kingdom in Luke 18:15-17), preaching and teaching (i.e., the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6, and the encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24), the written word (i.e., the letter to Gentile believers from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:22-29), church councils (such as the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15), personal encouragement (such as the instruction of Apollos by Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:26, and the meal at Zacchaeus' house in Luke 19:1-11), and correction (such as Jesus' encounter in the temple in Luke 19:45-48). This thesis will argue that the most prominent means for shaping culture in Luke is table fellowship. It will also argue that the most prominent means for shaping culture in Acts is teaching.

Significance of the Research

The aim of this research is to prove that evidence exists of intentional organizational culture creation in the New Testament and to discover the various methodologies employed to shape church culture. While many studies exist which treat organizational culture in general, there is a void in the literature for a biblical survey of the creation and presence of organizational culture in the New Testament. This study will provide a description of what intentional organizational culture creation should look like biblically. This is significant in several ways.

First, the principles discovered in the early teachings and practices of the early church serve as a model for modern churches that desire to pattern themselves after the New Testament church. Should modern church leaders care about intentional organizational culture creation, and if so, how should they go about shaping organizational culture? It is beneficial to the modern church if the methodologies of Scripture are discovered.

Second, this study can prompt a paradigm shift for approaching church leadership research. Much study on church leadership in the past three decades has focused on church growth methodologies.[16] Criticism of the church growth movement has included things such as "a preoccupation with 'numbers,' inappropriately overlaying 'business practices' on the church without theological critique," and an emphasis on "'transfer growth' from neighboring churches and not true 'conversion growth.'"[17] More recently, research has shifted to emphasize the importance of church health.[18] The implications of the current project should prove that developing biblical organizational culture is at the heart of church health. The emphasis of church leaders should be focused more on church health through organizational culture creation and less on church growth methodologies. Healthy church growth occurs only when healthy church culture is created.[19]

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[16]Seminal works in the church growth movement include Charles L. Chaney, *Design for Church Growth* (Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1978); C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984); Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987); Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); and Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1998).

[17]Mancini, *Church Unique*, 31.

[18]One of the first books to focus on church health is Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

[19]Though not written with a view toward the church, Patrick Lencioni has published a work arguing that the single most important factor of an organization's success is organizational health. See Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine if, how, and to what effect Jesus and early church leaders shaped church organizational culture in the New Testament by surveying Luke-Acts in order to discover methodological application for organizational culture creation and change in the modern church.

Research Questions

The following questions are the primary research questions driving this study:

1. Did Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shape the culture (behavior, values, and beliefs) of their followers?

2. What methodologies did Jesus and the early church employ in shaping church organizational culture?

3. To what effect did Jesus and early church leaders shape church culture? How effective were the methodologies they employed?

Delimitations of the Study

To narrow the scope of this project, the following delimitations characterize this research. First, this research will not seek to extrapolate the findings of the study to every organization. Due to the nature of the texts under consideration, the research findings will necessarily be limited to organizational culture in the context of the church. While implications from church organizational culture may be applicable to other organizations, there is not a one to one comparison between the church and other formal organizations such as a business, an institution of higher learning, a parachurch ministry, or a non-profit organization. Fundamentally, the purposes of the church are distinct from other organizations, though some similarities exist. The church is called to carry out the Great Commission (Acts 1:8), while other Christian organizations serve to support the church in the fulfillment of her mission.

Second, the proposed research project will not examine the selected texts in the New Testament in order to discover implications for leadership in general or for

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organizational management. Although these closely related cognate studies bear importance and relevance to the subject of organizational culture, the present study will be limited to examining the selected texts for the presence and creation of church organizational culture in particular.

Third, the proposed research project will not examine the biblical text as a whole, but only Luke-Acts, which describes both the life and teachings of Jesus and the history of the early church.[20] Due to the limitations of the current project, this thesis will narrow the focus to selected texts in the New Testament by surveying Luke-Acts to discover culture creation in the teaching and praxis of Jesus and the early church. Future research may be needed to examine the presence of organizational culture in the Old Testament or in other New Testament texts. Further research also may be needed to understand organizational culture from a strictly theological or biblical-theological perspective.[21]

Limitation of Generalization of Research Findings

The selected texts are representative of the teaching of the rest of the New Testament generally, since it takes into consideration Jesus and the early church. Therefore, the research findings in the selected texts will be generalized to represent the teaching of the New Testament as a whole. Furthermore, although this project does not include an analysis of Old Testament texts, and although it is assumed that organizational

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[20]The rationale for selecting these texts for examination is that they are representative of the teaching and praxis of Jesus and the early church. While culture creation can be discovered in other texts, the patterns present in the selected texts for this research are consistent with the practices found in other texts. These texts are a representative sample of organizational culture creation in the New Testament. Conducting a survey of every book of the New Testament is not within the scope of this project. Luke-Acts is unique in that together they are broad enough to cover both Jesus and the early church. Additionally, they are penned by one author, so they contain a consistent perspective on Jesus and the early church.

[21]A theological approach to this field of study might include the determination of the implications of the Doctrine of Man for organizational culture. A biblical-theological approach might trace the "horizontal" theme of the *people of God* to discover its impact on a Christian understanding of organizational culture.

culture in the Old Testament bears some significant differences from organizational culture in the New Testament, the generalization of this research should be considered as representative of a "biblical" model of church organizational culture, since Scripture does not contradict Scripture. The church is a unique creation, but no principles that guide the organizational practice of the church in the New Testament contradict any teaching of the Old Testament. Lastly, since the present research is an examination of both prescriptive and descriptive biblical texts, the application of the research will be considered universal for the organizational culture of the modern church.

Terminology and Definitions

There are several core terms that are used throughout this study. For the sake of clarity and consistency, the following definitions will be utilized.

Behaviors. Behaviors are the expressions of culture. Expression of culture "consists of its overt behavior or actions and artifacts (the results of behavior)."[22] This definition corresponds closely to Schein's category of "artifacts." Artifacts are the "visible products of the group."[23]

Beliefs. A church's beliefs are convictions or opinions "that a person holds to be true . . . as based on limited proof."[24] Beliefs are presuppositional assumptions. Beliefs correspond closely to Schein's category of "basic underlying assumptions." These assumptions "tell group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things."[25]

Church. The church has both an invisible and visible manifestation. As an invisible entity, "the church is the community of all true believers for all time."[26] In this

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[22]Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead*, 26.

[23]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 23.

[24]Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead*, 60.

[25]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 28.

[26]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 853.

way, the church has a universal scope. As a visible entity,

> The church is the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into his body through baptism with the Holy Spirit . . . Local churches are led by pastors (also called elders) and served by deacons, possess and pursue purity and unity, exercise church discipline, develop strong connections with other churches, and celebrate the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[27]

It is the local manifestation of the church that is within the interest and scope of the current project.[28]

Church organizational culture. Also called *congregational culture*, church organizational culture includes "beliefs, values, and their expression (some form of outward behavior)."[29] These categories correspond closely to Schein's three-part definition of organizational culture. A church's culture is "the combined effect of the interacting values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions that define the life" of the church.[30]

Culture. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn,

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.[31]

Organization. An organization has leaders, followers, and purposes. According to Robbins,

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[27]Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2012), 29-30.

[28]Driscoll and Breshears give a helpful, practical definition of the church: "The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy." Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 38.

[29]Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead*, 20.

[30]Mancini, *Church Unique*, 7.

[31]Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture*, 357.

An organization is the planned coordination of the collective activities of two or more people who, functioning on a relatively continuous basis and through division of labor and a hierarchy of authority, seek to achieve a common goal or set of goals.[32]

Organizational culture. Organizational culture includes an organization's artifacts (observed behavior), espoused beliefs and values (ideals, goals, ideologies), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs).[33]

Organizational culture creation. Organizational culture creation is the intentional or unintentional shaping of an organization's beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Values. A church's values are "the constant, passionate shared core beliefs that drive and guide the culture."[34] Values differ from beliefs in that values are beliefs the organization actually acts on.[35] Values correspond closely to Schein's category of "espoused beliefs and values." Espoused beliefs and values express an organization's "sense of what ought to be, as distinct from what it is."[36]

Research Assumptions

The research assumptions include a belief that the Bible is authoritative. To the degree the texts under consideration are interpreted correctly, the conclusions of the research for developing a biblical understanding of culture are not limited in terms of generalization for the church. A presupposition to this research is that the Scriptures are inerrant and provide sufficient evidence for determining the practices of organizational culture creation in Jesus and the early church.[37]

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[32]Stephen P. Robbins, *Organizational Theory: The Structure and Design of Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 5.

[33]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 24.

[34]Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead*, 40.

[35]Ibid., 41.

[36]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 25.

[37]Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references used in this thesis are from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*.

It is also assumed that the church in the New Testament can be classified as a formal organization with leaders, followers, purposes, and goals. Although it has important differences from other organizations such as businesses or governments, for the purpose of this study the church will be classified as an organization. Yet, while the conclusions of this research may have some relevance for other formal organizations, the research project is designed for application to the church in particular.

General Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has served as an introduction to the research problem. Thus far, the research problem has been defined, the research purpose and questions have been stated and delimited, and the assumptions, definitions, and significance of the research have been outlined. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the relevance of the thesis.

Chapter 2 will review the most pertinent precedent literature in the field of organizational culture, situating the current thesis within the literature and synthesizing the research that has been done on the topic up to the present. Specifically, the chapter will review works on organizational culture and change, with a particular view toward the church, and review briefly the pertinent works on the selected New Testament texts, focusing on research that gives background information on Luke-Acts. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the void in the research on organizational culture and identify how the current thesis fills the void. This chapter will explain additionally the methodology employed in this project. The methodology employed for the research will be an inductive survey of the texts under consideration. The research questions will be applied both to Luke and Acts and discussed in separate chapters.

Chapter 3 will commence the research into the text of Scripture itself. The Gospel of Luke will be surveyed to discover if evidence exists that Jesus intentionally shaped the organizational culture of his followers. The text will also be explored to discover the methodologies of culture creation that Jesus employed and whether or not

they were successful. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that Jesus intentionally shaped the organizational culture of his followers primarily through table fellowship.

Chapter 4 will examine the book of Acts to discover organizational culture in the early church. The chapter will survey Acts to discover if and how early church leaders shaped the organizational culture of the early church. The purpose of this chapter is to prove that early church leaders intentionally shaped the organizational culture of the early church primarily through teaching.

Chapter 5 will conclude the thesis project by summarizing the discoveries of the research. It will demonstrate the contribution this thesis made to the precedent literature and outline areas for future research. It will also make application of the research results and outline implications for the modern church. The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the research project.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to review the relevant precedent literature on organizational culture and situate the current research thesis within that literature. This chapter will demonstrate that a void exists in the current literature on organizational culture because the biblical text has yet to be examined to determine the ways in which culture was intentionally embedded among Jesus' followers and the early church.[1] Since the field of organizational culture is a relatively new area of study, the existing methodologies of organizational theorists are modern. Therefore, there is value in examining the biblical material, particularly Luke-Acts, to see if Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped organizational culture, and if so, in what ways and to what effect.[2]

This chapter also will include a description of the research methodology of this project. Rather than taking a modern theory of organizational culture creation and

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[1]Several works approach church organizational culture from a practical perspective, but no substantive biblical-theological foundational work on organizational culture exists. Angela Joan Ward provides a section in her doctoral thesis in which she briefly surveys the concept of organizational culture from a biblical-theological perspective, but it is not exhaustive or sufficient for the purposes of the present research. See Angela Joan Ward, "Church Organizational Culture: Construct Definition and Instrument Development" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 10-29. Andy Crouch argues that Jesus intentionally created culture, but his focus is on culture in general, not on organizational culture. Further, while Crouch briefly mentions some ways Jesus created culture, he does not examine thoroughly the means Jesus used to shape culture. See Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

[2]One of the research assumptions for this project is that the Bible is inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient for all things pertaining to life, including how organizational life is conducted. From a Christian perspective, understanding a biblical model of culture creation is important because the text of Scripture bears weight for how a Christian lives. If a particular model of culture creation is present in the text, it should influence how churches think about organizational culture creation. However, care needs to be exercised in approaching the text, especially narrative, to differentiate between what is prescriptive for the church and what is merely descriptive.

imposing it onto the text to discover if the model is present, the text will be approached on its own terms. An inductive survey methodology will be employed as Luke-Acts is examined to identify culture creation methodologies in the first century church. This methodology will aid in preventing an anachronistic or eisogetical approach to the text.[3]

There are several important developments in the field of organizational culture. Organizational culture creation in the church and other organizations is grounded in an understanding of organizational culture itself, and the study of organizational culture is itself rooted in an understanding of culture. Each of these areas will be explored in order to attain a thorough comprehension of the current research on organizational culture as well as demonstrate the need for the current research.

Culture

Culture is everywhere. Ward notes, "Wherever two or more human beings are gathered, there is culture . . . . Culture is pervasive."[4] In his classic work on the subject of a Christian's place in culture, Richard Niebuhr referred to culture as

> that total process of human activity and that total result of such activity to which now the name *culture*, now the name *civilization*, is applied in common speech . . . It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values.[5]

Niebuhr described several characteristics of culture. He argued that since culture is "bound up with man's life in society, it is always *social*."[6] Therefore, although culture is obviously a study in anthropology, it must also be understood as a study in

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[3]This is not to say that certain elements of culture creation are not present in the text. For instance, a common culture creation method is to create a sense of urgency. Jesus did this often, such as in his use of eschatological parables (e.g., Luke 12:35-40). However, if the current research hypothesis was to identify the presence of a particular organizational culture creation model as a whole in Luke-Acts, it would not be corroborated by the text.

[4]Ward, "Church Organizational Culture," 1.

[5]H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 32.

[6]Ibid.

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sociology, categorizing the way humans relate to one another.[7] Schein made a similar

observation: "Culture can be thought of as the foundation of the social order that we live

in and of the rules we abide by."[8] Fundamentally, culture is created as humans interact

with one another. Culture is not static in that regard because as human relations change,

culture changes.

Niebuhr further noted, "the world of culture is a *world of values*."[9] Culture is

concerned with both the realization and the conservation of values.[10] The importance of

values in culture (both in general and organizationally) cannot be overstated, especially

as it relates to the import of organizational culture creation in Luke-Acts. Culture

influences what people believe and value, and how they behave. In this way, culture is

about the ultimate nature of reality and thus shapes a person's worldview. The renowned

missiologist Lesslie Newbigin corroborates this point:

> By the word culture we have to understand the sum total ways of living developed
> by a group of human beings and handed on from generation to generation . . . And
> one must also include in culture, and as fundamental to any culture, a set of beliefs,
> experiences, and practices that seek to grasp and express the ultimate nature of
> things, that which gives shape and meaning to life, that which claims final loyalty.[11]

If Jesus and early church leaders sought to intentionally create cultural norms

among the nascent church, it is important to realize that they were in reality making

claims about where their followers' loyalties should lie. This is important for the

contemporary church because if a biblical model of organizational culture creation can be

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[7]Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 18. Cameron and Quinn note that the sociological perspective on cultural studies is the predominant one.

[8]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 3.

[9]Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 34. Italics original.

[10]Ibid., 36-37.

[11]Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3.

established, it has bearing on the church today. Jesus and early church leaders were making claims that affected people's allegiance. They created cultural norms that had not only social implications, but also moral and religious implications. They were making claims that vied for the loyalty of their followers. Thus, if Jesus created a culture of love among his followers, for instance, to reject that culture would be a rejection of his lordship and claim over their lives.

Though Niebuhr approaches the field of culture from a theological perspective, his definition of culture coincides with the secular theories on culture, which are numerous.[12] Geert Hofstede, a pioneer in the study of how culture influences the work place, stated that culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another."[13] One of the more precise definitions of culture approached from a secular perspective is given by anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn, who thoroughly summarize culture this way:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as producers of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.[14]

Their definition represents a common understanding of culture.[15] Importantly, their definition includes several elements of culture that are central to an understanding of organizational culture. First, culture manifests itself behaviorally. Second, culture is embodied in artifacts that can be observed. Third, culture is about ideas or beliefs and

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[12]Cameron and Quinn observe that as far back as early studies on culture in the 1950s, there were more than 160 definitions of culture. Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 18.

[13]Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1984), 21.

[14]Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1952), 357.

[15]D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 2.

their accompanying values.

Organizational Culture

Every organization has a culture embedded within it. Leaders who ignore the realities of culture do so to their detriment. There is a close relationship between an organization's culture and its identity.[16] Culture in one sense defines an organization's identity. Culture "reflects the prevailing ideology that people carry inside their heads."[17] Therefore, if a leader wants to transform the identity of the organization, the change must be approached at the level of culture. To this end, an understanding of the complexities of organizational culture is in order.

Elements of Organizational Culture

Theorists outline various approaches for delineating the specific elements of an organization's culture, but several common elements emerge in the literature. Ott lists seventy-three words and phrases used to describe organizational culture from fifty-eight major sources.[18] In the early years of research, there were two major schools of thought for understanding organizational culture: the *adaptationist* school, which understood culture as observed behavior and things, and the *ideationalist* school, which understood culture as ideas, meanings, and values that are shared between members of a group.[19]

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[16]Mats Alvesson, *Understanding Organizational Culture* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 39-41.

[17]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 19.

[18]J. Steven Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective* (Pacific Grove, CA: The Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1989), 52-53. These include words such as assumptions, beliefs, celebration, customs, expectations, habits, identity, ideologies, meanings, norms, philosophy, purpose, rites, roots, sentiments, spirit, stories, style, symbols, thinking, traditions, understandings, values, vision, way, and worldviews.

[19]Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 54. Ott's observation is based on the work of R. M. Keesing. See R. M. Keesing, "Theories of Culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3 (1974): 73-79.

Schein, considered by many to be the "father of organizational studies,"[20] refined the conception of culture by synthesizing the two schools of thought. His analysis of organizational culture remains as the definitive approach in the literature.[21] He classified organizational culture according to three basic elements: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. *Artifacts* are "the visible products of the group," including such things as an organization's physical environment, language, products, style, stories, behaviors, and observable rituals.[22] Artifacts are "easy to see but hard to interpret without an understanding of the other [two] levels [of culture]."[23] *Espoused beliefs and values* are the ideals and aspirations of an organization. These are "confirmed only by the shared social experience of a group."[24] These beliefs and values express "what ought to be, as distinct from what is."[25] *Basic underlying assumptions* are an organization's "unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values" that "determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling."[26] Because these assumptions develop at the level of the unconscious, they are difficult to change. This level of culture shapes worldview and can even provide a group's members with "a basic sense of identity."[27] According to Schein, an organization's artifacts, beliefs and values, and assumptions comprise the major elements of its culture.

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[20]Ward, "Church Organizational Culture," 2.

[21]Ott says, "Schein's three-level model provides the most useful typology published . . . for classifying elements of organizational culture into usable groupings." Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 61.

[22]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 23-24.

[23]Vijay Sathe, *Culture and Related Corporate Realities: Text, Cases, and Readings on Organizational Entry, Establishment, and Change* (Homewood, IL: Irwin, 1985), 10.

[24]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 26.

[25]Ibid., 25. "What is" is contained in an organization's artifacts.

[26]Ibid., 24.

[27]Ibid., 29.

Cameron and Quinn have a similar analysis of organizational culture. They state that the majority of writers view organizational culture as "the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members."[28] This is consistent with Ott's taxonomy of culture, wherein culture "consists of such things as shared values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, norms, artifacts, and patterns of behavior."[29]

The central elements of assumptions, beliefs, values, and behaviors are common classifications of organizational culture. Bolman and Deal include other features common in the research literature, such as stories, heroes, and rituals.[30] These are important symbols that help create organizational culture.

Although the categories classified above mark the most salient features of organizational culture, there are less prominent elements of culture as well. For instance, Alvesson states that culture can be formed in an organization by such things as "jokes, coffee breaks, the way people dress, the functions or consequences of the corporation's Christmas party, seating arrangements at meetings," etc.[31] Schein observed that an organization's culture could be shaped by things such as the architecture of the organization's building, the clothing of the employees, and even the technology used by the organization.[32]

Research has been conducted on many of the sub-features of organizational culture. For instance, theorists have explored the impact of language on organizational

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[28]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 18.

[29]Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 1.

[30]Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, & Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 248-62.

[31]Alvesson, *Understanding Organizational Culture*, 124.

[32]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 23.

culture.[33] The influence of organizational stories and scripts on culture has also been studied, as well as the importance of rituals and ceremonies.[34] Even the physical arrangements of organizational environments have been researched.[35] These and many other sub-features contribute to the development and composition of organizational culture, and can individually be categorized under one of the other three major culture elements.

Types of Organizational Cultures

While the elements of organizational culture can be classified on a micro-level, there are several types of organizational cultures that can be analyzed on a macro-level. Each of these macro-types also has the micro-elements of artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. These organizational macro-types are helpful in understanding what kind of organization it is whose culture is being analyzed. Schein traced three major organizational typologies: that of Harrison, Goffee and Jones, and Cameron and Quinn.[36]

Harrison observed four different types of organizational cultures: power oriented, achievement oriented, role oriented, and support oriented. Power oriented organizations are characterized by authoritative leaders. Achievement oriented organizations focus on achieving results. Role oriented organizations are typically public bureaucracies. Support oriented organizations are nonprofit or religious organizations,

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[33]See for instance, M. Edelman, *Political Language: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

[34]On stories and scripts, see J. Martin, "Stories and Scripts in Organizational Settings," in *Cognitive Social Psychology*, ed. A. H. Hastorf and A. M. Isen (New York: Elsevier/North-Holland, 1982), 255-305; A. L. Wilkins, "Organizational Stories as Symbols Which Control the Organization," in *Organizational Symbolism*, ed. L. R. Pondy et al. (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1983), 81-92. On rites and ceremonies, see R. P. Gephart, "Status Degradation and Organizational Succession: An Ethno-Methodological Approach," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (December 1978): 553-81.

[35]F. I. Steele and S. Jenks, *The Feel of the Work Place* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1977).

[36]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 166-68.

such as churches.[37]

Goffee and Jones identified organizational culture types based on the degree to which the organization upheld the virtues of solidarity (unity around the organization's mission) and sociability (camaraderie among the members of the organization). Using these dimensions, Goffee and Jones classified the following four organizational culture types: fragmented (wherein both the solidarity and sociability factors were low), mercenary (wherein the organization had more solidarity than sociability), communal (wherein the organization had more sociability than solidarity), and networked (wherein both the solidarity and sociability factors were high).[38]

Cameron and Quinn found that there are four kinds of organizations, based on two dimensions: the degree of stability and flexibility within the organization and the degree to which the organization is externally or internally focused. On that basis, an organization can be characterized either as a hierarchy (internally focused and stable), a market (externally focused and stable), a clan (internally focused and flexible), or an adhocracy (externally focused and flexible).[39] Hierarchies typically are controlling cultures. Markets typically are competitive cultures. Clans typically are collaborative cultures. Adhocracies typically are creative cultures.[40]

Martin approaches types of organizational culture from a different perspective than the three major typologies outlined above. She presents three views on organizational culture: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. The integration

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[37]R. Harrison, "Understanding Your Organization's Character," *Harvard Business Review* 57, no. 5 (1979): 119-28.

[38]R. Goffee and G. Jones, *The Character of a Corporation* (New York: Harper Business, 1998).

[39]Brody Heritage, Clare Pollock, and Lynne Roberts, "Validation of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument," *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 3 (March 2014): 2.

[40]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 41-51.

perspective values egalitarianism, innovation, and employee well-being.[41] The differentiation perspective questions egalitarianism and places less of an emphasis on innovation and employee well-being than the integration perspective does, but can be more efficient than the integration approach is.[42] The fragmentation perspective values ambiguity and diversified methods in the organization, which can result in confusion about egalitarianism, innovation, and well-being.[43] Each perspective brings organizational merits and deficiencies.

The typologies listed above have some relevance for the current research project, but perhaps approaching organizational culture this way obscures more than clarifies. For the purpose of the present research, it is most helpful to differentiate between the organizational culture in businesses and governments, and church organizational culture. While the church in the New Testament can be classified as a formal organization with leaders, followers, purposes, and goals, it has important differences from other formal organizations. For instance, while businesses and governments can coerce cooperation to some degree, participation in a church is voluntary. While organizational culture analysis for businesses and governments must address employee-employer relationships, the church must address pastor-member relationships. These distinctions, among others, should not be overlooked.

Therefore, while the typologies described above may very well describe certain aspects of the church, it is important to classify church organizational culture as a separate type of organizational culture from businesses or governments. The present research may have some relevance for other formal organizations, but it is designed primarily for application to the church. As the research progresses through Luke-Acts,

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[41]Joanne Martin, *Cultures in Organizations: Three Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), locs. 1129-1722, Kindle.

[42]Ibid., locs. 2001-2780.

[43]Ibid., locs. 3118-3993.

elements of organizational culture may be expected to differ significantly from that which is found in the literature base, which addresses organizations of a different type than the church.[44]

Origin of Organizational Culture

Where does organizational culture originate? Ott traced three general sources of organizational culture: "the broader societal culture in which an organization resides, the nature of an organization's business or business environment, and the beliefs, values, and basic assumptions held by the founder(s) or other early dominant leader(s)."[45] Ott believed organizational culture could be shaped externally (by environments or society in general) or internally (by the inherent nature of the organization or the influence of the founder or other leaders). There certainly are external influences on organizational culture. This is observed when a company adapts a product based on the market or the competition, for instance. However, the development of the organizational culture is driven more directly by internal influences such as leadership.

Schein classified the sources of culture differently. He focused more on the internal influences of the organization on shaping culture, although he recognized that new members or leaders in the organization may also bring an external influence with them into the organization. Schein says,

> Cultures basically spring from three sources: (1) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and new leaders.[46]

Both Ott and Schein mention the centrality of leadership in shaping culture. It

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[44]This is true even of the practical literature on organizational culture. For an example of a practical approach to organizational culture for a business, see James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (New York: Harper Business, 1994).

[45]Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 75.

[46]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 219.

is intuitive to recognize that "an organization's culture derives from its antecedent leadership."[47] Lencioni correctly argues that members of an organization will imitate the actions and attitudes of the leaders.[48] Kane-Urrabazo agrees: "The attitudes, values and behaviors of an institution begin with its leadership."[49] There is no more important influence in shaping an organization's culture than the leadership of the organization.

Yet while leaders play an important role in shaping organizational culture, leadership is not the only influence on the development of the culture. Bolman and Deal introduce an important conundrum by stating, "There is a long-standing controversy about the relationship between culture and leadership. Do leaders shape culture, or are they shaped by it?"[50] In a sense, the leader exists in a reciprocal relationship with the organization wherein the leader both shapes and is shaped by the culture. An organization's culture can even determine the kind of leader the organization acquires.[51] Beyond this, an organization's culture can shape and change the leader. For instance, if a new pastor attempts to lead his congregation through a change process and consistently encounters resistance, over time this may cause him to forsake future change initiatives. Organizational culture occurs through both leadership and "socialization."[52]

In this regard, culture can be shaped not only from "top-down" leadership but

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[47]Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Management Applications* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 749.

[48]Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 219-20.

[49]Christine Kane-Urrabazo, "Management's Role in Shaping Organizational Culture," *Journal of Nursing Management* 14, no. 3 (April 2006): 193.

[50]Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 264.

[51]Bass and Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership*, 754.

[52]Sergiu Mateiu, Vasile Puiu, and George-Constantin Puiu, "A Possible Design Model of the Organizational Culture," *Revista Academiei Fortelor Terestre* 70, no. 2 (2013): 173.

also from "bottom-up" influences.[53] That is, collective members can have significant influence in shaping the culture of an organization, and even the leader of the organization. In some sense, organizational culture is "socially constructed – created and preserved – by groups of people who work together for an organization."[54] The truth of this observation is demonstrated, for instance, when a leader leaves an organization but the culture remains intact. This elevates the influence of an organization's members in shaping and perpetuating culture. Indeed, one of the proofs that the culture of an organization has changed is if the change continues among the members of the organization after the leader has left.

However culture is created, the most important observation at this point is that even though organizational culture will evolve naturally due to internal and external influences, it can be shaped intentionally. Leaders and members of the organization have the opportunity to shape, change, and perpetuate culture through means that will be explored later. This is important because every organization faces influences that shape culture both intentionally and unintentionally. The most effective leaders intentionally shape the culture of their organization, even in the church. It is the thesis of this research project that Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped the organizational culture of the nascent Christian church.

Church Organizational Culture

Because churches are unique organizations, one might assume that the traits of organizational culture in general are absent from the church. However, "culture is the most important social reality in [the] church."[55] Like organizations of other kinds,

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[53]Christiane Demers, *Organizational Change Theories: A Synthesis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 146.

[54]Richard J. Black, "Organisational Culture: Creating the Influence Needed for Strategic Success" (MBA diss., Henley Management College, 2004), 16.

[55]Robert Lewis and Warne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside*

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churches have a unique culture. This culture may be difficult to discern, but it plays an important role in everything the church does. Therefore, pastors need to realize the importance of organizational culture and understand that as a leader of an organization they play an important role in "forming, changing, and managing the culture of the organizations they lead . . . Pastors must understand that they usually are not just spiritual shepherds, but leaders of an organization that has its own culture and subcultures."[56]

Malphurs adapts Schein's description of organizational culture by explaining that congregational culture is exhibited in a church's behavior (artifacts), values (espoused beliefs and values), and beliefs (basic underlying assumptions). A church's *behavior* includes "all that you would see, hear, and feel as you first encounter the congregation."[57] Worship style, the nature of the sermon, the ways in which members interact with each other, church signage, etc., are all behavioral artifacts of the church's culture. A church's *values* are "its beliefs that it actually acts on."[58] If the church believes evangelism is important, it only becomes a value when church members actually evangelize. Values denote what the church cares about the most. A church's *beliefs* are presuppositional in nature. Malphurs says, "a belief is a conviction or opinion that a person holds to be true about the church and its world as based on limited proof."[59] Significantly, the church may not always act on its beliefs (when beliefs are acted upon they become values), but they all have beliefs. Beliefs form the deepest layer of culture. Any organizational change in values and behaviors must occur at the level of a church's

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Out (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 3.

[56]Ward, "Church Organizational Culture," 3.

[57]Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 27.

[58]Ibid., 41.

[59]Ibid., 60.

beliefs or assumptions, which is the most difficult level to change.[60]

Lewis and Cordeiro note that a church's culture can be discovered by analyzing the church's leadership, values, vision statement, symbols, ceremonies, and celebrations.[61] Mancini says that a church's culture is "the combined effect of the interacting values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions that define the life [of the church]."[62] He lists things such as leaders, gifts, heritage, experiences, tradition, values, personality, and motivation as parts of a church's culture.[63] Every church's culture is "unmistakably unique and incomparably different."[64] It is the role of church leaders to discover the unique culture of their church and move toward clarifying, articulating, and advancing a vision that captures the church's unique potential.

There are several practical works that equip churches to develop healthy church organizational culture. One of the first books of this kind was written by mega-church pastor Rick Warren, who stated that the most important issue facing the church was developing church health.[65] For Warren, church health resulted from aligning the church's purposes with five biblical priorities: worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship.[66] These priorities give shape to the church's "clear-cut identity."[67] Developing the church's culture was built around alignment to the five purposes for the church.

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[60]Ibid., 57.

[61]Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 48.

[62]Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 7.

[63]Ibid., 8-9.

[64]Ibid., 6.

[65]Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

[66]Ibid., 103-6.

[67]Ibid., 82.

More recently, Dever has defined nine marks of healthy church culture, including expository preaching, biblical theology, biblical church discipline, a concern for discipleship and growth, biblical church leadership, and a correct understanding of the gospel, conversion, evangelism, and church membership.[68] Stetzer and Rainer developed a "scorecard" for assessing healthy church culture, marking the degree to which a church has a missionary mentality, vibrant leadership, relational intentionality, prayerful dependence, worship, community, and mission.[69] Montgomery and Cosper have created a "Faithmapping" plan for creating healthy church culture. Their model centers on showing how "the gospel, the church, and our mission are a coherent, organic, interrelated whole."[70] They focus on developing church members' identities as worshipers, family, servants, disciples, and witnesses.[71]

There are several models for understanding church organizational culture. Yet despite these practical approaches to church culture, no thorough treatment of the biblical foundations of organizational culture has been made. There has been some important research on creating organizational culture, both in secular organizations and in the church, but a biblical approach for organizational culture creation has yet to be developed. Before conducting research into a biblical model, however, it is important to overview previous research in organizational culture creation.

Organizational Culture Creation

There are several different perspectives on how organizational culture is created, as has been briefly mentioned previously. However, before examining those

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[68]Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

[69]Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010).

[70]Daniel Montgomery and Mike Cosper, *Faithmapping: A Gospel Atlas for Your Spiritual Journey* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013), 26.

[71]Ibid., 103.

perspectives, it is important to note that the church should engage culture. In Niebuhr's classification of how Christ and culture interact, he noted that Christ transforms culture.[72] In this view, the gospel was not about "the establishing of a new society so much as the conversion of existent society."[73] Christ enacted "the conversion of mankind from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness."[74] Christ engaged existing cultures and transformed them to demonstrate the reign of God. Demers notes that "actors and the processes through which they construct the organization" often change an organization's culture.[75]

As this thesis will bear out, Christ is the "Actor" behind the "actors" who enacts change within the church. Therefore, changing or creating organizational culture can be an act of discipleship, as church leaders imitate the example of Christ in seeking to bring Christ-centered culture into existence. Andy Crouch helpfully states, "The only way to change culture is to create more of it."[76] According to Crouch, joining God in His culture-shaping mission is an integral part of discipleship.[77] With that observation taken into consideration, what is the manner in which organizational culture should be shaped?[78]

There are several seminal works in the field of organizational culture

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[72]Niebuhr classified five models that he perceived throughout church history: Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ transforming culture. For more detail, see Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, xliii-lv.

[73]Ibid., liv.

[74]Ibid., 225.

[75]Demers, *Organizational Change Theories*, 232.

[76]Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 67.

[77]Ibid., 201.

[78]It is important to note that organizational culture creation processes are closely related to organizational change processes because organizational culture is not created *ex nihilo*. Culture creation occurs as a previous cultural norms shift into new cultural norms. In other words, new cultures do not appear in isolation from the already existent cultural norms. To that end, most of the literature about culture creation lists embedding mechanisms, etc., as a subtopic of organizational change.

creation.[79] Kurt Lewin developed one of the foundational theories on shaping organizational culture. He described three steps: "unfreezing" the cultural norms, developing new behaviors and values in the organization, and "refreezing" the new cultural norms by reinforcing them through policies, structures, etc.[80] An example of where this methodology reflects what occurs in the biblical text can be seen in Jesus' correction of the Pharisees' view of the Sabbath (Luke 14:1-6). He "unfreezes" their previous ideas and enculturates them with a new understanding of the Sabbath, "refreezing" a new cultural norm among his followers.

Edgar Schein believed culture formation was a result of both the influence of leadership and the shared experiences of the group. Leaders shape culture through "embedding mechanisms," such as how leaders allocate resources, how they allocate rewards and status, how they recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate, how they react to organizational crises, what they pay attention to, measure, and control, and through deliberate teaching and coaching.[81] Schein remarks, "Culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders."[82] At the same time, culture emerges as the group develops a "shared history," whereby the beliefs and values of the organization are "confirmed only by the shared social experience of a group."[83] These shared experiences happen through "originating event[s]" and "marker events" that give the organization meaning.[84] As the group shares experiences, they begin to develop shared assumptions ranging from the nature of their core mission to the kinds of

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[79]There are several practical works on shaping organizational culture and change. For an example, see Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

[80]Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

[81]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 236.

[82]Ibid., 3.

[83]Ibid., 26-32.

[84]Ibid., 198.

acceptable and unacceptable behavior they expect from members of the group. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41) is an example of an originating event for the early church.

Laurie Lewis developed a different pathway for creating organizational change. She argues for a strategic communication approach. Every organization has *stakeholders*, "those who have a stake in an organization's processes and or outputs."[85] Lewis' thesis is that by communicating with these stakeholders, organizational change can take place most effectively. Specifically, change "implementers" must communicate with stakeholders by interacting with their perspectives on the organization. Internal and external stakeholders will buy in to the vision for change as leaders or implementers create a narrative that resonates with the values and desires of the stakeholders. Her model is important because research indicates that a key for the success of one organization over another is the level to which the organization has "committed human forces."[86] Communicating with key stakeholders enables a greater level of human commitment within the organization, especially in the case of a church, as a premium is set on the importance of communication between church leaders and stakeholders within the church, such as deacons and small group leaders. Jesus' extended teaching discourses in the Gospel of Luke (e.g., Luke 6:20-49) are good examples of Lewis' model.

Cameron and Quinn encourage an alternate, process-based approach to organizational change. They identify nine steps for culture change: leaders must reach a consensus regarding the current state of the organization, agree on the preferred future of the organization, determine what the changes will be, identify stories illustrating the preferred culture, create a strategic action agenda, create immediate small wins, discover

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[85]Laurie K. Lewis, *Organizational Change: Creating Change through Strategic Communication* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 8.

[86]Masoud Ghorbanhosseini, "The Effect of Organizational Culture, Teamwork and Organizational Development on Organizational Commitment: The Mediating Role of Human Capital," *Tehnicki vjesnik* 20, no. 6 (2013): 1021.

leadership implications, maintain accountability, and develop a communication strategy.[87] This model is very similar to that developed by Egan, who frames change in three stages: an analysis of the current scenario, an agreement about the preferred scenario, and a strategy to arrive at the preferred scenario.[88]

Both of the previous models were built on the foundation laid by Harvard scholar John Kotter, who introduced a similar model of organizational change that has become a standard in the field. He suggests that change occurs as leaders create a sense of urgency, build a guiding team, get the vision right, communicate in such a way as to create buy-in, empower action by removing barriers to success, create short-term wins, create wave after wave of change and thus solidify the change, and make change stick by continuing to communicate the new culture of the organization to new members.[89] As members of the organization "see" and "feel" the need for change, adaptation in the organization will occur.[90]

Following Kotter's methodology closely, Herrington, Bonem, and Furr adapted his approach for use in congregational culture change. Their approach to congregational change is known as the "Congregational Transformation Model." Their eight-step process requires making personal preparation, creating urgency, establishing the vision community, discerning the vision and determining the vision path, communicating the vision, and reinforcing momentum through alignment.[91]

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[87]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 102.

[88]Gerard Egan, *Change-Agents Skills B: Managing Innovation and Change* (San Diego: University Associates, 1988), 6.

[89]These eight steps are explained fully in John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002).

[90]Kotter and Cohen, *The Heart of Change*, 179.

[91]Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 12-13.

Acknowledging the influence of Kotter on their model, they deviate from him somewhat by including disciplines within change leaders such as "deep spiritual vitality in their relationship to God" and a commitment to accountability within a team.[92] This makes their model distinct in that it addresses concerns that a Christian leader faces that secular leaders do not.

Pastors Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro outline several considerations for shifting organizational culture in a church context. Reflecting a similar approach as Cameron and Quinn, their process begins with assessing the present culture and the role of the leader in shaping the future. Leaders must then list the values needed in the preferred culture and enlist buy-in from other leaders. Leaders must write and display the vision for the future and communicate it by living it out and teaching it. As members of the church begin to follow the example of the leadership and live out the new cultural norms, leaders should celebrate the wins and honor those who buy-in. Finally, leaders must constantly check and recheck whether or not the church is accomplishing the vision. This regular assessment will hold leaders accountable to the values of the new culture.[93]

Conclusion

The examples above provide a broad research-driven theory base for church leaders that want to shape the organizational culture of their church. Furthermore, there is literature available to describe church culture change at a practical level.[94] Yet there is a void in the research available to church leaders. No research has been conducted to provide a biblical model for organizational culture creation. This thesis will fill the void

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[92]Ibid., 97-98.

[93]Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 59-64.

[94]For a helpful example, see Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). A seminal work on church growth and health, Rainer essentially applies the work of Jim Collins' *Good to Great* to the church. Rainer identifies factors such as leadership, vision, and culture as vital components in changing church culture.

in the research by surveying Luke-Acts to discover if organizational culture was created intentionally in the New Testament church, and if so, in what ways and to what effect.

What is clear from the literature is that both the leaders and members of an organization play an important role in creating and perpetuating organizational culture. This is significant for the church because it means that both church pastors and members have a responsibility to create and sustain a church culture that is Christ-centered and faithful to biblical norms. What is also clear from the literature is that organizational culture will change through natural transitions in the life of the organization and through intentional enculturation from leadership. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the church is always in danger of "mission drift," whereby the culture unintentionally shifts into unbiblical practices. Church leaders must be intentional about shaping and reshaping the church organizational culture to fulfill biblical norms for the church. Intentionally shaping organizational culture "is less like laying fresh sod for manicured lawns and more like cultivating the soil for maximum growth."[95] Pastors and church leaders should care about shaping their church's culture because they desire the church to achieve maximum growth.

The way church leaders shape culture may mirror the methods present in the literature base in some ways and may depart from those methods in other ways. As will be discovered, some of the principles in the literature base may be present in the biblical material itself in certain cases, though the text will be surveyed in such a way that no theory or model is imposed onto the text. The survey of Luke-Acts will demonstrate what organizational culture creation looked like in the early church.

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[95]D. Michael Lindsay, *View From The Top: An Inside Look at How People in Power See and Shape the World* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014), 70. Lindsay adds that shaping an organization's culture is "an investment in future prosperity."

Methodology

There are two possible methodological approaches to this research project: deductive and inductive surveys. The *deductive* approach to the text would require the interpreter to take a contemporary model of organizational culture creation and survey the text of Scripture to see if and in what ways that model might be present in the text. Deduction begins with an idea and then seeks to identify the presence of that idea in the text.[96] One might take Kotter's model of organizational change and seek to find specific examples in Luke-Acts where Jesus or early church leaders followed Kotter's process. This method doubtfully would lead to helpful information (other than perhaps to justify one of the contemporary approaches). It is further unlikely that modern approaches such as Kotter's would in fact be present in the text intact, though certain elements of modern models might be identifiable.

There are two problems with a deductive methodology. First, it has the danger of being eisegetical. Imposing an "alien" framework or model onto the text can do harm to an appropriation of the authorial intent of the text. The primary goal in interpreting Scripture is "to achieve a credible and coherent understanding of the text on its own terms and in its own context."[97] To the degree possible, the interpreter needs to limit the influence of his own presuppositions so that the text is not interpreted in a light for which it was not intended.[98]

The second problem with the deductive method is that it can be anachronistic. Jesus and early church leaders could not have employed Kotter's model of change, for

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[96]Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 126.

[97]Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 10.

[98]Rudolf Bultmann famously argued that exegesis without presuppositions is impossible. However, a sound exegetical method minimizes the negative effects of modern presuppositions. See Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith: Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*, trans. Schubert Ogden (New York: Meridian, 1960), 342-51.

instance, because Kotter's model was not developed until centuries after Luke-Acts was written. Therefore, to approach the text deductively would be reading a modern framework onto the ancient text.[99] The current research question is not if Jesus used a contemporary model. The current research question aims to discover through what means Jesus did create culture.

The *inductive* approach to the text requires the interpreter to survey the text on its own terms to discover the unique ways that Jesus and early church leaders created culture among the nascent Christian church. Induction begins by examining the contents of the text to discover the ideas present in the text itself.[100] This methodology is more consistent with sound hermeneutical principles because it protects the interpreter from "reading into" the text.[101] The basic difference between the two methodologies is that one (deduction) asks the question, "Did Jesus and the early church leaders employ *A, B*, or *C* model to create organizational culture?" and the other (induction) asks the question, "What model or means *did* Jesus and the early church leaders employ to create organizational culture?"

This inductive methodology will be informed by the existing literature in organizational culture studies but the aim of this project is to inductively approach the text itself to see how Jesus and the early church embedded culture. Even in approaching the text this way, care needs to be exercised so that the authorial intent of the text is recognized. Was the purpose of Luke-Acts to demonstrate organizational culture creation methods? It would be hard to prove that it was. If that was not the purpose of the text,

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[99]This anachronistic approach has been noted in relation to word studies. *Semantic anachronism* is "the reading of a later use of a word back into earlier literature." Andreas J. Kostenberger and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011), 633. See also D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 56.

[100]Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126.

[101]Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 25.

then the text must be approached in such a way that legitimate observations might be made about the text while at the same time not harming the intent of the text. Contemporary organizational culture models may be referenced throughout this thesis project in order to compare and contrast what is discovered in Luke-Acts with the existing literature, but to the degree that it is possible (recognizing that interpretation without presupposition is impossible), the text will be approached on its own terms to discover how Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped culture in nascent Christianity.

So how will the inductive method be applied? This project will survey Luke-Acts to discover if, how, and to what effect Jesus and early church leaders attempted to shape the behavior, values, and beliefs of the early church.[102] Several interpretive principles will be observed. In the Gospel of Luke, there are five important principles to note. First, certain initial questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) will be applied to the text.[103] Second, "interpretive instructions from the author himself" will be identified if they are present.[104] Third, repetition in the narrative will be noted, as this usually identifies central themes or keys to the meaning of the text.[105] Fourth, the shifts in the narrative from story to teaching discourse will be observed carefully.[106] Fifth, attention will be given to understanding series of stories, with a special view to

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[102]Behavior, values, and beliefs compose the make-up of a church's culture. Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead*, 20.

[103]J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 241.

[104]Ibid., 242. Duvall and Hays write, "Often a Gospel writer will help readers see his point by offering clues in the story's introduction." For instance, the information Luke offers about Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees in Luke 15:1-2 is instrumental for understanding the stories of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son in Luke 15:3-32.

[105]Ibid., 243.

[106]Ibid., 244.

understanding the point the author was making by arranging the stories the way he did.[107]

In the book of Acts, the following interpretive principles will be employed. First, the research will seek Luke's purpose for writing to his original readers.[108] Second, special attention will be given to the positive and negative patterns of the characters in the story.[109] The text portrays the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) in quite different lights. When considering culture, these differences are important to note. Third, individual passages will be read "in light of the overall story of Acts and the rest of the New Testament."[110] This will guard against taking a mere description in the text as prescriptive for the modern church. Fourth, repeated patterns and themes will be identified.[111] For instance, the Holy Spirit plays a central role in directing the work and culture of the early church (e.g., Acts 1:8, 2:4, 13:2, 16:7).

Relevant portions of Luke-Acts will be analyzed section by section, with a chapter devoted to each book. As the text is surveyed, particular attention will be paid to the ways in which Jesus and early church leaders shaped the behaviors, values, or beliefs of the disciples, as well as the extent to which those methodologies were effective. The hermeneutical principles outlined above will be taken into consideration as observations are made about organizational culture in the church.

Background Issues for Luke-Acts

The significance of this thesis is that it fills the void in the literature on organizational culture by exploring the biblical text to identify if, how, and to what extent

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[107]Ibid., 244-46.

[108]Ibid., 264.

[109]Ibid.

[110]Ibid., 265.

[111]Ibid., 267.

organizational culture was shaped intentionally. Before commencing with the research into Luke-Acts, several background issues need to be addressed. The authorship, provenance, date, genre, and structure of the books will be briefly identified.

Authorship, Provenance, and Date

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are connected by virtue of common authorship. In fact, Luke and Acts comprise a two-volume work.[112] The common authorship of Luke-Acts is the scholarly consensus, based on common prologues (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-3), language, style, and theology.[113] Although the author is not explicitly named in either book, both internal and external evidences point to Luke as the author of both Luke and Acts. Luke was a doctor and a "dearly loved" friend of the Apostle Paul's (Colossians 4:14). Internally, both the use of medical language in Luke-Acts[114] and the description of the author as a companion of Paul[115] are evidences that Luke was the author. Externally, several of the Early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, ascribe Luke as the author.[116]

The provenance of Luke is disputed. Although "there is not sufficient evidence to link the gospel definitely with any particular area," traditional views include Achaia

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[112]I. Howard Marshall, *The Book of Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 18-19.

[113]D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 203.

[114]For more on this, reference Adolf von Harnack, *Luke the Physician* (New York: Putnam, 1907).

[115]Note the use of the first-person plural "we" in the latter half of the book of Acts, such as in Acts 16:11.

[116]Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 205. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, in vol. 1 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 414. Additionally, Justin Martyr notes the apostolic authority of Luke. See Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 250-51.

and Rome as the place of composition.[117] The geographical origin of Acts is also disputed and ultimately unknown, although some have suggested Antioch, Rome, or Ephesus.[118] The intended recipient was Theophilus, whose identity and location is unknown, though is has been suggested that he had a background in Judaism and the synagogue.[119] Beyond Theophilus, "it is almost certain that Luke had a broader audience than one individual in mind."[120] Because Luke used a Greek rhetorical style and did not assume his audience was familiar with Jewish customs, it is likely that the audience was Hellenistic.[121]

There are a range of views regarding the dating of Luke and Acts. The most widely accepted date for the composition of Luke is between AD 75-90.[122] Most scholars date Acts between AD 80-95.[123] Yet, internal evidence suggests an earlier date for both books, since there is no reference to the Neroan persecution in either book and it is assumed that Judaism is still legal, a reality that would not have been the case after the Jewish rebellion in AD 66.[124]

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[117]Ibid., 207.

[118]Marshall, *Acts*, 48-49.

[119]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 27-28.

[120]Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 301.

[121]Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 64-65.

[122]David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 33. See also Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 16. Carson and Moo suggest that Luke could have been written as early as the mid-late 60s. See Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 210. Morris concludes that a dating in the early 60s is most likely. See Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 28.

[123]Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 297. Carson and Moo disagree with the scholarly consensus and date Acts in the mid-60s. Bruce agrees, arguing that since there is no mention of the Neroan persecution, the book must have been authored before AD 64. See F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 12-14.

[124]Ibid., 300.

Genre, Purpose, and Structure

Both Luke and Acts can be described formally as *narrative*, though Duvall and Hays more specifically categorize Luke as "theological biography" and Acts as "theological history."[125] Luke "tells the 'story' of his protagonist Jesus Christ."[126] Acts is a sequel to Luke and intends to show how "what Jesus began to do during his ministry on earth he now continues to do through his Spirit-empowered followers."[127]

The purpose of Luke's Gospel was "to give an historical account which would form the basis for a sound Christian faith on the part of those who had already been instructed, perhaps imperfectly and incompletely, in the story of Jesus."[128] Luke wrote to Theophilus, "so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:4). The purpose of Acts was to tell "the compelling story of the establishment of the first churches throughout the [Roman] empire."[129] Luke wrote his second volume to Theophilus to describe how what God had begun in Jesus would continue in the church. Acts also serves to connect the Gospels and the Epistles.[130] The purpose of Luke-Acts, as a two-volume work, was to tell the story of Jesus and the early church.

Luke employs a geographical structure for both Luke and Acts. There are three major sections in Luke: (1) An Introduction (1:1-4:13); (2) Jesus' Galilean Ministry

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[125]Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 257.

[126]Michael Travers, "Luke," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 400.

[127]Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 257.

[128]I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 40.

[129]Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 230.

[130]Steve Walton, "Acts," in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 80.

(4:14-9:50); and (3) Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem and His Passion (9:51-24:53).[131] There are four major sections in Acts: (1) Beginnings in Jerusalem (1:1-26); (2) Mission in Jerusalem (2:1-8:3); (3) Mission in Judea, Samaria, and the Surrounding Regions (8:4-12:25); and (4) Mission to the Ends of the Earth (13:1-28:31).[132]

In the next two chapters, Luke-Acts will be surveyed to discover if, how, and to what effect Jesus and early church leaders intentionally embedded culture among the organized church. This survey will be informed by the existing literature on organizational culture, but will approach the text on its own terms to develop a biblical model for organizational culture creation based on Jesus and the early church. This will fill a void in the current literature on organizational culture by constructing a biblical basis for intentionally shaping organizational culture within the church.

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[131]Kostenberger and Patterson, *An Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 403-4.

[132]Burge, Cohick, and Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity*, 233.

CHAPTER 3

SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE IN LUKE

One question every Christian leader should consider seriously is whether or not

it is in keeping with a biblical worldview to shape the organizational culture of the

church. Organizational culture creation has been described as manipulative.[1] As a

manipulative endeavor, organizational culture creation could be detrimental to the

purpose and nature of the church. If, however, a precedent can be found in the New

Testament for intentional culture creation, the modern Christian leader would be justified

in such an approach. Although it is generally assumed that Jesus intentionally shaped the

culture of his followers, what remains to be demonstrated is exactly what means Jesus

used to do so.[2] This chapter will argue that Jesus used meals as a primary means of

intentionally shaping the culture (behavior, values, and beliefs) of his disciples and

others, such as the Pharisees.[3]

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are many methods of shaping

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[1]Schein says, "Culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders." Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 3.

[2]An exception to this void in the literature is Andy Crouch's acknowledgement that Jesus intentionally created culture. In fact, Crouch recognizes, as is acknowledged in the present research, that Jesus used teaching and meals to create culture. This is a startling insight that corroborates the conclusions of the current research. However, while Crouch mentions this in general, he does not thoroughly examine the teaching or meals of Jesus to see in detail how Jesus uses these means to shape culture. See Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 137-38. The current chapter will examine the Lukan meals in detail, thereby filling the void.

[3]One might legitimately ask whether Jesus was trying to shape the culture of his disciples or that of the Pharisees. The answer seems to be, "yes." Luke weaves both the disciples and the Pharisees seamlessly into Jesus' instruction and activity in the Gospel. For instance, in Luke 17:20, Jesus was asked a question by the Pharisees. After giving a brief answer to the Pharisees, Jesus spoke to the disciples (who were already present) in vv. 22-37. When Jesus addressed the Pharisees, he was shaping the cultural norms of his followers. When he spoke to his followers, he was challenging the cultural norms of the Pharisees.

an organization's culture. Many of these methodologies can be identified in the actions of Jesus in Luke's Gospel. For instance, Kotter identifies the first step in changing an organization's culture as increasing a sense of urgency in the organization.[4] In the eschatological discourse in Luke 17:20-18:8, the Pharisees asked Jesus about the timing of the kingdom's arrival. In response, Jesus invoked the stories of Noah and Lot to describe the coming judgment and the people's need to be ready (Luke 17:26-36). He described the reality of God's imminent judgment to increase a sense of urgency among those who heard Him to repent and be ready for the Day of the Lord.

Another methodology of shaping an organization's culture is "deliberate teaching and coaching."[5] Jesus' teaching discourses are prominent in Luke, as they are in each of the synoptic Gospels. In fact, no less than ten major teaching discourses are found in Luke.[6] These range from teaching opportunities in the synagogue (such as Luke 4:15-30 and Luke 13:10-17) to teaching large gathered crowds (such as in Luke 6:17-49 and Luke 12:1-59). Sometimes Jesus taught the disciples in private (Luke 11:1-13). At other times, Jesus taught people in very public settings, such as in the temple complex (Luke 20:1-21:38). Jesus instructed (Luke 11:1-4), confronted (Luke 11:39-54), and set expectations (Luke 14:25-35). The methodology of teaching is an effective strategy for shaping organizational culture. Jesus clearly employed this methodology.[7]

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[4]John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 15.

[5]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 236.

[6]The ten major discourses are as follows: Luke 4:15-30 (teaching in the synagogue); Luke 5:17-26 (Jesus teaches, forgives and heals a paralytic, and confronts the Pharisees); Luke 6:17-49 (the "Sermon on the Plain"); Luke 8:4-18 (teaching the crowds with parables); Luke 11:1-36 (instructing the disciples privately and responding to challenges from the crowd after driving out a demon); Luke 12:1-59 (teaching disciples and a crowd of "many thousands"); Luke 13:10-17 (teaching and healing in the synagogue); Luke 14:25-35 (teaching a crowd traveling with Jesus); Luke 17:20-18:8 (teaching about the arrival of the kingdom of God); Luke 20:1-21:38 (teaching in the temple complex).

[7]For several helpful articles on how Scripture is utilized in teaching in Luke-Acts, see Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001).

These examples notwithstanding, there is a more salient feature of Jesus' life and ministry portrayed in Luke's Gospel. After broadly surveying the text of Luke, the research showed that the theme of meals features prominently and uniquely in Luke's account of Jesus' life. Therefore, this chapter will focus on Jesus' participation in meals as the primary means of challenging and shaping the behavior, values, and beliefs of those around him.[8]

Meals as a Motif in Luke

A motif can be defined as "a theological idea or theme which permeates an author's presentation."[9] To conduct a motif study, one must "read an entire Gospel for the purpose of obtaining all possible information from it relative to a given motif."[10] Notable scholars such as Joel Green and Alan Streett have identified the theme of meals, or "table fellowship," as a major motif in Luke's Gospel.[11] Koenig argues that "eating and drinking" is, in fact, the central motif of the Gospel.[12] Karris notes, "In Luke's Gospel,

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[8]As stated above, other means of culture creation can be identified in Jesus' ministry in Luke. However, this chapter will narrow the scope of analysis to the meal motif. This approach allows the most salient feature of the Gospel to emerge naturally through the exegesis of the text. An alternative to this approach might be to examine the role Jesus' miracles played in shaping the beliefs, values, and behavior of his followers. For example, in Luke 5:17-26 Jesus moved the behavior of the crowd from curiosity to worship by healing a paralytic. Similar results occurred in the other miracle stories. Another approach might be to examine the role confrontation played in shaping the culture of Jesus' followers, such as when he rebuked his disciples for rejecting children in Luke 18:15. However, the relative weight that is given in the text to these methodologies pales in comparison to the weight given the meal scenes. The meal motif is the most distinctive feature of Luke's Gospel. The emphasis given to this motif is unique among the other Gospels and must be regarded as a more central focus in Luke than miracles, confrontation, or other minor culture creation methodologies. Therefore, primary attention will be given to the meal scenes.

[9]Scot McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 109.

[10]Ibid.

[11]See Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 86. See also R. Alan Streett, *Subversive Meals: An Analysis of the Lord's Supper under Roman Domination during the First Century* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 131-70.

[12]John Koenig, *The Feast of the World's Redemption: Eucharistic Origins and Christian Mission* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000), 181. Karris concurs, noting, "The theme of food occurs in every chapter of Luke's Gospel." See Robert J. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian* (New York: Paulist, 1985), 5-6. Blomberg holds an alternate view. He argues how "it would be difficult to argue that Jesus' table fellowship with sinners formed the central theme in his Gospel . . . . Nevertheless, it clearly plays a

Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal."[13] Streett notes the unique role meals play in Luke's Gospel vis-à-vis the fact that "other Gospel writers position the same teachings in different social contexts."[14] This demonstrates the weight Luke placed on meals as an integral part of Jesus' ministry. In fact, the meal scenes unveil many of the central theological themes in Luke's Gospel.[15] This chapter will analyze the theme of meals in Luke to discover how Jesus intentionally shaped the culture of his followers.

In Luke, "the meals themselves are integral to the unfolding gospel narrative. Indeed, the meals function as transformative encounters, embodying the challenge and opportunity of Jesus' proclamation for those who are present."[16] Many of these transformative encounters occurred upon hearing Jesus teach after the meal was finished. Jesus' meal patterns followed the common Roman *symposium*, which included a meal and followed with a period of extended discussion.[17] The context of eating was transformative for those surrounding Jesus. Notably, Jesus always shared meals with others – he never ate alone in the Gospel – and it was in the communal eating that he

prominent role in his narrative." Craig Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 160.

[13]Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 14.

[14]Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 132. One example of this is Luke's account of Jesus' encounter of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke includes details of a meal with these disciples (Luke 24:30) that is not included in Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:12-13). See A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1950), 244.

[15]Dennis E. Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 4 (1987): 638.

[16]Kylie Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee: Challenge at Simon's Table in Luke 7:36-50," *Pacifica* 24, no. 3 (2011): 249.

[17]E. Springs Steele, "Luke 11:37-54—A Modified Hellenistic Symposium?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 3 (September 1984): 380. See also Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, & Mission around the Table* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 38.

shaped how people behaved and believed.[18] About the transformative nature of the Lukan

meals, Streett observes,

> In Luke, meals are occasion when Jesus breaks down ethnic and sectarian
> boundaries, and calls for a more inclusive table fellowship, one which reflects God's
> social vision for his kingdom. Luke likely includes these discussions to address
> similar social and political struggles facing his Christian community as it comes
> together for table fellowship.[19]

Jesus used table fellowship to disrupt the "socio-religious sensibilities" of

those who observed the meals.[20] Interestingly, Jesus is normally the guest of others and

therefore the recipient of hospitality, rather than the host. However, Jesus "'spins the

table;' he turns his hosts into guests so that they might receive his hospitality."[21] It was in

the role of host that Jesus shaped the behavior, values, and beliefs of those around the

table.

In itself, the variety of the guests around the table would have challenged

cultural norms. The nature of Lukan meals is that they were inclusive. In fact, the

Pharisees complained that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, those who would

have occupied the margins of Jewish society (Luke 15:1-2). To eat with someone in the

ancient world was "tantamount to extending to them intimacy, solidarity, acceptance;

table companions were treated as though they were of one's extended family."[22] That

Jesus would identify himself so closely with tax collectors such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-

10), for example, deeply troubled the Pharisees. It is in that context that Jesus re-oriented

the cultural expectations of those who were upset with his table companions. N. T.

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[18]Robert L. Kelley, Jr., "Meals with Jesus in Luke's Gospel," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 17 no. 2 (1995): 124.

[19]Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 132-33.

[20]Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 87.

[21]Martin William Mittelstadt, "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: A Theology of Hospitality in Luke-Acts," *Word & World* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 136.

[22]Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 87.

Wright states,

> He ate with "sinners," and kept company with people normally on or beyond the borders of respectable society – which of course in his day and culture, meant not merely social respectability but religious uprightness, proper covenant behavior, loyalty to the traditions and hence to the aspirations of Israel.[23]

It is important to be aware of the socio-cultural context of Luke's original audience. It is possible that Luke's audience would have first read the Gospel around a banquet table, with people of different genders (male/female), ethnic backgrounds (Jew/Gentile), economic levels (rich/poor), and cultural statuses (slave/free).[24] Jesus' ministry to the social outcasts through hospitality and meals would have verified and reinforced the experience of the early church in which there was "no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female" but simply those who were "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). The re-shaping of cultural expectations was likely to be experienced not only by people who participated in the meals described in Luke's Gospel itself but also among those who read or heard the Gospel after it was composed.

In Luke, ten meal scenes are identified, commencing with Jesus' meal with Levi (Luke 5:29-39), and concluding with Jesus' meal with his disciples after the resurrection (Luke 24:13-49). One additional scene that likely included a meal is when Mary and Martha showed Jesus hospitality (Luke 10:38-42).[25] Each of these scenes will be surveyed to discover how Jesus used them to shape the culture of those around him.

Eating with Levi (Luke 5:29-39)

The first meal scene in Luke took place at the house of a tax collector named Levi, who, "leaving everything behind," followed Jesus (Luke 5:27-28). Levi's first act

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[23]N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 149.

[24]Amanda C. Miller, "Bridge Work and Seating Charts: A Study of Luke's Ethics of Wealth, Poverty, and Reversal," *Interpretation* 68, no. 4 (2014): 421.

[25]The meal in this story is implied, but is very likely. Smith notes that the term *diakonia* was used regularly to refer to table service, implying that among the tasks Martha performed was the serving of a meal. See Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," 622.

of discipleship was to host a "grand banquet" for Jesus (Luke 5:29). The guest list for the banquet included "a large crowd of tax collectors and others." When the Pharisees and scribes saw the crowd that had gathered for the banquet in Jesus' honor, they asked Jesus' disciples why Jesus would "eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 5:30).

The Pharisees' question revealed an existing cultural reality: they had an underlying belief that Jesus should not be eating with tax collectors and sinners. Participating in table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners indicated "friendship" and "full acceptance" of those at the meal.[26] Considering the Pharisees' desire to remain ceremonially pure, the prospect of dining with the crowd in Levi's house was contemptible.[27]

Tannehill notes that tax collectors were despised because of burdensome taxes, combined with the common practice by tax collectors of gouging prices so as to obtain as much money as possible from the people.[28] Tax collectors were known for extorting the people in order to accumulate wealth (Luke 3:12-13; Luke 19:8). As those in league with Rome, they would have been despised by the Jews and would have held a low social and moral standing.[29] Thus, "tax collectors and sinners" are grouped together in Luke's Gospel.[30] By eating with them, Jesus was indicating "intimacy, kinship, and unity" with them, for in the ancient world "shared meals symbolized shared lives."[31]

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[26]Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 132.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 108

[29]Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 136.

[30]Fitzmyer notes, "The juxtaposition of these two groups is noteworthy, depicting Jesus' association with segments of Palestinian Jewry often regarded as outcasts." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 591.

[31]Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary

Jesus responded to the Pharisees' query about his dinner companions by stating that the "healthy don't need a doctor, but the sick do," explaining that the purpose of his ministry was not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32). Jesus' response re-oriented their underlying belief by challenging them to consider who indeed should be at the table. While the Pharisees focused on the supposed violations of ceremonial purity in this meal, Jesus focused on those God wanted to redeem. He reshaped both their cultural assumptions and values by drawing attention to God's desire to see sinners come to repentance. He valued sinners and the Pharisees should have as well.

The next scene in the narrative introduces another question from the Pharisees. They asked why John's disciples fasted and prayed frequently and yet Jesus' disciples "eat and drink" (Luke 5:33). This question indicated that the Pharisees' might have been objecting to the fact that "these meals are celebrations, joyful parties that seem inappropriate for people who need to repent."[32] The Pharisees assumed that the appropriate posture of repentance was fasting and prayer.

Jesus challenged this assumption by comparing the meal at Levi's house to a wedding feast where fasting would be inappropriate (Luke 5:34-35). Jesus described himself as the bridegroom and the disciples as the wedding guests. The correct response to Jesus' presence is celebration. The behavioral artifacts of the celebration in this case are eating and drinking.[33] Jesus argued that eating and drinking was the right behavior because of his presence among them.

In this meal scene, then, Jesus reshaped not only the Pharisees' underlying

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 246.

[32]Tannehill, *Luke*, 108.

[33]Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 96.

assumptions and values, but also their view of the kind of behavior that should be associated with repentance. Repentance is not merely exhibited in mourning and fasting, but also in the celebration of the forgiveness that Jesus bestows. This conclusion is displayed also in the preceding story in Luke's narrative, where Jesus forgave and healed a paralytic who then "went home glorifying God" (Luke 5:25). The crowd who observed this "was astounded, and they were giving glory to God" (Luke 5:26). When God forgives someone's sins, it is right to be "filled with awe" and celebrate (Luke 5:26).

Celebration banquets should be normative for God's people. In fact, the consummation of the kingdom of God itself is depicted as a meal where God's people "recline at the table in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29).[34] Levi and his guests were merely anticipating the coming kingdom by rehearsing the celebration that will be experienced in the eschaton.

Eating with Disciples in a Field (Luke 6:1-5)

The second meal scene immediately follows the first in the progression of Luke's narrative. The timing of the scene in relation to the previous episode is uncertain, as the only indication given in the text is that it occurred "on a Sabbath" (Luke 6:1). The Sabbath becomes the theme of the scene as the Pharisees question the lawfulness of the disciples' behavior. As the disciples passed through a field, they picked up heads of grain, rubbed them together in their hands, and ate them (Luke 6:1). This action in itself was not unusual and seemed innocent enough.[35] What was questionable about the disciples' behavior was that they were gathering grain on the Sabbath, something that

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[34]Tannehill, *Luke*, 109.

[35]It was customary for harvesters to leave grain behind for sojourners and the poor to gather for food. This is what occurred in Ruth 2:3, where Ruth "entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters." This was an act of mercy and charity on the landowners' part. Picking grain from a neighbor's field was lawful. Deut 23:25 says, "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck heads of grain with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to your neighbor's grain."

was inappropriate in the eyes of some Pharisees because they viewed it as a violation of the commandment not to work on the Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11).[36]

The question the Pharisees posed – "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" – revealed a cultural norm: they believed it was unlawful to pick grain on the Sabbath (Luke 6:2). Jesus' two-part response is instructive. The form of his question ("haven't you read?") suggests rebuke.[37] In the first part of his response, he appealed to David's example of entering the house of God to eat the sacred bread, an action he acknowledged was unlawful to do (Luke 6:3-4).[38] This clever illustration put the Pharisees on the defensive because if they condemned the actions of Jesus and those who were with him, they would also have to condemn David and those who were with him.[39] Bock notes that Jesus' appeal to David was a defense of a hierarchical ethic: "ceremonial restrictions of law are to give way to human need."[40] This point is made more clearly in Mark's Gospel when Jesus states, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). This was a new view of the law. Jesus valued the needs of man more than the obscure legal questions of the Pharisees.[41] His answer was an intentional reshaping of their values.

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[36]Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 522-23.

[37]Ibid., 524.

[38]This story is a reference to 1 Sam 21:1-9, when David entered God's house when he was fleeing from Saul and asked Ahimelech the priest to give him bread or "whatever can be found." Ahimelech gave him the bread of the Presence, but only after clarifying that it could be eaten only by men who had kept themselves from women.

[39]Marshall says, "The implication is that David had the authority to act as he did, and that Jesus has the same right, but in a higher degree, to reinterpret the law." I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 228.

[40]Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 525. See also W. L. Liefeld, *Luke*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 887.

[41]Indeed, as Arthur Just observes, "When Jesus brought the kingdom, that to which the weekly Sabbath observation pointed *arrived*, and so the Sabbath was *fulfilled*" (italics original). Arthur A. Just, Jr., *Luke 1:1-9:50*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 255.

In the second part of his response, he appealed to the Son of Man's lordship over the Sabbath (Luke 6:5). The Son of Man has eschatological and cosmic rulership (Dan 7:13-14).[42] Because the Son of Man has cosmic rule, it follows that he is also Lord (ruler, *kurios*) of the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man can pick grain on the Sabbath.

Jesus created a new cultural norm: as the supreme Son of Man, he can both eat in this manner and give to eat on the Sabbath. Jesus "has the authority to set aside the Sabbath laws for the benefit of his disciples."[43] Luke's inclusion of this story clearly posed a discontinuity with Jewish cultural norms. Amy-Jill Levine rightly notes that Luke created a dichotomy between traditional Judaism on one side of salvation history and Jesus and his followers on the other.[44] That is certainly the case in this scene. Jesus' disciples are eating in accordance with the lordship of Christ. The Pharisees stand in stark opposition at this point with the Son of Man's lordship. His corrective teaching intended to reshape their beliefs, values, and subsequent behavior.

Eating with Simon and Teaching Forgiveness
(Luke 7:36-50)

Luke's third meal scene took place in the home of a Pharisee named Simon who had invited Jesus to be his guest (Luke 7:36). While Jesus was reclining at the table of his host, an uninvited woman entered the house and assumed the role of a servant by washing his feet.[45] The manner in which she washed his feet was unusual. The woman

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[42]Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man featured prominently in his trial before the Sanhedrin. The Son of Man title entailed that he was more than mere man. This was demonstrated by the Sanhedrin's assumption that he was claiming to be the Son of God after he referred to himself as the Son of Man who "will be seated at the right hand of the Power of God" (Luke 22:66-71).

[43]David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 263.

[44]Amy-Jill Levine, "Luke and the Jewish Religion," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 68, no. 4 (2014): 392.

[45]Streett notes that it was the role of a slave, among other things, to wash the feet of the guests at a meal. See Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 16.

"brought an alabaster jar of fragrant oil and stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears" (Luke 7:37-38). After she washed them, "she wiped his feet with the hair of her head, kissing them and anointing them with the fragrant oil" (Luke 7:38). Her actions denoted humility and love.[46]

The identity of the woman is unknown. Luke described her merely as "a woman in the town who was a sinner" (Luke 7:37).[47] This description connects this scene to the previous section, where Jesus explained that he has been accused of being "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 7:34). This close linkage identified the woman as one of those who should be considered by the reader as a friend of Jesus.

Neale argues that the inclusion of this meal story is "a way to demonstrate and confirm, by means of a specific example, the ludicrousness of the complaints about Jesus' table-fellowship."[48] Indeed, Simon believed it was ludicrous that Jesus allowed the woman to touch him in the manner she did.[49] In fact, he thought to himself that Jesus must not be a legitimate prophet because otherwise he would know the kind of woman she was and reject her displays of affection (Luke 7:39).

Jesus used this occasion as an opportunity to teach Simon about forgiveness.

[46]Garland, *Luke*, 325.

[47]Though the text does not make it clear, some scholars have suggested the woman is a prostitute. For that view, see Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), 210. Nolland notes, "The dramatic impact of the woman's actions appear most strikingly if 'sinner' is understood as a euphemism for 'prostitute' or 'courtesan.'" John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 353.

[48]David A. Neale, *None but the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 140.

[49]Some scholars have suggested that the woman's actions were immodest and possibly even erotic. See Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 142. See also Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 696. Alternatively, her actions, including the unbinding of her hair, may have been an expression of religious devotion, contrition, or even grief. See Charles H. Cosgrove, "A Woman's Unbound Hair in the Greco-Roman World, With Special Reference to the Story of the 'Sinful Woman' in Luke 7:36-50," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 691-92.

Special attention is drawn to the teaching discourse by the inclusion of Jesus' statement to Simon that he wanted to say something to him, and Simon's recognition that Jesus is "Teacher" (Luke 7:40). Jesus began his lesson with an illustration about a creditor who "graciously forgave" a man who owed 500 denarii and another man who owed 50 denarii. He asked Simon which of the men would love the creditor more. Simon responded correctly that the one who was forgiven the higher amount (Luke 7:41-43). Jesus then asked Simon if he saw the woman present at the table (Luke 7:44). This rhetorical question was intended to draw Simon's attention to her. Garland remarks, "Of course, he sees her; but he does not see her as Jesus sees her."[50]

Jesus then made three contrasts between Simon and the woman.[51] First, he said that while Simon did not give him water for his feet, the woman washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:44). Second, he said that while Simon did not give him a kiss, the woman had not stopped kissing him since he arrived (Luke 7:45). Third, while Simon did not anoint Jesus' head with olive oil, the woman anointed his feet with fragrant oil (Luke 7:46).[52] These contrasts could be seen as a rebuke of Simon. Compared to the woman, his hospitality looked "decidedly cool."[53] Yet, Jesus was simply trying to get Simon to see the woman in a different light. He drew the connection between the woman and the debtors in his illustration and concluded, "her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much" (Luke 7:47). Then, turning to the woman, he told her that her sins were forgiven. This demonstrated that Jesus was not just

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[50]Garland, *Luke*, 328.

[51]Chester cleverly frames the situation: "[Simon] is *the host who's not really a host* . . . the woman is *the host who's not even a guest*." Chester, *A Meal with Jesus*, 42. Italics original.

[52]Anointing the head with oil would have been customary for giving a blessing, such as in the case of Samuel's blessing of David as the future king of Israel. See 1 Sam 16:2-13. Anointing with oil also would be used in connection to healing and prayer. See Jas 5:14.

[53]Tannehill, *Luke*, 136.

teaching Simon a lesson but he was concerned genuinely with the woman herself.[54]

While the text does not give us Simon's response to Jesus' teaching, the other guests wondered who it was that could forgive sins (Luke 7:49). Luke does not give an explicit answer, but the story concludes with Jesus telling the woman that her faith has saved her and sending her away with a blessing (Luke 7:50). This declaration of her salvation was an implicit answer to the guests' question: Jesus is one who can forgive sins.[55]

This story is significant because it teaches that even a sinful woman can be forgiven and welcomed to a meal if she has faith. It further teaches that Simon's evaluation of the woman was incorrect. His inhospitable behavior both toward to Jesus and the woman demonstrated his faulty value system. The woman rightly valued Jesus, and her behavior stands in contrast to Simon's. Jesus' positive response to her inculcated the table guests with a new cultural norm: those who love Jesus must love those Jesus loves.

Jesus is a friend of sinners. He did not come for those who deserved forgiveness the most but for those who did not deserve it at all. As Bock states, "the actions of a silent, sinful woman speak a thousand words."[56] She loved much because she had been forgiven much. Her encounter with Jesus likely would change her future behavior. Jesus' lesson for Simon hopefully would change his future behavior. His teaching clearly was intended to reshape the values of the dinner guests and their underlying assumptions concerning the woman's place at the table and in the *koinonia*. The inclusion of this story is confrontational: just as Simon and the other dinners guests are at a point of decision regarding Jesus' teaching, Luke's readers must decide for

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[54]Ibid., 137.

[55]Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 708.

[56]Ibid.

themselves if they will accept the new cultural norm where outsiders are invited inside.[57]

The Feeding of 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17)

Even though the fourth meal scene in Luke is one of the most familiar stories in Scripture, the cultural implications of Jesus' feeding five thousand people cannot be overstated. In fact, excluding the resurrection, it is the only miracle that is included in all four Gospels.[58] Luke's placement of this episode within the narrative structure is unique and has significant implications for this thesis.

Although the feeding does not follow the typical banquet pattern seen in the other meal scenes in Luke, it is nonetheless a significant meal. In this story, Jesus was not invited to someone's home. Rather, he fulfilled the role of the host. After Jesus quietly withdrew with his disciples to Bethsaida, crowds discovered where he was and followed him. Jesus "welcomed them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and cured those who needed healing" (Luke 9:10-11). What followed was a fulfillment of the Isaianic eschatological banquet wherein the Lord promised to "prepare a feast for all the peoples on this mountain" (Isa 25:6-10).

The crowds in Bethsaida grew hungry. Jesus' disciples urged him to send the crowds away to find their own food. However, Jesus instructed his disciples to feed the crowd (Luke 9:12-14). The miracle took place when Jesus took five loaves and two fish and multiplied them to feed the crowd, which included five thousand men, and likely included women and children beside (Luke 9:15-16). Not only did Jesus provide enough food for those who were present, but there were twelve baskets left over (Luke 9:17).[59] In

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[57]Crabbe, "A Sinner and a Pharisee," 264.

[58]Wilson C. K. Poon, "Superabundant Table Fellowship in the Kingdom: The Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Meal Motif in Luke," *The Expository Times* 114, no. 7 (April 2003): 224.

[59]Bovon rightly notes regarding v. 17, "Anyone who has never experienced hunger will have difficulty understanding . . . the joy of satiety. Eating in those times meant to experience continued life, joy in the meal, and fellowship." Francois Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 357.

a sociological context in which the majority of people lived at subsistence level, this miracle was an act of compassion.[60]

As significant as the miracle of feeding five thousand is in itself, just as significant for Luke's purpose is the function of the story in the flow of the narrative. Luke interpolates the feeding story between two stories that center on the question of Jesus' identity, utilizing an A-B-A' pattern.[61] In the preceding story, Herod heard that some people thought Jesus was actually a resurrected John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the other prophets who had been raised from the dead. The story ends as Herod asked about who Jesus was (Luke 9:9). In the subsequent story, Jesus asked his disciples who the crowds said that he was. Paralleling the Herod story, they answered that some said he was John the Baptist, some said Elijah, and some said one of the prophets. He then asked who the disciples said he was. Peter, speaking for the group, correctly answered that Jesus was the Messiah (Luke 9:20).

By sandwiching the feeding miracle between the two other stories, Luke is answering the question, "Who is this?"[62] Jesus is God's Messiah, the Messianic figure who provided the meal promised in Isaiah 25.[63] Jesus is the Anointed One who feeds the people and provides for their needs.[64] In this meal scene, Jesus was not so much shaping

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[60]Scholars estimate that between 75-97 percent lived at or below subsistence level. See Miller, "Bridge Work and Seating Charts," 419. See also Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 52-53.

[61]Garland states that because the feeding miracle is sandwiched between the stories about Jesus' identity, "it becomes a key event for penetrating the nature of Jesus' identity." Garland, *Luke*, 373.

[62]Tannehill notes that the way Luke frames the feeding story depicts his understanding of the important role the meal played in Peter's subsequent confession of Jesus as the Messiah. See Tannehill, *Luke*, 156.

[63]Luke's clever juxtaposition of the feeding miracle in between the questions about Jesus' identity is an example of his "narrative theology." Luke commonly used narrative, as opposed to explicit theological propositions, to communicate theological truth. See Michael Travers, "Luke," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 400.

[64]This fact is affirmed in the subsequent section (Luke 9:28-36). During the Transfiguration, a

the people's behavior or values, as their basic underlying assumptions, those "unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values" that "determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling."[65] He was doing nothing less than revealing his true identity to his followers so that they would believe in him.[66] It was that belief that would guide the disciples' subsequent behavior of denying themselves, taking up their crosses, and following Jesus (Luke 9:23-27). The feeding miracle, therefore, played a central role in shaping the organizational culture of the disciples, for it reinforced their belief about who Jesus was and laid the foundation for their subsequent behavior in denying themselves and following him.

The Hospitality of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)

There is some question as to whether or not the scene in Mary and Martha's home included a meal, since the text does not explicitly mention it. However, due to the common association of the word "serve" (*diakonia*, Luke 10:40) with table service, the preparation of and participation in a meal is likely in view here.[67] The story is "built around a contrast."[68] The actions of Martha and Mary are set in opposition to one another; Martha was "distracted by her many tasks" while Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to what He said" (Luke 10:39-40). Godet notes,

> The two sisters have often been regarded as representing two equally legitimate aspects of the Christian life, inward devotion and practical activity. But Martha does not in the least represent external activity, such as Jesus approves. Her very

voice spoke from a cloud saying, "This is My Son, the Chosen One; listen to Him" (Luke 9:35).

[65]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 24.

[66]Marshall observes that while Jesus' concern for the crowds is obvious, "the miracle is one that is meant for the eyes of the disciples." Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 357.

[67]Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," 622. Evans suggests Martha may have been preparing an "elaborate meal." Evans, *Luke*, 210.

[68]Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1037.

distraction proves that the motive of her work is not pure, and that her self-importance as hostess has a larger share in it than it ought.[69]

Jesus concluded that Mary's choice to concern herself with "one thing" was superior to Martha's choice to be "worried and upset about many things," calling it the "right choice" (Luke 10:41-42). Indeed, "it is Mary's focused attention on the word of Jesus that becomes the pivot point around which the story revolves."[70] Her decision to listen to what Jesus said was in keeping with Jesus' concern that those who call him "Lord," should also do the things he said (Luke 6:46). Jesus reshaped Martha's priorities so that she would heed the importance of sitting at his feet and "listening to what He said" (Luke 10:39).

The story about Martha and Mary follows the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke's narrative. Luke included the story of Martha and Mary at this point in his narrative in order to teach the importance of listening to the words of Jesus given in the previous scene.[71] In the previous scene, Jesus had instructed an "expert in the law" that if one would inherit eternal life, he must love God and love neighbor (Luke 10:25-28). The expert in the law, "wanting to justify himself," asked Jesus who his neighbor was (Luke 10:29). Jesus responded with the story of the Good Samaritan, who reached across ethnic boundaries to show mercy to a man who had been robbed, beaten up, and left for dead (Luke 10:30-37). The Samaritan was the hero of the story. He showed compassion to a stranger. Jesus then instructed the expert in the law, "Go and do the same" (Luke 10:37).

Jesus' instruction was clear: those who follow him must love their neighbors, regardless of who they are or the level of sacrifice it takes to demonstrate love. Luke juxtaposed the story of Martha and Mary with the Good Samaritan to draw a simple point: disciples should listen to (and obey) the words of Jesus (in this case, the word

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[69]Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on Luke* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981), 311.

[70]Holly E. Hearon, "Luke 10:38-42," *Interpretation* 58, no. 4 (2004): 394.

[71]John J. Kilgallen, "Martha and Mary: Why at Luke 10:38-42?" *Biblica* 84, no. 4 (2003): 554. See also Garland, *Luke*, 451.

about loving one's neighbor).[72] This is highly significant for understanding the way in which Jesus shaped the cultural expectations of his disciples. He shaped their behavior by teaching them to love their neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). He shaped their values by teaching them to value his words (Luke 10:38-42).[73] To be a disciple of Jesus is to value his words (like Mary) and behave in a way that is consistent with those words – in this case, loving one's neighbor.[74]

Eating with a Pharisee and Denouncing Hypocrisy
(Luke 11:37-54)

The sixth meal scene occurred at the home of an unnamed Pharisee who invited Jesus to dine with him. As Jesus sat down to recline at the table, the Pharisee noticed that Jesus did not undergo the ritual washing that was ordinarily performed before eating (Luke 11:38).[75] Responding to the Pharisee's astonishment, Jesus began to denounce the Pharisees and the scribes through a series of six "woes," three specifically addressed to the Pharisees and three specifically addressed to the scribes.

The first indictment of the Pharisees addressed the hypocrisy of ritual cleansing on the outside if the inside was not also clean. Jesus noted that although the Pharisees were diligent about cleaning the outside of their dishes, inside they were "full of greed and evil" (Luke 11:39). This was evidenced by the fact that they had neglected

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[72]Noting the comparison of the two stories, Craddock writes, "Jesus has just met a man skilled in Scripture who has trouble hearing the word of God, and Jesus offers him an example, a Samaritan. Now Jesus visits with a woman so busy serving, she does not hear the word, and Jesus offers her an example, her sister." Fred Craddock, *Luke*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 151-52.

[73]Robert Stein notes that the centrality of the "word" theme is evident because the term is used of divine proclamation over forty times in Luke-Acts. Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 322.

[74]As Green notes, hearing the words of Jesus and obeying them are integral components to repentance and discipleship. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 108.

[75]Green observes that in that culture, to overlook handwashing before a meal "was to mark oneself as an outsider in this community. In light of the laws of hospitality, failure to wash in this scene also constituted an insult to the host." Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 470.

the poor, which Jesus called bypassing "justice and love for God" (Luke 11:42). The second indictment relates to the first. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for choosing the front seat in the synagogues and loving greetings in the marketplaces (Luke 11:43).[76] While neglecting others, they enjoyed the privileges associated with their position. Jesus' estimation of the Pharisees is detailed in the third indictment, wherein Jesus said the Pharisees are like "unmarked graves" that people walk over without even knowing it (Luke 11:44). This association with the dead would have entailed ceremonial uncleanness.[77] Jesus made clear that it was not he who was unclean, but the Pharisees.

At this point in Jesus' speech, an "expert in the law" interjected by noting that in Jesus' indictment of the Pharisees, "You insult us too" (Luke 11:45). Turning to the man, Jesus leveled his first indictment at the scribes. They loaded people with "burdens that are hard to carry," and yet would not carry the burdens themselves (Luke 11:46). This referred to the fact that the scribes, in their attempt to ensure the people's conformity to the law, "embellished its specifications," all while being unwilling to observe the requirements they dictated to others.[78] This revealed that the scribes participated in the same kind of hypocrisy as the Pharisees.

The second indictment of the scribes contained irony. Jesus acknowledged that they had built monuments (or "tombs") for the prophets (Luke 11:47). This may have seemed on the surface as a way of honoring the prophets, but Jesus clearly meant that the scribes were responsible for the deaths of the prophets.[79] He made this point explicitly by

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[76]Fitzmyer notes that the front seat in the synagogue was the place of honor and that the greetings in the marketplace were "greetings of respect." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1985), 949.

[77]John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 666.

[78]Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 474.

[79]Arthur Just writes, "The lawyers realize how damaging the voice of the prophets is to their interpretation of the Torah, and so they join their fathers in *keeping the prophets dead*" (italics original). Arthur A Just, Jr., *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House,

acknowledging that the prophets had been killed and persecuted (Luke 11:49). He concluded, "Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible" (Luke 11:51).

Jesus' third and final indictment of the scribes condemned them not only for failing to enter the house of wisdom, but also for hindering others who sought to go in (Luke 11:52). In their hypocritical actions, the scribes chose the path of foolishness. For those who were supposed experts in the law, this last blow was withering. The Pharisees and scribes responded to Jesus' words by opposing him and "lying in wait for Him to trap Him in something He said" (Luke 11:53-54).

Contextually, Luke placed this story immediately following Jesus' teaching about the pervasive nature of darkness (Luke 11:33-36). Jesus said, "When your eye is good, your whole body is also full of light. But when it is bad, your body is also full of darkness" (Luke 11:34). He urged those who listened to make sure that the "whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness" (Luke 11:36). Jesus argued for true purity, not just purity on the outside. If someone is to be light, he must not have darkness inside. This was a condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes, who were not the light they should be because they had darkness remaining inside of them. The hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes described in Luke 11:37-54 is an example of the "darkness" discouraged in Luke 11:33-36.[80]

Jesus used the opportunity of the meal to shape intentionally the behavior of the Pharisees and the scribes. Bock notes that this passage "details how the hostility to Jesus arose and why the division between the old leadership and the new way exists."[81] Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the religious leaders' actions. In doing so, not only did

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1997), 492.

[80]Garland, *Luke*, 476. See also Nolland, who writes, "The Pharisees and the lawyers are blind to the light, precisely because their own lives are morally and religiously compromised." Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, 663.

[81]Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1126.

he influence the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes but also the future behavior of his disciples, and further, the behavior of those who read Luke's Gospel. Hypocrisy is an unacceptable behavior for those who follow Jesus. Jesus set new cultural norms and expectations both for religious leaders and for those who would be his disciples.

Eating with a Pharisee on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1-24)

The seventh meal scene in Luke is the third and final meal that took place in the home of a Pharisee. Jesus was invited on a Sabbath to eat at the home of "one of the leading Pharisees," along with several other scribes and Pharisees, who were "watching Him closely" (Luke 14:1). Following the "woes" Jesus leveled at them in the previous meal scene, the Pharisees and scribes looked for an opportunity to trap him either in his actions or words.[82] Two incidents at the table gave them the opportunity they sought: first, his healing of a man with dropsy ("a man whose body was swollen with fluid, Luke 14:2-6), and second, his teaching about humility and status (Luke 14:7-24).

In the first incident, Jesus posed a difficult question for the Pharisees and scribes. He asked them if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath, reintroducing the controversial question about Sabbath laws addressed in Luke 6:1-5. When they did not answer, he healed the man with dropsy. He then implied through a question that if any of those present had an animal or a son who fell into a well on the Sabbath, they would pull him out (Luke 14:3-5). By equating the healing of the man with the rescue of the son or animal, Jesus elevated the diseased man's status and noted the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes. They would be willing to break Sabbath regulations if it benefited them, but they were unwilling for Jesus to break Sabbath regulations to benefit someone who was a social outcast due to his disease. This revealed the inherent self-interest of the

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[82]Plummer remarks that while it is most probable that the man with dropsy ("a man whose body was swollen with fluid," v. 2) was uninvited and was merely hoping to be healed, the Pharisees may have placed him there as a trap. Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 354.

Pharisees.[83]

In the second incident, Jesus noticed how those at the table chose the best seats for themselves and responded by teaching them about humility and status in God's kingdom. Jesus told a parable about a man who was invited to a banquet, sat at the place of honor, and was embarrassed when he was asked to change seats because there was someone more important (Luke 14:8-10). He concluded the parable by instructing those around the table to "recline in the lowest place," because "the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:10-11). This signified the importance of humility and low status.

In the next section, Jesus encouraged the host of the meal not just to invite wealthy relatives or neighbors, but also those who were "poor, maimed, lame, or blind" (Luke 14:12-14), such as the man with dropsy in Luke 14:2. He concluded by telling a parable about a man who hosted a banquet and invited many people. All of the elites on the guest list made excuses for their absence at the meal (Luke 14:16-20). The man then invited the "poor, maimed, blind, and lame" to the banquet and they all came (Luke 14:21-24). This reinforced his previous teaching about humility and low status. Meals in the kingdom of God include guests who are characterized as "expendables with essentially no status and certainly lacking the means to reciprocate an invitation and increase the host's status in any way."[84]

One might legitimately ask what connection is made between the healing of the man in vs. 1-6 and Jesus' teachings on humility and status in vs. 7-24. However, these two sections are closely linked. In the ancient world, dropsy (the disease likely in view in

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[83]Garland states that the rhetorical point Jesus made is that in the same way they would care for their child in danger, "this man seized with dropsy is a child of God whose life is endangered, but they are indifferent to his plight." Garland, *Luke*, 568.

[84]Miller, "Bridge Work and Seating Charts," 422.

this healing) was commonly compared to greed.[85] Philosophers compared "dropsy's insatiable craving for more water and greed's acquisitive desire for more honor and wealth."[86] Therefore, in this scene Jesus "offers healing and transformation not only for an individual's bodily ailment, but also for the community's damaging preoccupation with the competitive pursuit of honor, status, and wealth."[87]

Jesus clearly desired to influence the behavior, values, and beliefs of those around the table. Indeed, "Jesus confronts common practice and offers a new way of thinking, changed attitudes and a new way of conduct, which embrace both present and future aspects of the kingdom of God."[88] The kingdom of God has counter-cultural values. Those who are exalted will be humbled and those who are humbled will be exalted. Meals that reflect kingdom values include those who are poor, maimed, lame, and blind. Bock notes that while Jesus had taught these lessons previously, the religious leaders had not yet learned the way of the kingdom. Therefore, this healing and the subsequent teaching discourse served as "a rebuke and a call to repentance."[89]

Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners (Luke 15:1-32)

The eighth meal scene involved two groups of people: "the tax collectors and sinners" and "the Pharisees and scribes" (Luke 15:1-2). Jesus had been teaching the crowds about the cost of following him (Luke 14:25-33). He called on everyone to "listen" to what he said (Luke 14:34-35). At the introduction of the next story, Luke notes

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[85]John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 296-97.

[86]Miller, "Bridge Work and Seating Charts," 422.

[87]Ibid. Hartsock comments that "this scene is a significant scene in the larger anti-wealth ethic of Luke; perhaps that is why no other Gospel writer includes the dropsy scene, as their purposes are not the same as Luke's purposes." Chad Hartsock, "The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape," *Biblical Interpretation* 21, no. 3 (2013): 353.

[88]Lyle Story, "One Banquet with Many Courses (Luke 14:1-24)," *Journal of Biblical & Pneumatological Research* 4 (Fall 2012): 92.

[89]Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1258.

that the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to "listen," in obedience to the instruction Jesus had given in the previous story (Luke 15:1). The Pharisees complained about this, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Jesus responded to their complaint by telling three stories: the story of the Lost Sheep, the story of the Lost Coin, and the story of the Lost Son.

All three stories have important parallels. First, something of value was lost. In the first story, a man had one hundred sheep and lost one (Luke 15:3). In the second story, a woman had ten coins and lost one (Luke 15:8). In the third story, a father had two sons and lost one (Luke 15:11-16). The value of what had been lost increases in each story (an animal, wealth, a child) while the increments of the items decrease (one hundred sheep, ten coins, two sons).[90] Second, someone searched for what had been lost.[91] The shepherd left his other sheep to find the lost one (Luke 15:4). The woman lit a lamp and searched carefully throughout the house to find the lost coin (Luke 15:8). The father saw his son from a long distance and ran to welcome him (Luke 15:20). Third, there was great rejoicing when what had been lost was found.[92] Both the shepherd and the woman called their friends and neighbors and said, "Rejoice with me" (Luke 15:6, 9), and the father hosted a feast to celebrate the return of his son (Luke 15:22-24). Jesus' conclusion was that there is "joy in heaven" over those who repent (Luke 15:7, 10).

While there are important parallels between these three stories, the third story includes an additional element that is not in the first two stories. During the banquet the father threw for his repentant younger son, his older son returned from working in the

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[90]Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 573.

[91]Bailey calls this "the burden of restoration." He says, "In this parable Jesus is defending his welcome of sinners. This welcome involves restoration to a community." Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 153-54.

[92]Giblin writes, "The dynamic theme is the invitation to share in joy over the conversion of sinners." Charles H. Giblin, "Structural and Theological Considerations on Luke 15," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (January 1962): 22.

field and complained that his father was celebrating the return of the prodigal son. While the father celebrated and rejoiced over his son, the older brother stood outside the house and refused to rejoice that his brother who was lost had been found (Luke 15:25-32).[93]

The point of these stories was that the Pharisees and scribes should rejoice in the same way that God rejoices when sinners come to repentance. In the context, the Pharisees and scribes, who refused to rejoice that tax collectors and sinners were listening to Jesus' words (like Mary in Luke 10:39), were like the prodigal's older brother who refused to rejoice when his sinful brother repented and returned home. The story was ultimately an indictment of their behavior.

The cultural impact of Jesus' stories should not be missed.[94] Rindge states, "The parable is not only a defense of Jesus' meal-sharing with the marginalized, but also an invitation to the Pharisees to join the meal."[95] He intended to reshape how people valued the outcasts, those who lived on the margins of society such as tax collectors and sinners in this meal scene and the poor and lame in the previous meal scene (Luke 14:1-24).[96] This, in turn, was intended to shape the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes from complaining to rejoicing. Those who followed Jesus learned what he valued and where they should find their joy.

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[93]Bock notes the irony of this passage: "The son who was lost and outside is now inside, while the 'inside' elder brother complains from outside." Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1317.

[94]Green observes that Luke accomplishes his theological aims through narrative. The use of stories would have had a powerful effect, inviting the Pharisees and scribes "not only to drop their concerns about Jesus but, indeed, to replicate his behavior in their own practices." Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 569.

[95]Matthew S. Rindge, "Luke's Artistic Parables: Narratives of Subversion, Imagination, and Transformation," *Interpretation* 68, no. 4 (2014): 409.

[96]Fitzmyer argued that the parables in Luke 15 actually are a continuation of the teaching in Luke 14:1-24, part of the "Lucan travel account." Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 1072.

Eating with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

The ninth meal scene in Luke represents the last meal involving controversy.[97] The location of the meal is in Jericho at the home of a chief tax collector named Zacchaeus. Jericho was introduced in the previous episode where Jesus healed a blind man outside the city gates (Luke 18:35-43). A crowd gathered in Jericho as Jesus passed through (Luke 19:1). Zacchaeus could not see him, so he climbed a tree to get a better view (Luke 19:2-4). Looking up, Jesus asked Zacchaeus to display hospitality by opening his home to him (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus "welcomed Him joyfully" (Luke 19:6). Green states, "This signifies from Jesus' point of view that he hopes, in the context of a shared meal, to forge a relationship with Zacchaeus."[98] Zacchaeus sought Jesus, but in reality Jesus was seeking him.[99]

The crowd who saw Jesus eat with Zacchaeus complained that he had "gone to lodge with a sinful man" (Luke 19:7). Culturally, there was good reason for complaint. Tax collectors were in league with the Roman government and commonly extorted the Jewish people in order to accrue personal wealth. That Luke notes that Zacchaeus is a "chief" tax collector (Luke 19:2) "implicates him more deeply in the corrupt tax system of the Roman government."[100] Zacchaeus would have been an outcast in the pattern of the woman at Simon's house (Luke 7:36-50), the man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6), and the blind man outside Jericho (Luke 18:35-43). Ladd states, "It almost seems that Luke attributes to God a sort of 'inverted partiality,' in that the gospel is particularly for the

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[97]Fitzmyer identifies this story as one of the concluding teachings in Luke's travel account. He says, "[Luke] sees in this outcast of Palestinian society yet another of the 'lost' whom Jesus has come to save. This episode thus brings to an end that part of the Lucan travel account which has been called the 'Gospel of the Outcast.'" Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 1218.

[98]Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 670.

[99]O'Toole says, "The quest really belongs to the Son of Man." Robert F. O'Toole, "The Literary Form of Luke 19:1-10," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 116.

[100]Craddock, *Luke*, 218. Craddock continues by stating, "In a corrupt system the loftier one's position, the greater one's complicity in that system" (ibid.).

poor, the despised, and the disadvantaged."[101]

There are some important parallels between the story of the blind man and the story of Zacchaeus. Both stories involve men who cannot see – one because he is blind (Luke 18:35), and one because he is short (Luke 19:3). Both stories involve crowds, particularly, crowds that stand in opposition to the men in the stories (Luke 18:39; 19:7). Both stories involve men who try to get Jesus' attention – one by calling out (Luke 18:38), and one by climbing a tree (Luke 19:4). Both stories involve Jesus's transformative interaction – Jesus heals one man (Luke 18:42), and has a meal with the other (Luke 19:5).[102] Luke connects these stories because they make a similar point: God loves the outcast.

The importance of this story is evident in the contrast between Jesus' acceptance of Zacchaeus and the crowd's rejection of him. After Zacchaeus promised to repay and compensate those he had extorted, Jesus declared that salvation had come to his house and that he was a true son of Abraham.[103] Then, recapitulating his earlier teaching that he had not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32), Jesus communicated the point of the story: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Zacchaeus was a lost sheep that Jesus came to find, like those in the parables of Luke 15.[104] Jesus did not come for those who deserved salvation the most, but for

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[101]George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 242.

[102]Though he approaches these parallels in a slightly different manner, Garland does a highly commendable job of tracing the connections between these stories. See Garland, *Luke*, 744-45.

[103]It should be noted that Zacchaeus was willing to depart with his riches, something the wealthy ruler in Luke 18:18-23 would not do. See Tannehill, *Luke*, 277. Additionally, Zacchaeus humbly repented of his sin, something the tax collector in Luke 18:13-14 did.

[104]There is a definite connection between the shepherd theme in Luke 15 and Luke 19. The promise of an eschatological shepherd in Ezek 34 may serve as the backdrop for these passages. See Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 1218; Francois Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 594; David W. Pao and

those who did not deserve it at all, like Zacchaeus. The cultural lesson for those who would follow Jesus was clear: disciples of Jesus must value the lost because Jesus values the lost. Further, the behavior of the disciples must reflect their value for the lost. This meant that the complaining of the Pharisees (Luke 15:2) and the crowd (Luke 19:7) must give way to the rejoicing of the Host (Luke 15:22-24).

The Last Supper (Luke 22:14-34)

The tenth meal scene is a climactic moment in Luke's Gospel. It is one of the most well represented scenes in church life, Christian art, theological debate, etc. Various interpretive options regarding the Lord's Supper are well documented.[105] However, the focus on this text for the present research will be on the impact of Jesus' teaching about greatness on the culture of his disciples.

In the middle of the last meal Jesus ate with his disciples before his crucifixion, Jesus announced that one of his disciples was going to betray him (Luke 22:21-22). The disciples began to argue about which one of them was going to do so (Luke 22:23). This argument about who among them would be the worst evolved into an argument about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus responded by urging the disciples not to rule over one another like pagan kings (Luke 22:25-26). Rather, they should serve one another. Jesus contrasted the way the existing culture viewed greatness with how he viewed greatness. He said, "For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving?

Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Luke*, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 341-54.

[105]Much work has been done on the Last Supper. For example, see William Barclay, *The Lord's Suppers* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967); Markus Barth, *Rediscovering the Lord's Supper* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988); A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1972); Albert Schweitzer, *The Problem of the Lord's Supper* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982); and R. Alan Streett, *Subversive Meals An Analysis of the Lord's Supper under Roman Domination during the First Century*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013. For a work tracing the meals in Luke in relation to Eucharist, see Eugene LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist According to Luke* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994).

Isn't it the one at the table? But I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27).

This was an astonishing role reversal. Jesus was associating himself not with one who eats at the table, but with one who serves others at the table.[106] Jesus then indicated that he would eat with his disciples at an eschatological table, implying that he would continue to demonstrate selfless service in the kingdom (Luke 22:29-30). Smith states, "Jesus' presentation of himself as host/servant at the Last Supper is thus seen as prefiguring his role as host/servant at the messianic banquet."[107]

Jesus reoriented his disciples' view of who was important. In John's account of this meal, Jesus illustrated his teaching on humility by modeling humility through foot washing (John 13:4-16). Bovon conveys the sense of role reversal: "By subverting the human system of authority and the exercise of power, the Jesus of Luke . . . requires that the person at the top lower himself."[108] Jesus' teaching about humility and service followed his declaration that he would give himself for his disciples (Luke 22:19-20), "calling to mind here that the extent of Jesus' self-giving service reached to the point of giving up his life for his own."[109]

Jesus' cultural expectations of his disciples were clear, shaping their beliefs, values, and behavior. This teaching discourse taught them that they should value humility and service. Arthur Just notes that service (*diakonia*) would be a "mark of the ministry of the apostles."[110] Indeed, as Plummer states, "true greatness involves service to others:

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[106]Smith argues that messianic banquets tend to be "connected with the theme of reversal, when the wealthy, the privileged, and especially the people of Israel (or Pharisees), will be judged." Smith, "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," 629.

[107]Ibid., 632.

[108]Francois Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 174.

[109]John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 1068.

[110]Just, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 844.

noblesse oblige."[111] This theme would carry into the life of the early church, as the

Apostles selected men who would serve tables (*diakonos*) and meet the needs of

neglected widows (Acts 6:1-7). Jesus set forth a model of leadership that was counter-

cultural, reorienting and correcting the disciples' underlying assumptions about greatness.

Streett concludes, "For Luke's audience the lesson is clear – they should imitate Jesus

and his meal practices and abandon the practices of the status-conscious Gentiles."[112]

Eating with Disciples After the Resurrection
(Luke 24:13-43)

The eleventh and final meal scene in Luke is the first meal Jesus ate after the

resurrection. Blomberg states that the coupling of Jesus' teaching and table fellowship in

this episode forms the "climax of Luke's Gospel."[113] The scene finds two disciples

making their way to Emmaus, discussing the preceding events, presumably the reports of

Jesus' resurrection in the previous section (Luke 24:1-14). Jesus encountered them on the

road as they were arguing and asked about the source of their dispute (Luke 24:15-17).

Not recognizing him, they proceeded to explain that they did not understand how Jesus

could have been the Messiah if he was crucified (Luke 24:18-24). This reflected the

common belief that the Messiah would "save" or deliver Israel by overthrowing Rome

and inaugurating the kingdom.[114]

Jesus responded to their discussion by rebuking them for failing to believe

what the prophets had said about the Messiah's suffering. Then, "beginning with Moses

and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the

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[111]Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 501.

[112]Streett, *Subversive Meals*, 194.

[113]Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 160.

[114]This is why Jesus' disciples seem pre-occupied with the timing of the kingdom's arrival. See Luke 17:20; Acts 1:6. For a helpful survey of first century Messianic expectations, see N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

Scriptures" (Luke 24:26-27). They were intrigued enough by what he said that they urged him to stay with them overnight, still unaware of his true identity (Luke 24:28-29).

Something significant took place in the next scene. Jesus reclined at the table with them, "took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them" (Luke 24:30). At that point, "their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him" (Luke 24:31). Jesus left them, and they returned to Jerusalem and reported to the disciples what had happened (Luke 24:32-35). As they spoke to the disciples, Jesus appeared to them again. To prove to them he was really there, he invited them to touch him. Then, he ate fish in their presence (Luke 24:36-43). This scene "probably parallels the Emmaus narrative by reporting a process of coming to faith and insight that includes both instruction in the scripture and a shared meal."[115]

Fitzmyer states, "Though he is the guest, he assumes the role of the host or *paterfamilias*."[116] As host, Jesus revealed to these disciples who he was. The significance of this passage is Jesus did not reveal himself to the disciples on the road, or even during the exposition of the prophets, "but in the blessing before the meal."[117] Arthur Just states, "The primary thrust of the Emmaus narrative is *table fellowship . . .* the *teaching of Jesus* and *the meal of Jesus* must be considered together."[118] It was in the context of the meal, even more so than the study of the biblical text on the road, that the disciples' eyes were opened to who Jesus was. G.B. Caird astutely observes,

> The disciples recognized Jesus by the way in which he broke bread. Luke and his friends would no doubt find in the solemn scene at the supper table an anticipation of their own Eucharistic observances. Yet these two disciples had not been present at the last supper. The memories which Jesus' action evoked must have been of other meals which he had held with his friends, perhaps, like the last supper, as

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[115]Tannehill, *Luke*, 360.

[116]Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 1568. See also Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1206.

[117]Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 60.

[118]Just, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1006. Italics original.

anticipations of the messianic banquet of the kingdom.[119]

Green notes that "the series of actions – took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them – is most reminiscent of his similar actions in 9:16 in the account of the miraculous feeding."[120] In the same way the feeding miracle in Luke 9 revealed Jesus' identity, this meal on the way to Emmaus revealed who he was. Tannehill calls the Emmaus narrative a "revelatory process."[121] Breitenberg says, "In the breaking of bread—an ordinary and mundane act but one that was carried out in a specific context and in which the risen Jesus participated—they knew him again."[122] Most of the meal scenes in Luke provided the context in which Jesus taught his disciples how to treat one another. In this scene, Jesus taught his disciples what they should believe about him. Jesus shaped their beliefs around the table.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Jesus intentionally shaped the culture (behavior, values, and beliefs) of those around him. In Luke's Gospel, the primary means through which he did this was table fellowship. McMahan states this well when he says,

> Of all the means by which Jesus could have chosen to be remembered, he chose to be remembered by a meal. What he considered memorable and characteristic of his ministry was his table-fellowship. The meal, one of humankind's most basic and common practices, was transformed by Jesus into an occasion of divine encounter. It was in the sharing of food and drink that he invited his companions to share in the grace of God. The quintessence of Jesus' redemptive mission was revealed in his eating with sinners, repentant and unrepentant alike.[123]

While Jesus used many mechanisms for culture creation, such as creating a sense of urgency and teaching, his primary mechanism for influencing the behavior,

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[119]G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1963), 259.

[120]Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 849.

[121]Tannehill, *Luke*, 358.

[122]E. Harold Breitenberg, Jr., "Luke 24:13-35," *Interpretation* 64, no. 1 (2010): 76.

[123]C. T. McMahan, "Meals as Type-Scenes in the Gospel of Luke" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 1.

values, and beliefs of his disciples and others was meals, as seen in Table 1. The meal

motif holds unique prominence in Luke when compared to the other Gospels. Smith

observes, "Meals were a central way in which Jesus portrayed the values and vision of

the covenant and the meaning of the rule of God."[124]

Table 1. Meal scenes in Luke

Text	Meal	Cultural Components Shaped
Luke 5:29-39	Eating with Levi	Beliefs, values, and behavior toward tax collectors and sinners.
Luke 6:1-5	Eating with Disciples in a Field	Beliefs, values, and behavior regarding Sabbath laws.
Luke 7:36-50	Eating with Simon and Teaching Forgiveness	Beliefs and behavior regarding the place of the sinful woman at the table.
Luke 9:10-17	The Feeding of 5,000	Beliefs about Jesus' identity and subsequent obedient behavior.
Luke 10:38-42	The Hospitality of Mary and Martha	Values regarding the importance of listening to Jesus' words.
Luke 11:37-54	Eating with a Pharisee and Denouncing Hypocrisy	Behavior regarding hypocrisy.
Luke 14:1-24	Eating with a Pharisee on the Sabbath	Beliefs and behavior regarding status and humility.
Luke 15:1-32	Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners	Behavior toward tax collectors and sinners.
Luke 19:1-10	Eating with Zacchaeus	Values and behavior regarding the lost.
Luke 22:14-34	The Last Supper	Values and behavior regarding humility and service.
Luke 24:13-43	Eating with Disciples After the Resurrection	Beliefs about Jesus' identity.

People's reactions to these meal encounters were mixed. Some of the

Pharisees, for instance, became angry with Jesus and opposed him after these table

experiences (Luke 11:53-54). Others, such as the disciples Jesus encountered on the road

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[124]Gordon T. Smith, *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 13.

to Emmaus, had their eyes opened to see who he was and felt their "hearts ablaze" (Luke 24:31-32). Still others, like Zacchaeus, experienced complete life transformation over the course of the meal (Luke 19:8).

There are many practical implications that can be drawn from this survey of the meal scenes in Luke. Eating with someone is a powerful act of unity and community. Barclay writes, "The simple act of eating together has always been an expression of fellowship."[125] Leaders who want to shape the culture of their organization would do well to consider the influence that can be exerted through meals. Sometimes, people can be reached more effectively through the personal influence wielded over a dinner table than any other means. Meals can express caring, concern, love, and influence in a way that few other things can. Hospitality is influence. Mittelstadt echoes this sentiment when he says,

> Christians would do well to consider the everyday opportunities afforded through loving table fellowship. Luke demonstrates that the table creates space for openness and vulnerability and posture us to be recipients and agents of God's renovation . . . Given the value placed upon relationships in our culture, creative hospitality might be the key to church unity and evangelism.[126]

Hospitality is one of the most consistent themes throughout Scripture. Israel was instructed to show hospitality to strangers (Lev 19:33-34). Jesus modeled hospitality, as demonstrated in Luke. The early church practiced table fellowship and hospitality (Acts 2:46). The author of Hebrews, who some believe may have been Luke, encouraged believers not to neglect hospitality (Heb 13:2).[127] In the eschatological Age to Come, the consummation of all things will be celebrated with a meal (Rev 19:7-9).[128] Modern

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[125]William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 95.

[126]Mittelstadt, "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry," 139.

[127]For a thorough defense of this view on the authorship of Hebrews, see David L. Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010).

[128]Blomberg notes that several of the meals Jesus ate with his disciples, including the Last Supper, likely foreshadowed this eschatological banquet. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 29.

Christian leaders would do well not to overlook the importance of meals, especially for shaping the organizational culture of the church. It may be that one of the most beneficial ways a church leader can spend his time is to eat with those he leads and thus embed cultural norms within the church, one meal at a time.

CHAPTER 4

SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE IN ACTS

There is no more exhaustive description of early church life and culture than

that which is found in the book of Acts. Any study of early church leadership practices

must include an analysis of Acts. It is clear from the previous chapter that Jesus

intentionally shaped the culture of his followers through the medium of table fellowship.

What remains to be discovered is if, how, and to what effect early church leaders also

intentionally shaped the organizational culture of the early church. It will be argued in

this chapter that early church leaders did in fact shape church culture and used the means

of teaching as the primary embedding mechanism for doing so.[1]

In addition to the deductive methodologies mentioned in previous chapters,

several inductive methodological approaches could be utilized in addressing the subject

of church culture creation in Acts. For instance, the meal motif explored in the previous

chapter also features prominently in Acts.[2] Meals were at the center of the new culture

that was created in the early church. The early church was devoted to "the breaking of

bread" (Acts 2:42). The believers met daily in the temple complex and "broke bread from

house to house" (Acts 2:46). Meals played an important role in the establishment of

deacons (Acts 6:1-7). Food was a central part of the vision Peter had that led him to

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[1]For a helpful survey of the theological message of the book of Acts, see Steve Walton, "Acts," in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 74-83.

[2]Research has been conducted on the importance of meals in Acts, although not with a view toward how they shaped church organizational culture in particular. See, for instance, Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). See also Nathan MacDonald, Luzia Sutter Rehmann, and Kathy Ehrensperger, eds., *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-43), which signaled a paradigm shift in the apostolic ministry throughout the rest of Acts. Table fellowship was likely a part of the hospitality Paul provided under house arrest in the closing days of his ministry (Acts 28:30-31). Clearly, table fellowship was as important to the early church after Jesus' ascension as it was during the course of his ministry. Early church leaders likely understood the power of hospitality in creating and reinforcing cultural norms in the nascent Christian church.[3]

Another approach to understanding culture creation in Acts would be to examine the role the community itself played in shaping cultural norms in the early church. There seems to be an inherent congregationalism in Acts.[4] For instance, Matthias was selected as Judas' replacement by the action of the community (Acts 1:23-26). Perhaps most obviously, the important role of the community is seen in the actions taken at the Jerusalem council, where "the apostles and elders, with the whole church" used their collective voice to influence the church at Antioch (Acts 15:22). When the church at

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[3]One might wonder why this thesis would not trace the theme of meals in Acts given the weight they have received up to this point. However, while meals have an important role in Acts, they do not bear the prominence that they do in Luke. As has been demonstrated, the dominant motif in Luke is clearly meals. However, in Acts there is a more prominent theme; as this chapter will bear out, the role of the speeches in Acts is central. The primary culture embedding mechanism of the apostles was teaching. Therefore, this chapter will not trace the role of meals in shaping culture. The methodological commitment of this thesis is not to force an alien structure upon the text but rather to allow the most salient features of the text to receive the attention they deserve. Speeches are most prominent in Acts. Schnabel notes that Luke reveals the very purpose of his text as a whole through the apostolic speeches. For his thoughts, see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 35-36. The speeches and their settings provide unique information regarding the culture of the early church. Indeed, as Bruce notes, the speeches are "valuable and independent sources for the life and thought of the primitive Church." F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 21. In addition to the cultural data that can be gleaned from the speeches, some have even suggested that the frequent summary statements about the teaching of God's Word (Acts 6:7, Acts 9:31, Acts 12:24, Acts 13:49, Acts 16:5, Acts 19:20, and Acts 28:31) may serve as structural markers in Acts. Jason C. Meyer, *Preaching: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 217. This marks the teaching theme as prominent in Acts.

[4]Paige Patterson, "Single-Elder Congregationalism," in *Who Runs the Church? Four Views on Church Government*, ed. Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 144. See also Mark Dever, "The Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 795.

Antioch received a letter from Jerusalem with instructions, "they rejoiced because of its encouragement" (Acts 15:31). One of the reasons the Jerusalem letter was so effective was because it carried the weight of the entire community.[5] A church's culture only changes when it develops broadly throughout the entire body. Only when the entire community adapts has there been an actual change in the culture of the church.

An important area of research in Luke-Acts has been the role of the Spirit in the life and development of the early church, though not with a focus on the Spirit's role in shaping church culture.[6] This would be a legitimate line of research to pursue and would make an important contribution to the study of church culture. The work of the Spirit is necessary in order to see a church's culture change. In fact, it has been argued that the Spirit is the main "character" in the story of the early church. Luke Timothy Johnson notes that because of the central role played by the Holy Spirit, "Acts can appropriately be called the 'Book of the Holy Spirit.'"[7] The phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit" is used frequently in Acts.[8] The Spirit directed the behavior of the apostles at crucial times in Acts, such as on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples spoke in other

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[5]Lewis' theory about the role "key stakeholders" play in shaping culture is analogous to what occured at the Jerusalem Council. Peer influence is powerful in shaping culture. This is why church discipline is so weighty, as an example. For information on Lewis' "strategic communication" process see Laurie K. Lewis, *Organizational Change: Creating Change Through Strategic Communication* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

[6]For instance, see William H. Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); Aaron Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other": Social Identity, Ethnicity, and InterGroup Reconciliation in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Gonzalo Haya-Prats, *Empowered Believers: The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011); Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile These Concepts* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005); J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005); Arie W. Zwiep, *Christ, the Spirit and the Community of God: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

[7]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 14.

[8]E.g., Acts 2:4, Acts 4:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 7:55, and Acts 9:17. For more on this theme, see James H. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006).

languages (Acts 2:1-21) and in the direction of the Apostle Paul's ministry toward

Europe (Acts 16:6-10). The Spirit functions vitally in the shaping of church

organizational culture. Changing the culture of the church is an enormous task, one that is

impossible without the Holy Spirit.

As worthy as these other avenues of research are, the focus of this chapter will

be on the role the speeches in Acts played in shaping early church culture, specifically the

speeches addressed to the church. Taking into consideration the observations above, it

could be argued that the speeches, given in the context of community, are a primary

means by which the Spirit shapes church culture. Put another way, while speeches are not

the only way early church culture was shaped, many of the other means (such as the

Spirit's involvement) necessarily involved speeches.[9] For instance, although the Spirit

was the main character on the Day of Pentecost, the immediate result of the Spirit's

involvement was that the believers began to speak, doing so "as the Spirit gave them

ability for speech" (Acts 2:4). Meyer states, "Acts does not simply attribute the spread of

the gospel to the power of the Spirit. It is vitally important to note that Acts follows the

rest of the Scriptures in linking both the Spirit of God and *the word of God*."[10] Therefore,

the speeches in Acts merit attention in order to understand how they were used in shaping

early church culture.[11]

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[9]Streett traces the importance of prophecy (often in the form of exhortation or teaching) as a central activity in Christian meals in the first century. This reinforces the argument that teaching was an important part of many of the other culture creation methodologies in Acts. R. Alan Streett, *Subversive Meals: An Analysis of the Lord's Supper under Roman Domination during the First Century* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 236-85.

[10]Meyer, *Preaching*, 216-17. Italics original.

[11]It should be noted that there has been a scholarly debate on the authenticity of the speeches in Acts. Some believe that Luke was recounting speeches that may not have actually occurred. For that argument, see M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 139. For an alternate view, see especially I. Howard Marshall, *The Book of Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 40-42; see also John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 43-47.

The Speeches in Acts

Teaching is an integral constituent in the narrative of Acts. Richard Wells observes that the first and last "acts" of the apostles in the book of Acts were sermons.[12] Luke used the repetition of summary phrases such as "the word of God continued to increase" to mark the significance of the Word.[13] In fact, as Marshall observes, the "chief medium" through which Luke develops his theology in Acts is through the inclusion of the apostolic speeches.[14] Indeed, "Preaching is the tie that binds Acts together."[15] Soards poignantly states the importance of the speeches in Acts,

> Through the regular introduction of formally repetitive speeches, Luke unified his narrative; and, more important, he unified the image of an otherwise personally, ethically, and geographically diverse early Christianity. This is no mean feat: Luke crafted from events and words a history that was coherent and, moreover, ideologically pointed – a history that could, in turn, move through the future selectively preserving the tradition it repeated and thereby deliberately advancing its causes.[16]

Scholars have identified the speeches in Acts in various ways. Dibelius categorized the speeches according to the speaker (i.e. Christian speakers such as Peter, Paul, James, Stephen, etc., and non-Christian speakers such as Gamaliel, Tertullus, and Festus) and identified twenty-four speeches.[17] Schneider followed Dibelius in his identification of twenty-four speeches, but categorized them not according to speaker, but according to kind, such as missionary speeches, defense speeches, partial speeches, and

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[12]C. Richards Wells and A. Boyd Luter, *Inspired Preaching: A Survey of Preaching Found in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 75.

[13]E.g., Acts 6:7, Acts 9:31, Acts 12:24, Acts 13:49, Acts 16:5, Acts 19:20, and Acts 28:31. As noted above, Meyer notes that these repeated phrases might serve as explicit structural features in Acts. Meyer, *Preaching*, 217.

[14]Marshall, *Acts*, 39.

[15]Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 76.

[16]Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 12.

[17]Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, 138-85.

dialogues.[18] Soards, while acknowledging that the scholarly consensus is twenty-four

speeches in Acts, argues more comprehensively that when the partial speeches and

dialogues are taken into consideration there are actually thirty-six speeches in Acts,

delivered by both Christian and non-Christian speakers.[19] Helpfully, Soards defines a

speech as "a deliberately formulated address made to a group of listeners," which for him

includes non-sermonic material such as prayers and even speeches from non-Christians.[20]

     C. H. Dodd differentiated between preaching the gospel to the lost (*kerygma*)

and teaching that instructed the church (*didache*).[21] Much research has been conducted on

the missionary speeches in Acts.[22] Dodd, for instance, traced the common elements of the

apostolic *kerygma*, creating a seminal work for the field.[23] However, for the purpose of

the present research, the concern must be focused on the speeches delivered to the church

so that the impact they made on early church culture can be traced.

     Since the purpose of this project is to identify the means through which the

culture of the early church was shaped, the relevant speeches that deserve analysis are

those that are directed to the church specifically, necessarily excluding the non-Christian

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[18]G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 95-103.

[19]Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 1. A list of these speeches can be found in appendix 1.

[20]Ibid., 20.

[21]C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 50-51.

[22]See, for instance, C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980); Atef M. Gendy, "Style, Content and Culture: Distinctive Characteristics in the Missionary Speeches in Acts," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 99, no. 3 (2011): 247-65; Thor Strandenaes, "The Missionary Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles and their Missiological Implications," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 99, no. 3 (2011): 341-54.

[23]Dodd lists six features of the apostolic *kerygma*: "the age of fulfillment has dawned . . . this has taken place through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus . . . by virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, as Messianic head of the new Israel . . . the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ's present power and glory . . . the Messianic Age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ . . . the *kerygma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of 'salvation,' that is, of 'the life of the Age to Come,' to those who enter the elect community." Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 21-23.

speeches, non-sermonic speeches, dialogues, and prayers. Of the sermonic speeches, Wells and Luter identify three distinct categories among twenty sermons: paraenetic sermons, missionary sermons, and apologetic sermons.[24] They note that five of the twenty sermons are paraenetic in nature, "preached *to believers* for purposes of encouragement, edification, and/or instruction."[25] This chapter will focus on the five paraenetic sermons addressed to the church, as these are the sermons that most directly shaped the culture of the early church.[26] Each of the sermons will be examined to discover how they shaped the culture of the early church.

Peter's Sermon in the Upper Room (Acts 1:15-26)

The first paraenetic sermon in Acts occurred soon after the ascension of Jesus and the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:9-11). The disciples had gathered in an upper room to pray and wait for the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12-14).[27] After listing the names of the eleven apostles, Luke recounted Peter's sermon to 120 disciples who had gathered in the upper room and the reaction of the disciples to his message (Acts 1:15-26).

The topic of Peter's sermon was the need to replace Judas.[28] There are two

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[24]Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 78-79. The *paraenetic sermons* are found in Acts 1:15-26, Acts 11:1-18, Acts 15:6-11, Acts 15:13-21, and Acts 20:17-38. The *missionary sermons* are found in Acts 2:14b-39, Acts 3:12b-26, Acts 10:34b-43, Acts 13:16b-41, Acts 14:15-17, Acts 17:22b-31, and Acts 28:24-28. The *apologetic sermons* are found in Acts 4:8-12, Acts 5:29-32, Acts 7:2b-53, Acts 22:1-21, Acts 23:1b-6, Acts 24:10b-21, Acts 26:2-23, and Acts 28:17b-20.

[25]Ibid., 78. Italics original.

[26]Certainly, the missionary and apologetic sermons would have been formative in the life and culture of the early church, but only the paraenetic sermons addressed the church directly. The purpose of the paraenetic sermons was the encouragement, edification, and instruction of the church. Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 78.

[27]Barrett notes that upper rooms were often used as meeting places, studies, and places of prayer. C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 87.

[28]Conzelmann rightly notes that this action of choosing someone to replace Judas was a one-time need in order to fill out the Twelve. In other words, not every apostle would need to be replaced. Hans

major parts of his address, each centered in the citation of Scripture. In the first part of

the sermon, he described the fate of Judas (Acts 1:16-20a). Peter grounded his statements

about Judas in David's prophecy that a betrayer would be destroyed and replaced (Ps

69:25, Ps 109:8). Peter then recounted to the disciples how Judas "acquired a field with

his unrighteous wages" which Judas gained by being a "guide to those who arrested

Jesus" (Acts 1:16-18). Peter described Judas' fate in vivid terms, saying that he died in

his field by falling headfirst and having his insides spill out (Acts 1:18-19).[29] The death

was so gruesome and notable in the community that people named the place where he

died the "Field of Blood" (Acts 1:19). Peter was doubtless stressing the justice of Judas'

death, considering the fact that he had betrayed Jesus.[30]

In the second part of the sermon, Peter addressed the need to replace Judas in

more detail. He appropriated Psalm 109:8 to state that someone needed to take Judas'

place as part of the Twelve. He then instructed those gathered about the requirements for

selecting Judas' replacement. First, it was necessary that one was selected who had

accompanied Jesus during his ministry (Acts 1:21-22a). Second, it was necessary that one

was selected who would "become a witness" of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:22b). Peter

thereby set the parameters of expectation for apostolic leadership. An apostle must have

observed Jesus and serve as a witness to the resurrection. Bock states, "The continuity of

exposure to Jesus is central to the special role of the witness and underscores the

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Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 12.

[29]This differs slightly from Matthew's account of Judas' death, in which he dies by hanging. There are several works that seek to harmonize the two accounts, including the possibility that the rope Judas used to hang himself broke and caused him to fall headfirst. See C. W. Carter and R. Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 20-21; A. B. Gordon, "The Fate of Judas According to Acts 1:18," *Evangelical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1971): 97-100.

[30]Polhill poignantly states, "For Peter the recollection of Judas's gruesome end must have been a grim reminder of his own denial of his Lord as he now sought to lead the assembly to fill the abandoned post." Polhill, *Acts*, 92-93.

credibility of the eyewitness tradition the apostles produced."[31] He continues by observing, "No one of succeeding generations would have these qualifications."[32] Peter clearly established a new cultural norm: those who serve as apostles must be qualified in such a manner in order to lead. Stott says that Judas' replacement had a responsibility "to safeguard the true tradition about Jesus."[33]

The disciples responded to Peter's sermon by considering two possible candidates: Joseph and Matthias (Acts 1:23). They prayed and asked God to show them which man should be selected, then cast lots to see who would be selected (Acts 1:24-26). Casting lots was a traditional means of determining God's will and was rooted in a confidence in God's sovereignty over the selection (Prov 16:33 states that every decision of the lot that is cast is "from the Lord").[34]

There are several important cultural observations in this story. First, it is necessary to note that the believers followed the instruction of Peter in terms of the manner of Matthias' selection. That is, his teaching shaped their subsequent behavior. Notably absent from this passage is any verbal debate or opposition to Peter's words. The fact that they selected a man with the qualifications Peter defined signified the effectiveness of the message he preached. In the first congregational action the early church took after Jesus' departure, they responded to teaching with obedient behavior, something the early church did throughout the rest of the book of Acts with few exceptions.[35]

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[31]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 88.

[32]Ibid.

[33]John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 58.

[34]David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 128.

[35]A notable exception to this obedient behavior was the disobedience of Ananias and Sapphira

The second cultural element Peter shaped in his sermon was the values of the early church. First, by grounding his instructions in the authority of Scripture, he taught the early church to rely on Scripture to guide them. Chrysostom noted about this text that Peter "acted as expositor, not as preceptor."[36] Peter did not merely decree who should be selected. Wells notes, "In short, Peter employs Scripture, first to comfort, then to guide, the nascent church."[37] Second, by relying on prayer, he taught the church to depend on God's sovereignty in directing their actions. That is, he taught them to value God's wisdom above their own. Third, he shaped their values as demonstrated in their decision to select a man who would bear witness to the resurrection. By selecting such a man, the early church affirmed this qualification and demonstrated their value of Peter's words. Their choice reflected that they also valued Jesus' instructions related to the witness of the believers (Acts 1:8). Matthias would model what Jesus expected for the entire church, a faithful witness to the nations of the resurrected Christ.

In this first paraenetic sermon, Peter clearly shaped several new cultural norms for the early church. His sermon was effective as is demonstrated by their obedient behavior in response. His instruction about leadership clearly governed the expectations the early church had for apostolic leadership.

Peter's Sermon to the Circumcision Party in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18)

The second paraenetic sermon in Acts was delivered to a group of believers in the early church "who stressed circumcision" (Acts 11:1). Tracing the narrative flow, this section begins in Acts 9:32 where Luke shifted his focus from the conversion of Paul to

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in Acts 5:1-11.

[36]Chrysostom, *A Commentary of the Acts of the Apostles*, in vol. 11 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 19.

[37]Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 91.

the acts of Peter. This section of the narrative includes three conversion stories, all stressing the inclusive nature of the gospel.[38] The last conversion story, that of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), features prominently in Peter's subsequent sermon in Acts 11. In fact, the content of his preaching is a recollection to the Jerusalem church of the events surrounding the conversion of Cornelius.[39]

The context of Peter's sermon must be considered in order to understand the reason he taught the Jerusalem church in the manner he did. In Acts 10, God's sovereignty is vividly on display. God gave a dream to Cornelius in which he instructed him to send men to Joppa and ask Peter to meet with him (Acts 10:1-8). Meanwhile, as the men neared Peter's house, God gave a vision to Peter in which he was instructed to eat unclean animals (Acts 10:9-13). Peter refused at first, alluding to the Jewish regulations regarding ritual purity,[40] but a voice spoke to him and said, "What God has made clean, you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).[41] This vision happened three times. As Peter was "deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean," the men Cornelius had sent arrived at his house (Acts 10:17-18). The Spirit spoke to Peter and told him that he had sent the men and that Peter should accompany them, which he did (Acts 10:19-23).

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[38]Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 136. The three conversions include the healing of a paralyzed man, the healing of a woman, and the salvation of a Gentile soldier.

[39]Kistemaker observes the following about this text: "We receive the impression that because of the vast history of the Christian church, Luke is forced to be selective and concise. However, when he records Peter's visit to Cornelius, Luke is purposely elaborate . . . As a Gentile Christian, he attaches considerable importance to the entrance of the Gentiles into the church." Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 407.

[40]These regulations can be found in Lev 11.

[41]Witherington states, "Peter assumed that because of the considerable presence of unclean animals and the possible problem of contamination, there was nothing fit to eat in the sheet." Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 250.

When Peter arrived at Cornelius' house, he found that many people had gathered together (Acts 10:24-27). He acknowledged to Cornelius that it was "forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner" but God had shown him not to call any person unclean (Acts 10:28-29). After hearing Cornelius talk about the dream God had given him, Peter spoke to those in Cornelius' household and said, "Now I really understand that God doesn't show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears Him and does righteousness is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:34-35). Peter then declared, "through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

The response to Peter's sermon was extraordinary. The Holy Spirit came upon those who heard the message and they began "speaking in other languages and declaring the greatness of God" (Acts 10:46). The Jews who were present were astounded at the fact that "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45).[42] The way Luke tells the story emphasizes the fact that the Jews were caught by surprise that the Holy Spirit would move among the Gentiles in this manner.[43]

This event – the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles – caused a significant debate in Jerusalem. In fact, the immediate context of Peter's sermon indicates that those who stressed circumcision were arguing with him and accusing him of associating with the Gentiles, which was something that he himself had indicated to Cornelius was unlawful to do (Acts 11:1-3). The complaint about table fellowship with those who were ritually impure was not new to Peter, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. One of the most consistent themes in the Lukan meal scenes is Jesus'

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[42]Kistemaker observes that the Jews were astounded that God had poured out the Spirit on the Gentiles, even though "Jesus had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all the nations." Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 400. It should have followed that the pouring out of the Spirit would follow the proclamation of the gospel.

[43]Ibid., 360.

insistence that everyone should be welcome at the table, regardless of ethnic or religious background. Here, the discussion appears again about fellowship with those on the cultural margins. It was to this circumcision party that Peter addressed his sermon.[44]

The point of God's revelation to Peter and Peter's subsequent sermon recounting the events surrounding Cornelius' conversion was "that God now grants salvation to all people irrespective of ethnic or religious background."[45] In "an orderly sequence," he told those present in Jerusalem the story of Cornelius' conversion (Acts 11:4ff) and concluded his sermon by stating, "Therefore, if God gave them [the Gentiles] the same gift that He also gave to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?" (Acts 11:17). For Peter, the lesson of the vision was clear: God desired the salvation of all people, including those considered ritually impure by the Jews. This represented a significant operational paradigm shift in the early Christian church.

The response to Peter's sermon about Jew/Gentile relations was as immediate and powerful as the response to the sermon that led to Matthias' selection as part of the Twelve. When the people heard his message, their first response was silence, followed closely by praise (Acts 11:18a).[46] The Jewish believers "glorified God, saying, 'So God has granted repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles!" (Acts 11:18b). While the Jew/Gentile question was by no means settled at this point in the narrative, as is demonstrated by the fact that the issue reappears later at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35), the people's reaction to Peter's sermon indicated an important new cultural

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[44]Bock refers to these people as the "circumcision group," suggesting they were not an organized party, but rather a group of concerned Jewish Christians. Bock, *Acts*, 406. Scholars such as Conzelmann and Parsons suggest that those "of the circumcision" referred to the entire Jewish Christian congregation. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 86; Parsons, *Acts*, 156.

[45]Schnabel, *Acts*, 474.

[46]"Growing quiet" likely indicated that the circumcision group decided after hearing Peter's sermon to "desist from criticism." Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

norm regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles in the mission of the church.

Peter's teaching in this passage shaped the beliefs, values, and behavior of the Jerusalem believers related to previous cultural norms regarding Jew/Gentile relations. While the divide between Jews and Gentiles was normative, even in the context of the Christian community, Peter clearly led a shift in behavioral methodology for the early church. From now on, they would make the gospel known among the Gentiles. He also shaped their beliefs about who could receive salvation and the gift of the Spirit, which in turn created a new value whereby Gentiles were included in the mission. In terms of the Gentiles' new designation as "Christians," Martin Hengel accurately observes,

> The fact that the members of the new messianic community in Antioch were given the peculiar Latin-type designation *Christianoi/Christiani . . .* indicates that they had become an independent organization over against the Jewish synagogue community. To the outsider, the successful messianic sect could now appear as a group on its own, which had detached itself from Judaism. It was given its own name, the independent character of which made it fundamentally different from earlier designations like 'Galilean' or 'Nazorean' (Acts 24:5), which had referred to Jewish groups.[47]

If a group's culture truly is perceived as "how things are done around here,"[48] then this new designation as a distinctive group from Judaism certainly marked a new cultural norm. Gentile Christians now formed a new group apart from the previously distinctive Jewish Christian church. This new group had its own cultural norms that marked important changes from the past. Peter's teaching was at the heart of this change.

Peter's sermon had its desired effect, as can be seen in the fact that the next episode in the narrative is the spread of the gospel to Antioch, where the good news was proclaimed to the Hellenists (Acts 11:19-26). Longenecker states, "The conversion of Cornelius was a landmark in the history of the gospel's advance from its strictly Jewish

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[47]Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 103.

[48]Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 19.

beginnings to its penetration of the Roman Empire."[49] Munck notes the connection

between the beginning of the primitive Antioch church to the previous events regarding

Cornelius and Peter, stating about Antioch,

> There something new and hitherto unknown came into existence, namely the
> preaching of the Gospel to non-Jews. Luke went on immediately with his account of
> the great effect of this venture, with effects just as revolutionary as those which
> followed the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews.[50]

Peter's teaching, in this case, clearly shaped the culture of the early church.

The Jew/Gentile relationship would continue to be a central part of the dialogue

occurring in the early church (e.g., Gal 3:27-26; Eph 2:11-22, etc.), but at the minimum,

the mission of the early church now included the Gentiles. Culture change is long-term,

as it was in this case, but the genesis of change began with the events surrounding this

sermon.[51]

Peter's Sermon at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6-11)

As mentioned above, the circumstances surrounding the conversion of

Cornelius and Peter's subsequent sermon by no means settled all questions on the

Jew/Gentile issue. This is evidenced by the appearance of a dispute in Antioch regarding

whether or not the newly converted Gentiles were required to be circumcised (Acts 15:1-

6).[52] The question centered on whether the Gentiles could be part of God's people as

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[49]Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in Vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 884.

[50]Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 108.

[51]Goldsworthy notes how "the inclusion of the gentiles forced a re-evaluation of the way the law would function in the church." Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 241. This is a startling change in cultural norms.

[52]Bruce notes that it was the normative practice of Gentile converts to Judaism to "observe the Jewish law in its entirety." Initiation into the Jewish community often involved circumcision, which is why "full proselytization was more common among women than among men." F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 266. If Wright is correct that "all early Christianity was Jewish Christianity," this expectation for early Christian converts to fully observe Jewish regulations such as circumcision makes sense. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis:

Jewish proselytes or if they could be part of God's people as Gentiles.[53]

The response of early church leaders was to form an assembly in Jerusalem to consider the question (Acts 15:6). After much debate, Peter was the first to speak. His address contained three main points, each of which firmly grounded his argument in God's sovereignty: First, God chose Peter to announce the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7); second, God validated the inclusion of the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8); and third, God chose to cleanse all who believe, without discrimination between Jew and Gentile (Acts 15:9).[54] Peter pointed his audience to the authority of God's activity and choice. This trust in God's sovereignty is on display in his later epistolary declaration that those who are chosen by God are chosen "according to the foreknowledge of God and Father" (1 Pet 1:1-2).

Peter followed the grounding statements in his sermon with a rhetorical question: "Now then, why are you testing God by putting a yoke on the disciples' necks that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). Barrett restates the gist of Peter's question, "It is absurd to expect Gentiles to put up with what we Jews cannot endure."[55] That is, the burden of Jewish regulations was something from which the gospel freed both Jew and Gentile. Therefore, to require Gentile converts to become Jewish proselytes represented "a challenge directed against God, for they refuse to believe the revelation God had given to Peter in Caesarea and the fact that the Holy Spirit had truly been given to Cornelius and his friends."[56]

Peter concluded his sermon with a statement of belief. He said, "On the

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Fortress Press, 1992), 453.

[53]Schnabel, *Acts*, 621.

[54]Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 90.

[55]C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 717.

[56]Schnabel, *Acts*, 634.

contrary, we believe we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way they are" (Acts 15:12). What Peter accomplished in this statement is significant. He argued that God indeed made no distinction in how Jews and Gentiles come to faith – both must be saved through the grace of God rather than the observation of obscure Jewish regulations. Polhill remarks, "Peter's ultimate point was that God is free to save whomever and however he pleases."[57] Indeed, "There is only *one* way of salvation – 'through the grace of our Lord Jesus.'"[58]

The Council responded immediately to this sermon with a quiet contemplation (Acts 15:12). They heard from Barnabas, Paul, and James (whose sermon will be analyzed in this chapter), before deciding to write a letter clarifying the Jerusalem church's position on the Judaizing question (Acts 15:12-29). Their conclusion after hearing the sermons of Peter and the others was that the Gentiles do not need to undergo circumcision. They attributed this decision directly to the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28a). Aside from a few instructions relating to sexual immorality and some food regulations, the Jerusalem church wrote to the church at Antioch that they desired "to put no greater burden on you" (Acts 15:28b).

Peter's sermon achieved its desired effect. The new cultural expectation for the church was that Gentiles would not be required to become Jewish proselytes. Bock states well the importance of this sermon,

> In sum, the scene is important because it completely legitimates the Gentile mission. It also establishes faith alone rooted in the grace of God through Christ alone as the principle of inclusion, and it does so by showing continuity with the promises of old. The new faith and practice are actually rooted in old promises, making the faith an old one in its roots. The idea that circumcision is necessary is emphatically refuted in the chapter . . . God's initiative must be appreciated for what it is: a full inclusion of Gentiles without making them Jews.[59]

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[57]Polhill, *Acts*, 328.

[58]Ibid., 327. Italics original.

[59]Bock, *Acts*, 493.

Bock's use of the terms "faith and practice" indicates that Peter shaped the cultural elements of belief, behavior, and by extension values, since values are beliefs that the church actually acts upon.[60] The Jerusalem Council became a model for decision-making in the church through church history.[61] The subsequent actions of the church would be modeled on the communal collaboration of the Jerusalem gathering. The centrality of teaching, dependence on the Holy Spirit's direction, and communal discussion and debate would guide future decisions in the life of the early church. Peter's sermon shaped the beliefs, values, and behavior not merely related to the church's relationship with new Gentile converts but also in how the church would govern itself in the future.

James' Sermon at the Jerusalem Council
(Acts 15:13-21)

The fourth paraenetic sermon in Acts is also delivered at the Jerusalem Council, but through the proclamation of James. The Jerusalem Council, including the sermons of Peter and James, has been described as "the centre of Acts."[62] Although delivered in the same context as Peter's sermon above, there was a significant difference in the content of James' sermon: whereas Peter preached primarily an exhortatory message to the church, James added specific instructions regarding the church's course of action. James took a leadership role in proposing a solution that the Jerusalem Council affirmed by their actions.[63] The solution he proposed in his sermon had a direct impact

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[60]Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 41.

[61]Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 175. For a more detailed analysis of biblical decision-making models for the church, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Decision-Making in the Church: A Biblical Model* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

[62]Barrett, *Acts*, 709.

[63]Bock suggests that James might have sought harmony "with a point of view his instincts may have originally sought to oppose." This ability to navigate two opposing parties is evidence of his leadership ability. Bock, *Acts*, 508.

not only on giving an answer to the immediate problem, "but the further expansion of the church."[64]

Like Peter, James rooted his argument in the work of God among the Gentiles. He restated Peter's report that God was at work "to take from the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). He then recalled the words of Amos 9:11-12 and Isaiah 45:21, stating that God rebuilt David's tent "so the rest of humanity may seek the Lord – even all the Gentiles who are called by My name" (Acts 15:17).[65] Whereas "Peter had offered a theological argument for Gentile inclusion in part on the basis of his personal experience, James offers a theological argument based on another source of authority: scripture."[66] James' teaching was grounded in Scripture, thus giving his teaching the weight of divine authority.

James finished his sermon with specific application to the situation in Antioch. He suggested that the Council write a letter to the church at Antioch encouraging them to "abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood," but not to "cause difficulties" for the Gentiles in regard to circumcision (Acts 15:19-20). He grounded the instructions about sexual immorality and food regulations in the authority of Scripture, specifically in the primacy of Moses' teaching (Acts 15:21). James' instructions were in harmony with Peter's thesis that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised, but he took a mediating view by suggesting the believers in Antioch should still observe certain Jewish regulations.[67]

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[64]Barrett, *Acts*, 709-10.

[65]Marshall says about the reference to David's tent being rebuilt, "In the present context in Acts it seems that God is to restore the fallen dynasty of David and all that appertains to it, with the aim that the remainder of humankind will seek the Lord – that is, the nations over which God's name is called." I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 591.

[66]Parsons, *Acts*, 212-13.

[67]Parsons suggests this was a "compromise" move with the Pharisees. Ibid., 214.

Schnabel lists several important theological implications for the early church to be drawn from James' (and Peter's) teaching. First, the teaching at the Jerusalem council reaffirmed that salvation was by grace through faith, and thus not a result of observing strict Jewish regulations.[68] Second, Gentiles could be saved without having to follow the teaching of the Judaizers. That is, they were not required to become Jewish proselytes.[69] Third, "God's decision about who is 'in' is bound up solely with people's faith in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile," resulting in the unity of God's people and the affirmation that believing Gentiles are "*bona fide members of God's people.*"[70] Fourth, while Gentiles were not required to be circumcised or to become Jewish proselytes, there were still important parts of the Old Testament law that they should observe, especially those related to idolatry and immorality.[71]

James' sermon was successful in that the Jerusalem Council followed his teaching exactly. They sent the suggested letter to Antioch, along with several "leading men among the brothers" who could clarify the intent and meaning of the letter (Acts 15:22-29). Peterson writes about the conclusion of the Council after hearing the apostles' teaching,

> The Jerusalem Council acknowledged that Gentile Christians were not obligated to live under the yoke of the law. At the same time, it challenged them to exercise their liberty with wisdom, restraint, and love, recognizing the concerns of some Jewish Christians about contamination through any association with idolatrous practices. The requirements commended to Gentile believers by letter and urged upon them by prophets and teachers in the local church context (15:30-32, 16:4) were designed to keep the lines of fellowship open with Jewish believers by giving warning to Gentiles about any compromise with the idolatry and immorality that was so much a part of their world.[72]

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[68]Schnabel, *Acts*, 653.

[69]Ibid., 653-654.

[70]Ibid., 654. Italics original.

[71]Ibid., 654-55.

[72]Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 440.

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James' sermon shaped the culture of the early church by influencing the beliefs of those gathered in Jerusalem regarding God's work among the Gentiles. It also directly influenced the behavior of the Council in terms of their actions toward the church at Antioch. One can only imagine the effect it would have had on church history had the Jerusalem church stifled what God was doing in Antioch and beyond. Longenecker writes about the significance of their actions in terms of subsequent history,

> When one considers the situation of the Jerusalem church in AD 49, the decision reached by the Jerusalem Christians must be considered one of the boldest and most magnanimous in the annals of church history. While still attempting to minister exclusively to the nation, the council refused to impede the progress of that other branch of the Christian mission whose every success meant further difficulty for them from within their own nation . . . Thus both Paul's mission to the Gentiles and the Jewish-Christian mission to Jews were enabled to progress side by side without conflict.[73]

Notably, James' sermon also had an effect on the behavior of the church at Antioch, because they enthusiastically received the letter containing his proposals. When they received and read the letter, "they rejoiced because of its encouragement" (Acts 15:31). It is assumed in the text, though not stated explicitly, that their rejoicing reflected tacit agreement about the solution proposed by the Jerusalem church. James' teaching affected, then, not just the behavioral norms of those in Jerusalem but also those in Antioch.[74] It is clear that the teaching of James served a vital role in shaping the culture of the early church.

Paul's Sermon to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17-38)

The fifth and final paraenetic sermon in Acts was delivered by the Apostle Paul. It is considered to be Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders. Paul was

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[73]Longenecker, "Acts," 953.

[74]Malina and Pilch state that due to the exhortatory nature of the letter sent to Antioch, their response reflected obedience as a result of loyalty and solidarity with those in Jerusalem, rather than a sense of obligation to the power or authority of the other church. This is a powerful statement about the personal influence wielded by the Jerusalem leaders. Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 111.

staying in Miletus and called for the elders to join him from Ephesus (Acts 20:17). When they arrived, he delivered his final sermon to them.[75]

Pervo states that this sermon is unique in Acts because it is an address to leaders. The sermon suggests "a paradigm for leadership, reinforcement of leaders' authority, and guidance for believers."[76] There are three major sections in the sermon: a defense of Paul's ministry among them (Acts 20:18-27), instructions for the elders and the church (Acts 20:28-31), and a benediction wherein he commits them to the Lord and to the "message of His grace" (Acts 20:32-35). Paul concluded his sermon by kneeling and praying with the elders (Acts 20:36).[77]

The first section of the sermon was a defense of Paul's ministry among them. He reminded them that he "did not shrink back from proclaiming . . . anything that was profitable or from teaching it . . . in public and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). He indicated that God had called him to go to Jerusalem and stated that he was willing to face whatever he might find there, even though the Spirit had told him that he would be imprisoned and afflicted once he arrived (Acts 20:22-24). He then declared that he was guiltless of their blood because he had declared faithfully to them "the whole plan of God" (Acts 20:25-27). This reminiscence of Paul's ministry and his indication that his current movement was ordered by the Holy Spirit would have reminded the elders of the authenticity of his leadership among them. Paul frequently defended his authority as an apostle by reminding the churches of his labor and exemplary conduct among them (e.g., 2 Cor 10:1-18; 1 Thess 2:1-12). Conzelmann stated that this section "sketches the picture

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[75]Wells calls this sermon "the first known systematic pastoral theology." Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 182.

[76]Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 516-17.

[77]Peterson divides the sermon in an alternate manner that is helpful and memorable. The first section of the sermon is Acts 20:18-21, titled "Recalling the Past." The second section of the sermon is Acts 20:22-35, titled "Facing the Future." Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 563-65.

of Paul as he should always be remembered."[78]

The second section of the sermon contained several instructions for the elders.[79] First, they should remain on guard "for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the flock of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).[80] Paul stated the reason for his exhortation: "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And men will rise up from your own number with deviant doctrines" (Acts 20:29-30). Paul understood that evil men could bring "bloody persecution" to the church and that false teachers could emerge to lead the flock astray.[81] Second (and embedded within the first imperative), they should "shepherd" the flock of God that was among them.[82] This shepherding mandate is consistent with the biblical motif found elsewhere in Scripture related to leadership of God's people (e.g., Ps 23, Ezek 34, 1 Pet 5:2). Third, they should be on the alert, remembering Paul's previous warnings about the possibility of false doctrine (Acts 20:31).

The third section of the sermon was a benediction in which Paul committed the

[78]Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 173.

[79]Although Paul does not mention it in this sermon, an interesting feature of his instructions to elders in Ephesus elsewhere is the requirement that they must be "hospitable." This is especially relevant in light of the material in the previous chapter on table fellowship and hospitality. It is clear that Paul understood the importance both of teaching and table fellowship. See 1 Tim 3:2, where hospitality and the ability to teach are coupled together as qualifications for elders in Ephesus.

[80]Barrett calls Acts 20:28 both "the practical and the theological centre of the speech; the practical centre, because Paul's primary intention is to urge the Ephesian elders to do their duty effectively . . . and the theological centre, because only here in Acts is there an attempt to bring out the ground of the church's ministry in the work of the Holy Spirit." Barrett, *Acts*, 974.

[81]Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 204.

[82]Parsons and Culy state that the construction of the verb "to shepherd" (*poimainein*, a present active infinitive) indicates that this was the purpose for which they had been appointed by the Holy Spirit. Mikeal C. Parsons and Martin M. Culy, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 396. Thus, "shepherding" becomes the governing motif of the verse. For an excellent work that develops a biblical theology of the shepherding theme, see Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

elders "to God and to the message of His grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20:32). Paul also reminded them once again of his labor on their behalf during his ministry among them (Acts 20:33-35). This was meant to encourage and build them up, which it in fact did, as is evidenced by their reaction of affection and intimate friendship when he departed (Acts 20:36-38). Paul also reminded the elders that God would give them an inheritance (Acts 20:32), which was echoed in Peter's later teaching that those who shepherd the flock well will receive "the unfading crown of glory" (1 Pet 5:4). Polhill notes about this benedictory section, "Paul passed on the banner to the Ephesian elders to continue to lead the church after his departure, urging them above all to be faithful to his gospel in the light of the coming threats."[83]

Because of his imminent departure and doubtful return, the elders' response to Paul's sermon was sorrow. While the text does not explicitly indicate whether or not the elders took to heart his instructions, it is nonetheless clear that he intended to shape their future behavior. This is indicated by the imperatives to be on guard, shepherd the flock, and be on the alert (Acts 20:28-31). Even in the form of his address, which paralleled other common farewell addresses, Paul intended for his example and instructions to influence the behavior of the elders. Polhill notes, that among other things, a common feature of the ancient farewell address was "exhortations to desired behavior on the part of the hearers."[84]

Additionally, by committing the elders to "the message of His grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20:32), Paul intended to shape their belief and confidence in the message that he had entrusted to them through his teaching ministry. Paul desired

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[83]Polhill, *Acts*, 429.

[84]Ibid., 423. Polhill discusses other common features which include assembling close associates, notifying the hearers of the speaker's impending death or departure, asking the hearers to emulate the speaker's behavior, delivering exhortations about future behavior, and casting predictions of coming trouble.

those who led the church to be committed faithfully to continue in the tradition of his teaching ministry. In his letter to Timothy, who was serving in Ephesus, Paul urged him, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). Paul had modeled this by declaring to them "the whole plan of God" (Acts 20:27) and now expected the elders to emulate his example.[85] Paul wanted to shape a culture among the church leaders in Ephesus of assured belief in the message and subsequent behavior that included intentional and faithful teaching of the message.

Conclusion

The speeches in Acts, particularly the paraenetic sermons of the apostles, function prominently in Luke's account of the life and growth of the early church. Soards observes, "Luke weaves speeches into the narrative of Acts and creates *emphasis* so that the speeches articulate a distinct worldview."[86] As demonstrated above, the apostles' teaching shaped the organizational culture of the early church because it directly impacted the behavior, values, and beliefs of early Christians. As Richard Wells so appropriately remarks about the sermons in Acts, "when the preachers preach, things happen."[87]

Each of the paraenetic sermons was effective, shaping the early church's culture in clear ways. Whether it was in selecting a replacement for Judas, developing an understanding of how Jewish and Gentile believers should relate to one another, or understanding the sacred task of shepherding the flock, the sermons achieved their

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[85]Pelikan notes that the semantic construction in v. 27 suggests Paul was indicating that "'accuracy' (*akribeia*) in the presentation of the Christian message was the obligation not only not to pervert it, but also not to omit some part of it, for heresy has often been a concentration on one aspect, in itself correct, of 'the whole counsel,' at the expense of the message 'as a whole.'" Pelikan, *Acts*, 219.

[86]Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 183.

[87]Wells and Luter, *Inspired Preaching*, 177.

desired goals. Peter, James, and Paul understood that the church must be obedient to the Word of God.

Paul said that Scripture is "profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). The apostles grounded their teaching ministry in the authority of Scripture, understanding that if the behavior, values, and beliefs of the early church would change, it would be driven by the teaching of God's Word. In the book of Acts, the Spirit used the teaching of the Word to shape the culture of the early church, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Paraenetic sermons in Acts

Text	Sermon	Cultural Components Shaped
Acts 1:15-26	Peter's Sermon in the Upper Room	Values and behavior relating to the selection of Matthias as one of the Twelve.
Acts 11:1-18	Peter's Sermon to the Circumcision Party in Jerusalem	Beliefs, values, and behavior regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church's mission.
Acts 15:6-11	Peter's Sermon at the Jerusalem Council	Beliefs, values, and behavior regarding the circumcision of Gentile converts.
Acts 15:13-21	James' Sermon at the Jerusalem Council	Beliefs, values, and behavior regarding the circumcision of Gentile converts.
Acts 20:17-38	Paul's Sermon to the Ephesian Elders	Beliefs and behavior regarding faithfulness to the "message of grace" and the flock of God.

Teaching is a common culture creation methodology in modern organizational change theory.[88] More importantly, however, it has featured prominently in the life and history of God's people. The Israelites were instructed to "teach" generation after

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[88]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 236.

generation to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut 6:4-9). King Solomon viewed himself as "the Teacher" of Israel (Eccl 1:1). Those who encountered Jesus were "astonished at His teaching because His message had authority" (Luke 4:32). The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, "Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim 4:16). Teaching was central in Acts, as has been demonstrated above and could be demonstrated further in the narrative, such as when Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos home and "explained the way of God to him more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Peter, James, and Paul serve as exemplary examples of those who took seriously the responsibility of teaching and understood how it would influence the early church.

The examples of Peter, James, and Paul have important implications for the modern church and the way in which church leaders shape church culture. Specifically, the sermons in Acts and their effect demonstrate the centrality of teaching Scripture in the life of the church and its benefit for shaping church culture. The place of Scripture is so essential to the book of Acts that "Scripture is used to give shape to the narrative."[89] The mandate for the modern church is to follow the apostles' example and make the teaching and preaching of Scripture primary in the church. Cullman stated that the church's proclamation of the gospel "gives to the period between Christ's resurrection and Parousia its meaning for redemptive history."[90]

The most powerful way to shape and change a church's culture is through teaching what God's Word says about the church. When Jesus wanted to change the culture of the temple in Jerusalem (the way things were done behaviorally), he did so by

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[89]Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 223.

[90]Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 157.

confronting them with God's Word (Mark 11:15-19). The renowned German theologian

Karl Barth spoke of the commitment the preacher must have to God's Word,

> We stand before holy scripture. This bears witness to revelation, establishes the church, and gives the command, and vocation comes through it. The act of those who live by justification, then, can be no other than that of understanding and expounding the scriptural word, and to that extent repeating it.[91]

Teaching God's Word requires a leader to submit other agendas, priorities, and ideas to it. William Willimon encouraged preachers to consider all the "skills of biblical interpretation as skills in service of faithful listening to the text."[92] Kerr agrees, stating, "The preacher who follows in the apostolic succession is consecrated to proclaim a definite, unchanging message. This message is something given, not something discovered."[93] That is, if a church's culture is going to change, it must not be grounded in what the leader thinks but in what God thinks. Change must be grounded not in the leader's word, but in God's Word. The leader must not ground his teaching in his own authority, but in God's authority, as revealed in Holy Scripture. Haddon Robinson notes that preachers may fill the pulpit with many things, "Yet when a preacher fails to preach the Scriptures, he abandons his authority. He confronts his hearers no longer with a word from God but only with another word from men."[94]

In order to change the observable artifacts or behavior of a church, the values of the church must change. In order to change the values of the church, the presuppositional underlying beliefs of the church must change. The most effective means of addressing people's deeply held assumptions and beliefs is to teach God's Word. If leaders desire to shape church culture, they must seek eagerly to understand Scripture and

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[91]Karl Barth, *Homiletics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 75.

[92]William H. Willimon, *Proclamation and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 42.

[93]Hugh Thomson Kerr, *Preaching in the Early Church* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1942), 43.

[94]Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 18.

then must commit faithfully to teach it to others. In doing so, the behavior, values, and beliefs of the church will begin to align with God's Word. The apostles understood this to be true. The open-ended conclusion of the book of Acts serves perhaps as an invitation for the generations of Christians who would follow them to continue in the pattern of their teaching as they lead the church and shape church cultures that reflect biblical norms.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Organizational health is a central indicator of organizational success. Patrick Lencioni states, "At the end of the day . . . few other activities will seem more worthy of our effort and more impactful on the lives of others, than making our organizations healthy."[1] Yet organizational health cannot be achieved without developing healthy organizational culture. Developing a biblical church culture is vital to experiencing church health. While this thesis has not delineated every characteristic of healthy church culture, it has discovered some primary ways through which healthy church culture can be shaped and reinforced.

Research Conclusions

This thesis has revealed important insights about organizational culture in the light of the biblical material in Luke-Acts. Edgar Schein said, "Just deciphering a culture for curiosity is as vague as just assessing personality or character in an individual. Assessment makes more sense when there is . . . some specific purpose for which we need information."[2] The purpose for which this research was conducted was to determine the primary means through which Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped the culture of the early church.

The following questions were the primary research questions driving this

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[1]Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 193.

[2]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 177.

study:

1.　　　　Did Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shape the culture (behavior, values, and beliefs) of their followers?

2.　　　　What methodologies did Jesus and the early church employ in shaping church organizational culture?

3.　　　　To what effect among New Testament believers and church did Jesus and early church leaders shape church culture? How effective were the methodologies Jesus and the early church employed?

The research demonstrated that Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped the culture of their followers. Their actions affected the behavior, values, and underlying beliefs of the early church. Many of these cultural elements were related to Jew/Gentile relations (Acts 11, Acts 15), as well as the relationship Jesus' followers would have with tax collectors, sinners, and other outsiders (Luke 5:29-39, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 19:1-10). Other cultural elements included behavior, values, and beliefs regarding hypocrisy (Luke 11:37-54), Sabbath regulations (Luke 6:1-5), status and humility (Luke 14:1-24, Luke 22:14-34), Jesus' identity (Luke 9:10-17, Luke 24:13-43); the disciples' obedience (Luke 9:10-17, Luke 10:38-42), and leadership selection and responsibilities (Acts 1:15-26, Acts 20:17-38).

The primary means or "imbedding mechanisms" Jesus and early church leaders used for shaping and reinforcing new cultural norms were table fellowship and teaching. In Luke, table fellowship was the primary means Jesus used to shape the culture of his followers. This was demonstrated through the prominence of eleven meal scenes in Luke, all of which addressed one or more cultural elements. In Acts, teaching was the primary means church leaders used to shape the organizational culture of the early church. This was demonstrated through the five paraenetic sermons addressed to the church in Acts, all of which addressed two or more cultural elements.

These means generally were effective (e.g., the disciples' obedient response to Peter's sermon in Acts 1 or James' recommendations in Acts 15). However, in some

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cases Jesus' actions were rejected (e.g., the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus after their experience with him at the table in Luke 11:53-54). Still, these encounters generally were significant, including life-transforming exchanges such as the repentance of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 after dining with Jesus.

Contribution of the Research

This research is significant in that it fills a void in the current literature in the field of organizational culture and change by providing a distinctively biblical model for shaping church culture. Although much research had been conducted on organizational culture and change in secular organizations such as businesses, hospitals, and educational institutions,[3] and while some church leaders have appropriated the secular research for the purpose of shaping church culture,[4] no research had been conducted to develop a model of organizational change "native" to the text of Scripture itself. By discovering the importance of table fellowship and teaching for shaping the organizational culture of the church, this thesis provides a unique contribution to the existing research in the field of organizational culture and change.

For the church leader who is interested in purely biblical means for shaping the culture of his church, as opposed to appropriating a model designed for secular organizations, this research provides two unique methodologies for shaping and reinforcing church culture. By teaching what God's Word says about the church and reinforcing change through the personal influence exerted over the meal table, leaders

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[3]E.g., Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*; John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002).

[4]E.g., Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005); Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013); Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

can shape church culture using a distinctively biblical model. This does not negate the importance of the secular research, but does provide a new contribution to the research for change methodologies.

Although this research is primarily beneficial to church leaders, there is some relevance of the research for secular organizations as well. For instance, if a business leader attempts to change an organization based merely on his or her opinion about the way things should be done, the change may be unsuccessful. However, if the leader will ground the change in an authority higher than his or her opinion, the change effort might be more effective.[5] Furthermore, if the leader will reinforce the cultural changes through personal influence exerted over the dinner table, it may be that the members of the organization will learn to trust and follow the leader's changes because of the personal relationship that has developed. In other words, teaching and table fellowship have relevance beyond the church. Leaders of secular organizations can use teaching and table fellowship to shape and reinforce the culture of their organizations.

Areas for Future Research

There are several areas where future research is needed in order to enhance the present study. First, further research on organizational culture could be conducted in Luke-Acts. As noted in previous chapters, there are several important sub-themes in Luke-Acts that could be explored. For instance, one could examine the role confrontation played in Jesus' ministry. One could also trace the importance of community in Acts. Additionally, one could trace in detail the role of the Spirit in shaping the culture of the early church. For that matter, although the meal motif has been thoroughly traced in

[5]While many secular leaders will not attempt to ground change in the authority of Scripture, the appeal to an authority beyond the leader may still be helpful. For instance, in politics, a leader might ground an argument in the U.S. Constitution to lend weight to an appeal. A business leader might refer to precedent experience or case studies of effective organizations. In general, if a leader will teach the organization's members that the change is grounded in some authority beyond the leader, they might agree to the changes more easily.

Luke, one could examine the role meals played in Acts in the creation of cultural norms in the early church.[6]

Second, this thesis has only researched organizational culture creation methodologies in Luke-Acts. Further work could be done on other New Testament books. For instance, one could examine the elements of organizational culture present in the seven churches described in Revelation 2-3. Or, one could examine the confrontational nature of Paul's letter to the church at Galatia to examine how it was used to change the culture of the Galatian church. In addition to examining other New Testament books, research could be conducted on organizational culture in the Old Testament, such as in the life of Israel under the various Israelite kings.

Third, the study of organizational culture could be approached from a purely theological perspective.[7] For instance, one might trace how the kingdom of God necessarily reshapes cultural norms in the church. Or one might explore the implications of the Doctrine of Man for organizational culture. Additionally, a biblical-theological approach might trace the "horizontal" theme of the *people of God* to discover its impact on a Christian understanding of organizational culture.

Methodological Application

Modern church leaders should be aware that every church carries its own unique culture. Leaders should realize the importance of pro-actively shaping church culture so that it reflects biblical norms. Since Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped the culture of the early church, modern church leaders should realize

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[6]As mentioned in the previous chapter, research has been conducted on the importance of meals in Acts, although not with a view toward how they shaped church organizational culture in particular.

[7]Angela Joan Ward includes a brief overview of the biblical and theological nature of organizational culture in her doctoral dissertation. Angela Joan Ward, "Church Organizational Culture: Construct Definition and Instrument Development" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 10-29.

their responsibility to be aware of the culture realities of their church and take intentional steps to shape them. The culture of every organization is constantly changing. The change happens naturally as the organization evolves but the changes will be unpredictable. The effective church leader will guide change with intentionality. The implications of the research findings in the present study are that leaders can most effectively and biblically shape church culture through table fellowship and teaching.

Table Fellowship

If a leader wants to shape the behavior, values, and beliefs of his church, he should prioritize the importance of eating meals with church members. Table fellowship is powerful. Hospitality is influence. Over a meal, a leader can exert personal influence effectively and build relational credibility that can be leveraged to affect change at a micro-level. As an increasing number of individuals change through personal encounters with the leader, the organization as a whole will experience changes in its culture that reflect these personal encounters. Michael Lindsay states, "At its root, leadership hinges on the relationship between followers and the leader."[8]

Leaders develop real relationships through hospitality. Though there are many meals that leaders should share with church members beyond the Lord's Supper, N. T. Wright argues about the Lord's Supper that it is not the end of the church's unity but rather the means. He states, "It ought to be the means, the thing we already do, that will create a context in which we will be able to understand and respect one another, and grow towards a richer unity."[9]

An example of the effectiveness of hospitality from recent history is the

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[8]D. Michael Lindsay, *View from the Top: An Inside Look at How People in Power See and Shape the World* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014), 139.

[9]N. T. Wright, *The Meal Jesus Gave Us: Understanding Holy Communion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 81-82.

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practice of former President George H. W. Bush. President Bush was well known for using his home to build personal relationships with foreign dignitaries. This "personal diplomacy" often involved cooking hamburgers and hot dogs. While he was in Congress, the "hamburger lunches" he hosted proved effective in building friendships with politicians from both parties who would work with him for the rest of his career.[10] Hospitality proved to be one of the most effective elements of his statecraft.

Karris poignantly remarks that "eating is a serious and dangerous, but also a joyful business."[11] Incorporating table fellowship as a component of one's leadership practice can be one of the most fruitful and personally rewarding activities in a leader's life. Blomberg notes that the purpose of Christian meals is to draw believers into greater intimacy.[12] It may be in the context of that greater intimacy that a leader can influence his followers the most. Tim Chester notes, "If you share a meal three or four times a week and you have a passion for Jesus, then you will be building up the Christian community and reaching out in mission."[13]

There are several ways a leader can incorporate table fellowship into his ministry. First, on a regular basis a leader should take members to eat at restaurants during the week. These one-on-one encounters allow the leader to embed cultural norms through the exertion of personal influence and care for the member. Second, a leader should host people for meals in his home. Church members get an authentic glimpse into the leader's life when they visit his home for a meal. If the leader's life is consistent with his teaching, he can replicate norms of behavior, values, or belief powerfully among the

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[10]George W. Bush, *41: A Portrait of My Father* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2014), 83.

[11]Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 97.

[12]Craig Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 179.

[13]Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, & Mission around the Table* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 16.

members as they receive his hospitality. Third, the leader should provide opportunities for table fellowship within the life and organization of the church. This can take place in a regular weekly fellowship meal, frequent participation in the Lord's Supper, or occasional get-togethers throughout the year. These experiences will allow personal interaction between members and can provide a context in which fruitful conversations can occur and cultural norms can permeate the congregation.

Teaching

Leaders shape church culture most effectively by grounding any organizational movement in the teaching and preaching of Scripture. Church members will likely adapt to cultural changes more readily when they know that the changes are driven by a correct understanding of God's Word. Albert Mohler summarizes the role of teaching in the life of the leader most precisely when he states,

> The most effective leaders are unstoppable teachers. They teach by word, by example, and sheer force of passion. They transform their corporations, institutions, and congregations into learning organizations . . . To lead with conviction is to seize the role of the teacher with energy, determination, and even excitement. What could be better than seeing people learn to receive and embrace the right beliefs, seeing those beliefs and truths take hold, and then watching the organization move into action on the basis of those beliefs?[14]

Teaching and preaching the Bible must be central in the local church. Healthy church culture will not be created without it. Andy Stanley notes that one of the most important considerations about a leader's communication is the *outcome* of teaching: "life change."[15] Indeed, Christian teaching should always lead to change. When a church leader opens God's Word and teaches it to a congregation, the church is called both to hear and do the Word (Jas 1:22). When the church obeys Scripture, organizational

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[14]R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), 72-73.

[15]Andy Stanley and Ronald Lane Jones, *Communicating for a Change* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2006), 92.

transformation results. John Stott remarked that "disturbing the complacent" is one of the duties of the preacher.[16] As the church is disturbed from its present cultural reality, new cultural norms can begin to develop as the behavior, values, and beliefs of the church conform to Scripture.

The teaching ministry of the leader can occur at three levels. First, the leader should teach members on a one-on-one basis through personal discipleship. This practice reflects Jesus' teaching that the church should "make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20). Leaders can shape the behavior, values, and beliefs of individual members through one-on-one Bible teaching. Second, teaching should occur in the context of small groups. Stetzer and Rainer note that a mark of a "transformational church" is the centrality of small groups, and "the anchor of a transformational small group is the Word of God."[17] Culture permeates an organization as groups of people adapt to the new cultural norms. If a leader can influence small groups through teaching, the organization as a whole will begin to experience change. Third, teaching Scripture should occur in the pulpit ministry of the pastor. Paul told Timothy to "pay close attention to your . . . teaching" (1 Tim 4:16). Expository preaching should be the primary means of teaching Scripture in the pulpit because it allows God's Word to be central.[18] The leader who grounds organizational change in Scripture will demonstrate that the change is rooted in God's authority and not his own. The most powerful way to change a church's culture is through teaching what God's Word has to say about the church.

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[16]John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 310.

[17]Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 193.

[18]Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 42.

Conclusion

Among other things, a biblically qualified pastor must be "hospitable, an able teacher" (1 Tim 3:2). The juxtaposition of these two elements is not accidental. In teaching and eating, a modern church leader can embed cultural norms in the church in ways that are consistent with the practice of Jesus and early church leaders. The leader can follow the pattern set by Jesus and early church leaders not only in the nature of the cultural norms that are shaped but also in the very means of shaping these norms. The practices of table fellowship and teaching are also consistent with the most current research conducted on healthy churches. For instance, Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer describe "relational intentionality" as one of the major marks of a "transformational church."[19] Hosting church members, guests, and lost friends for meals is a biblical way of demonstrating relational intentionality.

Furthermore, Rainer notes that "breakout churches" have leaders who are characterized by "fierce biblical faithfulness," wherein "they not only give mental assent to key doctrinal truths, but they also practice these beliefs in their preaching, teaching, leadership, and ministry."[20] Perhaps the best thing a modern leader can do in leading a church is to cease worrying about the latest church growth methodologies or ministry fads and focus his ministry on teaching Scripture faithfully and practicing the kind of hospitality that allows him to lead church members to greater Christ-likeness.

The burden of leadership weighs heavily on leaders who desire to effect change in their organizations responsibly and in ways that ultimately honor the Lord. Every organization changes naturally. Indeed, this change is needed. Due to the broken nature of mankind, organizations by necessity must constantly change and reform so that unbiblical cultural norms can be transformed in ways that honor Christ. In God's

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[19]Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 99-122.

[20]Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 66.

sovereignty, leaders are sometimes placed into organizations for the express purpose of

serving as agents of God-glorifying change. Hans Finzel states,

> At times, I suspect, God places individuals into organizations where they don't fit for a reason, either to teach the organization things it needs to learn, or to work on the development of the person who is the poor fit.[21]

Leaders who guide their organizations to develop cultures that are healthy and

biblical experience both the benefit and the burden of change. The burden is that change

is difficult and sometimes very costly. The benefit is that if successful, the leader

observes the positive outcomes of the organizational change. Beyond that, the leader

himself experiences positive change in the process of leading the organization to change.

Therefore, intentionally shaping church culture through teaching and table fellowship is

both glorifying to God and edifying to the leader and his followers. Speaking and eating

for God's glory grows the church in ways that honor Jesus.

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[21]Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Colorado Springs, CO: NexGen, 2000), 154.

APPENDIX 1

THE SPEECHES IN ACTS

Marion L. Soards provides the following list.[1]

1. The words of the risen Jesus and the angels to the apostles (1:4b-5, 7-8, 11)
2. Peter's speech and the disciples' prayer prior to the enrollment of Matthias (1:16-22, 24b-25)
3. Peter's speech at Pentecost (2:14b-36, 38-39, 40b)
4. Peter's speech in Solomon's portico of the Temple (3:12-26)
5. Peter's speech to the Jewish authorities after his and John's arrest (4:8b-12, 19b-20)
6. The prayer of the apostles' and their friends (4:24b-30)
7. The speech of Peter and the apostles to the council (5:29b-32)
8. Gamaliel's speech to the council (5:35b-39)
9. The speech by the Twelve prior to the appointment of the Seven (6:2b-4)
10. Stephen's speech (7:2-53, 56, 59b, 60b)
11. Peter's speech in Cornelius' house (10:28b-29, 34b-43, 47)
12. Peter's speech to the circumcision party (11:5-17)
13. Paul's speech at Antioch of Pisidia (13:16b-41, 46-47)
14. The speech of Barnabas and Paul at Lystra (14:15-17)
15. Peter's speech at the Jerusalem gathering (15:7b-11)
16. James's speech at the Jerusalem gathering (15:13b-21)
17. Paul's speech in the middle of the Areopagus (17:22-31)
18. Paul's speech to the Corinthian Jews (18:6b-d)
19. Gallio's speech to the Corinthian Jews (18:14b-15)
20. Demetrius's speech (19:25b-27)
21. The speech of the Ephesian town clerk (19:35b-40)
22. Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders (20:18b-35)
23. Agabus's speech in Caesarea (21:11b-c)
24. Paul's speech to the disciples in Caesarea (21:13b-c)
25. The speech of James and the Jerusalem elders (21:20b-25)
26. The speech of the Jews from Asia (21:28)
27. Paul's speech to the Jerusalem Jews (22:1, 3-21)
28. Paul's speech before the council (23:1b, 3, 5, 6b)
29. The Pharisees' speech in the council (23:9c-d)
30. Tertullus's speech (24:2b-8)

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[1]Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 21-22.

31. Paul's speech before Felix (24:10b-21)
32. Paul's speech before Festus (25:8b, 10b-11)
33. Festus's speech (25:14c-21, 24-27)
34. Paul's speech before King Agrippa (26:2-23, 25-27, 29)
35. Paul's speech(es) during the sea voyage to Rome (27:10b, 21b-26, 31b, 33b-34)
36. Paul's speech to the Roman Jewish leaders (28:17c-20, 25b-28)

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ABSTRACT

SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE: TABLE FELLOWSHIP
AND TEACHING IN LUKE-ACTS

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This thesis examines Luke-Acts to explore if, how, and in what ways Jesus and early church leaders intentionally shaped the culture of their followers. In Luke, table fellowship was the primary means Jesus used to shape the culture of his followers, as demonstrated through the prominence of eleven meal scenes. In Acts, teaching was the primary means early church leaders used to shape the organizational culture of the early church, as demonstrated through five paraenetic sermons addressed to the church. Table fellowship and teaching affected the behavior, values, and underlying beliefs of the early church related to Jew/Gentile relations (Acts 11; Acts 15), who should be considered as insiders/outsiders (Luke 5:29-39; Luke 7:36-50, Luke 19:1-10), hypocrisy (Luke 11:37-54), Sabbath regulations (Luke 6:1-5), status and humility (Luke 14:1-24; Luke 22:14-34), Jesus' identity (Luke 9:10-17; Luke 24:13-43); the disciples' obedience (Luke 9:10-17; Luke 10:38-42), and leadership (Acts 1:15-26; Acts 20:17-38).

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