

HOW JESUS OPERATED

*“And Jesus said to Simon,
‘Do not be afraid, henceforth you will be catching men alive.’”*

In Christ’s presence fear goes and we are given a stake in his work.

L U K E 5 : 1 0 b

When I was a little fellow in the late 1950s, my Father would sometimes introduce me to one of his acquaintances, and the ritual went something like this. “John, I’d like you to meet my son,” and that was my cue. I was taught to look up, look them in the eye, extend my hand for a shake, then say in a clear voice, “Pleased to meet you, Sir. My name is Phil.” They’d be duly impressed at my manly training. Then came the question everyone used in those days, “And Phil, what do you want to be when you grow up?”

Now if I knew then what I know now, I’d have replied, “I want to be an adult with enough sense not to ask stupid questions to five year olds.” But since that level of repartee was not yet in my repertoire, I replied with the most impressive word I knew, “I want to be an archaeologist!” Their brows would arch, and then— as always— they asked the inevitable next question, “And what is an archaeologist?” I then wowed them a mini-lecture on paleontology. After that they stopped asking questions. It was great fun; my father smiled. He was my straight man, and we had pulled off yet another zinger.

Now the odd thing is that my most-impressive word is what I’ve become, only with a twist. I dig down, not into the dirt, but into biblical texts— and Yes, I am looking for buried treasure. Which is why I was fascinated with some recent archaeology on Luke, not meaning his Gospel but the man himself.

Luke was not a first but a second— or even third— generation disciple, a physician, trained in rhetoric, a traveling companion of Paul, and his two volumes on our founder and his movement, Luke and Acts, take up twenty seven percent of the New Testament, which is more than even Paul.

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Our best early traditions are that Luke died at age 84 and was buried at Thebes in Greece where his tomb is venerated as a pilgrimage site. It's on my bucket list to make a pilgrimage to stand at the tomb of the One who has so far taken about 6000 hours of my life in study and writing and teaching.

There is evidence that the lead coffin in which he was buried was transferred to Constantinople in A.D. 338 and later taken west to Padua in Italy, likely during the Crusades. In 1354 the skull was separated from the body at the order of Emperor Charles IV and is now housed in Prague. It was last opened in 1562, but in 1992 the bishop of Padua received a request from a Greek bishop that a portion of the bones be returned to Thebes as a courtesy.

So in 1998, under the supervision of an Italian pathologist and a population geneticist, tests began on DNA taken from a tooth found in the coffin. The bones are of a Syrian male who died between A.D. 72 and A.D. 416. That is consistent with what we know of Luke but not proof. But, when the head was brought from Prague, it perfectly fit the top neck bone, as did the tooth when fitted into the right jaw. A rib from near the heart was then returned to the church in Thebes.¹ The evidence grows!

Now since Protestants- with a few exceptions- have abandoned the veneration of holy relics, it doesn't matter whose the bones are since we have Luke's writings, but could it be that they lie in three pieces: Prague, Padua, and Thebes? I think so. I've read the technical articles. As an aside, it's also highly probable the bones of St. Peter are under the Vatican altar and the bones of Paul at a church there that bears his name.²

Our Christian forebears were buried somewhere; the sites were known and often honored early as places of pilgrimage. Many had churches built over their graves, so why be surprised if some remnants survive? Our faith is not about myths but real people, only one of whom has so far had his flesh and

¹ Nicholas Wade, "Body of St. Luke Gains Credibility," October 16, 2001, www.nytimes.com. For the scientific paper, "Genetic characterization of the body attributed to the evangelist Luke," see www.pnas.org/content/98/23/13460.

² "Pope: Basilica bones belong to apostle St. Paul," www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/06/29/vatican.st.paul.bones/index.

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bones transformed by resurrection, and that's Jesus. Luke and the rest of our blessed dead are still awaiting that great event at the end of the age, when- as the spiritual goes, "Dem bones gonna rise agin. Gonna hear the word of the Lord."

TURNING TO THE TEXT

5:1-11 Call And Commission Of The First Disciples.³

It's shortly after sunrise on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum. Such a crowd gathers they nearly press Jesus back to the lake.⁴ He's opening Scripture in light of the kingdom of his Father, and they are eager listeners. Jesus was a doer of mighty deeds, but first a teacher, and his deeds were like lab to lecture. First tell kingdom stories, then show it in deeds so they illumine one another.⁵ "This is who my Father is," says Jesus, "and this is what happens when God shows up as ground level to set things right." An English priest has written that with "his mind-blowing teaching went a body-healing touch."⁶ A few verses after our story ends, Luke writes, "...and great multitudes gathered 1) to hear and 2) to be healed of their infirmities." It was an everyday phenomena. Love came near as a preview of the coming kingdom of God.

Everywhere Jesus went a deep hunger in people is met by a supply of truth and love from the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit; it's a

³ On the "Call and Commission" stories in Luke, see Dennis Sweetland, *Our Journey with Jesus: Discipleship According to Luke-Acts* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), Chapter 2, "Call and Commissioning Stories: The Gospel," 19-44.

⁴ David Bivin, "The Miraculous Catch," *Jerusalem Perspective*, March/April 1992, 8.

⁵ An accessible treatment of Jesus' kingdom ministry is Ben Witherington, *Imminent Domain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). On the challenge of holding the two (lecture and lab) together, see Doug Banister, *The Word & Power Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

⁶ Morris Maddocks, *Twenty Questions About Healing* (London, England: SPCK, 1988), ix.

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Trinitarian engagement with ordinary folk.⁷ Learn about God from Jesus, then interact with God’s power a love that heals. Maybe that’s why *The Power of Love* by Huey Lewis And The News is one of my favorites:

“Don’t need money, don’t take fame; don’t need no credit card to ride this train..... The power of love is a curious thing, make a’ one man weep and another man sing.... It might just save your life; it’s the power of love.”

In our day we have many words and little power, lots of lectures and few labs, much good advice, little good news. We’ve lost the art of living interactively with the Holy Spirit for the benefit of others. It’s too risky for timid pastors and skeptical saints. But even now I feel the Spirit’s breezes blowing through my thinning hair.

Jesus and Peter had different experiences that night. Jesus slept; Peter sweated. Jesus let go of a day’s labor; Peter embraced it in casting nets. Jesus was refreshed; Peter worked by torch-light all night with his partners for what? Nothing. Not until transparent nylon nets were introduced in the 1950's could commercial fishing be done during daylight in the Sea of Galilee. Water’s just too clear; fish spot linen nets and swim away. And when the fishing is done, the work is not. Linen nets rot if not carefully washed, repaired and hung to dry, and it’s pure drudgery if there’s no catch. A night wasted.

As Peter worked with brother Andrew and friends James and John, a crowd pressed in on Jesus. Then a voice, “Hey, Pete, lend me your boat as a floating pulpit before I drown.” Every extra minute kept Peter from finishing the day’s work and getting some sleep.⁸ It was a test of character for a frustrated fisherman, but someone was fishing for Peter!

⁷ For a pastoral treatment of this pattern, see Bill Hull, *Straight Talk On Spiritual Power* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002).

⁸ In Luke’s telling, the signs of 4:31-44 precedes Peter’s call. In Mark 1:16-20 the call of Peter does not include prior knowledge of Jesus; in Luke it does. Having healed Peter’s mother in law, Jesus can now ask for a favor with the boat!

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There are times when emotions support our faith and carry us along on a wave of confidence; there are also times when faith is pure obedience against the grain. As the crowd scatters and Peter's about finished, Jesus places yet a second claim on his time and equipment, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." It's a foolish command and a crazy promise. Jesus the builder telling fisherman Peter about his own business. Men don't like that!

Remember that Jesus is always carrying on two conversations: one with the Father through the Spirit, one with the people around him.⁹ It's where the insight and power came from. Yes, Jesus of Nazareth was God the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity assuming full humanity, which means all the limits that come with being a creature.

Jesus did not have our allergic resistance to God, nor our desire to be independent, go his own way, and make his own rules, but he had our limits. During the years of his life among us, the privileges of deity were laid aside and held in abeyance, so Jesus was not omnipresent— something a localized body can never do, not omniscient— something a limited human mind cannot contain, and not all powerful on his own as an independent operator. He lived in momentby-moment dependence on the Father's will and the Spirit's divine energies.

On his own, Jesus was good and pure and powerless, the nicest guy in Nazareth. But in the love and obedience of his trust, look what happens! He says as much in John 5:19, "... the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. I can do nothing on my own authority."

He is the sent member of the Triune God, God the Son in flesh as Jesus. He comes from that eternal relationship and lives out of it in perfect love, obedience, and responsiveness. How did Jesus know what to say and when to say it? To put it crudely, he received a telegram from above, "Tell Peter to put out in the deep and let down his nets for a catch." He then read the telegram to Peter. And when Peter and his team of three chose to obey, the immediacy of the Holy Spirit filled the nets. As with everything Jesus said and did, it was a

⁹ For insight into this ministry dynamic, see John 5:19-30 where Jesus admits to being a mimic: what he sees he does, and what he hears he says.

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unified Trinitarian action: the Father willing, the Son obeying, the Spirit energizing, with Jesus as the only visible agent.

Jesus received a revelation from above and passed it on to Peter, “Launch out into the deep for a catch.” Brief, terse, unexplained, a blunt challenge out of the blue. Jesus acted in faith by speaking to Peter; Peter acted in faith by obeying, even though he complained a bit, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing. But *at your word* I will let down the nets.” Jesus is really good at demons and disease and teaching crowds, but can he do fish?

Why *at your word*? Peter had just seen how potent Jesus’ word was in the Capernaum synagogue, at home with his mother-in-law, and with the crowds in his courtyard,¹⁰ so he obeys. It’s tired faith, complaining faith, but still obedient faith based on real evidence, so Peter obeys for a second time. “Loan me your boat as a pulpit,” and now, “Launch out into the deep....”

Remember: faith is not blind; it is rather trust based on evidence. Peter had multiple evidences, and here he trusted Jesus in a new segment of life in the midst of fatigue and discouragement. Being hungry, angry, lonely, or tired (while I call H-A-L-T) makes obedience sometimes hard for me, and when I HALT, it means I need a meal, some time alone if angry, a friend if lonely, or some rest.¹¹ But Peter, after grouching a bit, obeyed and learned the lesson of a later hymn, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” That was Peter’s song.

The Spirit’s gift of knowledge is a form of divine revelation in which you know something because God told you.¹² At first it seems dramatic- and is, but after a while you understand this is standard equipment which we’ve recently ignored in our bias against a truly involved God who helps us love others with

¹⁰ 4:31-44.

¹¹ See the article at www.jesuslovesmethisknow.com/index79.

¹² For a contemporary testimony, see Shawn Bolz, *God’s Secrets: a life filled with words of knowledge* (Studio City, CA: Icreate Productions, 2017).

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his wisdom and power. Plumbers have wrenches, dentists drills, and believers have spiritual gifts as tools of the trade.¹³

The word of knowledge or wisdom may come as an intruding idea that disrupts your train of thought so that you ask yourself, “Where did that come from?” Or maybe a holy hunch, “I wonder if...” Or a picture on the mind’s eye, “What’s that?”¹⁴ Even an odd sensation, say pain in a place you have no pain. It’s easily missed. God rarely shouts and most often whispers. Perhaps Jesus heard something like this from the Father:

“I’m about to pay Peter for the borrowed boat. What I withheld last night, I now exceed. Tell him to launch out for a catch. He has to take the nets off the racks and get them wet again. Let’s see if he obeys. We might catch more than fish this morning!”

Skeptics who reduce this miracle to a natural occurrence where Jesus was a little higher than Peter and saw a shoal of fish miss the point, give away their naturalistic bias, and turn Jesus into clever deceiver.¹⁵ This is not a sleight-of-hand but a miracle of super-abundant provision enabled by divine revelation.

Jesus heard and spoke to Peter; and, after a mild complaint, Peter obeyed. The place where Peter was expert— fishing on the Galilee— was about to be interrupted by the Lord of Creation. Miracles can be a catalyst to faith— and are for some, but miracles do not coerce faith, especially for the skeptics for whom no evidence is ever enough.¹⁶ But why should we be surprised if nature

¹³ For a thorough treatment, see Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), Chapter 8, “Word of Wisdom and Word of Knowledge,” 148-158.

¹⁴ See Bill Johnson, Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), Chapter 10, “Words of Knowledge for Healing,” 191-212.

¹⁵ On the rationalist strategy for explaining and explaining-away Jesus’ so called *nature miracles*, see Graham H. Twelftree, *The Nature Miracles of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), Chapter 1, “Nature Miracles and the Historical Jesus,” 24-27.

¹⁶ See Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1982), 61-64 for a discussion of the issues of miracle and trust.

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bends to the touch of the God who knows it intimately and works from inside it?¹⁷

Picture the sights and sounds at the center of the story. Boats stop dead in the water. Linen sinews stretch and begin to pop. A shout for help. Two twenty-five-foot-long boats with four foot gunnels are filling with shining, flopping fish.¹⁸ How many miracles have been missed because some believer refused to obey an illogical command that went against common sense?

No fish are caught during daylight with linen nets; that was Peter's seasoned judgment. But when he moved beyond limited experience into the realm of trust based on a prophetic word of Jesus, something happened. Peter was learning to trust Jesus and his words which were grounded in the Living God of Israel. He failed that night; Jesus succeeded the next morning: lesson one. If you want to catch fish or people, listen to Jesus! He's good at both.

Jesus did not give Peter silver coins; he gave him fish to be sold for coins. Mendel Nun, an expert on Galilee fisheries, estimates it was two week's work compressed in one huge haul.¹⁹ Fifteen hundred pounds of fish.

¹⁷ See Twelftree, *The Nature Miracle*, Chapter 6 by Michael Levine, "Miracles and the Laws of Nature," 128-151. For an excellent popular treatment by an apologist, see Lee Strobel, *The Case for Miracles: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018).

¹⁸ On "The Jesus Boat," see Shelley Waschmann, *Understanding the Boat from the Time of Jesus* (Jerusalem, Israel: Carta, 2015).

¹⁹ Bivin, "Miraculous Catch," 10.

Tiredness evaporates; adrenalin surges; Peter hits the jackpot. The one who is Lord over the demons and illness is also Lord over nature, even over the finances of those who obey him. Hello? What we need as we obey, he provides; what he doesn't provide as we obey, we don't need. And if we're not obeying, what's it matter? Lori and I see tithes and offerings as a visible reminder of our being in an ongoing partnership with God, and when we need something, it has a way of coming towards us. We like living this way.

So where is Jesus? Right where we left him, in the boat with Peter and Andrew and the fish. He never got out of the boat. I love it. It lets me know he's as comfortable in the banker's vault, the farmer's field, the surgeon's suite, the teacher's classroom as he is in the synagogue or alone at prayer. He knows you and your business better than you do. Jesus is not particularly religious but claims the whole of life. Not just a Sunday but a Monday Jesus, a Lord for every day that ends in *Y*. Jesus smelled like a fish market till he took his next bath; the pungent smell of miracle was all over him. I love a Jesus who smells like sweat-and-fish, not this blow-dry-Mary-Kay-smelling Jesus that passes as sappy Christian art. A wimpy, proper Jesus is not worth following. He didn't eat at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. No, he ate at Teal's Seafood Market!

I suspect Jesus was laughing. Fish flopping everywhere, Peter about to have a mid-life career change. Fishing was a discipline and a duty, often a drudgery, occasionally a delight, but now Peter was about to discover that for which he was made. How many men and women work hard and long and never discover their destiny in Christ? Live for the weekend, dream of retirement, when all the while Jesus is walking into their workplace with a better deal.

Not all follow Christ the same way. Peter was called to change vocations: fisherman to apprentice, apprentice to evangelist, and finally apostle to martyr. Jesus re-manufactured Peter several times along the way, and the coolest thing is that as I leave here tomorrow another assignment is already on the way. I hope it means a post-Covid return to teaching the Gospel of Luke

in Africa, but it might not, and that's OK. I like the challenge of being reinvented and retooled along the way. At sixty-six God kicked me into the middle of Africa!

Now there are some jobs that can never become a calling because they're simply not good for people and take advantage of the weak. If you're in one of those and have a troubled conscience, ask God for a move. You need a paycheck; you also need a life and a sense of holy zest about what you do. It may be your job is an honorable one but that your ministry is somewhere else, so when someone asks, "What do you do?" you answer, "My calling is youth ministry or music ministry or witnessing or service or prayer, but I earn a living at....." The call to follow Christ is a call to be with him and to participate in his work. It's a relationship which opens up into strange new opportunities.

Preachers sometimes give altar calls to come kneel and pray. That's OK. But the best are not accompanied by hymns and pleadings. They come as the Lord pushes someone to their knees with the weight of his mercy and blessing. One moment Peter was a successful fisherman, the next a man in searing agony of soul. Light dawned; Peter saw through the circumstances to just who Jesus was and who he was, "Depart from me, *O Lord*; I am a sinful man." Peter didn't read that confession off a page; it erupted out of his heart because of the raw illumination of divine revelation. Peter felt exposed, and he was exposed, and he had been exposed by Jesus on purpose!

Jesus is the most attractive and frightening man alive, and he will not be tamed. Holy love is terrifying and magnetic at the same time.²⁰ To do business with him is to be utterly exposed, the truth about God and the reality of me in

²⁰ The Latin is *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which means a mystery that attracts and repels (See Johan Cilliers, "Liturgical Perspectives on the Approach to God," www.academic.sun.ac.za/tsv/Profiles/Profile_documents/Johan_Cilliers_MYSTERIUM_TREMENDUM_ET_FASCINANS.pdf).

close proximity. Peter sees himself, and it hurts. He begs Jesus to get out of his boat and out of his life. “Go away, Lord; I don’t like this much truth.”

The power that earlier touched others as he watched in the synagogue and in his home and courtyard now touched him! Jesus crawled inside Peter’s defenses and turned on the floodlights. And all the shame that was in him surfaced. I’ve had about enough of you; get out of my life! Being around you is just too much!”

Remember, friends, it’s not sin or bad behavior or addictions or lack of learning that disqualify us from service, only its denial. Peter was a good guy by any standard: orthodox Jew, kosher table, taking care of his mother in law, work all night, hold the boat for Jesus when tired, launch out against better judgment, then have Jesus wreck your life with a load of fish and a load of guilt and shame, “Get away from me.” It was just too much for one day, but it was the day that changed Peter forever.²² Jesus did not obey Simon and leave him alone; instead he gave a second command and prophecy, “Do not be afraid, henceforth you will be *netting people*.”²³

The crowds are growing, helpers needed. So Peter, brother Andrew, and their buddies James and John become— on that day and in this event— the first four of Jesus’ apprentices, students, followers, disciples.²⁴ He is counted as trustworthy based on sufficient evidence, and that is what faith is, not a leap in the dark but a leap into a new light. And note how our story ends with a joyful sacrifice. These four had been busted and blessed, drafted and called, verse 11, “And when *they* brought their boats to land, *they left everything*- including three quarters of a ton of fish- and followed him.” Jesus is disruptive.

²² This “Call and Commissions” story is the beginning of Peter’s conversion, a long process with decisive turning points and occasional setbacks as chronicled in Luke and Acts. On conversion in the New Testament, see Scott McKnight, *Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels* (Louisville, KY: WJK); Richard W. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), Ron D. Witherup, *Conversion in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994);

Gordon T. Smith, *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation* (Downer's Grove, ILL: IVP, 2001), Chapter 5, "Models of Conversion in the New Testament," 107-134. On conversion in the contemporary world, see Scott McKnight and Hauna Ondrey, *Finding Faith, Losing Faith* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); Ron Crandall, *The Contagious Witness: Exploring Christian Conversion* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1999). For an historical anthology, see Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, *Famous Conversions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983). And most recently, David W. Kling monumental *A History of Christian Conversion* (Oxford, England: OUP, 2020).

²³ Luke Johnson's felicitous and inclusive translation in *Luke: Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 88.

²⁴ Mark 1:16-20.

Is there anything you must empty your hands of to receive the destiny to which you are called? Jesus now has four helpers for three years of training, eventually a dozen.²¹ Peter went fishing and got hooked, as did his partners. I don't preach this stuff to entertain; I retell Scripture to give the Holy Spirit raw materials to change lives, and that means me first! I am hungry for a change, and if that means exposure, so be it!

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis speaks plainly about the total claim Jesus make on a life. He writes:

“Christ says, ‘Give me all. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No halfmeasures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there. I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think are innocent as well as the ones you think are wicked- the whole

²¹ See 6:12-19 on the formation of the twelve.

outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you myself: my own will shall become yours."²²

Pete, Andy, and their fishing buddies Jimmy and Johnny found this out. Jesus knows your name; he's coming after you, and every day in ways subtle and overt he's calling you to pay attention and respond to his call rumbling beneath the surface of your days. You have the right to say *No*, but I don't recommend it. What you crave, which is *Life* with a *Capital L*, is found only in him. Everything else is a temporary imitation of the real thing.

CONCLUSION

In his book *Your Church Is Too Safe*- what a great title!- Pastor Mark Buchanan shares the story of Russian priest, Father John Sergieff:

“John was a priest in Kronstadt, Russia in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Imperial Russia was decadent, the streets dangerous, rife with poverty and depravity..... Alcoholism was rampant. Prostitutes crowded the corners, thieves the alleys. There was no safe place, so most people who weren't part of that world didn't venture out into it. Most of the clergy, used to a life of privilege and status, used what waning powers they had to insulate themselves from the widespread peril and hardship.

Not so Father John. His daily practice was to don his robe and descend into the meanest part of the city. He'd walk among the addicts and the predators, the whores and the thieves, the orphans and the widows, and he did it with healing in his wings. He would find the most broken and dissolute man or woman he could track down, lying in a gutter or standing on a street corner. He'd then cup their chin in his large hand and lift their face so they were looking in his eyes. ‘This,’ he would say, meaning this way of life, this means of survival, this condition I found you in, ‘is

²² (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2001), 196-197.

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beneath your dignity. You were created to house the glory of the living God.’ Father John was called the *Pastor of All Russia*. Everywhere he went, revival came with him.”²³

Is this not what we are to do? To together obey Jesus’ written word and living voice in order to fish for people. So what now? Take a few minutes in silence to risk the Lord Jesus speaking to you about his presence and his call. Just be open and listen. “Come, Holy Spirit, and shine light upon Jesus Christ.”

²³ (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 88-89.

Appendix 1: Contrasting Biblical Discipleship And Modern Church (Club) Membership

Ancient Christian Discipleship	American Church (Club) Membership
Risky, High Cost	Safe, Low Cost
Contributor & Stakeholder	Consumer & Observer
<i>In The World</i> As A Clear Alternative Community	<i>Of The World</i> With A Few Moral Variations
Total Self Involvement	Segmented Self (Sunday Faith) “Come a little bit, do a little bit, give a little bit, and say a whole lot.”
Obey In Behavior	Assent In Beliefs/ Doctrine
Active, Involved	Passive, Observers
Always Serious, High Adventure	Mostly Casual, Low Demand, Minimal Adventure
High Supernatural Exposure: Miracles Expected	Rare Exposure To Supernatural: Skepticism Is The Norm
Always On The Move	Rarely On The Move
At The Vital Center Of Life	Around The Edge Of Life As A Possible Option
High Challenge	High Comfort
Group Orientation: <i>We First</i>	Individual Orientation: <i>Me First</i>
Allegiance: Tight Bond, Severance Required	Affiliation: Loose Bond, Easily Abandoned
Home As Hospitality, Place Of Teaching	Home As Refuge, Hiding Place, Entertainment
Offer Life And Substance	Pay Club Dues
High Expectation For Transformation	Low Expectation For Transformation
Intense Training, Change Expected	Observing/ Critique Expected

Largely Outdoors	Largely Indoors
Organic Bond: Shared Life	Institutional Bond: Shared Space In Buildings
Follow Jesus, Learn His Ways, Share His Ministry	Admire Jesus, Worship Him, Pay Others To Do Work
Jesus As Leader, Model And Mentor	Jesus As Savior From Sins Worst Consequences
Confrontive And Blunt: Being True!	Convivial And Affable: Being Nice!
High Accountability	Low Accountability
Intense Fellowship: 24/7 + Conflict	Occasional Fellowship: Coffee/Cookies + Avoidance
Disciples Often Look Bad, Goofy, Incompetent	Members Focus On Image-Management, Looking Good
Location: Front Lines	Location: Behind the Lines
Ministry By Amateurs (for the love of it)	Ministry By Professionals (career clergy)
All Are Spiritually Gifted Ministers	Pay The Professionals (Clergy + Staff) To Do It For Us
Jesus And His Kingdom Mission Draw Resources	Institutional Maintenance Draws Large Resources
Holy Spirit As Creative, Disruptive Presence	Low Tolerance For The Unexpected

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Appendix 2: The Continuance Of Miracles In The Church²⁴

During his pastoral ministry, Augustine came to know a woman in Carthage named Innocentia. A devout woman and highly regarded, she tragically discovered that she had breast cancer. A skillful physician told her the disease was incurable. She could opt for amputation and possibly prolong her life a little, or she could follow the advice of Hippocrates and do nothing. Either way, death would not be put off for long. Dismayed by this diagnosis, Augustine reports, "she turned for help to God alone, in prayer." In a dream, Innocentia was told to wait at the baptistry for the first woman who came out after being baptized, and to ask this woman to make the sign of Christ over the cancerous breast.

Innocentia did as she was told, and she was completely cured. When she told her doctor what had happened, he responded with a contemptuous tone, "I thought you would make some great discovery to me!" Then, seeing her horrified look, he backpedaled, saying, "What great thing was it for Christ to heal a cancer? He

²⁴ Bruce L. Shelley, "Signs & Wonders: Miracles Ended Long Ago— Or Did They?" *Christian History*, Issue 67, Summer 2000, Vol. XIX, No. 3: 43.

raised a man who had been dead four days." This story, reported in *City of God*, shows how dramatically Augustine had changed his mind on the subject of miracles.

In North Africa in Augustine's day, belief in miracles was as widespread as today's obsession with angels in America. Early in his ministry, Augustine mocked these popular claims. In *On True Religion*, written in 390, he asserted that miracles like those in the Bible ended in the apostolic era. "These miracles," he wrote, "were no longer permitted to continue in our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should be chilled by the customariness of the very things whose novelty had inflamed them."

But later in Augustine's ministry, some of his colleagues traveled to Jerusalem and returned to North Africa with relics of the body of an apostle. Little chapels called *memoriae* containing sacred dust sprang up in country estates around Hippo. As biographer Peter Brown puts it, Augustine had to deal with miracles on his own doorstep.

The bishop, who had once scoffed at such folk religion, now found himself preaching to huge crowds drawn by a little bit of dust. He saw the power of the shrines: he knew of a thief in Milan who was compelled to confess his deeds at the tomb of the saints. He needed to modify his earlier, anti-miracle stance.

So Augustine, late in life, decided to examine and record the miracles that he personally encountered and to give the verifiable miracles maximum publicity. In fact, he writes that when he learned Innocentia had not told others about her healing, "I was indignant that so astounding a miracle, performed in so important a city, and on a person far from obscure, should have been kept a secret like this; and I thought it right to admonish her and to speak to her with some sharpness on the matter."

When Innocentia did tell her friends what had happened, "They listened in great amazement and gave praise to God." Augustine's hope was that, as apostolic miracles had aided the growth of the early church, miracles in his own day would draw people to Christianity. Unfortunately, pagans and heretics boasted of miracles, too. Augustine did not deny the pagan miracles, but he likened them to the wonders performed by Pharaoh's magicians, in contrast to the miracles wrought by Moses. Pagan miracles occurred, but as they did not bring glory to the true God, they must be dismissed.

Heretics' miracles, according to Augustine, never happened: "Either they are deceived, or they deceive." Heretics are incapable of performing miracles because, by their schismatic nature, they show that they have not love, and he who has not love is nothing. If a heretic claims to have performed a miracle, Augustine warned, he is a false prophet, seeking only to lead people away from Christ. Augustine's exuberance for true miracles in *The City of God* shows that he no longer saw them as sham spirituality but as physical manifestations of God's work in the world. He wrote, "What do these miracles attest but the faith which proclaims that Christ rose in the flesh and ascended into heaven with the flesh? ... God may himself perform them by himself, through that wonderful operation of his power whereby, being eternal, he is active in temporal events; or he may effect them through the agency of his servants. ... Be that as it may, they all testify to the faith in which the resurrection to eternal life is proclaimed."
