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THE STRUCTURE OF MARK'S GOSPEL: CURRENT PROPOSALS

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ABSTRACT

For many decades now Markan scholarship has struggled to uncover the structure of Mark's gospel. With the advent of literary/narrative criticism the struggle has intensified to understand how the gospel unfolds in order to tell its story of Jesus. This article surveys recent and current proposals that have been advanced for Mark's gospel. Some scholars have judged that there is no structure; others have found a highly complex web of interrelated sections. While many proposals use a mixture of principles to derive the alleged structure, an attempt has been made to classify the proposals based upon the primary principle used. These categories include: topography/geography; theological themes; *Sitz im Leben* of the recipients; literary factors.

Tannehill remarks that 'outlining narratives is not a neat endeavor' (1995: 170). His observation can be corroborated by looking at the numerous proposals that Markan scholars offer for the structure of this gospel. Consequently, the variety in the number of proposals has led some Markan scholars to doubt that there even is an explicit structure to the gospel. Nineham made this judgment:

> The very fact that such widely differing principles of arrangement have been attributed to St. Mark perhaps suggests that in searching the Gospel for a single and entirely coherent master-plan, corresponding to a set of clearly formulated practical purposes, scholars are looking for something that is not there and attributing to the Evangelist a higher degree of self-conscious purpose than he in fact possessed (1963: 29).

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Despite Nineham's pessimism, trying to understand the structure remains a worthy pursuit. We must recognize and/or remember that the arrangement of the material is the most important clue to the gospel's theological core.

> Our attempt to understand the theological intention that motivated Mark to undertake the kind of reinterpretation of the traditions about Jesus that the creation of a 'gospel' represents would take a long step forward if we could come to some clear understanding of the overall structure into which he placed the individual traditions (Achtemeier 1986: 30).

Thus, discussions of structure often lead to discussions of occasion and purpose. Schweizer wrote, 'Looking at the structure of his [Mark's] book will reveal to us something of the reasons why he wrote it in this way, how he understood his task, and, hence, what his message, and especially his portrayal of the life of faith, is' (1978: 387; see also 1970: 14). However, one must be cautious, for an outline of Mark may tell more about which aspect of the gospel narrative is the outliner's focus than it does about Mark's structure.

What I seek to do in the pages that follow is survey recent past and current proposals concerning the structure of Mark's gospel. The goal is simply to survey the proposals that have been given and offer some observations about the state of the question. What we will notice is that the differences in proposed outlines seem to be in the details of the structure rather than in the broad picture. This is contrary to Gundry (1993: 1048-49) who concludes that the Gospel of Mark is a 'loose disposition of materials' or 'a collage, not a diptych or a triptych or any other carefully segmented portrayal of Jesus'. Unfortunately, not only do individuals dispute the details of an outline, but also there is no consensus on a principle for determining those details. Best, in recounting the proposals for identifying pre-Markan material, says that the material as it existed in the oral tradition did not possess within itself an organizational principle. 'Whoever had to draw together the miracles, parables and sayings would still not have known where and how to relate them to one another' (1983: 6). Thus, he asks the question, 'What principle did he then use when he put them together?' (1983: 100).

While a principle for determining Markan structure is under debate, near unanimous consent exists for a distinct section in the middle of the gospel, beginning at either 8.22 or 8.27 and ending at 10.45 or 10.52. Examples of scholars who hold to a basic three-part division include Ellis (1975), Donahue and Harrington (2002: 23-25), France (2002: 11-15), and others as will become evident below.

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Many Markan scholars would consider the Caesarea Philippi episode as the central pericope and turning point of the gospel. Juel (1994: 73) calls Peter's confession 'the great transitional scene', and Stock (1982: 133) calls Peter's confession 'the decisive turning point in Mark's gospel'. Thus in the broadest and simplest of proposed divisions, scholars have divided the gospel into two sections: 1.1–8.26 and 8.27–16.8 (e.g. Edwards 2002: 20-21). Pesch (1984: 39) identifies two halves to the gospel with further subdivisions, but he does not include titles for each major subsection nor does he integrate his admission that the subsections of 1.1–8.26 form the first half of the gospel. Pesch is exemplary of many of the major German commentators (Lohmeyer 1967: 7-8; Klostermann 1971: 1; Lührmann 1987: 23; Gnilka 1998: 30-32) who make an outline but then do not use the outline to aid the interpretive process; they only focus upon the individual episodes.

In order to test the proposal of a basic two-part division, Quesnell (1969) examined the changes in the gospel under a number of headings. In his analysis of Mark, he observed that with 8.27 a number of changes took place. He catalogued changes of vocabulary and style: references to 'bread' cease; explicit references to the nonunderstanding of the disciples cease (though the theme continues in a new form); the amount of space given to words of Jesus rises. The presentation of the figure of Jesus changes in the latter half. Mark begins to present Jesus as a figure of destiny whose fate is entirely marked out for him, beginning with the first 'the Son of Man must suffer' in 8.31. He emphasizes this fate as determined by Scripture. By contrast, if the gospel had stopped at 8.26, Jesus would be a great prophet, teacher, healer, but he would not have been the crucified Messiah. Other changes include a new set of adversaries (chief priests, scribes and elders); apostles begin to speak as individuals for the first time; and the first references to the Father appear.

Quesnell's analysis is met with skepticism by Gundry (1993: 1048) who judges the break between 8.26 and 8.27 as not passing 'muster very well'. He cites as evidence: (1) Jesus does not yet start on his way to Jerusalem for the passion; (2) the forensic victories nor Jesus' magnetism nor the miraculous element cease or even wane; (3) Jesus does not turn from the crowd; in fact, after predicting his passion and resurrection he summons the crowd along with the disciples (8.34-38); (4) Jesus continues to teach in public (10.1-9, 17-22; 11.17, 11.27–12.40) just as there were times of teaching the disciples in private (4.10-20, 34; 7.17-23; 8.14-21).

Broadly speaking though, Quesnell's observations are affirmed by scholars. For example Rhoads *et al.*, commenting on the nonunderstanding of

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the disciples, identifies a shift that takes place 'midpoint in the story'. 'The issue shifts from a lack of understanding to misunderstanding. The disciples now understand who Jesus is, but they misunderstand' what Messiah means (Rhoads, Dewey and Michie 1999: 125).

Further proposals beyond these basic two parts are numerous and what follows is an attempt to categorize the various proposals based on the primary principle that scholars have used to reveal Mark's structure, recognizing that some proposals mix categories.

1. *Topography/Geography*

One principle that scholars have traditionally used to outline Mark is topography. Mark typically introduces pericopae with the topographical movement of Jesus. Taylor (1966) has five sections marked off with a geographical designation, excluding the Introduction (1.1-13) and the Passion/Resurrection (14.1–16.8).

1.14–3.6	Galilean ministry
3.7–6.13	Height of Galilean ministry
6.14–8.26	Ministry beyond Galilee
8.27–10.52	Journey to Jerusalem
11.1–13.37	Ministry in Jerusalem

Hedrick, reacting against those who appeal to content/theology for arriving at a structure of Mark (see below), says that one must first seek Mark's formal or narrative indicators of structure. He finds 'the only evident overall framework given to these independent episodes and the sub-groupings of material' in Mark 1–13 is geographical (1983: 257). Thus, Hedrick outlines Mark into fifteen sections determined by spatial indicators of where Jesus goes (by the sea, in the synagogue, etc.). These are then grouped into larger geographical units (in Galilee, a trip to Tyre and Sidon [1.14b; 4.1, 35; 5.21; 7.24, 31; 8.13; 9.30; 10.1; 11.11, 27; 13.1; 14.1]). Other commentators who use topography to delimit sections of Mark's gospel include Lane (1974) and France (2002).

Arguing against a geographical outline, Gundry demonstrates the inconsistency in Mark's notation of topology by citing examples of topographic movement not by Jesus or his disciples, but topographic movement occurring within a pericope and sometimes too vague to be used for outlining. Gundry concludes, 'Walking through Mark takes us hither and yon with little or no discernible pattern' (1993: 1046). Even on a larger scale, assigning topographical labels to major sections does not work for Gundry (1993: 1047). To cite one example, the alleged second main section, 'A journey

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toward Jerusalem (8.27–10.52 [or 10.45 or 11.10])', has Jesus departing northward to Caesarea (8.22, 27) the opposite direction of Jerusalem, up a mountain (9.2), down it (9.9), and then into a house (9.28)—all outside Galilee—and then back through Galilee to Capernaum (9.30, 33) before heading out toward Jerusalem.

Contrary to Gundry, most Markan scholars find some value in using topography to determine general and broad sections within the gospel. For example, Lührmann (1987), after the Introduction (1.1-15), identifies sections based on the geographical focus of the events. Mark 1.16–4.34: Capernaum; 4.35–8.26: Sea of Galilee; 8.27–10.52: Way to Jerusalem; 11.1–12.44: Argument in Jerusalem; 13: Destruction of Jerusalem; 14.1–16.8: Passion narrative.

However, scholars have raised concerns when trying to use topography to determine sub-points within a section. While Mark 1–8 may be judged to be Galilean in focus, the details of a day-to-day itinerary within Galilee cannot be reconstructed from the available material. For example, in Mk 6.45 Jesus instructs his disciples to go to Bethsaida while he remains behind. After Jesus rejoins the disciples, the reader finds them landing at Gennesaret. Interpreters have offered suggestions to explain the discrepancy. Malbon (1984) suggests that the discrepancy is theologically motivated—Bethsaida represents Gentile territory and the fear of the disciples is their reluctance to go to the Gentiles. Achtemeier (1970), followed by Kelber (1974), suggests that the geographical confusion is due to the rearrangement of traditional material. However, these are only suggestions or, as Achtemeier calls them, 'non-Markan guesses' (1986: 13).

Another example of the inability of topography to aid in determining structure within a section is the accounts in Mark of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee, with Jesus making successive journeys from west to east without any mention of a return by either sea or land (4.35 and 5.1; 5.21). Hall (1998) suggests that the successive journeys from west to east may not be as problematic as some Markan scholars make them out to be. He compares the edited highlights of a game of football (i.e., soccer) to the possibility of what Mark has done in chs. 4 and 5. 'To make the best use of the limited space available, Mark has not cluttered his narrative with time statements…but has telescoped his highlights into a continuous story-line' (p. 43).

Many commentators have resorted to allegorizing geographical references in an attempt to decipher the theological message (e.g., Lohmeyer 1936; Lightfoot 1938; Marxsen 1969: 54-116). These attempts to allegorize

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geographical references have been met with varying degrees of skepticism (e.g., Malbon 1982, 1991). Others have tried to find a mediating position. For example, Anderson (1981: 37) says the structure is in its first instance theological rather than biographical-chronological because of Mk 1.1; however, he concludes, 'it is not necessary to suppose that Galilee and Jerusalem are both theologically loaded terms for Mark' (p. 38). Likewise Telford suggests, 'The narrative[s]…can also be read with regard to their theological and even mythological associations as well as to their historical ones' (1999: 27).

It was Dodd (1932; *pace* Nineham 1955) who suggested that a summary of the life of Jesus was current in the early church and that this provided the structural backbone for the gospel. When Peter talked to Cornelius and his household (i.e., Gentiles), they apparently had a rudimentary knowledge of the life of Jesus (Acts 10.37-41). Besides, if Jesus was from Nazareth of Galilee, in the broadest of strokes his story is going to have to be one of a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. 'In view of the focus on movement all the way in the Gospel it is not surprising that it should contain certain indications of a rudimentary geographical construction: Galilee; Galilee and surrounding regions; journey to Jerusalem; Jerusalem' (Anderson 1981: 38). As Best grants, the Last Supper had to be set in the immediate context of Jesus' death; the baptism needed to be near the beginning of the story (1983: 101). Since the gospel story involved a life story, at least to some extent, there was a demand for sequence.

2. *Theological Themes*

Another principle that scholars have used to delimit a basic outline of Mark's gospel is to identify an overriding theological theme or concept. One such suggestion has been the title and concept of 'Son of God'. Lane states, 'The initial verse of the Gospel dictates the structure of the account which follows' (1974: 1). This statement, however, is probably best understood generally, for in outlining the gospel, Lane resorts to a geographical scheme. Similar in thought is Achtemeier, '[The title "Son of God"] seems to be the christological frame around which the Gospel was constructed' (1986: 34). Myers has identified three key moments in the gospel where the reader's attention is focused on the identity of Jesus, which then lends support to the thesis statement in 1.1 (Myers 1990: 390-91). Consequently, these three high revelatory episodes strengthen a biographical interest on the part of Mark.

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Baptism	Transfiguration	Crucifixion
Heavens rent	Garments white	Veil rent
Dove descends	Cloud descends	Darkness spreads
Voice from heaven	Voice from cloud	Jesus' great voice
'You are my Beloved Son'	'This is my Son'	'Truly, this man was the Son of God'
John the Baptist as Elijah	Jesus appears with Elijah	Is he calling Elijah

Recently Peace (1999: 110-56) argued that the gospel should be divided into two main parts (at 8.30), each of which has three units; each unit is focused on a different title of Jesus (teacher, prophet, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of David, Son of God). This sequence consequently represents the progressive christological enlightenment of the disciples.

Another theme that interpreters have suggested as an organizational principle is that of rejection and misunderstanding. Throughout the gospel, people are called to follow Jesus. In the first half of the gospel, the three 'complexes' (1.14–3.6; 3.7–6.6a; 6.6b–8.21) each begin with a call to follow Jesus and each ends with his rejection (3.6; 6.1-6; 8.14-21). In the second half of Mark's gospel, the call to follow Jesus is formed again and is subdivided by the three predictions of Jesus' rejection in Jerusalem (8.27-32a; 9.30-32; 10.32-34). However, each call and prediction is met with misunderstanding (8.32b–9.1; 9.33-50; 10.35-45). This pattern appears to have originally been noticed by Schweizer (1964, 1978) and later refined by Perrin (1974).

Robbins proposed dividing the gospel around a three-step progression in which Jesus went to a new place with his disciples, engaged in interaction with the disciples or others, and as a result of the interaction summoned his disciples anew (1981; 1984: 19-51). He thus identifies six major blocks, with the introductory three-step progression identified in the parenthesis: 1.14–3.6 (1.14-20); 3.7–5.43 (3.7-19); 6.1–8.26 (6.1-13); 8.27–10.45 (8.27–9.1); 10.46–12.44 (10.46–11.11); 13.1–15.47 (13.1-37).

In a similar fashion, Gnilka (1998: 31-32) uses Jesus' interaction with the disciples as the organizing principle of the gospel. His outline is as follows: the introduction (1.1-15), Jesus works authoritatively before the people (1.16–3.12), Jesus' teaching and miracles (3.13–6.6a), restless wandering (6.6b–8.26), call to follow the cross (8.27–10.45), Jesus' work in Jerusalem (10.46–13.37), passion (14.1–16.8).

Another theological theme used in proposing an outline for Mark's gospel is that of 'The Way'. Few scholars question the importance of the theme in 8.27–10.52 where ὁδός (*hodos*, 'way') occurs no less than ten times. Before 8.27 ὁδός is used in connection with the coming of John the

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Baptist (1.2-3) and the parable of the sower (4.4) and its interpretation (4.15).

Heil (1992), without offering any explanation except to cite E. Manicardi (1981) in a footnote, says that one of the major themes is that of 'the way' of the Lord God being actualized and executed by 'the way' of Jesus. 'In fact', Heil goes on to say, 'this dominant theme provides the scheme and framework for the entire narrative' (1992: 18).

I. Mk 1.1-13: Preparation for the Way of the Lord
II. Mk 1.14–3.6: Jesus Goes His Way Demonstrating the Arrival of the Kingdom of God
III. Mk 3.7–5.43: The Mystery of the Kingdom of God is Given to the Followers of the Way of Jesus
IV. Mk 6.1–8.26: The Followers of the Way of Jesus Do Not Grasp the Mystery
V. Mk 8.27–10.52: The Way of Jesus Leads to Suffering, Death, and Resurrection
VI. Mk 11.1–13.37: On His Way Jesus Brings Forth New Teachings in and about the Temple
VII. Mk 14.1–15.47: Jesus Accomplishes the Way of Suffering and Death
VIII. Mk 16.1-8: The Resurrection of Jesus and the Way of the Lord
IX. Appendix: Mk 16.9-20

I have questioned, however, if 'the way' is a dominant enough theme to provide the 'scheme and framework' for the entire gospel (Larsen 2002a: 16, 156-57). Without denying that 'the way' is an important theme in 8.27–10.52, the expression appears in a limited fashion outside of this section.

Another theological theme used to suggest an overarching framework for the gospel is the Old Testament theme of the Exodus. Various scholars have proposed such a framework: Farrer (1951), Hobbs (1958), Swartley (1973; 1980: 73-86) and Derrett (1985). Finding these proposals inadequate, because they are more successful in demonstrating Exodus motif influence on individual sections than on the literary structure of the gospel as a whole, Watts (2000) has proposed that the Isaianic New Exodus (hereafter INE) is Mark's organizing theme.

Watts proposes that Mark's presentation of Jesus is best understood against the opening editorial citation of 1.2-3. Here one identifies a positive motif whereby Jesus' identity and ministry is presented in terms of INE; and one identifies a negative motif by which Jesus' rejection by the nation's leaders and his action in the temple is cast in terms of the prophet Malachi's warning; a warning which itself concerned the delay of the INE. 'This dual perspective of salvation and judgement—both within the context of the INE—seems to provide the fundamental literary and theological structure of Mark's gospel' (p. 4).

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In a book review, I concluded that Watts offers a provoking, challenging and valid presentation of how Mark may have utilized a theological motif of the Old Testament in order to communicate the life and mission of Jesus (Larsen 2002b). However, a primary question that I am left with concerns the relationship between the three themes of the INE and how the relationship between the three elements impacts the overarching scheme for the literary structure of Mark. Watts presents the INE as having three distinct themes. First, Yahweh delivers and heals his exiled people. Second, Yahweh leads 'blind' Israel on a journey. Third, Yahweh arrives in Jerusalem. Because Isaiah does not present the NE in/as a chronological three-step process, and noting that the citations for each theme are scattered throughout Isaiah, one is left to surmise that the first two elements of the INE are happening simultaneously. Yahweh delivers and heals as 'blind' Israel is on the journey. Watts has proposed that these three themes correspond with the broad literary outline of Mark's gospel. First, Jesus performs powerful words and deeds. Second, Jesus journeys with his 'blind' disciples. Third, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. Watts writes concerning the first major division of the gospel, 'Jesus' healings of the blind, deaf, and lame likewise echo Yahweh's healing of the exiles in the INE' (2000: 372). However, there are no miracles of sight in the first major division of the gospel. Likewise, in what sense can one say that the exiled people are delivered and healed? The end of the first major section of Mark, 8.14-21, hardly suggests deliverance and healing.

3. Sitz im Leben *of the Recipients*

A third approach to understanding Mark's structure is to see the alleged needs of the early church in the text, thus having those needs dictate the gospel's organization. To put it another way, something outside the text cements it together. See, for example, Bowman (1965) and his proposal that the gospel was related to a Passover liturgy; he characterizes it as a Jewish Christian Passover haggadah for Jews in Rome. Just as the Passover celebration was a narration of how God had redeemed his people in fulfillment of a promise, so Mark retells the new Christian Passover story. Carrington (1952) proposed that the organization was dictated by a Christian liturgical calendar based on that of the Jewish synagogue and intended to be read piece by piece in worship from the New Year in September to the season of Tabernacles. Lewis suggests that Mark used a 'boat source' narrative that was Christian haggadah—'traditions about Jesus explaining how Christ effected the deliverance motifs of the Rosh Hashana psalm' (1978).

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Proposals that find their organizational principle in liturgy have been strongly opposed. Martin (1973: 85-86) observes that Bowman has not offered an explanation for Mark addressing Gentile readers for whom he has to explain Jewish customs (3.22; 7.2, 3-4; 12.18, 42; 14.12; 15.32, 42) and translate Aramaic terms (3.17; 5.41; 7.11, 34; 10.46; 14.36; 15.22, 34). Likewise, if Mark was drawing up a liturgical calendar as proposed by Carrington, one has to account for certain gaps and omissions that are hard to explain (see Johnson 1972: 22). Davies (1956; see also 1962) has shown that there is no evidence for primitive Christianity borrowing the lectionary practice of the Jewish synagogue (cf. Col. 2.16). One may also see Aune (1987: 26-27) and Morris (1964; 1983) who have challenged the idea that the primitive church borrowed from the lectionary of the Jewish synagogue.

4. *Literary Factors*

There does not appear to be agreement over what one should classify as a technique of literature and what is a technique of rhetoric. For example, one finds discussions of chiasms as a literary tool and as a rhetorical tool. Therefore, no attempt has been made in this discussion to separate written from oral components for understanding the organization of Mark's gospel. 'Whatever distinctions we may make between narrative- and rhetorical-criticism, there is a considerable degree of overlap too' (Smith 1996: 49).

Guelich focuses on internal considerations and proposes that literary considerations should be used in determining the structure because they are 'more likely coincident with Mark's telling of the story, than with his conscious desire to follow a design' (1989: xxxvi). Guelich uses the basic division into two halves and proposes that 1.16–8.26 (1.1-15 being an introduction) breaks into three subsections (1.16–3.12; 3.13–6.6; 6.7–8.26) with each subsection beginning with the involvement of the disciples (1.16-20; 3.13-19; 6.7-13) and each subsection concluding with a note of rejection followed by a summary relating to Jesus' ministry (3.1-6, 7-12; 6.1-6a, 6b; 8.10-21, 22-26). Guelich's proposal appears to be a variation of that of Schweizer. Evans (2001), who was asked to complete the Mark commentary left unfinished due to Guelich's unexpected death, simply adopts and resumes Guelich's outline. Marcus's (2002: 64) outline is very similar to Guelich's with just minor variation.

One such literary device used by Mark, and long noted by scholars (e.g., Klostermann 1971; Kee 1983: 54-56; Wright 1985; Edwards 1989; Fowler 1989; Van Oyen 1992; Shepherd 1995), is that of intercalation,

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the dovetailing or interlacing of one pericope with another in an A-B-A pattern. In each case Mark begins to tell a story, interrupts it by inserting another, and then returns to the original in order to complete it. Shepherd (1993: 388-92) lists the twenty different passages that have been proposed as intercalations.

Intercalations not only function in a literary way (to create suspense and tension) but they also invite the reader to draw a theological conclusion from the linked passages by treating them in a mutually interpretative way. Shepherd concludes that the intercalations in Mark are an expression of dramatized irony. For example in Mark 3, Jesus' family goes out to 'save' him and in the process ally themselves with his enemies. Jesus argues that a divided house cannot stand; yet his relatives are divided from him. However, they are not his true relatives (Shepherd 1995: 539). A classic example (see Telford 1980) of intercalation is Jesus' action of cursing the fig tree (11.12-14, 22-25) and his action in the Temple (11.15-19).

Another literary device used by Mark is the asking of questions (Fowler 2001: 132-33). While the questions themselves do not mark the placement of divisions, the nature of the questions do. Some of the questions are real and others rhetorical, some of which go unanswered (cf. 1.27; 2.7; 4.41; 14.4; 16.3). Witherington (2001) identifies a common theme for the questions of 1–8.27, the question of who and why (1.27; 2.7, 16, 24; 4.41; 6.2; 7.5). Mark 8.27-30 answers the 'who' question. 'Once the "who" question is answered, Jesus is able to reveal what his mission is' (2001: 38). Mark 8.31–10.52 reveals what the mission is (8.31; 9.31; 10.32-34). The mission is accomplished in Mark 11–16. Witherington concludes that because of the nature of the questions asked in the gospel, the major concern of the gospel is Christology.

> [This simple outline] supports the theory that we are dealing with a biography which has as its most basic question not ecclesiological struggles in Mark's church, nor even matters of Christian discipleship (though that is indeed an important secondary item in this Gospel), but rather the big question: who is Jesus? (2001: 38)

Another literary device used by Mark that gives clues to his structure is the use of summary statements (*Sammelberichte*). Schmidt was the first to call attention to these Markan summary reports and analyze them in relation to the evangelist's literary method. Schmidt argues that the introductory and concluding statements attached to the individual stories that bind them together into a continuous narrative are historically worthless, 'historische Wertlosigkeit' (1919: 17). His thesis is that Mark's information

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came to him in the form of isolated stories, that he had no idea how these stories were related to each other in time or locality, and that the framework that binds them together was an artificial construction of the evangelist. For a critique of Schmidt, see Hall (1998).

There is considerable debate about what verses are in fact summary statements and how these summary statements function. Perrin and Dulling (1982: 239-54) recognize summaries at 1.14-15, 21-22, 39; 2.13; 3.7-12; 5.21; 6.6b, 12-13, 30-33, 53-56; 10.1. Egger (1976), who finds these 'summary statements' useful in identifying the structure of Mark, omits 5.21 and 6.12-13 and includes 1.32-34, 45; 2.1-2; 4.1-2. Perrin says that these statements function as the basic 'pegs' of Mark's overall literary structure. Schmidt says that their significance is to broaden, widen or expand the ministry of Jesus beyond the borders of the individual particularized narratives (1919: 13). Perrin breaks down the literary structure of Mark as follows, with the major divisions occurring where summary statements and geographical notices coincide.

1.1-13	Introduction
1.14-15	Transitional Markan summary
1.16–3.6	First major section: The authority of Jesus in word and deed
3.7-12	Transitional Markan summary
3.13–6.6a	Second major section: Jesus as Son of God and rejection
6.6b	Transitional Markan summary
6.7–8.22	Third major section: Jesus as Son of God and misunderstood
8.23-26	Transitional giving-of-sight story
8.27–10.45	Fourth major section: Christology and Christian discipleship
10.46-52	Transitional giving-of-sight story
11.1–12.44	Fifth major section: the days in Jerusalem prior to the passion
13.1-5a	Introduction to the apocalyptic discourse
13.5b-37	Apocalyptic discourse
14.1-12	Introduction to the passion narrative
14.13–16.8	The passion narrative

Hedrick (1984) has offered a multifaceted critique of Perrin. He argues that the 'summary statements' do not summarize what precedes or follows. He also suggests other verses that 'qualify' as summary statements that have not been properly identified as such: 1.5, 28, 32-34, 45; 2.1-2, 15; 4.33-34; 6.1; 9.30-32; 10.32. He lists other passages that fit Perrin's criteria of geographical shift and summary that Perrin does not cite: 4.33-36; 5.21; 9.30; 10.1. Hedrick concludes that the function of the summary statements is to give 'generalized non-specific descriptions of the ministry of Jesus intended to expand it beyond the few typical episodic incidents described in the Gospel' (1984: 303) and, 'Evidence for the summaries

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providing a basic structural framework of the Gospel is still lacking' (1984: 304). Cook (1995: 37) judges Hedrick's article a real contribution because it 'actually attempts to evaluate the methodology of using summaries to build an outline of Mark'.

Kee also has been critical of Perrin's outline along a number of lines (1983: 64). The strongest objection is that the outline gives no hint of the diversity of material in each section. For example, there is no recognition of the lengthy treatment of parables in the section 3.13–6.6a. In addition, three of the titles for sections include christological references, while much more than Christology is presented in those sections. Donahue (1973: 207-208) has observed that the 'summary statements' really are not 'summary' in nature, but rather anticipate and recapitulate at the same time.

Still another approach is that of identifying chiasms. Standaert wrote, 'Mark's gospel is constructed according to concentric schema: prologue and epilogue correspond, while the three parts of the body of the narrative are centered upon the middle part (6.14–10.52)' (1978: 174). Standaert's mentor van Iersel has fine-tuned the approach and proposed a five-part topographic framework, which gives the work an overall concentric structure (1982; 1989: 20-24; 1998: 68-86). Wilderness and tomb are marked by continuity, Galilee and Jerusalem by contrast. These four parts surround the center part, the Way, which stands as the center and the key to the gospel. Brett (1986) proposes in a chapter of Mann's commentary a division of the gospel into two major units (1.16–8.21 and 8.22–16.8) and each major unit into three segments, all in chiastic agreement.

Humphrey also proposes a chiastic structure to Mark (1992: 4). His approach combines a concentric structure of the main points and the linking of the main points with smaller episodes (which are paradigms of discipleship) that act as bridges between the major sections. These 'bridges' are also in a chiastic relationship to one another. Humphrey does not stop there; each major section has a concentric structure also. Thus, we have chiasms within chiasms tied together with a chiasm.

Scott has also proposed a chiastic structure for Mark, arguing that the book is 'both linearly and chiastically arranged' (1985: 17). In Scott's scheme the transfiguration episode is the 'unmistakable center of the whole gospel, with 9.7…as the pivot of the chiasmus' (p. 18). Interestingly, Scott has calculated that the Transfiguration episode is 'one-fifth of one percent' off center (p. 18). For a similar approach see Gardner (1999).

Bryan (1993: 83, 99) and Hooker (1991: 16) caution the reader of the gospel, because of its oral nature, not to hold too firmly to the exactness of the breaks between its major movements. Rather, they suggest that the

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introductory or concluding pericope of sections should be viewed as 'hinges' because they look forward and backwards (see also Parunak 1983 and Stock 1985). Pericopae identified as 'hinges' include 1.14-15; 8.22-26; 10.46-52; 15.40-41. Mark 8.22-26 looks ahead and forms an *inclusio* with 10.46-52, with nearly every incident between these two stories demonstrating the 'blindness' of the disciples and their inability to understand Jesus and his teaching (cf. 8.31-33; 9.2-13, 32, 33-37, 38-50; 10.13-16, 23-31, 32-45). Likewise, 8.22-26 also looks back to the feeding of the four thousand and the subsequent discussion by the disciples (8.17-21).

Related to literary concerns (i.e., the focus is upon the written work) is a more developed rhetorical approach (i.e., the focus is on oral work) to understanding Mark's organization. Bryan's proposal for a structure for the Gospel of Mark begins with an attempt to be sensitive to the likely orality of the gospel. Bryan begins his work by suggesting that Mark's contemporaries would have characterized the gospel as a 'life'. What is of concern for us here is the question that introduces the second section of the book, 'Was Mark written to be read aloud?' 'The only real way to understand Mark's structure is to follow it through as it was designed to be followed—indeed, to *listen* to it as it was designed to be heard—and so to experience it as it does its work' (1993: 83). After identifying characteristics of oral composition, Bryan concedes 'that there is nonetheless something to be said for discerning an overall chronological arrangement, and that it constitutes a framework for the whole' (1993: 83). He, like van Iersel, proposes that the gospel falls 'naturally' into five parts (1.1-8 [wilderness]; 1.9–8.21 [Galilee]; 8.22–10.52 [road to Jerusalem]; 11.1–15.41 [in Jerusalem]; 15.42–16.8 [at the tomb]), but he does not recognize the chiastic arrangement as van Iersel does. Bryan then proceeds to survey each pericope or episode in the gospel and identifies hinges, brackets, chiasms, *inclusiones* and summary statements to show how the gospel is a coherent presentation.

Standaert proposes an elementary structure of the Gospel of Mark following the divisions common within classical rhetoric: *exordium* (1.1-13), *narratio* (1.14–6.13), *probatio* (6.14–10.52), *refutatio* (11.1–15.47), *conclusio* (16.1-8) (1978: 42; see also Stock 1982: 49). As seen above, he then goes on to suggest a concentric composition of individual sections and subsections. Sections that have been suggested as having concentric or parallel rhythms include 1.16-45; 2.1–3.6; 4.1-34; 8.27–9.13; 12.1-40; 13.5b-37. Mark 8.27–9.13 provides a good example of this concentric composition with 8.27-30 balancing 9.11-13 and 8.31-33 balancing 9.2-10, and 8.34–9.1 remaining as the center of the passage (Standaert 1978: 174).

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Best criticizes Standaert's proposal for a concentric composition. Best (1983: 103) says that if Mark had been competent in this matter it would have been a simple matter in 8.28 to have changed 'one of the prophets' to 'the prophet' to indicate Moses who appears later (9.4). Further, the divine voice in the Transfiguration (9.7) balances Peter's confession in 8.29, yet this does not fit in with a concentric composition (1983: 103). Best (p. 104) is also critical of Dewey's proposal (1980) of concentric parallelism in Mk 2.1–3.6. One argument used by Best to challenge Dewey is that tongue in cheek he proposes a concentric structure of 1.40–2.17 (which interferes with Dewey's 2.1–3.6). Besides, if the gospel was written to be listened to and not just read, it is questionable if a concentric parallelism would be easily detectable by an original hearer (Best 1983: 105).

In trying to understand the gospel's structure, the orality of the early Christian message should not be underestimated. Hooker states, 'The gospel was almost certainly intended to be read aloud in a congregation, not privately' (1991: 15). Perhaps the most significant work to date on the orality of the gospel is that of Kelber (1997). Kelber argues for a sharp division between an oral and a written Gospel, a division so sharp that he proposes Mark wrote the Gospel to challenge the 'authority' of the oral gospel. Kelber argues only for individual episodes containing oral style rather than the gospel as a whole, contra Dewey (1989; see also the articles and accompanying bibliographies in Dewey 1994). For critiques of Kelber's thesis, see Boomershine (1987); Hurtado (1990); Halverson (1994; 1997).

Returning to Best's criticism, I believe that just because Mark chose not to editorialize every possible concentric item does not negate items that are concentric. Thus we should not too hastily reject proposals that challenge one to consider rhetoric. The suggestion that Mark uses 'hinges' may be a valid and helpful way of dividing sections. Simply because Stephon Langton (1150–1228) and Robert Estiene [= Stephanus] (1503–59) divided the text into chapters and verses (respectively), it does not mean Mark must have been so precise in marking off sections or divisions. Storytelling will use literary features such as repetition, foreshadowing and framing to tell the story. Therefore, such words as 'immediately', 'again', 'and' and 'then' will provide the author opportunities to move the plot and subsequently mark transitions. Mark may very well have been a storyteller himself. The process of writing down the story that he told would have preserved modes of oral recitation.

This is apparently the point that Bryan and Dewey both make. Dewey cautions against a single linear outline or structure (1991). A linear outline necessitates ascertaining major division points. Similarly, Rhoads *et al.*

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(1999: 47-55) says that it is not possible to make a linear outline of Mark's story, because it is literature that was meant to be heard, it is 'episodic' and makes connections by various forms of repetition. Therefore, Dewey proposes that Kee's metaphor of a fugue is a better model for understanding the structure of Mark (Kee 1983: 64, 75). Stories gain depth and enrichment through repetition and recursion. Thus, multiple overlapping structures and sequences, forecasts of what is to come and echoes of what has already been said, make up the gospel (see also Lang 1977). Dewey illustrates this in her article by examining those portions of the Gospel of Mark that frequently are identified as a break in the gospel: Mark 1, 3, 8, 10–11 and 14. She demonstrates how the various pericopae where breaks are posited consist of forecasts and echoes, variation within repetition, for a listening audience.

5. *Concluding Observations*

Given the multitude of various proposals for Mark's structure, in some ways we are no closer to arriving at a conclusion than we were decades ago. This confusion is tied to the inability of scholars to reach a consensus as to whether a governing principle can be applied to the text in order to suggest definitive breaks. Some principles look to items outside the text to suggest divisions and others look to the text itself to reveal its structure. Rather than limit themselves to just one principle, some scholars have even opted for a truly eclectic approach to arrive at a structure of the text. For example Pesch (1984) uses a number of criteria (collections of material, spatial and temporal changes, different story types, leading concepts, 'Jesus' in the introductory sentence of an episode).

As long as literary concerns remain a focus of current gospel study then the question for the structure of Mark will continue. Though now made thirty years ago, Johnson offers a fitting insight to conclude this survey: 'Only further study on the part of many scholars will bring agreement as to which alleged patterns are real and significant, but surely it is clear that the earliest gospel is not a naïve and fortuitous collection of incidents but the result of a long tradition of preaching and teaching' (Johnson 1972: 23-24).

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