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

Edited by
DAVID E. AUNE and
REIDAR HVALVIK

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Essays in Memory of Hans Kvalbein

Edited by
David E. Aune and Reidar Hvalvik

Mohr Siebeck

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Abbreviations

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

Hans Kvalbein in 2007

Introduction

David E. Aune

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

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

The Gospels

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Acts of the Apostles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the early Christian community contains a variety of people who had various experiences of migration. Stephen's speech in Acts 7 contains a concentration of themes related to migration and refugee status and the challenges that this involves. Stephen's speech constitutes a theological foundation for the impending Christian mission to the ends of the earth, since God's presence, action and salvation are not limited to one people and place. The persecution following the death of Stephen scatters Christians throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1–2). Acts 8 describes the ministry of Philip, one of the migrating Hellenists who had a ministry in Samaria. One early designation for followers of Jesus was "the Way" or "wayfarers" (9:2), referring to both their identity and message. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, where he was going to confront Jewish Christians (Acts 9), became paradigmatic for his long career as a migrant missionary. Peter also "goes here and there" (9:32) ministering to believers in Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea. With Acts 11:19, the narrative returns to those Hellenistic Christians who were scattered after the death of Stephen (8:1–4). From Acts 13 onward, Paul become the main character in the narrative, combining periods of intensive travel with various stays in particular cities, always accompanied by a variety of colleagues and workers; e. g. Corinth where he stayed a year and six months (18:11) and Ephesus where he stayed for two years (19:10). Finally, after a two-year stay in Caesarea, followed by a six-month trip on the Mediterranean, Paul came to Rome. In Acts 18:1, the movement of Christians is also attributed to the political situation, in this case, Aquila and Priscilla have been expelled from Rome by Claudius (along with all other Jews and Jewish Christians) after which they meet Paul in Corinth. Like few other books in the New Testament, Acts deals with the phenomenon of "the wandering people of God," essential for the formation and dissemination of early Christianity in the first century CE. Luke's portrayal of the followers of Jesus displays an enormous dynamic and mobility. The experiences of the many migrant missionaries led to the full acceptance of Gentiles into the people of God as *Gentiles*.

Paul

In "Perspectives for Mission: Galatians 3:1–14 in Context," Peder Borgen explores the significance of Gal 3:1–14 for understanding Paul's mission to the churches of Galatia. Basic to Paul's position is the belief that the Jewish people believed in one God and from Paul's perspective this one God was also the God of the Gentiles (Rom 3:29–31). God has a special relationship with the Jewish people through the Scriptures. The way in which the Gentiles are included in the worship and service of the one God is the central focus of Paul's letter to the Galatians. Sometime after Paul had founded the churches of Galatia, he found himself in conflict with his Galatian converts over the role of the

Scriptures in the life of believers. The central issue was the extent to which the regulations and observances of the Jewish Scriptures be regarded as valid for the Gentile converts which made up the congregations of Galatia. For this reason, the proper understanding of the Jewish Scriptures plays a central role in Galatians. The phrase "the works of the law" and the term "faith" are found repeatedly in Gal 3:1–14 and form an antithesis which is central to Paul's argument. While Paul was a zealous persecutor of Christians he must have assumed that Jesus was crucified for his own crimes. After Paul became a believer, he discovered that rather than dying for his own sins, Christ suffered a victorious death "for us" by having become a curse for us (Gal 3:13). According to Nils Alstrup Dahl, Gal 3:1–14 summarizes contradictory Scriptural passages under the headings "by faith" and "by the works of the law." According to Paul, those who are of faith are blessed, while those who rely on the works of the law are condemned. Dahl maintains that a real contradiction would have existed only if the law had led to justification and life; Paul maintains that the law was unable to do this and had not even been intended to function in such a way. Borgen argues that we should think in terms of two jurisdictions rather than in terms of supersession. The "Sinaitic jurisdiction" has "the works of the law" as a key phrase, while the "Abrahamic jurisdiction" has "faith" as a key phrase. In Gal 3:16 Paul uses a philological method of exegesis in arguing that the promises were made to Abraham and his "offspring" (singular) not "offsprings" (plural) and Paul understands "offspring" to refer to Christ, as in Gal 3:29: "And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (understanding Christ as a collective person as in Gal 3:26–29). The promise of the reception of the Spirit is mentioned in Gal 3:14 ("that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"), but how is the Spirit related to Christ? According to Gal 4:6: "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying 'Abba, father!'" In sum, Paul's letter treats problems in churches which were the result of his missionary activity. The letter gives us insight into Paul's radically new perspective as a missionary to the Gentiles when seen against the background of his former life as a persecutor of Christians.

Halvor Moxnes, makes use of recent work on ethnicity and memory to update his discussion of Rom 4 originally treated in his doctoral dissertation of forty years ago in an article entitled "Who are the Children of Abraham in Romans 4? Retelling the Memory of Abraham 'Our Ancestor'." Collective or social memory is a reconstruction of the past that adapts historical facts to the beliefs and values of the present. Following Ehud Ben Zwi, Moxnes discusses one *topos* of the cultural memory of Abraham in Paul: Abraham as ancestor. While Paul's retelling of the Abraham story in Rom 4 is much less polemical than the retelling in Gal 3, Moxnes focuses on the ancestry of Abraham as the specific way in which non-Jews were included in the people of God. Moxnes reviews the work of Carolyn Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A*

Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul (2007), but criticizes her position on the fixity of Jewish identity since she endows it with qualities that she criticizes, i. e., being "natural" and "unquestionable." Following Fredrik Barth, Moxnes maintains that ethnicity is not an inherent quality of a group, but rather the product of boundary making in which one group sets up boundaries over against other groups as part of their identity. Common among markers of identity within these boundaries, according to Christopher Stanley, are (1) belief in a shared history, (2) a common culture, and (3) some form of differentiating physical difference. Both Judeans and Greeks, who had different myths of origin and history, were ethnic groups that frequently found themselves in conflict. Paul worked with stories about Abraham that he could expect his audiences of Judeans and god-fearers to be familiar with. Paul begins Rom 4 with a question: "What then shall we say about Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?" in which he probably refers to the traditional memory of Abraham as the ancestor of the Judeans. Since Abraham occupied a strong memory tradition among Judeans, Paul had to draw on other Abrahamic traditions which would overrule those parts of the common memory of Abraham that did not support his position. The paradigmatic text that Paul uses to support his claims is Gen 15:6: "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Rom 4:3). Since Paul mentions only Abraham's belief as leading to righteousness he excluded other stories from entering the picture, particularly circumcision. Romans 4:11–12 illustrates how memory telling functions. Here Paul raises the daring issue of whether Abraham was circumcised or uncircumcised when he received the blessing of God. By arguing that Abraham's belief (Gen 15) preceded his circumcision (Gen 17), he claims priority for the former (Rom 4:11). In Rom 4:13–22, Paul redefines ethnic categories by emphasizing that Abraham received righteousness by faith and not the law, he excluded "those of the law," i. e., Judeans, from becoming heirs of Abraham. Paul does not break with his ethnic group, but includes non-Judeans in the group, though Judeans who are not Christ-believers are excluded. In Rom 4:18–21, Paul introduces a new definition of being a descendant of Abraham: not biology but God's promise. Since the ancestor is the model of character for his descendants, Abraham's descendants were those who shared his main characteristic: "faith." In Rom 4, Paul essentially breaks down the ethnic divisions between Jews and Gentiles.

Later New Testament Writings

David E. Aune explores "John's Prophetic Commission and the People of the World (Rev 10:8–11)." In this essay, the author examines the role of Christian prophecy in the mission of the early church. While the Revelation of John is typically regarded as belonging to the apocalypse genre, it also has similarities

to the later prophetic books of the Old Testament, which some have categorized as proto-apocalyptic or as prophetic apocalypses. In Revelation, John directs a prophetic message of salvation, not only to the people of God (in this case believers in Christ), but also to the people of the world, whether Jews or Gentiles. The author regarded himself as a prophet, evident in the presence of two prophetic commissions, one to Christian congregations (1:9–20), and the other to the people of the world (10:8–11). The prophetic call narrative in Rev 10:8–11 was based on Ezek 2:8–3:4, where Ezekiel uses the metaphor of a scroll for his prophetic message, the form the author gives to Revelation, which conveys his prophetic message. The focus of John's prophetic call in Rev 10:8–11 is found in v. 11: "And I was told, 'You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.'" This polysyndetic list has six close parallels elsewhere in Revelation. Revelation 5:9 will serve as an example:

> Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and by your blood did ransom for God [people] *from every tribe and tongue and people and nation* [ἐκ πάσης φ υλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους] and made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.

Here the author uses four overlapping ethnic categories to summarize the people of the world who have responded to the gospel who constitute the new people of God, whether Jew or Gentile. In Rev 10:11, God commands the author to prophecy "about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." This list of four overlapping categories of people of the world is found seven times in Revelation. An examination of each of these seven passages reveals that some, though by no means all, of the people of the world will respond to the proclamation of the gospel and become followers of Jesus. Though there are many instances in which people of the world do not repent when they experience divine punishment, there are also instances in which people see the light and repent of their evil ways to become followers of the Lamb (11:13). Revelation was written to Christians who needed to learn that salvation was divinely intended for all people and all who respond with repentance and belief will become part of the people of God.

In "'Like Newborn Infants': The Readers of 1 Peter as Newly Converted Christians," Torrey Seland focuses on three texts in 1 Peter arguing that the readers addressed in the letter are recent converts who are still in process of being socialized to the Christian world view. The author agrees with Ramsay Michaels that the readers of 1 Peter are those implied or presumed by the author. The readers, who include both men and women, slaves and children, are presumed to have experienced some sort of social ostracism and have endured some kind of harassment. Some of these people are relatively wealthy and they have some knowledge of the stories found in the Hebrew Bible. The author asks whether the implied readers have been Christians for a relatively

long time or perhaps for just a few years and examined three relevant passages to shed light on this issue: 1 Pet 1:12, 25; 4:3–4 and 2:1–3. In 1 Pet 1:12, 25, the readers are presented as having been recently evangelized. The author presupposes that the readers have been exposed to the preaching of the Word and by positively responding to this message became Christians. The message proclaimed was anchored in the Jewish Scriptures and emphasized the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In 1 Pet 1:12, 25, the author twice uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω, one of the more common terms for the basic proclamation of the gospel. The author does not reveal the identity of those who proclaimed the gospel to the readers, though several proposals have been made: (1) Peter himself or some of his coworkers, (2) some members of the community may have heard the gospel in Jerusalem at the Pentecost event narrated in Acts 2 and brought it back to the community, (3) the Christians in the area may have been converted through the efforts of Paul or his coworkers or (4) the Christians addressed may have been deported from Rome by the emperor Claudius. Whatever the merits of these possibilities, the author regarded the recipients as first rather than second generation Christians. In 1 Pet 4:2–3 the author reveals some of the social consequences of the readers' conversion to a new faith. The fact that their neighbors were surprised by the new type of social behavior which these converts were exhibiting again suggests that their conversion occurred relatively recently. First Peter 4:3–4 contains a stereotypical list of vices which characterized their previous lifestyle. J. H. Elliott has suggested that drinking parties such as those suggested in 1 Pet 4:2–3, could have taken place at meetings of clubs and associations. The conflicts which they were experiencing could have arisen because of their withdrawal from such social contexts. Since non-Christians are described as surprised by their behavior, this is another indication that they were recent converts. First Peter 2:1–3 describes the readers as newborn infants who long for pure spiritual milk, a metaphor which suggests that the author regards the readers metaphorically as children who had experienced conversion relatively recently.

Early Christianity

Reidar Hvalvik discusses "Mass Conversions, Persecutions and Church Growth: Critical Reflections on the Rapid Expansion of the Church during the First Three Centuries." The movement that would eventually be called "Christianity" began as a small group within first century Judaism. Three hundred years later, Christianity had spread throughout the Roman Empire and had become the religion favored by the Roman emperor. The growth of Christianity is nothing short of astonishing. For historian Ramsay MacMullen, the phenomenon of mass conversions is necessary to explain the phenomenal growth of early Christianity. MacMullen also alluded to the famous adage of Tertullian that the blood

of the martyrs was the seed of the church and ask how that worked. In this essay, Hvalvik examines the two phenomena which many believe led to the growth of early Christianity, mass conversions and persecution. Acts mentions the conversion of large groups of Jews to Christianity; three thousand in Acts 2:41 and five thousand in Acts 4:4; later in Acts, James mentions the fact that there are many thousands believers among the Jews (21:20). These numbers are often dismissed by historians as pious exaggerations in part because that would mean that a large portion of the population of Jerusalem would have been Christians. Hvalvik asks whether it makes any sense to speak of "thousands" of converts and asks what is known of the population of Jerusalem. Estimates run from 60,000 to 120,000 with the influx of pilgrim during Jewish holy days running from 125,000 to 400,000. With these possible figures in mind Hvalvik judges that 3,000 converts makes some sense. He argues, rightly, that both the terms "Christianity" and "conversion" are anachronistic; "Christianity" was not widely used for the followers of Jesus until the mid-second century, and the Jews to whom the apostles proclaimed the gospel were asked to "repent" not "convert." Those who responded to the message "reaffiliated" with a subgroup within Judaism. Given the relationship between the 3,000 people who accept the message of Peter on the day of Pentecost and the numbers of those Jews and proselytes who might have been present in Jerusalem (from 185,000 to 380,000), the number of new believers is not at all unreasonable. While "mass conversions" hardly occurred it is entirely possible that a considerable number responded positively to the message of the apostles.

Second and third century Christian authors often adopt a triumphalist tone when speaking of the great number of believers there were throughout the Roman Empire despite persecution by the authorities. Hvalvik mentions the fact that there are no impartial sources to help us understand the effect that persecution had on the growth and expansion of Christianity. For outsiders, Christian martyrs were unpatriotic fanatics who threatened social order. Though Christianity was not a legal religion, there is evidence that Roman officials acted relatively reasonably with Christians who refused to sacrifice to the emperors. There is no convincing evidence that during the second and third centuries persecutions, which happened only rarely, were actually good for the church. It is also important to remember that the church experienced backsliding and apostasy. During the persecution under Decius (249–251) many Christians sacrificed to the Roman gods, avoided sacrifice by various means or bribed Roman officials. The persecution under Decius produced both martyrs and apostates. The negative consequences of persecution were much greater than the positive consequences.

Karl Olav Sandnes has contributed an essay on "Households and the Exodus: A Note on Infant Baptism in the Early Church," focusing on whether household baptism included infants. The two opposing positions on the baptism of

infants are represented by Joachim Jeremias who argued for the practice in the early church and Kurt Aland who argued against it. Both agreed that the first extant evidence appears in the early third century CE. Sandnes asks whether Jewish sources reflect a corporate conception of salvation including children and whether that notion was adopted by early Christians in their discussion of infant baptism. This issue was prompted by the so-called household formula in Acts and the relevance of 1 Cor 10:1–2: "Our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Sandnes asks whether Paul draws upon a potential analogy that exceeds the actual use he makes of the Exodus in 1 Cor 10 and thus attests to the presence of a Scriptural pattern that could include children. Feminist studies have demonstrated that marginal groups, like women and children, are almost invisible in the sources. The baptism of households is mentioned six times in Acts, none of which mention women, children or slaves. The wider meaning of οἶκος ("household") suggests that children are not *excluded* is found in contemporary Greco-Roman and Jewish sources. In 1 Cor 10:1–5, Paul summarizes the Exodus story in which they key elements (the guiding and protecting cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea) are summarised in the term: ἐβαπτίσθησαν. The phrase "our fathers," who experienced the Exodus, cannot be taken to exclude either women or children.

Sandnes then turns to the theme of the Exodus and children in Jewish tradition (Wis 10:21; Isa 40:11). Though infants are not mentioned explicitly, their presence during the Exodus is assumed, particularly in Philo's version of the event (*Mos*. 1.179). Based on Exod 15:1, a tradition of the participation of children in the Exodus is reflected in many Jewish sources. Sandnes then asks if children were included in early Christian interpretations of the Exodus, since the crossing of the Red Sea was understood as a paradigm of baptismal theology and practice. According to Origin, what the Jews understood as a crossing of the sea, Paul calls baptism (1 Cor 5:17). Origen's justification of infant baptism has no clear connection with his reading of the crossing of the Red Sea; the presence of children at the Exodus event has no relevance for Origen to the question of infant baptism. The author concludes that it is likely that some early Christians baptised infants, while others did not. The story of the Exodus, Sandnes argues, was thought to include the presence of infants. Though the author expected to find an emphasis on the presence of infants in the interpretation of the Exodus found in Origen and Cyprian, both advocates of infant baptism in the early church, he found that these fathers connected infant baptism with other biblical texts.

Finally, Oskar Skarsaune has contributed an essay on "Mapping 'πάντα τὰ ἔθνη': The Geographical Horizon of Early Christian Mission." Skarsaune focuses on the question of how early Christians imagined the shape of the earth and the land on it. Taking the gospel to "all the nations" (Matt 28:19) or to the

"end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) evoked concrete images of landscapes and peoples that were on maps of the known world. The Christian mission was concerned with maps from the beginning, particularly ancient Jewish texts which mapped the world and its inhabitants, e. g., the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 and *Jubilees* 8–9. Genesis 10 is in the context of Gen 12:1–3, which promised blessing to all the peoples of the earth through Abraham and his offspring. Genesis 10 describes who these people are in a genealogical scheme consisting of a list of seventy nations, many named after their lands and cities of fictional forefathers. The world has a tripartite structure, named after the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, who settled in the north (the sons of Japheth), south (the Hamites) and east (the Shemites). Japheth's sons (10:2–5) include Gomer (the Greek Kimmerians), Magog ("land of Gog," perhaps Asia Minor), possibly referring to Gyges (= Gog) the king of Lydia. Gog is the overlord of Tubal (Cilicia) and Meshech (Phrygia). Gyges ruled more or less over Asia Minor. Javan (Greek Ionia) were the people of the Aegean islands and the Aegean coast of Asia Minor. Tarshish is the western limit of the inhabited world north of the Mediterranean. The sons of Ham (10:6–20) were Cush, Egypt, Put (Libya) and Canaan, organized from south to north. The Israelites traced their genealogy through Shem, the first son of Noah and Abraham descended from the line through Eber and his son Peleg. Shem's descendants included Elam (Persia), Asshur (Assyria), Arpachshad (probably Babylonia), Lud (probably Lydia).

The world map in *Jubilees* 8:10–9:15 was written during the mid-second century BCE, reflecting the inner-Judean conflicts of the Hasmonean period. While the distribution of peoples and lands in Gen 10 is simply stated as a fact, *Jubilees* tells the story of how the distribution of peoples and lands came about, i. e., they were arranged on the basis of a divinely sanctioned document written by Noah. Unlike Gen 10, *Jubilees* describes the locations and boundaries of the different peoples with relative specificity. *Jubilees* followed an Ionian cartographic tradition in which the earth was represented as a disc surrounded by Ocean, with Delphi in the center. However, *Jubilees* replaced Delphi with Jerusalem. The Ionian map conceived of the earth as a cylinder surrounded by a circular ocean rim on the top end of the cylinder After Plato and Aristotle, the idea of a globular earth gradually triumphed. *Jubilees* inserted Gen 10 into this Ionian conception, simplifying it by mentioning only of Noah's sons and grandsons. The New Testament text with the most allusions to Gen 10–11 is Acts 2:9–11, part of the Pentecost story, suggesting that it is an important subtext for Acts 2:9–11. In Gen 11, the seventy nations are dispersed throughout the world, while in Acts 2, people from every nation visit Jerusalem. In Gen 11, people shared one language, but after being dispersed they could not understand each other; in Acts 2, divided tongues were given to the apostles, so that everyone present could understand the languages spoken. Acts 2: 9–11 contains its own mini-table of nations.

Theology for the Church, Its Mission and the Christian Life

The Scholarly Profile of Professor Hans Kvalbein (1942–2013)

Reidar Hvalvik

Hans Kvalbein was born in Oslo 7th of April 1942 and grew up in a family with five resourceful brothers. Among other things, the home was characterized by a great interest in music, and Hans became a capable violinist. It is not impossible that he could have become a professional musician, as his younger brother did[1] – if he had chosen this career. Instead he chose theology, but brought with him the violin for entertainment in various social settings.

He graduated from high school with top marks in 1960 and started to study theology at MF Norwegian School of Theology[2] (in Norwegian: Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet). At that time MF had similarities with a seminary, since the great majority of students would become pastors in the Church of Norway, but the study was on the same academic level as at the faculty of theology, the University in Oslo, and lasted for six years (plus an extra year with practical theology). Kvalbein had no intention of becoming a pastor, but was deeply interested in theology in order to have a better knowledge of the basis of his Christian faith. After graduation in 1966, again with the best possible marks,[3] he studied classical Greek and underwent compulsory military service as a chaplain (though not ordained). He was a research fellow at MF in 1969–1971 before he received a scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt foundation (1971–1972). After a short period as acting assistant professor at MF (autumn 1972 – spring 1973), he was awarded a three-year scholarship from the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (1973–1976). He was engaged as assistant professor at MF in 1976, earned a doctorate in theology at the University of Oslo in 1981 and became professor in the New Testament at MF in 1985. After teaching at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong (1985–1986), he continued as professor at MF until his retirement in 2011. He died the 19th of December 2013, at the age of 71.

The following is an attempt to draw a picture of Hans Kvalbein, by presenting a selection of his publications – especially those written in Norwegian and thus

[1] Aage Kvalbein (b. 1947) is cellist and a professor in cello at the Norwegian Academy of Music.

[2] Earlier called "The Free Faculty of Theology" in English. MF is an abbreviation for (part of) the Norwegian name ("Menighetsfakultetet"), nowadays so well-known that it is more or less used as a name.

[3] "Laudable with recommendation" (Latin: *laudabilis cum litteris commendatitiis*). This was earlier the best possible grade in connection with a higher university degree. The name of the candidate was reported to the King of Norway.

less available for a foreign readership. Special focus will be given to the broader context (in the church, academia and society of Norway) which stimulated or prompted his writing. Besides, attention will be given to the most consistent traits in Kvalbein's scholarship and commitment.

The Bible as Authority and Object of Research

Kvalbein was a gifted scholar and an excellent pedagogue. He was eager and exceptionally able to instruct future pastors, ordinary church members and those in charge of the religious education in the schools. This is reflected by the fact that he has written extensively in Norwegian, always in a popular, readable style. In his mother tongue he published numerous articles and some commentaries and introductions to the books of the New Testament.[4] For almost three decades his two volume commentary on Matthew (published 1989 and 1990) has been a standard commentary in Norway, read by a large number of students and pastors. This commentary was the fruit of his lectures on Matthew for undergraduate students at the "Institute for Christian Education," where he was teaching for several years. This institute was a department at MF for students who would become teachers in religious education in the primary and secondary school.[5] His interest in religious education, which focused on Christianity in Norwegian schools until 1997,[6] is also reflected in his many articles in the journal *Prismet* – initially with the subtitle "Journal for School and Home."[7] As early as 1973 he published a lecture in this journal that in many ways indicates Kvalbein's personal and professional commitments. The title was "The Bible Crisis in Theology and in School."[8] He characterized it as a crisis that arises in the Christian church "when the Bible no longer is read and understood as the word of God. Then the church has lost its authority; it is like a ship without compass and without rudder. Such a ship will never reach its goal."[9]

These words reveal a reverence for the Bible, which obviously was part of the heritage from his pietistic and low-church background. His theological studies forced him, however, to reflect about the nature of the Bible and its authority, and early in his career as a research fellow, he wrote an article about that topic, questioning the (orthodox Lutheran) theory of verbal inspiration, which, ac-

[4] For further details, see the bibliography at the end of this volume.

[5] In Norwegian: Institutt for kristendomskunnskap. This department was established in 1967.

[6] Cf. the German "Christentumskunde."

[7] The journal is published by IKO – Church Educational Centre in Oslo, established in 1945 as an independent institution, with special focus on the religious education in schools.

[8] "Bibelkrisen i teologien og i skolestua," *Prismet* 24 (1973): 257–260, 262–269. All translations from Norwegian publications are my own.

[9] "Bibelkrisen," 257.

cording to him, lacks a real basis in the Bible itself.[10] More in line with the New Testament is a focus on the historical reliability of the Scriptures, the apostolic authorization, and the uniqueness and exclusivity of "the reality of revelation"[11] which the New Testament conveys. "We have no other historical trustworthy access to this reality of revelation, or better: to this person, the incarnated, crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, than the New Testament writings. … The Christian faith is, as faith in the incarnation, directed to the oldest historical sources, that is to the New Testament, and through the New Testament also to the Old Testament."[12] In this way the Bible becomes the only valid authority in the church.

It may be interesting to note that Kvalbein already as a student carried forward a critical view of the theory of verbal inspiration when he (in the low-church journal *Fast Grunn*) had an interview with the German Professor Walter Künneth.[13] The topic was the new confession movement in Germany, and Künneth was asked about possible problems for the movement. He answered, with reference to the pietistic movements: "One has to beware of falling back to a primitive doctrine about a verbal inspiration, namely that every word in Scripture is dictated by the Holy Spirit and thus inerrant."[14]

In the article "The Bible Crisis in Theology and in School," Kvalbein focused positively on the authority of the Bible, giving attention to three areas: a) the trustworthiness of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, b) the miracle stories, and c) the historical Jesus. With regard to the first question, he stressed that even in the classroom we have to speak about the Bible as the word of God, without denying that it is a historical document, written by many different people over a long period of time. He admitted that "the Bible is filled with problems and stumbling blocks for both faith and thought," and stressed the necessity to consider God's revelation in the Old Testament as temporary and advancing; it records a preparatory salvation history that finds its conclusion in Jesus Christ.

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[10] "Kan inspirasjonstanken begrunne skriftens autoritet?" [Does the Idea of Inspiration Give Reasons for the Authority of Scripture?], *Ung Teologi* 3.1 (1970): 9–18. Twenty-seven years later Kvalbein published an article in German which – at least to a certain extent – may be seen as a revised and enlarged version of the Norwegian article: "Die Inspirationslehre und die Autorität der Heiligen Schrift," in *Dein Wort ist die Wahrheit: Festschrift für Gerhard Maier: Beiträge zu einer schriftgemässen Theologie* (ed. Eberhard Hahn, Rolf Hille and Heinz-Werner Neudorfer; Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1997), 51–64.

[11] "Reality of revelation" is a rendering of the Norwegian "åpenbaringsvirklighet" = the German "Offenbarungswirklichkeit" – not easily translated into English.

[12] "Kan inspirasjonstanken begrunne skriftens autoritet?" 17–18.

[13] Professor in systematic theology in Erlangen 1953–1969.

[14] "'Intet annet evangelium!' En samtale med lederen for den nye bekjennelsesbevegelsen i Tyskland, professor Dr. Walter Künneth" ['No Other Gospel!' A Conversation with the Leader of the New Confession Movement in Germany, Professor Dr. Walter Künneth], *Fast Grunn* 18 (1966): 201–207, 207.

For that reason we need to have a certain distance to the Old Testament, recognizing that it contains much that does not have any relevance for us.[15]

Concerning the miracle stories, Kvalbein criticized both the medieval understanding of the miracles as evidence for the divinity of Christ and the modern existentialist theology which dismisses the historicity of the miracles. The miraculous element is vital for the Christian faith since it depends on the greatest of all miracles – the resurrection of Christ, understood as a historical event (cf. 1 Cor 15:14).[16]

The last question – about the historical Jesus – was, according to Kvalbein, probably the most central point in the current crisis in relation to the Bible because here we are talking about "the crucial question for all church-related preaching and teaching: Who was Jesus really?"[17] Kvalbein illustrated the crisis with reference to current trends in German theology, represented in Norway by the New Testament Professor Jacob Jervell, of the University of Oslo, who in a series of radio programs, among other things, had questioned the virgin birth, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and some of his miracles. In addition he denied that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God or the Messiah, and that he did not think about his own death as an atonement for the sins of all people. Kvalbein commended Jervell for stressing other aspects of Jesus: as the friend of the ostracized and sinners, calling people to discipleship and compassionate commitment towards their neighbors. The problem is that these aspects are emphasized at the expense of central parts of the New Testament witness about Christ, such as Jesus being the fulfillment of Old Testament promises and that he came to atone for the sins of the world.[18]

Kvalbein was eager to stress that this modern picture of the historical Jesus was not the result of historical research on the sources alone. In other words, the reality is not that scholarship and learning stand against belief, but rather "scholarship against scholarship and belief against belief."[19]

Considering the search for the historical Jesus, Kvalbein underscored the fact that the four Gospels are the only relevant sources for painting a picture of Jesus. If someone wants to present another picture which deviates significantly from that given in the Gospels, there are two possibilities: reduction or speculation. Reduction means deleting certain aspects of the Jesus of the Gospels, claiming them to be historical unreliable. The result is a "reduced Jesus." Speculation means to add some ideas about how Jesus should and "must" have been, often reflecting a certain world-view and agenda.

[15] "Bibelkrisen," 263
[16] "Bibelkrisen," 264–265.
[17] "Bibelkrisen," 265.
[18] So already in "Forskerferden og de ubesvarte spørsmål" [The Research Quest and the Unanswered Questions], *Luthersk kirketidende* 105 (1970): 170–175.
[19] "Bibelkrisen," 266.

Kvalbein's own conclusion was that a sober historical research in reality has limited possibilities to get behind the Jesus of the Gospels. Some details may be corrected, especially in those cases where the Gospels contradict each other, such as the dating of the cleansing of the Temple or the dating of the day of the death of Jesus. But generally we can trust the picture of Jesus found in the Gospels, which is the oldest and most authentic source "for knowledge about Jesus and belief in him."[20]

Even though Kvalbein early in his career wrote two articles on Paul and a popular commentary on 2 Corinthians,[21] his main scholarly interest came to be (the historical) Jesus and his message, a tone set already in the article referred to above.

German Theology and the Historical Jesus

It is difficult if not impossible to understand Kvalbein's career without referring to German theology. During his days as a theological student many of the textbooks were German, and almost all trendsetting theologians were from Germany. Aspiring students therefore went to German universities. Kvalbein's first study abroad was in Erlangen (1963–1964); later he went to Tübingen several times for shorter and longer periods (in 1966,[22] 1971–1972, 1974).

The first indication of his contact with German theology came in the abovementioned interview with Professor Walter Künneth (1966), three years later in an article on the theological position of Künneth, being one of the foremost opponents of Rudolf Bultmann and his program for "demythologizing" the New Testament.[23] Bultmann (and his disciples) contended that only faith in the kerygma of the New Testament was necessary for Christian faith, not any facts regarding the historical Jesus; in reality the New Testament shows no interest in history. Consequently the Gospels do not give access to the historical Jesus, only to the kerygma of the early church. Against this position Künneth emphasized that the Christian kerygma was concerned about history; it can be seen as a *report about facts*, because God's revelation has taken place in historical events. Kvalbein concludes: "It is the relation to history which is the burning issue in modern theology. When kerygmatic theology will erase the connection

[20] "Bibelkrisen," 267.

[21] See the bibliography at the end of this volume, under the years 1969, 1970 and 1973.

[22] This stay (Summer 1996) and the earlier one in Erlangen were financed by Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD).

[23] In this article Kvalbein tries to summarize the main points in Künneth's two books *Glauben an Jesus? Die Begegnung der Christologie mit der modernen Existenz* (1962) and *Entscheidung heute: Jesu Auferstehung – Brennpunkt der theologischen Diskussion* (1966).

between the kerygma and factual history, the distinctiveness of the Christian faith is threatened."[24]

There can be little doubt that Kvalbein identified himself with Künneth's position. In 1970 Jacob Jervell voiced a moderate version of German critical scholarship in the abovementioned radio programs, by questioning the historicity of certain events recorded in the Gospels. He was met with opposition from pastors and professors[25] and Kvalbein wrote a critical article in *Luthersk kirketidende*, a church magazine aimed primarily at pastors in the Church of Norway. Among the issues he discussed was the "function" of the historical Jesus. "The historical Jesus" can be understood in three different ways: 1) The Jesus of "neutral" historical research, 2) The "real Jesus," or 3) The "normative" Jesus. The first of these, found through secular historical methods, is of little or no interest for the church since it has no place for miracles and events without analogies. When the historical Jesus is conceived as the "real" Jesus, he is offered as an alternative to the "dogmatic" Jesus found in the Gospels. When this happens, a question immediately arises: Which of the two should be preached in the church? This leads to the third Jesus – the "historical" Jesus as the "normative" Jesus. Kvalbein quotes Jervell saying that the Jesus of the confessions and dogmas does not reach people of today but the historical Jesus has the possibility to reach people right through the centuries. As Jervell says in his book about the historical Jesus: "Today it seems necessary to 'reduce' something of what we have in the church, and then by all power and ability to picture the Jesus of history, the man without identity."[26]

Jacob Jervell responded to the criticism by directing many questions to Kvalbein – as Kvalbein had done to Jervell.[27] Jervell upheld the possibility of creating a picture of Jesus before and "behind" the Gospels, though he admitted that the possibility is limited. Among other things, he directs two critical remarks to Kvalbein. First, Kvalbein seems to presuppose that there is "one unified and simplified picture of Jesus" in the New Testament. Second, "for Kvalbein history seems to have stood still between Jesus and the writing of the Gospels."[28] Kvalbein's reply to Jervell made clear that the two debaters to a large extent had different agendas. To be noted is Kvalbein's concluding remarks about the historical-critical method used in gospel research:

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[24] "Tro på Jesus," 335.

[25] Most notably Edvin Larsson's essay "Jomfrufødselen" [Virgin Birth] in the newspaper *Aftenposten*, March 13, 1970.

[26] Jacob Jervell, *Den historiske Jesus* (2nd ed.; Oslo: Land og Kirke, 1969), 93–94.

[27] Jacob Jervell, "Kvalbeins ubesvarte spørsmål" [Kvalbein's Unanswered Questions], *Luthersk kirketidende* 105 (1970): 266–271.

[28] Jervell, "Kvalbeins ubesvarte spørsmål," 270–271.

The general historical method, where the principles of analogy and causality are essential critical criteria, must by necessity lead to a levelling of the picture of Jesus in the gospels. If the historical work on the Gospels shall have any theological worth, these principles have to be dethroned, as Jervell commendably does with regard to the resurrection, though not in other parts of the picture of Jesus in the Gospels.[29]

The focus on Jesus and his message occupied Kvalbein through his whole life. His last major contribution was his Jesus book from 2008 – with the title (in English translation): *Jesus – What Would He Do? Who Was He? An Introduction to the Message of the Three First Gospels*.[30] The title and the whole arrangement of the book immediately stimulated some discussion within the New Testament department at MF.[31] Was this a book about the historical Jesus and his "self-understanding" or, as the subtitle indicates, about the picture of Jesus and his message according to the three Synoptic Gospels? The tension in the title is not, however, a mistake. It reflects the author's understanding of the relation between the historical figure Jesus from Nazareth and the Synoptic Gospels. Kvalbein writes that there is "no big gap between what the Gospels record and what Jesus said and did." This assertion is justified with a reference to Jewish society, which had great respect for tradition:[32] "The handing over of the words of Jesus and the stories about him took place in a milieu where the audience could control what was told them, and they would have reacted if they found great deviations between the different representations."[33] To a certain extent this may be correct. But what about the Gospel of John? Is not its very existence like a bomb under Kvalbein's harmonizing model, since it gives a representation of Jesus, which in many ways is very different from that of the Synoptics?[34]

With regard to the Synoptic Gospels, Kvalbein claims that the similarities between them are so great that it justifies a unified representation of the life and message of Jesus based on the three first Gospels. Such an arrangement is not meant to be an alternative to separate treatments of the theology of each of the Synoptics, but it is better suited to give a unified and comprehensive picture of Jesus and his message. The presupposition is of course that there is one common theological perspective behind the Synoptics. That this is the case,

[29] "Svar til Jacob Jervell" [Reply to Jacob Jervell], *Luthersk kirketidende* 105 (1970): 291–295, 294.

[30] *Jesus: Hva ville han? Hvem var han? En innføring i de tre første evangelienes budskap* (Oslo: Luther forlag, 2008).

[31] The most outspoken critic was Geir Otto Holmås (who wrote a doctoral dissertation on Luke-Acts), at that time associate professor at MF and lecturing on the Synoptic Gospels.

[32] Here Kvalbein has a general reference to the research of Birger Gerhardsson (1961), Rainer Riesner (1981) and Samuel Byrskog (1994).

[33] Kvalbein, *Jesus*, 38.

[34] Cf. Mogens Müller's review of the book in *Tidsskrift for teologi og kirke* 81 (2010): 68–69. In his view the later Gospels are conscious theological attempts to rewrite the story about Jesus – which means that John only seems to stand out.

Kvalbein thinks can be proved by the fact that both Matthew and Luke have based their Gospels on Mark.[35]

There is certainly no reason for overemphasizing the differences between the Synoptic Gospels; they unquestionably have very much in common. On the other hand, there are also differences, and both Matthew and Luke made changes in Mark's text, and made independent marks on the tradition. These facts more or less disappear in Kvalbein's model. One wonders if this missing focus on each separate gospel is a reflection of a deep-rooted suspicion towards redaction criticism, found e. g. thirty years earlier in a review of one of Jervell's books. There Kvalbein concentrates on the chapter on redaction criticism, and questions what the author writes about "diverging theologies" in the New Testament. He concludes by maintaining that it is difficult to find room for the "doctrinal unity in the NT" in what Jervell writes about redaction criticism.[36] This may correspond to Kvalbein's view that theology should serve the church (see below). Speaking about divergent theologies does not do that.

Let us return to Kvalbein's assertion that there is "no big gap between what the Gospels record and what Jesus said and did." At least there is a time gap. In his review of Kvalbein's book the Swedish New Testament scholar Tord Fornberg observes that Kvalbein barely asks critical questions about how the Jesus tradition developed; in other words, what happened during the 30–50 years before the Gospels were fixed? Besides he finds methodological shortcomings, for example with regard to judgments about historicity.[37] Similar shortcomings are also mentioned in Gunnar Johnstad's thorough (and in many ways positive) review of the book.[38] According to Kvalbein it is necessary to undertake a historical evaluation of the Gospels, and he says that he "is open for direct source criticism in the cases where they contradict each other or are contradicted by other sources, for example, in the dating of the day Jesus died before or after Easter."[39] Besides he is skeptical to the historicity of Matt 27:51–53 (about the opening of graves when Jesus died) because the other Gospels are silent about these remarkable events. He concludes that it probably is best to understand this notice as "a theological interpretation of Jesus' death and resurrection in the form of a narrative. Jesus' death is a victory over the death!"[40] In this connec-

[35] Kvalbein, *Jesus*, 35–36.

[36] Review of Jacob Jervell, *Da fremtiden begynte: Om urkristendommens tro og tenkning* (2nd enl. ed.; 1976), *Tidsskrift for teologi og kirke* 49 (1978): 226–227.

[37] Cf. Tord Fornberg's review of the book in *SEÅ* 76 (2011): 256–258, 258. In spite of much valuable material about the Synoptic Gospels and its background, Fornberg stresses the author's methodological weakness (256–257).

[38] Gunnar Johnstad, "Hans Kvalbeins synoptiske bibelteologi – en milepæl i norsk nytestamentlig teologi" [Hans Kvalbein's Synoptic Biblical Theology – A Milestone in Norwegian New Testament Theology], *Luthersk kirketidende* 144 (2009): 418–422.

[39] Kvalbein, *Jesus*, 38.

[40] Kvalbein, *Jesus*, 370.

tion Johnstad asks for an explanation of the criteria used to evaluate something as theological interpretations and expressions, and other things as "historical events."[41]

Further Johnstad notes that Kvalbein in the last part of his book asks what kind of picture the Synoptics give of "Jesus' view of himself" and if this picture can be traced back to Jesus. In the main Kvalbein answers this question in the affirmative. When Kvalbein in this connection talks about the "self-understanding of Jesus" (p. 216), what does he mean? Is this the self-understanding of the "historical Jesus" or the evangelists' interpretation of it? Generally Johnstad finds it unsatisfactory that Kvalbein neglects to discuss the methodological questions which arise when one attempts to reconstruct the self-understanding of a person living 2000 years ago, and that he even uses terms like "self-image," "self-consciousness," and "self-understanding" without differentiation and definition.[42] Though Kvalbein's book provides a lot of important information about the Synoptic Gospels and their background, historical and methodological questions remain unsolved.

Jesus and the Poor

As should be evident from what is written above, the young Hans Kvalbein was provoked and challenged by current German New Testament scholarship, represented in particular by Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann.[43] This does not hinder him from studying in Tübingen where Käsemann was professor (1959–1971). In fact, it was a conscious choice. According to Rune Slagstad[44] who studied in Tübingen at the same time, Kvalbein went there to "take on the theological super-ego of Jacob Jervell, Ernst Käsemann, and his disciples."[45]

Back in Norway Jervell played an important role in many public debates. He liked to challenge traditional positions and he often used pointed formulations. The most notorious example is his comments from 1959 on the gospel text on the first Sunday after Trinity, Luke 16:19–31. He made exegetical comments on the text, meant to assist pastors who soon would preach on this passage. Jervell

[41] Johnstad, "Hans Kvalbeins synoptiske bibelteologi," 421. A similar question was asked to Kvalbein by Jervell in 1970: What is the criterion for saying that some events recorded in the Gospels are historical, while others are labelled metaphors? (see Jervell, "Kvalbeins ubesvarte spørsmål," 267).

[42] Johnstad, "Hans Kvalbeins synoptiske bibelteologi," 421.

[43] Notable is also Kvalbein's critical review of the Norwegian translation of Ernst Käsemann, *Der Ruf der Freiheit* (1968); English translation: *Jesus Means Freedom* (1969). Käsemann received an honorary doctorate at the University of Oslo in 1969.

[44] A Norwegian historian, philosopher, and legal theorist, born 1945.

[45] In an essay in a Norwegian newspaper: "Et forsvar for teologien: Hvor ble den høyere etiske himmelen av?" *Klassekampen*, June 11, 2011.