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Jesus of Nazareth as the (Apocalyptic) Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer:

Following *Jesus Christ* beyond radical criticism's point of view

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ABSTRACT

The study of Jesus of Nazareth has long been a topic subjected for intense debates for competing interpretations, often polarized between traditional faith perspectives and radical critical approaches (Deines, 2006; Howard Marshall, 1967, 1977, 2004). This article proposes a methodology for historical research on Jesus that transcends the limitations of radical criticism, which frequently reduces Jesus to a mere social revolutionary, rebel rabbi, or political zealot. By focusing on Jesus as a Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer, we aim to draw a nuanced portrait that acknowledges the historical context while remaining faithful to the basic tenets of Christian belief (Hwang, 2001, 2024). In this connection it can be said that the hypothesis of Jesus as an Apocalyptic Prophet was first proposed by A. Schweitzer. This aforementioned approach emphasizes Jesus's prophetic pronouncements, His use of parables as transformative teaching tools, His role as a spiritual coach guiding disciples, and His ultimate redemptive purpose. This article argues that a careful examination of the Gospels, informed by historical and cultural context but guided by a faith-informed hermeneutic, allows for a robust and enriching understanding of Jesus without succumbing to the reductionist tendencies of radical criticism.

Kata kunci:
New Testament studies,
Historical Jesus, radical
criticism

ABSTRAK

Studi tentang Yesus dari Nazaret telah lama menjadi topik yang menjadi bahan perdebatan sengit karena interpretasi yang saling bertentangan, yang sering kali terpolarisasi antara perspektif iman tradisional dan pendekatan kritis radikal (Deines, 2006; Howard Marshall, 1967, 1977, 2004). Artikel ini mengusulkan metodologi untuk penelitian historis tentang Yesus yang melampaui batasan kritik radikal, yang sering kali mereduksi Yesus menjadi sekadar revolusioner sosial, rabi pemberontak, atau fanatik politik. Dengan berfokus pada Yesus sebagai Nabi Apokaliptik-Pendongeng-Pembimbing-Penebus, kami bertujuan untuk menggambarkan potret bernuansa yang mengakui konteks historis sambil tetap setia pada prinsip-prinsip dasar kepercayaan Kristen (Hwang, 2001, 2024). Dalam hubungan ini dapat dikatakan bahwa hipotesis Yesus sebagai Nabi Apokaliptik diusulkan pertama kali oleh A. Schweitzer. Pendekatan yang diajukan ini menekankan pernyataan kenabian Yesus, penggunaan perumpamaan sebagai alat pengajaran yang transformatif, perannya sebagai pelatih spiritual yang membimbing para pengikut, dan tujuan penebusan utamanya. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa pemeriksaan Injil yang saksama, yang didasarkan pada konteks sejarah dan budaya tetapi dipandu oleh hermeneutika yang berlandaskan iman, memungkinkan pemahaman yang kuat dan memperkaya tentang Yesus tanpa menyerah pada kecenderungan reduksionis dari kritik radikal.

Keywords:
Studi Perjanjian Baru, Yesus
dalam sejarah, kritik radikal

INTRODUCTION

The resurgence of interest in both ecclesiology and the historical Jesus, as suggested by the notion of "new rock and roll" in Church studies, underscores the enduring relevance of these topics (cf. Ward). While Pete Ward's observation highlights the Church's central role in contemporary discourse, the foundational figure of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth, remains the subject of intense scholarly scrutiny and popular fascination.

One of basic tenet in historical Jesus research is that Jesus of Nazareth taught His disciples in Aramaic language, but recently that basic tenet has been disputed, by arguing possibility of Jesus of Nazareth taught in Hebrew especially in Galilean

dialect while acknowledging the majority of lingua franca in His time was Aramaic (Lataster, 2014; Hwang, 2011; Kitchen, 1966; Metsämuuronen, 2019; Neal, 1963; Porter, 1993).

Aside of that theme, it seems we can agree on a theme that is: much of the historical research on Jesus has been dominated by *radical criticism* approaches that often strip him of His divine significance, portraying him instead as a product of his socio-political context. These interpretations, while offering valuable insights into the historical milieu, frequently reduce Jesus to a radical teacher, rebel rabbi, or political zealot, ultimately framing his ministry as a failure within the political machinations of his time (Howard Marshall, 1967, 1977, 2004; Carson & Moo, 2005, 2009).

The present article seeks to navigate this complex terrain by proposing a methodology for historical research on Jesus that avoids the pitfalls of radical criticism, of which we can find roots for instance in Peter L. Berger's term "*methodological atheism*", see also (Berger, 1967; Bubnov, 2023; Linnemann, 1990; Linnemann, 1992; Rahme, 2023; Telford, 2014).

Our aim is not to dismiss the importance of historical context but to develop a framework that allows for a more holistic and faithful understanding of Jesus. We posit here that Jesus can be understood as the Apocalyptic Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer, a multifaceted figure whose ministry transcended the limitations of his time and continues to resonate with believers today (Jones, 2005; Christianto, 2025).

By focusing on these four key aspects of Jesus's ministry, we can move beyond the reductionist interpretations that often characterize radical criticism.

- The Apocalyptic Prophet: Jesus's prophetic pronouncements, rooted in the Hebrew tradition, were not merely social critiques but pronouncements of God's kingdom and calls to repentance. Examining his prophetic utterances within their historical and theological context allows us to understand his message as both timely and timeless. In this connection it can be said that the hypothesis of Jesus as an Apocalyptic Prophet was first proposed by A. Schweitzer (S.J. Gathercole, *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 51 no. 2, 2000; Silitonga, 2022). Nonetheless, here this writer does not stop at that Schweitzer's known hypothesis, instead the notion of Jesus as the Apocalyptic Prophet shall be accompanied with three more characteristics of His ministry, as follows:
- The Storyteller: Jesus's use of parables as teaching tools was a masterclass in communication, designed to engage His audience and challenge their assumptions. Understanding the cultural and literary context of these stories reveals their profound theological and ethical implications.
- The Coach: Jesus's relationship with his disciples was one of mentorship and spiritual guidance. Examining His interactions with them reveals his methods of teaching, his patience, and His commitment to preparing them for their future ministry.
- The Redeemer: Ultimately, Jesus's ministry culminated in His sacrificial death and resurrection, the central event of Christian faith. This redemptive act

cannot be fully explained by historical analysis alone, but it can be understood as the fulfilment of His prophetic mission and the culmination of his teachings.

The present article will explore each of these facets of Jesus's ministry, drawing on the Gospels and relevant historical and cultural sources. By adopting a faith-informed hermeneutic that acknowledges the limitations of historical criticism while remaining open to the possibility of divine revelation, we can construct a portrait of Jesus that is both historically grounded and theologically meaningful. We seek to draw an outline that it is possible to engage with the historical Jesus without succumbing to the reductionist tendencies of radical criticism, allowing us to encounter Jesus as the Apocalyptic Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer, whose message of hope and redemption continues to transform lives.

Part of the present article can be considered as a follow-up of previous articles for instance, cf. Christianto & Chandra (2020), Christianto (2022), Christianto (2025).

On Methodology: Shifting from common methodological assumptions

Classical historical research on Jesus of Nazareth often operates on three fundamental assumptions, which, while seemingly objective, are rooted in what Peter Berger termed "*methodological atheism*" (Berger, 1967; Bubnov, 2023; Rahme, 2023). These assumptions include:

1. The Dichotomy Between Historical Jesus and Gospel Christ: A stark distinction is drawn between the "actual" Jesus of Nazareth, presumed to exist before

the rise of Christianity, and the Jesus depicted in the Four Gospels and the broader New Testament. This approach posits that the Gospels are primarily theological constructs, not reliable historical accounts.

The Primacy of Aramaic and the Undermining of the Gospels: The assertion that Jesus primarily taught in Aramaic language is used to question the authority of the Greek New Testament Gospels. This implies that the Gospels are translations, subject to distortion and reinterpretation, thus casting doubt on their accuracy. Nonetheless, it shall be mentioned here that recently that basic tenet has been disputed, by arguing possibility of Jesus of Nazareth taught in Hebrew especially in Galilean dialect while acknowledging the majority of lingua franca in His time was Aramaic (Hwang, 2011; Kitchen, 1966; Lataster, 2014; Mack, 1993; Metsämuuronen, 2019; Neal, 1963; Porter, 1993).¹

2. Delayed Christological Elevation: The belief that Jesus was elevated to the status of Christ or Messiah long after his death, suggesting that his followers retroactively imbued him with divine significance. This view minimizes the possibility that Jesus himself claimed or demonstrated messianic authority during his lifetime.

¹ Note: several sources have cited that Jesus might have spoken in Hebrew with Galilean accent, or sometimes Aramaic with Galilean accent, and it can be said too that the original or part of original Gospels book were written in Hebrew, as testified by new findings called The Cochin Hebrew Gospels found near Kerala, India, probably brought to that place by St Bartholomew or St Didymus Thomas at first century AD. See also, quote: “Jesus Spoke Hebrew, written by Brenton Minge, is a most important book for, as its sub-title reads: Busting the “Aramaic” Myth.” url: [Jesus would have spoken Hebrew with a Galilean accent | Daniel returned to Jerusalem as governor Nehemiah](#); see also for instance: John Wijngaards’ remark: “The Galilean Aramaic Jesus spoke, was a mixture of the old 'imperial Aramaic' and colloquial Hebrew.” url: [Hebrew and Aramaic](#)

These tenets, while providing a framework for historical inquiry, often lead to a reductionist portrayal of Jesus, stripping him of his divine claims and reducing Him to a mere historical figure shaped by socio-political forces. Such an approach, grounded in methodological atheism, inherently excludes the possibility of supernatural intervention and divine revelation (cf. Bauckham, 1981, 2003; Mack, 1993).

A Faith-Informed Historical Approach

As we noted above, the present article seeks to navigate this complex terrain by proposing a methodology for historical research on Jesus that avoids the pitfalls of radical criticism, of which we can find roots for instance in Peter L. Berger's term "*methodological atheism*", see also (Berger, 1967; Bubnov, 2023; Howard Marshall, 1967; Linnemann, 1990; Linnemann, 1992; Rahme, 2023; Telford, 2014). Instead we propose a methodology that transcends these limitations by beginning with a strong affirmation of the teachings of Jesus as presented in the Four Gospels. Rather than starting with skepticism, we begin with a presumption of reliability, recognizing the Gospels as primary sources that, while requiring careful interpretation, offer valuable insights into the life and teachings of Jesus (cf. Bauckham, 1981, 2003; Keener, 2016; Mack, 1993).

By re-depicting Jesus as the Apocalyptic Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer, we aim to paint a nuanced portrait that acknowledges the historical context while remaining faithful to the core tenets of Christian belief. This approach emphasizes:

- The Gospels as Primary Sources: While acknowledging the need for critical analysis, we recognize the Gospels as essential historical documents that provide a foundation for understanding Jesus.
- Contextual Understanding: We will examine the historical and cultural context of Jesus's ministry, including the social, political, and religious landscape of first-century Judea.
- Faith-Informed Hermeneutics: We will employ a hermeneutic that acknowledges the possibility of divine revelation and the transformative power of Jesus's teachings.
- Jesus's Multifaceted Ministry: We will explore Jesus as a prophet, storyteller, coach, and redeemer, recognizing the complexity and richness of his ministry.

By shifting away from methodological atheism and embracing a faith-informed approach, we can move beyond the limitations of radical criticism and gain a more comprehensive and meaningful understanding of Jesus of Nazareth.

The present article directly addresses the classical tenets and emphasizes the importance of the Gospels as primary sources and the value of a faith-informed perspective in historical research (Howard Marshall, 1967, 1977, 2004; Keener, 2016; Mack, 1993).

Results

To emphasize again, classical historical research on Jesus of Nazareth often operates on three fundamental assumptions, which, while seemingly objective, are rooted in

what Peter Berger termed "*methodological atheism*." These assumptions include: The Dichotomy Between Historical Jesus and Gospel Christ; The Primacy of Aramaic and the Undermining of the Gospels; Delayed Christological Elevation. These tenets, while providing a framework for historical inquiry, often lead to a reductionist portrayal of Jesus, stripping him of His divine claims and reducing Him to a mere historical figure shaped by socio-political forces. Such an approach, grounded in *methodological atheism*, inherently excludes the possibility of supernatural intervention and divine revelation.

By re-depicting Jesus as the Apocalyptic Prophet-Storyteller-Coach-Redeemer, we aim to paint a nuanced portrait that acknowledges the historical context while remaining faithful to the key tenets of Christian belief (cf. Bauckham, 1981, 2003; Keener, 2016).

Jesus from Nazareth as the Prophet

Jesus of Nazareth, beyond His roles as storyteller, coach, and redeemer, stands prominently as a prophet, especially He is the Apocalyptic Prophet (cf. Tsarfati 2022). This dimension of His ministry, often overshadowed by other interpretations, is crucial for understanding His impact and the enduring relevance of his message. The prophetic voice of Jesus, particularly evident in the eschatological discourses recorded in Mark 13 and Matthew 24-25, reveals a Man who not only spoke truth to power but also offered a profound vision of the future (cf. Leman & Pentak, 2004; Tsarfati 2022).

To understand Jesus as a prophet, we must first acknowledge the rich prophetic tradition within Judaism. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel served as God's messengers, calling their people to repentance, offering visions of hope, and warning of impending judgment. Jesus, rooted in this tradition, spoke with a similar authority, often using prophetic language and imagery.

His prophetic pronouncements were not simply predictions of future events. They were calls to action, invitations to a transformed life, and pronouncements of God's kingdom. Jesus's prophetic ministry was deeply intertwined with His historical context. First-century Judea was a volatile region under Roman occupation, filled with messianic expectations and social unrest. In this context, Jesus's prophetic pronouncements took on added significance, often challenging the established religious and political order (Finlan, 2011; Grenz, 2012; Keller, 2012; Keller, 2014).

Mark 13: The Olivet Discourse

In Mark 13, Jesus delivers the Olivet Discourse, a powerful prophetic message delivered on the Mount of Olives. He warns His disciples about the coming tribulations, including false messiahs, wars, famines, and earthquakes. He emphasizes the importance of vigilance and endurance, urging his followers to remain faithful amidst trials.

This discourse is not merely a prediction of future calamities. It is a call to discernment, urging believers to recognize the "signs of the times" and to remain steadfast in their faith. Jesus's prophetic voice in Mark 13 is one of both warning

and encouragement, reminding His disciples that even in the midst of chaos, God's ultimate triumph is assured (Keener, 2016; Tsarfati, 2022).

Matthew 24-25: Parables of Judgment and Kingdom:

Matthew 24-25 expands on the themes introduced in Mark 13, offering a more detailed vision of the end times. Jesus uses parables like the parable of the fig tree, the parable of the faithful and wicked servants, the parable of the ten virgins, and the parable of the sheep and the goats to illustrate the importance of preparedness, faithfulness, and compassion. These parables are not merely moral lessons. They are prophetic pronouncements about the coming judgment and the establishment of God's kingdom. Jesus's prophetic voice in these chapters is one of both judgment and hope, warning of the consequences of unfaithfulness while offering a vision of eternal reward for those who remain true to God.

Jesus's Prophetic Authority

What distinguishes Jesus's prophetic ministry is His unique authority. He spoke not as one who merely relayed messages from God, but as one who embodied God's presence. His pronouncements were not simply predictions; they were declarations of God's will.

His prophetic voice challenged the religious leaders of his time, exposing their hypocrisy and calling them to repentance. He spoke with authority about the coming kingdom of God, offering a vision of hope and restoration.

The prophetic messages in Mark 13 and Matthew 24-25 continue to resonate with believers today. They remind us of the importance of vigilance, faithfulness, and compassion in a world filled with uncertainty. They challenge us to live in light of God's coming kingdom, to be prepared for the return of Christ, and to extend God's love to all people (Tsarfati, 2022).

By recognizing Jesus as the Apocalyptic Prophet, we gain a deeper understanding of his ministry and the enduring relevance of his message. His prophetic voice, captured in the Gospels, continues to speak to us today, urging us to live lives of faith, hope, and love.

By focusing on Jesus as the Great Prophet, we can move beyond the reductionist interpretations that often characterize radical criticism. We can encounter Jesus as a man who spoke with divine authority, offering a prophetic vision that continues to shape the lives of millions around the world.

Jesus from Nazareth as the Storyteller: Jesus and the Power of Parable

Jesus of Nazareth, beyond his prophetic pronouncements and redemptive sacrifice, was a master storyteller. His ability to craft compelling narratives, filled with vivid imagery and profound truths, was a cornerstone of his ministry. We aim to draw a nuanced portrait that acknowledges the historical context while remaining faithful to the core tenets of Christian belief. And to do this, we must explore His role as the Great Storyteller.

In a culture steeped in verbal tradition, Jesus's stories resonated deeply with His audiences. He didn't deliver abstract theological concepts; He wove narratives that captured the imagination and challenged the heart. His parables, far from being simple allegories, were transformative tools designed to provoke thought and inspire action.

The Sermon on the Mount: A Tapestry of Narrative and Wisdom (Matthew 5-7)

The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7, is a prime example of Jesus's masterful storytelling. While it contains profound ethical teachings, it's also a collection of vivid images and compelling narratives. Jesus speaks of salt and light, of cities on hills, of birds and lilies. He uses metaphors and similes that paint pictures in the minds of His listeners, making his message both memorable and relatable.

The Beatitudes, for example, are not simply pronouncements of blessedness; they are portraits of a transformed life. Jesus paints a picture of those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. These images, combined with his authoritative pronouncements, created a powerful and lasting impact.

The Authoritative but Compelling Parables: Unveiling Kingdom Truths

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus uses parables to convey profound spiritual truths. These stories, drawn from everyday life, served as windows into the kingdom of God (Bauckham, 1981, 2003).

- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37): This iconic parable, in response to a lawyer's question about loving one's neighbour, transcends cultural and religious boundaries. It challenges the listener to redefine the concept of "neighbour," emphasizing compassion and action over religious piety. The story's vivid imagery and emotional impact make it a timeless lesson in love and empathy.
- The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23): This parable illustrates the different ways people respond to the message of the kingdom. It uses the familiar image of a farmer sowing seeds to convey profound insights into the human heart and the challenges of faith.
- The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32): This story, a masterpiece of narrative art, explores themes of repentance, forgiveness, and unconditional love. It resonates with audiences of all backgrounds, offering a powerful message of hope and reconciliation.

Why Stories?

Jesus's use of parables was not merely a stylistic choice (Christianto, 2022; Keener, 2016; Leman & Pentak, 2004). It was a deliberate approach to:

- Make complex truths accessible: Stories simplify abstract concepts, making them easier to understand and remember.
- Engage the imagination: Stories captivate the listener, drawing them into the narrative and prompting them to reflect on its meaning.

- Challenge assumptions: Parables often subvert expectations, forcing listeners to reconsider their beliefs and values.
- Invite personal application: Stories allow listeners to see themselves in the narrative, prompting them to apply the message to their own lives.

The Enduring Legacy of Jesus's Stories

Jesus's stories continue to resonate with audiences today, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers. His parables offer timeless wisdom, challenging us to live lives of compassion, forgiveness, and love. By recognizing Jesus as the Master Storyteller, we gain a deeper appreciation for His ministry and the power of His message. His stories, recorded in the Gospels, continue to inspire, challenge, and transform lives around the world.

Jesus from Nazareth as the Great Coach: Formation of Disciples

In the tapestry of Jesus's multifaceted ministry, His role as the Great Coach stands as a vital thread. And in this regard, we shall emphasize Jesus's pivotal role in forming and equipping His disciples (Jones, 2005; Christianto, 2025).

Jesus didn't just preach to crowds; He invested deeply in a small group of individuals, transforming them into his closest followers and future leaders of His movement. This process of discipleship was a deliberate and intentional coaching program, designed to equip them for the monumental task of carrying on His mission after his departure (Jones, 2005; Leman & Pentak, 2004).

John 1: The Personal Call and Initial Encounters

The Gospel of John, particularly chapter 1, provides a glimpse into the personal and intentional nature of Jesus's calling. He didn't issue a general invitation; he sought out individuals, engaging with them in personal conversations and inviting them to "come and see."

- Andrew and Simon Peter: Jesus's encounter with Andrew and Simon Peter highlights his ability to recognize potential. He saw beyond their outward appearances, perceiving their inner strengths and calling them to a new purpose.
- Philip and Nathanael: The calling of Philip and Nathanael demonstrates Jesus's ability to connect with individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives. He engaged with their questions and doubts, leading them to a deeper understanding of his identity.

This initial calling was not merely a recruitment drive; it was the beginning of a transformative relationship, a coaching process that would shape their lives and ministries.

The Dynamics of Discipleship

Jesus's coaching methodology was experiential and participatory. He didn't just lecture His disciples; He invited them to observe His actions, participate in His ministry, and learn from His example (Jones, 2005).

- **Learning by Doing:** The disciples accompanied Jesus on His journeys, witnessing His miracles, listening to His teachings, and observing His interactions with people from all walks of life. This hands-on experience was crucial for their development as future leaders.
- **Challenging and Equipping:** Jesus challenged His disciples' assumptions, confronted their weaknesses, and pushed them beyond their comfort zones. He also provided them with practical training, teaching them how to preach, heal, and cast out demons.
- **Addressing Doubts and Fears:** Jesus patiently addressed his disciples' doubts and fears, providing them with reassurance and encouragement. He understood their human limitations and offered them grace and forgiveness.

Preparing for the Great Task: The Sending of the Disciples

Jesus's coaching was not just about personal development; it was about preparing his disciples for the great task of carrying on His mission. He knew that He would soon be leaving them, and He wanted to ensure that they were equipped to continue His work (Jones, 2005).

- **The Sending of the Twelve (Matthew 10):** Jesus sent His disciples out on a mission, giving them authority to preach the gospel and heal the sick. This experience provided them with valuable practical training and prepared them for their future ministry.

- The Promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14-16): Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide and empower them after His departure. This promise provided them with assurance and confidence, knowing that they would not be alone in their mission.
- The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20): Jesus's final instructions to His disciples, known as the Great Commission, charged them with the responsibility of making disciples of all nations. This commission provided them with a clear sense of purpose and direction.

Jesus's coaching methodology continues to inspire and inform leadership development today. His emphasis on personal relationships, experiential learning, and empowering others remains relevant for leaders in all fields.

To summarize, by recognizing Jesus as the Greatest Coach, we gain a deeper appreciation for His ministry and the transformative power of His leadership. His example reminds us that true leadership is about developing people, empowering them to reach their full potential, and equipping them to make a lasting impact on the world.

Jesus from Nazareth as the Redeemer

Jesus of Nazareth, as the culmination of His multifaceted ministry, stands as the Great Redeemer, a figure whose sacrifice transcends time and culture. And to do this, we must explore the heart of His mission: His redemptive work in Calvary (Boaheng, 2022; Bruce, 1968; Dunn, 1998; Treat, 2023). The concept of redemption,

the act of being saved or delivered from sin and its consequences, is fundamental to Christian belief. Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection are understood as the pivotal events through which this redemption is accomplished (Treat, 2023).

The Gospel Narratives: Witnessing the Redemptive Sacrifice

The Gospels meticulously narrate the events leading up to Jesus's crucifixion, emphasizing the suffering He endured. These accounts highlight the sacrificial nature of His death, portraying Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). While the Gospels present the historical account, the letters of Paul provide the theological framework for understanding its meaning (Carson & Moo, 2005, 2009).

The Apostle Paul, in His letters to the Romans and Galatians, elaborates on the whole world scope of Jesus's redemptive work, and even if we agree on the role of Jesus as Cosmic Christ, then He also redeems the entire Cosmos. He emphasizes that salvation is not limited to a particular ethnic group or religious tradition but is freely offered to all who believe (cf. John 3:16).

- Romans, Justification by Faith: In the Letter to the Romans, Paul articulates the doctrine of justification by faith. He argues that all people, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinners and fall short of God's glory. However, through faith in Jesus Christ, they can be declared righteous in God's sight. This justification is not based on works of the law but on God's grace, freely given to those who believe (Romans 3:21-26).

- Galatians: Freedom from the Law: In the Letter to the Galatians, Paul addresses the issue of legalism, emphasizing that salvation is not achieved through adherence to the Mosaic Law. He argues that Christ's death has freed believers from the bondage of the law, making them children of God through faith (Galatians 3:26-29). Paul teaches that the law was a tutor leading to Christ, but that now faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- Universal Grace: Paul's theology underscores the universality of God's grace. He proclaims that Jesus's redemptive work is not limited by ethnicity, social status, or religious background. It extends to all who place their faith in him.

Jesus's redemptive work has profound implications for humanity:

- Forgiveness of sins: Through his sacrifice, Jesus offers forgiveness of sins, reconciling humanity to God.
- Restoration of relationship with God: Jesus's death and resurrection open the way for a restored relationship with God, allowing believers to experience his love and grace.
- New life in Christ: Through faith in Jesus, believers are born again, receiving a new life characterized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- Hope for eternal life: Jesus's resurrection offers hope for eternal life, assuring believers that death is not the end but the beginning of a new and glorious existence.

The Enduring Relevance of Jesus's Redemption

Jesus's redemptive work continues to transform lives around the world. His sacrifice offers hope, forgiveness, and new life to all who believe. By recognizing Jesus as the Great Redeemer, we gain a deeper understanding of His mission and the transformative power of his love. His redemptive work, as articulated in the Gospels and expounded by Paul, remains the cornerstone of Christian faith, offering salvation and hope to all who seek him (Hwang, 2011; Moo, 1996).

Discussion and Implications

Jesus of Nazareth was not merely a teacher; He was a transformative pedagogue, employing a unique blend of experiential learning, re-conscientization, and a focus on spiritual maturity. Unlike the structured approaches of Vygotsky, B. Skinner, or Freire, Jesus's method was deeply and far more personal, relational, and aimed at a holistic transformation of His disciples.

1. Experiential Learning:

Jesus's teaching was not confined to lectures or theoretical discussions. He immersed His disciples in real-life situations, allowing them to learn through direct experience. They witnessed His miracles, participated in His ministry, and grappled with the challenges of following Him. This experiential approach fostered deep understanding and lasting transformation.

- Walking on Water (Matthew 14:22-33): This event was more than a miracle; it was a lesson in faith and trust. Peter's experience of walking on water, and then sinking when he doubted, provided a visceral understanding of the importance of unwavering belief.
 - Matthew 14:31: "Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "*why did you doubt?*"
- The Sending of the Twelve (Mark 6:7-13): Jesus sent His disciples out to preach and heal, giving them practical experience in ministry. This hands-on training allowed them to apply His teachings and develop their own skills.
 - Mark 6:12-13: "They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."

2. Re-Conscientization: Challenging Assumptions and Transforming Worldviews

Jesus's parables and teachings were designed to challenge His disciples' preconceived notions and to foster a deeper understanding of God's kingdom. He used stories and metaphors to expose the limitations of their existing worldviews and to invite them to embrace a new way of thinking. This process of re-conscientization led to a profound shift in their understanding of themselves, their relationships, and their purpose.

- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37): This parable challenged the disciples' understanding of who their neighbor was, prompting them to expand their circle of compassion and to embrace a more inclusive worldview.
 - Luke 10:37: "Jesus told him, "*Go and do likewise.*"

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Jesus's teachings on love, forgiveness, and humility challenged the disciples' understanding of power and success, inviting them to embrace a countercultural way of living.
 - Matthew 5:44: "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

3. Spiritual Maturity: Cultivating Discipleship

Jesus's ultimate goal was to cultivate spiritual maturity in His disciples. He sought to transform them into faithful followers who embodied His teachings and carried on His mission. This involved nurturing their faith, developing their character, and empowering them to serve others.

- The Promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26): Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide and teach His disciples, empowering them to grow in their faith and to become witnesses to His love.

- John 14:26: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20): Jesus's final command to His disciples was to make disciples of all nations, indicating that their spiritual growth was meant to be shared with the world.

Several implications: Embracing Re-Conscientization

The transformative pedagogy of *Jesus, with its emphasis on experiential learning, re-conscientization, and spiritual maturity*, provides a powerful approach even for contemporary ministry. Inspired by this approach, we and several fellow ministers have begun to embrace a re-conscientization approach during lecturing, and we have also initiated a holistic ministry through Yayasan Sukma Kawula Mahardika, focusing on Christian counselling for LGBTQ-suffering young people. Furthermore, this writer has explored on a journey as a Christian coach, aiming to empower young people to fulfil their God-given callings (Jones, 2005; Christianto, 2022a).

A. Re-Conscientization in Lecturing:

Traditional lecture-based teaching often prioritizes the transmission of information over the transformation of the learner. Recognizing this limitation, we have begun to integrate re-conscientization into our lecturing. This involves:

- **Challenging Assumptions:** Instead of simply presenting established doctrines, we encourage students to critically examine their own beliefs and assumptions, fostering a deeper understanding of their faith.
- **Contextualizing Scripture:** We emphasize the importance of interpreting scripture within its historical and cultural context, helping students to see how its message applies to their own lives.
- **Promoting Dialogue:** We create space for open and honest dialogue, allowing students to share their questions, doubts, and experiences, fostering a sense of community and mutual learning.
- **Connecting Theory to Practice:** We bridge the gap between theory and practice, encouraging students to apply their learning to real-world situations and to reflect on their own spiritual growth.

This re-conscientization approach aims to move beyond rote memorization and encourage students to develop a living faith that informs their thoughts, actions, and relationships. We started this new approach to learning especially in theological education, by presenting our ideas in OCRPL webinar around 2020,² with abstract as follows:

"In the past, the economic concept was inseparable from moral values or theology. After the industrial age, the separation between economy and theology becomes more observable. Those who define and decide issues in the macro-economic domain such as inflation, price levels, rate of economic growth, national income,

² At a seminar held at Oxford Center for Religious and Public Life, 24th Nov. 2020.

gross domestic product (GDP), and changes in unemployment do not care about theological or moral concepts.

In microeconomics, practitioners provide questions such as why different goods have different values, how individuals and businesses conduct and benefit from efficient production and exchange, and how individuals best coordinate and cooperate with one another without much consideration to theology or moral values. Meanwhile, the *foci* of theological education often touch mainly on church life and seldom yield transformational concepts for the real economy. Only in 2020 when humanity ends up being shaken by digital culture, COVID-19, social or political conflicts, global economic crises, and even ecological disasters, serious discussion that might give birth to a new transformative theology begins as a question arises

"Where is Jesus in this condition? Responding mainly to the needs of today's global economic crisis, this article discusses the concept of relational identity that derives from the Trinitarian theology as a framework for a new economic concept named as koinomics as an effort to contribute to a transformative theology. To do so, the study explores the Trinitarian dimensions, which koinonia and perichoresis are the pillars. Further, the work studies two communities as models to identify the real obstacles in applying such theological concept. As the result, the potentials of koinomics as a framework are affirmed, yet various factors in the macro and micro-economic contexts that have been identified needs more theological responses." (cf. Bevans & Schroeder, 2004; Christianto, *Koinomics*, 2020, 2022).

b. Yayasan Sukma Kawula Mahardika: An approach to Holistic Ministry for LGBTQ-Suffering Young People

Our concern for the well-being of young people led to the founding of *Yayasan Sukma Kawula Mahardika* (a Javanese term, which can be interpreted as "The Souls of Redeemed & Free People"). This foundation addresses the challenges faced by youth struggling with LGBTQI traits, offering a path to healing and restoration. We recognize that these individuals are often caught in a battle between conflicting identities and desires, which often mirrors the larger conflict between light and darkness. Our aim is to offer them the light of truth and the path to redemption.

Inspired by Jesus's compassion and his commitment to reaching the marginalized, along with several ministers and Christian counsellors, a few years ago we started Yayasan Sukma Kawula Mahardika, a ministry dedicated to providing Christian counselling for LGBTQ-suffering young people within our reach (Suria, Simbolon, Susilo, *et al*, 2021; Adams, 1970). Our small ministry initiative seeks to:

- Offer a Safe and Affirming Space: We create a safe and non-judgmental environment where young people can explore their identities and experiences without fear of condemnation.
- Provide Holistic Counselling: We offer counselling that addresses the emotional, spiritual, and relational needs of LGBTQ-suffering young people, helping them to find healing and wholeness.

- Promote Reconciliation: We seek to foster reconciliation between LGBTQ-suffering young people and their families, communities, and churches, in order to return understanding and acceptance.

This ministry is rooted in the belief that all people are created in God's image and deserve to experience His love and grace; nonetheless we shall emphasize here that young people who suffer from LGBTQ worldview shall be given a second chance to repent, recover, and repair from their mistakes (cf. Adams, 1970; Davies & Gilbert, *Portraits of Freedom*, 2001).

c. Starting a modest Christian Coaching Ministry for Young Ministers

Recognizing the need for mentorship and guidance in contemporary ministry, this writer has begun to explore a new role as a coach. This involves:

- Identifying God-Given Callings: to help young people to discern their unique gifts and callings, empowering them to pursue their passions and serve God in meaningful ways.
- Developing Ministry Skills: to provide practical training and guidance in areas such as preaching, teaching, leadership, and pastoral care, equipping young people to become effective ministers.
- Fostering Spiritual Growth: to encourage young people to deepen their relationship with God through prayer, scripture study, and spiritual disciplines.

- Providing Accountability and Support: to offer ongoing praying and support, helping young people to stay focused on their goals and to overcome challenges.

This coaching approach is grounded in the belief that God calls and equips individuals to serve Him in diverse ways, and that mentorship and guidance can play a crucial role in helping them to fulfil their potential.

Concluding remark

In summary, this exploration has sought to move beyond the reductive lenses of radical historical criticism, which often confines Jesus of Nazareth to the limited roles of a social rebel or a political zealot. By embracing a holistic perspective, we have endeavoured to shed light the multifaceted nature of Jesus as the Great (Apocalyptic) Prophet, the Storyteller, the Coach, and the Redeemer. This approach, grounded in a deep respect for the Gospel narratives and informed by a faith-centred understanding, allows us to draw a more complete portrait of Jesus. We recognize His prophetic voice, which spoke truth to power and unveiled the coming kingdom; His mastery of parables, which transformed hearts and minds; His dedication to discipleship, which equipped a movement; and above all, His redemptive sacrifice, which offered salvation to the world. Ultimately, this framework acknowledges the historical context while remaining steadfast in the primary tenets of Christian belief, revealing a Jesus who transcends the limitations of radical skepticism in historical analysis and continues to inspire faith and transformation.

Moreover, by embracing re-conscientization in lecturing, establishing a holistic ministry in particular for LGBTQ-suffering young people, and exploring new roles in Christian coaching, we are seeking to embody the transformative pedagogy of Jesus in our contemporary context. This writer believes that by challenging assumptions, fostering spiritual growth, and empowering others to live out their faith, we can contribute to the ongoing work of God's kingdom.

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VC

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