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**THE DISCIPLESHIP IN LUKE:
MARY AS THE PERFECT DISCIPLE**

Moderator

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**A Long Essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies**

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to

My parents,

Brother

All my confreres and

All friends

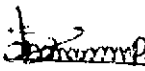
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflections. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed .......

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Date....6/12/2005.....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Luke, the author of the two-volume literary creation, which we refer to as Luke-Acts, believes that God has a plan by which human beings can gain eternal salvation. This plan was revealed by God in the Old Testament by prophecies and promises and at last through the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Christian community of Luke includes of all people without having any partiality of religion, culture, family, economic status, language etc, and all those who follow Christ sincerely as true disciple of Him.

According to Luke this discipleship of Christ is not an accidental, but rather the real plan of God for the salvation of all. Discipleship is an act of God, a miracle of divine grace (Job 10:12-13; Zech 8:5-8; Gen 18.14) and one can only receive it in obedience and surrender (Acts 9:1-22).

The Lucan style in which he has arranged his discipleship texts in the journey narrative (Lk 9:23-27; 9:57-62; 14:25-35; 18:24-30) not only gives them a permanent and lasting value, but also makes one think of discipleship itself as a journey (Lk 9:51.53; 10:1; 13:22) a course (Acts 13:25; 20:24) and a way (Lk 1:79; 20:21). It is the course that Jesus has once entered and (Acts 13:24) and now finished (Lk 9:31). It is a course which disciples must follow now (Heb 12:1-2). It is an invitation and a challenge

offered to all opening out unbounded opportunities to live and grow in the service of the Kingdom. But every one is free to accept or reject this costly commitment.

Being such a fantastic story teller, Luke portrays the elements of discipleship in his gospel including women disciples. Bringing Mary into the scene, as the one exemplifies all of the disciples 'who hear the word of God, keep it and live it (Lk 1:38; 11:28, 38-48) in her life as a true follower. For the disciples of Jesus in the gospel of Luke Jesus mandates a response from the followers, by way of renouncing their possessions and sharing with the poor what they have and follow Jesus radically with a whole heart and mind. Luke orients his gospel towards arousing in the disciple an intense love for God and his people. He works systematically all through his teaching on discipleship that the path of love leads to a true union with God which is the ultimate goal of a disciple. The evangelist, who speaks about women disciples, does not hesitate to bring Mary as Jesus' first and perfect disciple. Luke gives enough exegetical evidence to stress his idea. Discipleship is a life long commitment for Luke; and if so Mary is the best ideal for discipleship.

My task here is to depict the Lucan picture on discipleship. In order to do that, in the first chapter I will analyze the discipleship and its meaning in the Old Testament namely in the Jewish tradition. The chapter ends with the basic requirements of discipleship, especially in the New Testament.

The second chapter mainly deals with the Lucan picture of Discipleship; where he portrays it as a journey. Also the chapter explains the characteristics of discipleship in the Lucan point of view, which helps us to understand the real flow of Lucan

theology of discipleship – as an ongoing response to the call of Jesus. The chapter ends with the Lucan idea on women's discipleship.

The third chapter is the climax of our study where both first and the second chapters are heading to. It analyzes the discipleship of Mary the Mother Jesus. I try to analyze with Lucan background that how Mary becomes the perfect disciple of Jesus and how she challenges the modern women with the model of discipleship.

Christians today look to Jesus and his disciples in Luke-Acts for examples to imitate in their own journeys with Jesus. We can fulfill the missionary responsibility in our community as well as in foreign lands by preaching the good news of God's salvation, by following Jesus and leading a life of humble service. By portraying Jesus as a model of compassion who is particularly attentive to the question of social and economic justice, Luke tells us that those who wish to do the will of God must place themselves at the service of others. This service ethic includes adopting a life style which, in many respects, is radically opposed to the standards of this world.

Chapter I

Discipleship in the Jewish Tradition

Introduction

Especially in the first century of Jewish tradition, different groups of people were called disciples, using the essentially equivalent terms '*mathetes* and *talmis*', which are meant for the followers, who were committed to a popular and accepted teacher or a movement. The best examples for this could be the disciples of Pharisees (Mt.22: 15-16) who were belonging to an institution or a Rabbi. Hence the chapter will discuss the terminology, history, tradition and the main elements of discipleship.¹

1.1 The Terminology

The English word 'disciple' normally designates a follower, a student of a great master or religious leader. The term 'disciple' is usually used for the equivalence of the Greek word '*mathetes*' and the Hebrew word '*talmid* and *limmud*'.² The two important Greek terms which are part and parcel of the discipleship vocabulary are '*mathetai*' (disciples) and '*akolouthein*' (to follow). But interestingly the former occurs in the Old Testament (LXX) for a few times. This is because the Old Testament authors do not picture God as a master and Israel as his disciple. Rather we find a God who speaks to them directly through the prophets and kings. In fact there was no adequate situation for the establishment of a master - disciple relationship in Israel. In the Old Testament the

¹ J.B. GREEN, ed., Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 176-177.

² J.B GREEN, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 176.

term 'servant' (*mesa ret*) was used often instead of 'disciple' (*Talmid*). For instance Joshua is named as the servant of Moses, and not as the disciple (Ex.24: 13); Elisha was the servant of Elijah (Ikg.19: 21); and Baruch was the servant of Jeremiah (Jer.32: 12-15).³

But interestingly when we examine the Greek tradition, especially in their different schools of philosophy, there is a gradual change of understanding of teacher – pupil relationship and the terms used to refer to them. There we find terms like Rabbi or master and disciple (*hakam -talmid*). The Greek tradition gave importance to the law and the temple, and the Rabbis cultivated an intellectual thirst for the understanding of the law and its observance, which had unreserved influences on the ordinary people who did not know the law.⁴ This gave rise to different groups of followers who wanted to study the law and to scrutinize it under the guidance of some famous masters and thus to become somehow the students of the law (*talmid*). In the gospels the term *mathetes* / *mathetai* appears roughly 260 times. The term '*mathetes*' in the singular appears in the teaching of Our Lord on the nature of discipleship (Lk.14:26-27), where discipleship means- 'full Christ likeness.'⁵

1.2 The Historical Background

1.2.1 Discipleship in the Old Testament

The word 'disciple' is not very much seen in the Old Testament, while some other evidences point out the relationship between master and the disciple in the history

³ R.J.RAJA. "Follow me, discipleship in synoptic gospels", *Vidyajyoti* LVI, 514.

⁴ C.BROWN ed, *DNT*, 484.

⁵ R.J.RAJA. "Follow me, discipleship in synoptic gospels", *Vidyajyoti* LV1, 514.

of Israel. Nevertheless the references for 'disciple' in the Old Testament history remain few. Hence in the book of Chronicle (25:8), we come across a word '*talmid*' which indicates 'a student in musical instruction', while prophet Isaiah calls a group gathered around as 'my disciples' (Is.50: 4). If we look at the history of Israel we can see that the term '*limmudim*' was used to specify the disciples of Yahweh (Is.54: 13), indicating that '*limmudim*' could be disciple of both Yahweh and human master. This implies that there was a relationship between master and disciple within the social structure of the Israel tradition (Prov.22: 17, 25:1.)⁶

1.2.2 Greek Traditions

In the classic Greek literature '*mathetes*' was used to designate a learner, though at times in a technical sense it also designates to a great teacher. But in a restricted sense, it meant to an institutional pupil. The great Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had their group of disciples who were interested in acquiring the knowledge from their masters by being with them and listening to their utterances. During the Hellenistic period and at the time of Jesus, "*mathetes*' continued to be used with general connotation of a 'learner'.⁷

1.2.3 Rabbinic tradition

A Rabbi means a master or a teacher, the one who is an expert in the law. Therefore studying the law means walking along the footsteps of the master or following the one who is an expert over the law. The one who walks after or follows the

⁶ J.B GREEN, ed., Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 176.

⁷ J.B GREEN, ed., Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, 177.

master is called a disciple or a pupil. Therefore the duty of a student or a disciple is to learn the law and more than that to adhere to that law. In that sense serving the law would imply the service of the master or to surrender oneself to the master. At the time of Jesus, these concepts and understandings were very much prevalent in Israel.⁸

1.2.3.1 Rabbi and disciple

Here we are going to see some important aspects of the relationship between a Rabbi and his disciple in the tradition of Israel. The disciple had the right to choose their Rabbis. After making the choice of their master, the disciple begins his training by staying with the master for a certain period of time. The disciples commit themselves in mastering every phrase of the Torah. The discipleship is only a step towards becoming an ordained Rabbi⁹. The duty of the disciple is to learn the law and traditions, and become an expert in interpreting them. Once a disciple has attained fuller knowledge and has become an expert in the law and tradition, he acquires the title of Rabbi by ordination. But there is no specific time of year for a disciple to become a Rabbi or to finish his discipleship course. The Rabbi decides if his disciple is able or worthy to be a Rabbi.¹⁰

1.2.4 The New Testament Tradition

When we come to the New Testament tradition and evaluating Jesus as a Rabbi, the master and teacher according to the traditional Israelite understanding, we find lot of

⁸ R.J.RAJA. "Follow me, discipleship in synoptic gospels", *Vidyajyoti* LVI, 514.

⁹ C.BROWN ed, *DNT*, 485.

¹⁰ R.J.RAJA. "Follow me, discipleship in synoptic gospels", *Vidyajyoti* LVI, 515.

differences in several of his methods and attitudes that contradict the traditional understanding of discipleship. Thus against the traditional practice of the Jewish Rabbis, Jesus himself chose his disciples and not the disciple who chose him (Jn 15: 16, Mk 3: 13, Lk.9: 59). Jesus binds his disciples to his own person, that is to say, Jesus asked them to learn from him rather than from the law. Here Jesus becomes the Law for his disciples. Another striking difference we notice is Jesus' invitation for everyone to be his disciples (Lk 6: 15). Jesus does not intend to ordain his disciples as Rabbis like the traditional practice.¹¹

The duty of the disciples of Jesus is to proclaim the Kingdom of God and not to teach the Torah and so his attitude should be that of a humble servant of his master. Another important peculiarity we find is that the disciples of Jesus do not form their own disciples but rather they form disciples for their master. In other words, discipleship as inspired by Jesus and demanded by him was apparently a new concept, different from the rabbinic tradition. The qualities demanded of the disciples of Jesus are that of total dedication, self-commitment and surrender, which break all other ties placing the security on God.¹² Merely listening to the word of God does not guarantee one's salvation. The best example is that of the rich ruler who heard the message of Jesus' preaching turns away from Jesus' command to "sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and then follow me" (Mk 10:21). There is a radical change of ideals in Jesus' invitation to discipleship from that of the Rabbinic. In the sermon on the mountain (Lk 6: 20-49) Jesus tells that those who hear

¹¹ XAVIER ed, DBT, 126.

¹² XAVIER ed, DBT, 127.

the word of God must also incorporate them into their lives (Lk 6: 46-49). In short discipleship involves listening to Lord's teaching and consequently the Word of God comes in action in them in the day-to-day experience.¹³

1.3 Requirements of a disciple

In the New Testament discipleship, is an invitation and gift from Jesus. Even when one is invited by Jesus to be his disciple, he has to fulfill what is demanded of him, the essential qualities to be a disciple of Jesus. Hearing, seeing and obedience are the basic requirement of every disciple who wish to follow Jesus. We shall deal briefly on each of these requirements as depicted in the gospel of Luke.

1.3.1. Hearing

The discipleship begins by hearing the word of God. The Lucan Jesus repeatedly exhorts the people to hear the word of God and to obey it (Lk 2: 47). Luke gives the best example from the parable of the Sower. Luke portrays Jesus as an exemplary of discipleship: the one who hears the word of God and embraces it with generous heart and bears fruit through perseverance (Lk 8: 15). Jesus proclaims blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it (Lk 11: 28). In order to highlight that Jesus is the source of wisdom and knowledge (the Word of God) Luke puts the explanation of Jesus about the example of queen of the south who listened the wisdom of Solomon, and emphasizes the importance of listening to him, for He is greater than Solomon (Lk 11: 31). To emphasis on the aspect of listening to the word of God, Luke portrays the voice from heaven during the time of transfiguration – “listen to him” (Lk.9:35). The repeated

¹³ R.J.RAJA. “Follow me, discipleship in synoptic gospels”, *Vidyajyoti* LVI, 517

exhortation of Jesus to his audience, “he who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Lk 8:8, 14:35) indicates the initial step of discipleship.¹⁴

1.3.2 Seeing

Seeing is another metaphor for perceiving the word of God. The best instance Luke gives is of the shepherds. After seeing the newborn Jesus, “returned glorifying and praising God for all they have heard and seen” (Lk 2: 20). Another example Luke gives is of Simeon who declares “mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all the peoples” (Lk 2: 30-31). Seeing the wonders which Jesus had performed like the recovery of sight to the blind (4:18, 7:21) is important for the disciples to understand their master. After healing of the man who was paralyzed, all were saying with astonishment and glorifying God “we have seen strange things today” (Lk 5: 26).¹⁵

Again to show the importance of seeing in the call of discipleship, Luke shows the example of ten lepers who were healed by Jesus but only a Samaritan has seen the wonder which Jesus did to him, hence he comes back and glorifies him (Lk 17: 15-16). When the man who was blind in the street of Jericho after seeing Jesus with his eyes follows him (Lk 18: 35-43). The centurion when he witnessed the death of Jesus he glorified him as the Son of God (Lk 23: 47). Luke tries to strike the same point again in the post resurrection understanding in the episode of Emmaus event. When they saw Jesus breaking the bread their eyes were opened (Lk 24: 31). In short, to be a disciple of Jesus, one has to see his master, and proclaim the glory of God. That is why Jesus

¹⁴ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 22

¹⁵ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 23

replies to the disciple of John the Baptist 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard' (Lk 7: 22), indirectly implying the qualities of a disciple who is witnessing his master. Seeing and hearing should lead one to the recognition of Jesus and proper response to him. Jesus warns his disciples and followers using the words of Isaiah, about those who look but not understand (Lk 8: 10). Later He appreciates his followers telling that "blessed are the eyes that see what you see, because many prophets and kings desired to see what you see but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it" (Lk 10: 23-24). Here Jesus portrays how important it is to 'hear' and to 'see' in the growth of discipleship.¹⁶

1.3.3 Obedience

Another important requirement for the disciple is obedience: obedience to the word of God. In order to acquire this obedience, one has to accept the word of God which he heard from the Lord and come to the real faith in the Lord. This faith is received by repentance of the sin. That is why Jesus says faith leads to salvation. In fact the one who hears the word of God is expected to obey and believe it (Lk 5: 17).¹⁷

According to Luke the initial positive response of a disciple includes many things, namely hearing and receiving the word and believing it. When one believes, he experiences conversion as a result of repentance which leads to the baptism. After the baptism that person is a new creature in Christ as his disciple. When he is transformed as a disciple of Jesus, he has some duties pertaining to the following, namely

¹⁶ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 23

¹⁷ D. SWEETLAND, *Our Journey with Jesus*, 118-119.

proclaiming, and witnessing to what he has heard and seen from his master. Gradually he also shares all what he has with the poor.

1.4 Conclusion

In short a disciple participates in the mission of Jesus by doing what he did, namely preaching, teaching, healing, exorcising, forgiving, serving and enduring conflicts in persecution. As we have seen in this chapter, a true disciple is the one who hears the Word of God and obey it in his life as we have seen in the New Testament tradition. In other words, a disciple means the one who follows his master, Jesus Christ at any cost closely and perfectly.¹⁸

¹⁸ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 24.

Chapter II

Discipleship in the Gospel of Luke

Introduction

Discipleship is one of the important themes of the gospel of Luke along with universalism, prayer, table companionship, poverty and riches, Holy Spirit, endurance, continuity of Israel with the church, etc. In this chapter we shall briefly discuss on the salient features of discipleship pictured in the gospel of Luke. After evaluating the various elements of discipleship and the stages of becoming a disciple we shall also briefly discuss on the women disciples and universalism of discipleship in Luke's gospel.

2.1 The Author, Audience and Purpose

In the third gospel, about the points on authorship, audience and theological and pastoral purposes, there had been consensus among the scholars, though not obvious from the internal and external sources. We shall highlight the mostly accepted stance regarding these issues.

2.1.1 The Author

Nowhere in the gospel or in the Acts of the Apostles, does the author revealed his identity. However, scholars agree that probably Luke was a gentile, the unique New Testament writer who was not a Jew. It is probable that he was not a native of Palestine. Many identify him as the physician spoken of in the letter to the Colossians (Col 4:14).

In short the author of the gospel is anonymous, but probably a Greek speaking gentile Christian, well educated, a city dweller and who might have been a friend and companion of Paul for a time.¹⁹ The gospel of Luke must be dated a period later than the period A.D. 64-70.²⁰

2.1.2 The Audience

The book was written to a man called Theophilus, probably a catechumen. He is called *most excellent Theophilus* and the title given to him is the normal title for a high official in the Roman government. The author of Luke wrote it to explain to the audience represented by Theophilus more about Jesus and the Christian faith.²¹ It is clear that Luke wrote mainly for gentile Christians. Theophilus was a gentile, as was Luke himself, and there is nothing that gentile could not grasp in the narration of Luke. For example when he is tracing the descent of Jesus, he traces it not to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, as Mathew does, but to Adam, the founder of the human race (Mt 1:2, Lk.3:38).²² Luke also gives Greek translation of Hebrew and explanation of Hebrew feasts. Hence, even though Luke addresses his gospel and Acts to a certain Theophilus (Lk 1:3, Act.1:1.), we can conclude that his audience was Greek speaking gentile Christian Community from a sophisticated and Hellenistic urban environment.²³

¹⁹ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 15-17.

²⁰ E.J TINSLEY, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary and the New English Bible: The Gospel According to Luke*, 17.

²¹ W. BARCLAY, *The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of Luke*, 1.

²² W. BARCLAY, *The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of Luke*, 3.

²³ B.E. REID, *Women in the Gospel of Luke*,

2.1.3 The Theology and Purpose of Luke

The author confesses in the preface that he is not an eye witness. But he presents an “orderly account...so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed” (1:3-4). Luke’s gospel contains the pastoral theology for the catechumens as guide. Hence it communicates the loving kindness of Jesus that is extended to every one. The author also shows the universality of Jesus’ ministry that has gone to Israelites (people of God) as well as gentiles.²⁴ There are numerous other themes that are clearly webbed together across the gospel and the Acts such as prayer, Holy Spirit, attitude towards material possession, endurance during persecution and communion with other Christians, forming a family of God. Timothy Johnson considers Luke-Acts as a two-stage prophetic narration involving numerous theological implications for his audience.²⁵

2.2 Discipleship in the Gospel of Luke

Discipleship as such an independent theme is not discussed in the gospel of Luke. However, from the call narratives and other discourses we can clearly draw the required elements and responses of a follower of Jesus. In this section we shall draw out some of the unique elements of discipleship depicted in the Lucan narration.

²⁴ W. BARCLAY, *The Daily Study Bible*, The Gospel of Luke, 5.

²⁵ T.Johnson, *Sacra Paginam* III, 17-19. According to him, both Luke and Acts demonstrate the fulfillment that is displayed through prophetic images; Jesus is pictured in the image of Moses.

2.2.1. Discipleship as a Journey

Discipleship according to Luke, radically takes the form of a journey.²⁶ In order to be a disciple of Jesus one has to follow him along the way that he travels from Galilee to Jerusalem and ultimately to God. In the early times of Jesus' ministry, to follow him meant leaving friends, family and occupation in order to accompany him on his journey. But when Luke wrote his gospel, the way of following Jesus had taken on the sense of an internal attachment and total commitment to Jesus and his message. In other words following Jesus means doing the will of God and giving importance to Jesus as master of one's life. This way of life will involve a change of residence, a different career and so on, which transforms the person both materially and spiritually. For Luke Christian discipleship is as an identification of oneself with Jesus' way of life and destiny in an intimate personal following of him. Therefore, for Luke there is a connection between the journey motif and the life of faith. Following Jesus on the journey to God means making progress in the life of faith (Lk 8:15). In other words Luke portrays the journey of a disciple with his Master, as a life of active faith, a faith which lives in one's life.²⁷

2.2.2 Discipleship as a Call

When we analyze the gospel of Luke we can see that Luke gives four major call scenes in his gospel. The first one is the call of Mary to cooperate with God's Plan (Lk 1:26-38). The other three scenes are particular calls to discipleship. They are: the call of

²⁶ L. DOOHAN, *Luke the Perennial Spirituality*, 207.

²⁷ J. FITZMYER, *Luke the Theologian*, 123.

first disciples (Lk 5:1-11), the call and mission of the twelve (Lk 6:12-16, 9:1-5) and the fourth one is the call and mission of the seventy two (Lk 10:1-20). It is very important to note that in each call there are some common themes which can be considered as Luke's theological requirements for discipleship.

2.2.2.1 The Call of the Disciples

The calling of the first disciples in Lk 5:1-11 is preceded by the performance of miracles by Jesus. They are meant to help the disciples to recognize in Jesus the divine power, which is able to surpass human estimation. Peter's call exemplifies the response of a disciple by confessing his sinfulness, while James and John without questioning accept Jesus' call.²⁸ As we have already seen in the first chapter the speciality of Jesus' discipleship is that, the initiative in the call is always coming from the master and this element is very clear in Luke's account of discipleship. No one asks to be his disciple but Jesus chooses each one (Lk 1:26-28, 5:1-4).²⁹

2.2.3 Characteristics of Discipleship

We can identify several elements involved in Jesus' invitation to follow him. From the narrations of His selection of the first disciples in chapter five and from the call of the Twelve we get a general outline of the requirements of discipleship. We shall list the most significant among them in this section.

²⁸ P. PERKINS, *Reading the New Testament*, 238.

²⁹ L. DOOHAN, *The Perennial Spirituality*, 208-209.

2.2.3.1 Personal Experience

In Mark's gospel Jesus is introduced as the son of God at his baptism (Mk 1:11) after which he begins his ministry in Galilee with the call of the first disciples as he walks along the Sea of Galilee (Mk 16:20). But in the gospel of Luke the call of the first disciples are not reported in the first twenty verses of the gospel.³⁰ Jesus calls his first disciples only after proclaiming his identity in the synagogue (4:16-21), performing miracles (4:31-41) and preaching the good news (4:44). Here the implication is to the personal experience. Those who identified him, seen his miracles and heard his preaching are invited to follow him.³¹

2.2.3.2 Self Awareness

At the marvelous catch of fish Simon Peter falls down in front of Jesus confessing his sinfulness, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (5:8). The experience of Jesus must lead one to realize his/her own personal disposition. This is a pre-requisite condition to be a disciple. Jesus however, does not condemn him rather encourages him and brings him to his mission, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people" (5:10). Jesus upsets the traditional understanding by calling a sinful man to the mission of God. Jesus' mission embraces sinners and outcasts. There is no discrimination in the invitation to discipleship on any human basis.³²

³⁰ G.KITTEL-G. FRIEDRICH, *TDNT*, 560.

³¹ D.E. COLLINS, *The Reign of God is in Your Midst*, 87.

³² B.E. REID, *Women in Luke*, 26-27.

2.2.3.3 Missionary Responsibility

The call of Jesus implies a responsibility attached to it. The invitation is not merely to be with him, rather to draw others to him. This mission is explicitly given by the Risen Lord (24: 47-48). The Holy Spirit will enable the disciple to be witness to him in bringing others to Christ (Acts 1:8). The call of Jesus also demands service. Jesus, during his life time sets a perfect example for his disciples to follow. The discipleship in Luke is structured on service.³³

2.2.3.4 Following Jesus

In the previous section (3.1.) we have explained the discipleship in Luke as a Journey. Jesus is pictured as always on the journey (in 9:51-19:44 as a long journey towards Jerusalem and prior to that there are frequent reference to Jesus' travel and other journeys in 4:16,31,44, 5:12, 6:1,12, 17, 7:1,11, 8: 1,26, 40, 9:10,28). The vocation of the disciples is to follow him closely. Hence one has to leave behind his way and goal to follow him dynamically; this takes him to an intimate union with Jesus.³⁴

2.2.3.5 Detachment

In the gospel of Mark, which is one of the sources of Luke, says only that the first disciples left their net. Luke on the other hand, explicitly states that they left *everything* and followed him (5:11). The same is repeated in the call of Levi, 'and he got up, left *everything* and followed him (5:28). The evangelist tries to emphasize the

³³ B.E. REID, *Women in Luke*, 27-28.

³⁴ D.E. COLLINS, *The Reign of God is in your Midst*, 89.

importance of having the right attitude towards material possession. A disciple has to depend totally on the divine providence for his sustenance and protection.³⁵

2.3 Response of the Disciple

The ideal response to the call of Jesus is pictured in the parable of the seed, "But as for that in good soil, these are the ones who when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance" (8:15). Hearing the word of God cannot bring forth the ideal response mechanically.³⁶ The scribes and Pharisees listened to Jesus only trying to trap him (6:7); Herod wanted to see to him out of mere curiosity (9:9). In the parable of the good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite saw the wounded man, but only the Samaritan turned to be his neighbor, the ideal disciple of Christ (10:25-39). We shall list some of the required responses of a follower on his or her way to achieve purpose of the call. We shall discuss them under two stages: the initial response and the ongoing response demanded of discipleship.³⁷

2.3.1 Initial Response to the Call

Acceptance of the Word of God is the first response to the invitation of Jesus to follow him. Though Jesus worked several miracles, even his beneficiaries and those who closely observed them did not accept him. According to Jesus accepting even the little children is an acceptance of the sender, Jesus (18:17). Reception of the message of Jesus joyfully sprouts faith. Mary is the perfect example of acceptance that resulted in her proclamation of total faith in God (1:45). Zechariah, whereas, stands in contrast to

³⁵ D.M. SWEETLANO, "The Journey of discipleship in Luke", 277.

³⁶ J.P. KEALY, *Luke's Gospel Today*, 197-198.

³⁷ J.P. KEALY, *Luke's Gospel Today*, 197-199.

the absolute faith of Mary (1:20). Throughout the gospel we can see the pictures of several people belonging to both the categories.³⁸

A matured faith calls for repentance, a complete conversion. Repentance and forgiveness of sins are the recurring themes in the gospel and in the Acts. The message of the risen Jesus to his disciples is none other than the commission to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins. The climax of the initial response to the invitation of Jesus is the baptism, entering the community of the chosen. John baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize his followers with Holy Spirit (3:16). In the Acts, the theme of baptism with water and with the Holy Spirit is depicted in several passages (8:12, 10:24, 13:15, 18:3, 19:5).³⁹

2.3.2 Ongoing Response to the Demand of Discipleship

The most basic requirement of discipleship at the second level is following Jesus. The disciples left everything to follow him; they abandoned their livelihood to take up the new mission given to them by Jesus. There shall be no hindrance of any sort, even from their dear ones, 'Let the dead bury their dead: But you go and proclaim the kingdom of God' (9:60). This command of Jesus is the essence of the vocation, to proclaim the good news to others. The mission of Jesus which he announced at the beginning of his ministry (4:18-19) is transmitted to all who are invited to follow him.⁴⁰

Proclamation of the good news is not merely a verbal communication; rather it involves the whole person. The proclamation is by witnessing through one's own life

³⁸ B.BYRNE, *A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, 83.

³⁹ B.BYRNE, *A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, 84.

⁴⁰ E.J.TINSLEY, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 71-72.

which is transformed through the encounter with the Word of God. The Risen Lord commissions the disciples to proclaim the message by means of witnessing, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Act 1:8).⁴¹ The first disciples witnessed the message through their lives even to the point of death. The strength to bear witness to Christ is attained through unceasing prayers. The disciples of Jesus remain in close union with him through prayer for which Jesus himself was their sole example. Before every important event in his life, Christ spent several hours praying to the Father. The early Christian community described in the Acts, gives us a vivid picture of the praying followers of Christ. The disciples of Jesus, who have left everything to follow him, now live in selfless sharing of material and spiritual gifts.⁴²

Healing, exorcising, teaching, serving, enduring persecutions and forgiving are the immediate effects of embracing the message of Jesus and establishing intimate union with him. However, all of these flow from the Holy Spirit, who is given as a parting gift to the followers of the risen Lord. When the disciple receives the Spirit he or she is able to grow to maturity as a true follower of Christ.⁴³

2.4 Universality of Discipleship

The commissioning of the seventy for the mission (10:1-12), in addition to the mission of the Twelve (9:1-6), can be seen as the exposition of the universal nature of the discipleship of Jesus. The seventy represents all the nations of the earth. Hence calling

⁴¹ D.SWEETLAND, *Our Journey with Jesus*, 42-43.

⁴² E.J.TINSLEY, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 74.

⁴³ B BYRNE, *A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, 74.

seventy to his mission implies the unlimited nature of his discipleship. This is made more obvious in the commission of the Risen Lord in the Acts (1:8). The mandate given to the seventy coincides with that of the twelve. The demand to detach is followed by the bestowing of his authority to them; they are not limited in any way as his disciples. In short, Luke presents discipleship across the barriers of culture, language, nationality and other human set boundaries.⁴⁴

2.5 Women Discipleship

The author of the gospel presents not only men disciples but also women, though not explicit. Elizabeth (1:5-7, 24-25), Mary, the example of perfect faith (1:38), Anna the prophet (2:36), and other women who supported him and followed him (8:1-3) these women are no way inferior to the other men disciples. Luke in fact introduces women in many of his parables unlike other evangelists. The attempt of the author here is to establish the equality of the gender in following Jesus. Accepting the word of God and responding to it positively makes the disciple. In the Acts of the Apostles this point is further emphasized by mentioning several of the women disciples who even helped the apostles in proclaiming the message. Some of them were even quicker than their male counter part, in accepting the good news.⁴⁵

Conclusion

The author of the third gospel displays the fundamental qualities of discipleship throughout the gospel and in the Acts of the apostle. In the invitation to follow Christ he

⁴⁴ B.E. REID, *Women in Luke*, 43.

⁴⁵ B.E. REID, *Women in Luke*, 44-47.

points out some of the key elements of discipleship. The response of the listener to the invitation in faith is the stepping stone of the discipleship. Through the narration of the various events and sayings of Jesus the evangelist underscores the importance of Christian discipleship which is universal and beyond the gender boundaries.

Chapter III

Mary as the Perfect Disciple in the Gospel of Luke

Introduction

Mary, the highly favored one was chosen to be the mother of the Savior according to the eternal plan of God. Because of her readiness to accept God's plan, she received special privileges and she also gained numerous titles such as mediatrix, spiritual mother, mother of faith, queen of heaven and earth. Her divine motherhood, assumption and Immaculate Conception are matters of faith for the Catholics. Though there are notably few mentions about her in the scripture, she is depicted as the perfect disciple of her son, Jesus. In this chapter, we shall briefly deal on the presence of Mary in the scripture, especially in the gospel of Luke as the portrait of the perfect disciple.

3.1 Mary in the Scriptures

In the Old Testament, scholars perceive a number of prophecies which are pointing towards Mary, the mother of the savior. Most prominent among them include Gen 3:15 and Is. 7:14-16. In Gen 3:15, the punishment which the serpent receives from God, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head and you shall lie in wait for his heel', is generally understood as referring to Mary and Jesus who crushed the head of the serpent. In Isaiah's prophecy (7:14-16), the virgin spoken of is seen as a direct reference to Mary despite

the translation problems.⁴⁶ Other messianic prophecies like Mic 5:1-3, Jer 31:22, etc. are also giving indirect reference to Mary.⁴⁷

The four gospels of the New Testament give descriptions about the mother of Jesus from the time of annunciation till the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus. In addition to this there are also a few other mentions found in Acts of the Apostles, Galatians and also in the apocalypse.⁴⁸ Though there are no indications about her birth and death in the canonical books of the bible, the apocryphal writings give several details about Mary⁴⁹.

3.2 Portrait of Mary in the Gospel of Luke

The gospel of Luke, because of its special treatment of feminine elements, is called the 'gospel of women'.⁵⁰ This is literally true when we consider the vivid portrait of Mary in its initial chapters (chapters 1-2). Luke often softens the harsh sayings of Jesus about her that are in his source, Mark.⁵¹ Luke's theological purpose was to display the mother of God as the perfect disciple at every stage of her life. Hence he

⁴⁶ The Hebrew word '*almah*' means a young woman, whereas the Greek translation of it, in the LXX, is '*parthenos*' which means a virgin. Hence the reference of text to Mary was much debated among the scholars of the last century. See

⁴⁷ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 73.

⁴⁸ In the chapter 12 of the book of Revelation which speaks of the woman who gives birth to a son is not unanimously accepted as a reference to Mary. Some would treat it as a passage on the persecuted church.

⁴⁹ A. BOSSARD, ed., *Dictionary of Mary*, 22. The book of James (also known as *protoevangelium*) gives us a detailed description about the nativity and childhood of Mary in the words of Joachim her father, See A. MCBRIDE, *Images of Mary*, 46-50.

⁵⁰ G. BIGOTTO, *Mary the Mother of Jesus: Exegesis and Spirituality*, 80.

⁵¹ G. BIGOTTO, *Mary the Mother of Jesus: Exegesis and Spirituality*, 81. Mark has the question, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?', which is placing Mary in an embarrassing situation (Mk 3:33). Luke does not have it in his narration.

depicts her with great respect and admiration. We shall highlight some of the salient elements of the Lucan picture of Mary.⁵²

3.2.1 *The Call of Mary*

Luke employs the Old Testament vocation paradigm of the divine call to illustrate the election of Mary to be the mother of the savior. The call of Abraham (Gen 17), Moses (Ex 3), Samson (Jud 13), Gideon (Jud 6), etc. have the basic features of: greetings, commission, doubt, reassurance, and sign. The annunciation of Mary is also set in this pattern to raise her to the level of ancestors who are chosen by God for the divine mission.⁵³ Luke emphasizes that the true disciple is the one who is chosen by God for his mission like Mary.

3.2.2 *Mary, the Perfect Disciple*

Luke portrays a complete picture of discipleship in his gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. The depiction of Mary in the initial stages of his gospel serves the purpose of sketching the outlines of discipleship which is displayed fully in the mother of Jesus. She is pictured as the first believer. Twice, in 8:19-20 and 11:27-28, Jesus brings to the front the ideals of perfect discipleship, the one who hears and obeys the words of God in reference to his mother. The journey of faith in a teenaged girl is set up as the model for all who wish to follow Jesus. Commitment to the mission, fulfillment of the responsibilities attached to the call, detachment, dependence on God, and the numerous

⁵² R.E. BROWN · K.P. DONFRIED – J.A. FRITZMYER – J. RUMANN, *Mary in Luke*, 20. The primary interest of Luke is to give a description about the life of Jesus. Hence Mary appears only as a means to arrive at his goal.

⁵³ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 72.

other requirements of discipleship are virtually accomplished on the person of Mary in the Lucan description.⁵⁴

3.3 Mary as the model of discipleship

All the elements of discipleship that are typical of the New Testament can be found in the Lucan depiction of the mother of God, especially in the first two chapters of his gospel. In this section we shall evaluate briefly some of the most significant and outstanding discipleship qualities that shine out in Mary.

3.3.1 Faith

Faith is a personal 'yes' to the self revelation of God. In Luke the faith of Mary contrasts that of Zechariah which is placed prior to the call narration of Mary. Mary was indeed confused about the message that was brought to her by the angel.⁵⁵ She too like any other Jew believed in the advent of the messiah. However, she would never have expected her personal involvement in the great salvific plan of God. We shall delve deeply on the various aspects of the faith of Mary.

3.3.1.1 Faith in Freedom

Like love, faith cannot be imposed on any one. It is a spontaneous and personal response. Hence to believe in the message of the angel Mary had to exercise her personal freedom. With the support of her freedom she could choose to accept or to reject the message. With the full knowledge of the implications of the choice in her life

⁵⁴ P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" in *Vidya Jyoti*, 68 No.10, 787.

⁵⁵ A. BOSSARD, ed, *Dictionary of Mary*, 84-85.

she had to embrace the message.⁵⁶ She knew well what she was committing to, and the responsibilities attached to it. Her definitive 'yes' hence glitters more brightly with the conscious acceptance of God's invitation.

3.3.1.2 Blessed because of the Faith

The greeting of Elizabeth, 'And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord' is repeated by Jesus twice again during his public ministry (8:19-21, 11:27-28). Jesus corrects the notion that having close association with the messiah and being his kin is not blessedness, rather 'hearing the word of God and obeying it', that is, having total faith in God. Mary is blessed not because of her son, but because she listened to God and obeyed him with full trust.⁵⁷

3.3.1.3 The Noble Fiat of Mary

Mary, like Zechariah questions the messenger, but the radical difference between them is obvious. The former asks about the modality of the birth of the child since she is a virgin which is not against faith, while the latter questions about the omnipotence of God, his ability to do 'what is impossible in the eyes of human' (1:37). Mary's gesture is seen as a search for understanding the revelation of God for better and deeper faith.⁵⁸ Hence she is raised to the sphere of the great ancestor, the father of faith, Abraham; from now on, she will be called the mother of faith. Her fiat, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (1:38) is the climax of her

⁵⁶ P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" in *Vidya Jyoti*, 68 No.10, 784.

⁵⁷ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 74.

⁵⁸ J. FITZMYER, "Luke" *The Anchor Bible*, 28, 356.

call narration. Her 'yes' is not a passive submission, rather it is a definitive declaration of total obedience to the eternal plan of God with trust and willingness to assume the responsibilities it demands.⁵⁹

3.3.2 Dependence on God

The choice of Mary was to abide by the demands of her vocation with an undivided heart. This meant to move beyond the satisfactions of an ordinary married life like any other Jewess. The recognition and dignity of the family life in the tradition Jewish society was going to be at stake. Her betrothed husband, Joseph, could abandon her. According to the Jewish tradition, such a decision implied death by stoning. The 'yes' of Mary hence involved the risk of her own life and dignity. Mary was able to make a choice in her freedom to 'let go' all human aspirations and personal plans of life to embrace a life filled with challenges and anxieties.⁶⁰ Her choice of total detachment, therefore strikes out as a unique example for those who wish to follow Christ. It is made more explicit by Jesus during his public ministry (9:23-26).

3.3.3 Service

Service is the heart of discipleship, and it is vividly pictured in the scene of visitation, where Mary goes to offer service to her cousin Elizabeth. The gesture of the fourteen year old girl traveling for four days to cater to the need of her cousin, despite her vocation to be the mother of the savior highlights her humility.⁶¹ Here the initiative to serve is taken by Mary immediately after receiving her great vocation. The vocation

⁵⁹ B.R. GAVENTA, *Mary: Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus*, 51-52.

⁶⁰ G. BIGOTTO, *Mary the Mother of Jesus: Exegesis and Spirituality*, 108.

⁶¹ R.J. KARRIS, "The Gospel According to Luke" *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 681.

and the call to serve are interconnected; one cannot be separated from the other. This calls for placing God at the center, replacing the basic human nature of self-centeredness.⁶² Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation, *Marialis Cultus* speaks of service as the product of discipleship, ‘...she is held up as an example to the faithful for the way in which her own particular life she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God, because she heard the Word of God and did it, and because charity and spirit or service were the driving force of her action, she is worthy of imitation because she was the first and most perfect of Christ’s disciples’ (35).⁶³

3.3.4 Joy

Mary’s response to the invitation of God to be part of the salvific plan was essentially that of joy amidst various challenges and doubts. The *magnificat* of Mary is a joyful praise to God for his surpassing greatness, like that of Hannah of the Old Testament (1Sam 2:1-10). God’s merciful action in the face of human impossibility is one of joy.⁶⁴ An examination of the mighty deeds of God in the lives of the lowly provokes Mary to burst out in praises to him. It is a messianic joy – *chaire*, and not mere human happiness (Zep 3: 14-15).⁶⁵ The same emotion is transmitted at the visitation of the magi, in songs of Zechariah, angels, and Simeon. The *magnificat* of Mary becomes the symbol of the universal song of joy for the magnificent work of God in the human history.⁶⁶

⁶² G. BIGOTTO, *Mary the Mother of Jesus: Exegesis and Spirituality*, 92.

⁶³ POPE PAUL VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 53.

⁶⁴ H. BOJORGE, *The Image of Mary: According to the Evangelists*, 39.

⁶⁵ G. BIGOTTO, *Mary the Mother of Jesus: Exegesis and Spirituality*, 86.

⁶⁶ I. GEBARA- M. BINGEMER, *Mary Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*, 164-165.

3.3.5 Prayer

The Lucan Mary stands out as an example also of a praying disciple. The Mariology of Luke begins with the annunciation to a pious girl who was, probably, at personal reflection and culminates in the picture of her engaged in communal prayer with other disciples. We can examine the prayers of Mary at three levels. Firstly, the typical Jewish articulate prayers like that of the *magnificat*. In the second place, Mary also involves in reflective prayers (2:19, 51). She tries to understand the meaning of the revelations in her life through personal reflections. Finally, communal prayer as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles (1:14). Mary found favor with God because of her sinless life and constant intimacy with God in prayer.⁶⁷ The life of Mary is an exhortation to the disciples to be in continuous union with Jesus; perseverance in the faith and trust even when everything appears to be meaningless.

3.3.6 Life of Trials

The mystery of the divine plan of salvation was never fully disclosed to Mary. In her human limitations her vocation was continuously to strive to understand what God demands of her. The fiat of Mary was that of leaping into the dark fully depending on God's providence. The prophesy of Simeon at the presentation (2:34-35) was only an anticipation of what was ahead of her. The path of Jesus' glory, the cross, was also that of Mary. She was called to take up her daily cross of misunderstandings and rejections as part of her discipleship. The controversy of the life of her son and the hostility of the religious and political authority to it was beyond the endurance of a widow. As perfect

⁶⁷ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 87.

disciple, Mary transcends them and assumes to the fullness of her call as a disciple. Hence Luke does not bring Mary at the foot of the cross, but at the praying community of the disciples.⁶⁸

3.3.7 The Mission

The mission of Mary commences from the time of her call, the annunciation. Her first mission journey was to her cousin Elizabeth who required her presence and service. By giving birth to the messiah Mary completes her initial mission. During the public ministry of Jesus Mary disappears from the scene. This is because the mission of Jesus is of prominence and there is no significance for individuals. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Mary appears once again together with the community of apostles (Act 1:14). Here she stands as the icon of the continuity of the mission of Christ.⁶⁹ The mission entrusted to the Disciples of Christ is that of his own. Hence Mary's silence during the public ministry and the presence in the new community are of great significance to meaning of discipleship.

3.3.8 Discipleship as an Ongoing Process of Growth

Discipleship is an ongoing process; one had to grow to its fullness each day. Though Mary understood the demands of the discipleship and her special vocation, several events and situations were beyond her grasp. According to Meagher, a biblical

⁶⁸ P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" *Vidya Jyoti* 68, 785.

⁶⁹ P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" *Vidya Jyoti* 68, 788. The vocation of a disciple does not imply privileges alone but the responsibilities. Mary identifies herself with the mission of her son, which was her prime concern and duty.

scholar, she also experiences corrections in her understanding of discipleship.⁷⁰ The reply of Jesus when found in the temple after three days of anxious search is to be understood in this line, 'Did you not know that I must be in my father's house' (2:49). Any attempt to bypass or protect him from the challenges of the call is warned. Jesus' mission is to be in the business of his father and trying to hinder him is against discipleship. Hence Mary is forced to change her understanding of her role in the life of her son.⁷¹ She is no more the one who leads the son, but she has to follow the son. Mary's growth in her following Christ is through her personal reflections, 'Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart' (2:19, 2:51). 'Mary is depicted in Luke as consistently responsive to the revelatory experiences in her life. Treasuring experiences that are infused with God's presence can bring insight later and provide a firm foundation for a life of obedient discipleship.'⁷²

3.4 Uniqueness of the Discipleship of Mary

The call and discipleship of Mary is unique in the New Testament on various levels. First and foremost, her vocation is unique because of its Trinitarian nature – the father calls her to make personal in Jesus through the power of the third person of the trinity.⁷³ The address, 'highly favored' reveals her unique status before God. Mary was the first to receive the message, the first to believe, and the first to follow him- the first

⁷⁰ P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" *Vidya Jyoti* 68, 786. This section can be termed as the 'correction narrative' for Mary is given the right orientation to the mission in the reality of life.

⁷¹ H.V. BALTHASAR, *Mary for Today*, 34.

⁷² P.M. MEAGHER, "The Lucan Mary in Jesus' Ministry" *Vidya Jyoti*, Vol.68 No.10, 786.

⁷³ A. BOSSARD, ed., *Dictionary of Mary*, 348.

disciple. Unlike other disciples who deserted the master during trials, Mary never failed in her call and was always faithful.⁷⁴

The disciples of Jesus are called to follow him, so too Mary, but her first role was to give birth to him and then to follow him – a unique mission in the history of salvation. Her fiat was decisive for the whole humanity of all the times. In short, her discipleship was multifaceted. Mary can be considered as the disciple who knew Jesus well for she lived with him for more than thirty years in intimate relationship, listening and conversing with him. She knew him from the crib to the cross and thus, she can be addressed as the most experienced follower of Christ.⁷⁵ Hence, Raymond Brown rightly concludes about the uniqueness and primacy of discipleship of Mary, ‘According to the criterion of discipleship based on doing the will of God, Mary as depicted by Luke becomes the first Christian disciple’.⁷⁶

3.5 Significance of Mary’s Discipleship to the Modern Women

The biblical portrait of Mary is a controversial figure for the feminist thinkers on various reasons. According to them, the patriarchal, male dominating perspectives are obviously projecting in the Mariology. In this section we shall view some of the arguments of the feminist thinkers and the significance of Mary for the modern women.

3.5.1 The Fiat of Mary versus Modern Feminism

Can a self-respecting woman find meaning in the portrait of Mary in the New Testament or can we mould a norm for the modern women from the Mary of the Bible?

⁷⁴ A. MCBRIDE, *Images of Mary*, 39.

⁷⁵ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 88.

⁷⁶ B. BUBY, *Mary the Faithful Disciple*, 9.

Many of the feminist thinkers look at the annunciation, the vocation of Mary to the divine motherhood, with contempt. Simone de Beauvoir, the famous feminist thinker of the last century while speaking about annunciation says, 'For the first time in human history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory consummated in the cult of virgin'.⁷⁷ Daly, another thinker in the same vein but with much more severity and releasing open attack on the tradition comments on the fiat of Mary, 'Like all rape victims in the male myth she submits joyously to this unspeakable degradation'.⁷⁸

In the fiat of Mary many of the feminist thinkers see the subordination, humility, passivity, and exaggerated self sacrifice. The Lucan use of '*doule*' (1: 48), is seen as an insult on the women and their dignity.⁷⁹ The passivity, subordination and virginity are terms referring to victimization rather than joyous commitment.⁸⁰ Hence setting Mary as a model for the modern women is, 'hopelessly inadequate for feminist needs'.⁸¹ As an alternative, while some trying to picture Mary as a sister, friend, prophet and companion, others substitute her with Mary Magdalene about whom all the four gospels speak. She was a liberated woman and showed the model of sisterhood and friendship during the public ministry of Jesus.⁸²

⁷⁷ K.MCDONNEL, "Feminist Mariologies: Hetronomy, Subordination and the Scandal of Christology", in *Theological Studies*, Vol.66 No.3, Sep. 2005, 531.

⁷⁸ K.MCDONNEL, 532.

⁷⁹ I.G. CIVIT, *The Song of Salvation: the Magnificat*, 43. *Doulos* is a Greek word, meaning handmaid or female slave,

⁸⁰ K.MCDONNEL, "Feminist Mariologies: Hetronomy, Subordination and the Scandal of Christology", in *Theological Studies*, Vol.66 No.3, Sep. 2005, 535.

⁸¹ K.MCDONNEL, 533.

⁸² K.MCDONNEL, 540. They consider the sisterhood of Mary Magdalene is superior to the motherhood of Mary which was a passive submission.

3.5.2 Can Mary be still the Model for the Modern Women?

Those who argue about the inadequacy of Mary's discipleship for the modern women fail objectively to evaluate the biblical Mariology without being entangled in the socio-cultural and religious constraints of the time. They forget that the submission of Mary was to God's will, to be part of the greatest mission, the eternal salvation plan. She kneels down in front of her son, who is the son of God; it is not shame but glory and privilege. McDonnell rightly comments about the hostile remarks on Christianity of the feminists and their search for a neutral gender scripture, 'If women cannot look to scripture, to the organizational church, or to the tradition they are then left to their own resources, anger, woman's experience, and the sisterhood of wounded women'.⁸³

Mary emerges as a model for the women of modern times amidst discontents about her discipleship. Primarily she is model in her ability to collaborate with God's plan in her life. Her courageous decision and the endurance to stand by the consequences of it till the end of her life, is a rare value in the modern world of consumerism and profit oriented life. Mary's dynamism, audacity, responsibility assumed, communion with human experiences of pain and joy, ability to trust in God, etc are not oblate values. The family life, motherhood, and virginity are of special importance for the women of this century, when marriage and family life are on the threat and marital chastity is becoming an old fashion. Mary transmits herself as a model wife, mother, ideal woman and virgin beyond the barriers of culture, society and

⁸³ K.MCDONNELL, 565.

religion. We can still find numerous elements that were highly reflected in the life of Mary and are needed in the lives of the modern disciples.

Conclusion

The evangelist Luke successfully pictures Mary, though she appears only in the beginning of the gospel, as the of model discipleship. In the life of Mary all the elements of a perfect disciple are mixed magnificently well. There are various aspects of her discipleship which are of great importance to us. However, her decisive 'yes' to the invitation of God is the foundation of all the rest. Amidst various criticisms, Mary remains as the model of discipleship for the followers of Christ in every age.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

It is God who calls a disciple and guide him or her along the way of his son Jesus. The fundamental exigency of discipleship is a renunciation. It means denying oneself, 'giving up' all one's possessions and freeing oneself off from all persons whom one would love and cherish. The 'giving up' of things and persons is for the sake of 'giving to' - means the disciple loses many worldly things in his or her life for the sake of Jesus (Lk 9:24).

The final goal of all discipleship is double-pronged, namely to take on the ideals and values of Jesus Christ, to put on Christ, to be with him and to preach and bear witness to the Kingdom by serving God and his people. Following Jesus means running the race with the eyes fixed on 'Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Heb 12:2), in whom there was 'not Yes and No' but an always 'Yes' (2Cori 1:19); and the messengers of 'New heaven and New earth' (Rev 21:1-8) which God had promised.

The third evangelist is a master story teller and each episode of Luke has a powerful identity-forming potential. Though two thousand years passed since he wrote his gospel, still it is very significant in its message and dramatic style. This is the reason why his gospel is relevant even to the modern world. Even though the evangelist does not give a concrete definition of discipleship as such, it is possible to identify from his gospel, what kind of a person a disciple should be.

Some critics call Luke as the 'feminist theologian', while others call his gospel, the 'gospel of women'. In fact his gospel we come across many women who followed Jesus in his public ministry. Interestingly Luke is the only evangelist who speaks about mother Mary as the disciple of Jesus. We don't have any evidence that Luke met Mary in his life time, but one thing is sure that he has been given a detailed knowledge about the Mother of Jesus, either through oral tradition or from other descriptions on Mary.

In the first and second chapter I have tried to analyze and to bring a picture on discipleship comparing the Old Testament tradition, and the New Testament tradition, especially in the gospel of Luke. Portraying the Lucan picture on discipleship, I moved to the discipleship of Mary. Here I reflected on Mary's discipleship in Lucan view as the perfect discipleship.

However there is no much explicit reference in the gospel, Mary as the disciple, the evangelist frames his gospel very well, using his style and affirms that Mary is the perfect follower of Jesus. Luke depicts the discipleship of Mary from the moment of annunciation; and he brings it up to the post resurrection scene in the upper room, praying together (Acts 1:14). I have tried to explain in the last chapter how Mary became the first and perfect disciple of Jesus from the moment she received the message, up to the last moment of her life on earth, without failing in her call but always faithful to her call.

The discipleship acquires its full meaning only in reference to the person of Jesus. It is He who becomes the beginning (the call) the middle (the conditions) and the end (the reward) of discipleship. It is he with whom and for whom the disciple bears all

privations and sufferings. Only the person of Jesus makes the costly commitment to discipleship a yoke sweet to bear (Mt 11:29). “What is impossible with men is possible with God (Lk 18:27).

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	Anchor Bible Dictionary
<i>AFER</i>	African Ecclesial Review
<i>BT</i>	Bible Today
<i>CBC</i>	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
<i>DJG</i>	Dictionary of Jesus and Gospel
<i>DM</i>	Dictionary of Mary
<i>DSB</i>	The Daily Study Bible
<i>NJBC</i>	New Jerome Biblical Commentary
<i>TDNT</i>	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

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