

Not here, but ahead: The *proagein* motif in the Gospel of Mark as the virtue of "faith that follows after" for Christian religious education

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Abstract: The term "empty tomb" has become standard vocabulary in Christian religious education, although the New Testament never predicates *κενός* of Jesus' tomb. This article traces where the predicate of emptiness is actually lodged and finds that Paul attaches it to proclamation and to faith (1 Cor. 15:14), so that emptiness migrates from space to act and relation. What remains at the mouth of the tomb is not an adjective but a verb of motion, *προάγει*. Employing narrative criticism and lexical motif analysis, the study maps the five occurrences of *προάγω* in Mark (6:45; 10:32; 11:9; 14:28; 16:7) and identifies two structures: the reversal of the position of going ahead, from human beings to Christ, and an inclusio of fear linking 10:32 with 16:8. From this motif a formative virtue is constructed, "faith that follows after," the disposition to set out because Christ has already set out, with a negative boundary drawn from 2 John 9. The virtue requires reconstructing Christian religious education at three points: locus, teacher authority, and telos with its assessment.

Keywords: Christian religious education, empty tomb, faith that follows after, formative virtue, Galilee, Gospel of Mark, *proagein*

Introduction

Every religious educational institution lives from a single presupposition that is rarely examined: that it is the place where the divine may be encountered. That presupposition operates silently in the architecture of campus worship spaces, in the protocols of compulsory attendance, and in the language that names the institution a "home" of formation. Its pedagogical consequence is consistent: faith formation is understood as a movement of coming and remaining. Learners are formed insofar as they are present in the right place, for long enough, and under the right supervision. Christian religious education in Indonesia has inherited this pattern along both its tracks, the school and the ecclesial, and has done so almost without question.

From that presupposition is born what may be called a pedagogy of presence-as-possession: the teacher is positioned as the holder of the presence he teaches, and the institution as the place where that presence is stored. Its symptoms can be traced at two sites that appear unrelated. The first is the teacher-student relationship, which makes continuous proximity the measure of successful formation, so that release is read as failure. The second is

the way the resurrection of Christ is taught: as evidence that closes a case rather than as a commissioning that opens a road. Both rest upon the same assumption, namely that the object of faith resides in the place where teaching occurs and can therefore be mastered, exhibited, and bequeathed.

The Easter narrative disturbs precisely that assumption, and the disturbance begins at the level of vocabulary. As Goodacre has shown, the term “empty tomb” never appears in the earliest Christian sources, even though it has become the standard term in the modern literature.¹ What the texts say is “the place where they laid him” (Mk. 16:6), “they did not find the body” (Lk. 24:3), and “he is not here” (Mk. 16:6).² By contrast, the sole place at which Paul uses the word “empty” in a resurrection context is 1 Corinthians 15:14: if Christ has not been raised, then κενόν is that proclamation and κενή is that faith.³ Emptiness does not adhere to the tomb; it migrates to proclamation and to faith. And the word by which the messenger explains where that migration issues is not a word about emptiness but a verb of motion: προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, he goes ahead of you into Galilee (Mk. 16:7).⁴

Three bodies of literature have addressed this topic, each with its own interests. Mainstream resurrection scholarship centers on the question of historicity and on the evidential value of the tomb, across a spectrum of positions running from the affirmative to the skeptical. Markan scholarship discusses Galilee as a theological locus and debates the ending of the Gospel at 16:8. The literature of Christian religious education, in turn, has long treated character formation, praxis, and virtue, but has almost invariably rested on teaching and discipleship texts rather than on the resurrection narratives. The three run alongside one another without meeting. A literature search conducted in the ATLA Religion Database, JSTOR, and Google Scholar located no study that explicitly reads προάγω as a narrative motif and then derives from it a category of formative virtue for Christian religious education. As a consequence, the Easter tomb continues to be treated within Christian religious education as apologetic material rather than as a source of formative categories.

This gap is what the present article seeks to fill, with two claims to novelty. First, while the absence of the term “empty tomb” has been noted within New Testament scholarship, its theological consequence has not been drawn: that the predicate of emptiness is in fact attached by Paul to proclamation and to faith, and that the verb προάγω has never been constructed as a category of virtue within Christian education. Second, and more decisively, this verb will be read not as an isolated word in a single verse but as a motif extending across the whole of Mark’s Gospel: at 6:45 the disciples are made to go ahead and end in fear and hardness of heart; at 10:32 Jesus walks ahead toward Jerusalem and those who follow ἐφοβοῦντο; at 11:9 the crowd divides into those who go before and those who follow; at 14:28 he promises to go

¹ Mark Goodacre, “How Empty Was the Tomb?,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 44, no. 1 (2021): 134–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X211023714>.

² Mark 16:6: ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν; Luke 24:3: εἰσελθοῦσαι δὲ οὐχ εὗρον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. All Greek citations in this article follow Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

³ 1 Corinthians 15:14: εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν.

⁴ Mark 16:7: ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

ahead into Galilee; and at 16:7 that promise is fulfilled, followed by the closing verse 16:8, which repeats the very same verb of fear.⁵

This article argues that the *proagein* motif in the Gospel of Mark supplies the ground for a formative virtue here called “faith that follows after,” that is, the disposition to set out because Christ has already set out and not because certainty has first been obtained; and that this virtue demands a reconstruction of the locus, the authority, and the *telos* of Christian religious education. Three objectives follow from that thesis: to demonstrate that emptiness within the Easter narrative migrates from the tomb to proclamation; to construct the virtue together with its negative boundary, so that it is not read as a new synonym for obedience or for prevenient grace; and to derive from it a pedagogical construct that can be tested against the practice of Christian religious education in Indonesia.

The method employed is narrative criticism combined with lexical motif analysis of the Gospel of Mark, drawing upon Resseguie’s framework for New Testament narratology, with a deliberate selection of προάγω over comparable verbs of motion such as ὑπάγω and ἀκολουθέω on account of its distinctive relational semantics, which bind position to the act of following after; this is followed by a text-based theological construction and concludes with a pedagogical derivation. The principal pericope is Mark 16:1–8, which is not textually contested; the debate over the authenticity of the material that follows it does not touch the foundation of this argument.⁶ The boundary of the virtue thus constructed will be drawn from 2 John 9, the only place in the New Testament at which this verb is used pejoratively, so that the construct proposed here possesses a side that can be violated and is therefore testable. The discussion proceeds through four parts: the migration of emptiness in 1 Corinthians 15:14; the *proagein* motif in the Gospel of Mark; the construction of the virtue of “faith that follows after” together with its boundary; and the reconstruction of the locus, the authority, and the *telos* of Christian religious education.

Emptiness displaced: The absence of κενός and the irony of 1 Corinthians 15:14

Much of the modern theological conversation about Easter rests on a phrase that does not derive from the text. “Empty tomb” has become the standard term in apologetics, dogmatics, catechesis, and Christian religious education textbooks, to the point that it feels like a biblical quotation. It is not. Goodacre has shown that the term was never used in the earliest Christian sources, and that its application to first-century Jerusalem tombs in fact raises an archaeological difficulty of its own, since tombs of that type were designed to house many bodies, so that the absence of a single body would not render such a tomb empty.⁷ For the present study, the more consequential implication is lexical: if the tomb is not called empty, then the question worth asking is not how empty it was, but where the predicate of emptiness is in fact lodged within the New Testament.

⁵ The five occurrences of the verb προάγω in the Gospel of Mark: 6:45 (προάγειν, with the disciples as subject), 10:32 (ἵν προάγων αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς), 11:9 (οἱ προάγοντες, with the crowd as subject), 14:28 (προάξω), and 16:7 (προάγει). Cf. Matt 14:22, which uses the same infinitive form as Mark 6:45.

⁶ The concept developed in this article is named with the articular infinitive τὸ προάγειν; its lexical lemma is προάγω, while the form at Mark 16:7 is the present indicative προάγει. The textual debate over Mark 16:9–20 does not touch the pericope 16:1–8 on which this reading rests.

⁷ Goodacre, “How Empty Was the Tomb?,” 134–35.

The vocabulary of the four Gospels displays a striking caution. Mark places three things in succession in the mouth of the young man clothed in white: a denial, a demonstration, and a location: οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, “he is not here,” and then ἰδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν, “see the place where they laid him.”⁸ Matthew repeats the same pattern as an invitation to draw near. Luke selects a verb of failed searching: οὐχ εὑρον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, and adds a question that displaces the entire framework of that search: τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;⁹ John conveys it through Mary’s mistaken inference that the body has been removed by someone else. Four writers, four formulations, and not one of them attaches the quality “empty” to the space of the tomb. What they do attach is an absence from one particular place and a failure to find.

The difference appears subtle, yet it is decisive. “The tomb is empty” is a statement about a space, and such a space can be examined, photographed, made into a site, and disputed as to its authenticity. “He is not here” is a statement about a person who has moved, and it demands a further question: if not here, then where? The terminological shift from the second formulation to the first has frozen an event of motion into a state of space; and it is that freezing which has subsequently generated a pedagogy that treats the resurrection as an object to be exhibited rather than as a commissioning to be followed.

As for the word κενός itself, it does indeed occur eighteen times within the New Testament, yet not once within a resurrection narrative.¹⁰ Its range of usage falls between two poles. At the first pole it is concrete and pertains to hands that return carrying nothing: servants who are beaten and then sent away empty-handed, and the rich who are sent away empty in the Magnificat. At the second pole it is evaluative and attaches to the empty words by which one may be deceived and to a philosophy that is hollow deceit (Mk. 12:3; Lk. 1:53; 20:10–11; Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:8). In other words, κενός in the New Testament is almost always a predicate of the hand that returns empty or of the word that is void, and not of the space that has been vacated.

It is precisely at this juncture that 1 Corinthians 15:14 becomes decisive. Paul constructs a layered conditional, and at its fourth layer he lets the predicate fall twice at once: εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν: if Christ has not been raised, then empty is our proclamation and empty is your faith.¹¹ The neuter form κενόν agrees with κήρυγμα; the feminine κενή with πίστις. And the difference of pronoun is no stylistic ornament: the emptiness that might ensue falls upon two distinct parties, the preachers on the one side and the believing community on the other. Three verses later Paul intensifies his indictment with a further word, ματαία, futile; and at the close of the same chapter he employs κενός once more, now of a labor that is never in vain in the Lord.¹²

From this point the present portion of the thesis may be formulated. Within the New Testament, emptiness is not a property of space but a possibility that threatens action and relation. What stands in danger of becoming empty is proclamation, which is an act, and faith,

⁸ Mark 16:6. Cf. Matt 28:6, which adds the invitation δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον.

⁹ Luke 24:3, 5. Luke repeats the formula οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε at 24:6.

¹⁰ The word κενός occurs eighteen times in the New Testament, not once within the resurrection pericopes of the four Gospels.

¹¹ 1 Cor 15:14. A number of witnesses include καὶ after ἄρα, and there is variation between ἡμῶν and ὑμῶν in the second phrase; the reading followed here is ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, as in NA28.

¹² 1 Cor 15:17 (ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν); 1 Cor 15:58 (ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενός ἐν κυρίῳ).

which is a relation. Both are preserved from that emptiness by one thing alone: that Christ has been raised. Emptiness therefore changes place, and the direction of its migration runs contrary to the direction presupposed by the term “empty tomb.” That term deposits emptiness within the tomb and leaves proclamation secure; Paul empties proclamation and faith precisely if the tomb remains occupied.

Two distinctions must be pressed if this construct is not to be misunderstood. First, the present conclusion differs from Goodacre’s. He pursues an archaeological route and halts at a methodological recommendation to replace the historical question;¹³ the present study pursues a lexical-theological route and proceeds to construct a virtue. Second, and more precariously, κενός must not be dissolved into the discourse of *kenosis*. The verb κενόω at Philippians 2:7 is indeed cognate, but its subject and its function are altogether different: there the one who empties himself is Christ in an incarnational movement, whereas here what is threatened with emptiness is human proclamation and human faith in a conditional movement. To equate the two would obscure the very thing this section seeks to display.

The methodological consequence will be taken up in the following section. If the Easter texts decline to furnish an adjective by which to name the tomb, then what must be traced is the word they do in fact furnish. And that word is not an adjective but a verb of motion. Having stated that Jesus is not here and having pointed to the place he has left, the young man does not conclude his statement with a description of space but with a direction: προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. It is toward that word that the present reading now moves.

The *proagein* motif in the gospel of Mark: The reversal of the position of going ahead

If the preceding section worked with a lexical absence, the present one works with its presence. Having stated that Jesus is not in that place, the young man clothed in white does not halt at a description of space but supplies a direction, and that direction is stated by means of the verb προάγω (Mk. 16:7). The methodological decision that governs this entire section is the refusal to read that verb as an isolated word within a single verse. Mark employs it five times, and those five uses are distributed across structural points that are anything but random: once upon the lake, once upon the road to Jerusalem, once at the gate of the city, and twice within the prophecy–fulfillment pair that brackets the death (Mk. 6:45; 10:32; 11:9; 14:28; 16:7). What is read here is not vocabulary but a pattern. Lexically, the selection of προάγω over other verbs of motion is not without warrant: whereas ὑπάγω depicts departure without emphasis upon relational position, and ἀκολουθέω marks following without emphasis upon distance, προάγω inherently positions two parties, the one in front and the one behind, and thus becomes the verb best fitted to bear the relational sense upon which this construction of virtue rests.

The background of the debate is already available and is of considerable age. Ernst Lohmeyer advanced the thesis that Galilee and Jerusalem functioned as two opposed theological centers within earliest Christian tradition, and that Mark reflects the convictions of the Galilean community, with particular emphasis upon Mark 14:28.¹⁴ R. H. Lightfoot took over that thesis and applied it to the problem of the ending of Mark’s Gospel, concluding that

¹³ Goodacre, “How Empty Was the Tomb?,” 147–48.

¹⁴ Ernst Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem*, FRLANT 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936).

the Gospel does indeed end at 16:8, and that the Galilee–Jerusalem opposition furnishes the clearest evidence for that conclusion: despised Galilee is shown to be the place God has chosen for the Gospel, while the holy city of Jerusalem becomes the center of hostility.¹⁵ This Lohmeyer–Lightfoot–Marxsen chain was subsequently extended along narratological lines, treating the two toponyms as bearers of the narrator’s ideological perspective.¹⁶ Yet that entire interpretive tradition has attended to the places and scarcely at all to the verb of motion. It is at that point that the present reading begins.

The first occurrence ends badly. At Mark 6:45 Jesus compels his disciples—the verb is ἡνάγκασεν—to embark and to go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he himself dismisses the crowd.¹⁷ This is the only place in Mark’s Gospel where the disciples occupy the position of going ahead, and the result is a contrary wind, a fear that leads them to suppose they are seeing a ghost, and a severe verdict from the narrator: their hearts were hardened. The forward position, when occupied by disciples, yields not leadership but panic.

The second occurrence reverses that position. At Mark 10:32 the narrator composes an image at once calm and menacing: ἦν προάγων αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο; Jesus was walking ahead of them, and they were amazed, while those who followed were afraid (Mk. 10:32). For the first time Jesus occupies the position in front, and his direction is Jerusalem, which is to say death. What deserves notice is the reaction that accompanies it. When he goes ahead, he calms no one. It produces astonishment in those who are near and fear in those who follow.

The third occurrence shows that the issue is indeed one of position. At Mark 11:9, as Jesus enters Jerusalem, the crowd divides into two groups designated by two participles: οἱ προάγοντες and οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες. Those walking in front cry Hosanna and lead him into the city. A few days later, not one of those cries remains. Mark offers no comment, but his narrative arrangement speaks: each time human beings occupy the position of going ahead, whether the disciples upon the lake or the crowd at the gate, the direction they take proves not to be the direction that saves.

The final two occurrences close that pattern and convert it into a promise. Upon the Mount of Olives, having prophesied that all will stumble, Jesus says: ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὸ ἐγερθῆναί με προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν (Mk. 14:28). And at the tomb the young man repeats it in the present tense, as something already under way: προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν (Mk. 16:7). The position of going ahead is now held permanently by him, and its direction is reversed: no longer up to Jerusalem but back to Galilee, from the sacred center toward the ordinary periphery, the site of daily labor and of the first call.

Two structural findings emerge from this sequence. The first is the reversal of position: from Mark 6:45 to Mark 16:7 the right to go ahead passes from human beings to Christ, and every occurrence in between confirms that the transfer was necessary. The second is the inclusio of fear. The verb ἐφοβοῦντο that closes the scene of going ahead at 10:32 is the same verb that closes the entire Gospel at 16:8, ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ (Mk. 10:32; 16:8). Mark opens and

¹⁵ R. H. Lightfoot, *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938).

¹⁶ E. van Eck, “Galilea en Jerusalem as narratologische ruimtes in die Markusevangelie: ’n Kontinuering van die Lohmeyer–Lightfoot–Marxsen ketting,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 44, no. 1 (1988): 139–63, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v44i1.2192>.

¹⁷ Mark 6:45: καὶ εὐθὺς ἡνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαϊδάν. Cf. Mark 6:52.

closes this motif with the same word. Walking behind the one who goes ahead is not reassuring, and this Gospel declines to pretend otherwise.

At precisely this point an objection must be anticipated. Within the New Testament the same verb is once employed to censure rather than to commend: at 2 John 9, ὁ προάγων is the figure who does not have God. That occurrence lies outside Mark's Gospel and derives from a different literary environment, yet it cannot be disregarded. A cross-textual reading of a single verb occurring across differing genres and canonical corpora constitutes a recognized procedure of canonical intertextuality within New Testament narrative criticism, for it is precisely from there that the boundary for the construction of virtue in the following section will be drawn.

Faith that follows after: The construction of a virtue and its negative boundary

The transition from exegesis to construction is the most precarious point in a study of this kind, for it is here that the reading of a text may turn into allegory in academic dress. To forestall this, the construction that follows is bound by four requirements: every feature of the virtue must be traceable back to a determinate textual feature; the virtue must be distinguishable from its neighboring concepts; it must possess a negative boundary that renders it violable; and it must itself declare where it is liable to fail. A virtue that holds everywhere and can be violated by nothing is not a virtue but a metaphor. These four requirements are derived from MacIntyre's account of virtue, which insists that virtues can be understood only within the context of practices possessing internal goods, and from Hauerwas, who maintains that Christian character is formed through the narrative of a community rather than through abstract principles.

Its working definition may be formulated as follows. Faith that follows after is the disposition to set out for the place that has been indicated, because Christ is already there, and not because certainty has first been obtained. This formulation deliberately holds two things in tension. There is certainty, but the certainty resides with the one who goes ahead, not with the one who follows after. And there is a departure, but the departure is not an initiative; it is a response.

Four constitutive features may be derived from the motif already mapped. First, anteriority: the one who is sought is always ahead of the one who seeks, so that the knowledge proper to faith comes after and is never obtained in advance. Second, delocation: the place of encounter is not the place at which teaching occurs but the place toward which one is sent, Galilee, not the tomb, and not Jerusalem either. Third, departure precedes understanding: the formula "there you will see him" situates the seeing after the going, not before it. Fourth, non-possession: no one, including those who deliver the message, possesses the presence he proclaims; all he can do is point in a direction.

Systematically, the first feature intersects with the eschatological category Moltmann developed from *Theology of Hope* (1964; English translation 1993) through to *The Coming of God* (1996), by way of the distinction between *futurum* and *adventus*: the future as an extension of what already exists, over against the future as an advent that is not born of any process

preceding it.¹⁸ That intersection, however, must not be converted into an identification. *Adventus* depicts God coming to us from ahead; *proagein* depicts Christ going ahead of us to a place we must come to. The first situates human beings in the posture of waiting; the second situates them in the posture of setting out. It is this difference in the direction of movement that renders the category proposed here something other than a reapplication of Moltmann's eschatology to a Markan text.

The second distinction requiring emphasis concerns *gratia praeveniens*, prevenient grace. The proximity of the terms will at once give rise to the suspicion that what is proposed here is merely a new name for an old doctrine. The difference lies in the object under discussion. *Gratia praeveniens* speaks of sequence within salvation: grace goes before and enables the human will to respond. *Proagein* speaks of the location of encounter: Christ has departed for a certain place, and the encounter occurs there. The first explains why human beings can believe; the second explains why faith assumes the form of departure. The two are neighbors, not substitutes for one another. In other words, *gratia praeveniens* answers a question belonging to the *ordo salutis*—why human beings are able to respond to grace—whereas *proagein* answers a question concerning the locus of encounter: where, and in what form, faith is lived.

The third distinction concerns obedience and discipleship. Mark himself supplies the instrument, for he twice pairs προάγω with ἀκολουθέω within a single clause (Mk. 10:32; 11:9). Following, within that pairing, is not compliance with a present command but the act of going after someone who is no longer in place. The difference is not one of nuance. Obedience presupposes a commander whose presence can be monitored and verified; following after presupposes precisely his absence from the place where we stand. And the component of fear that Mark records at 10:32 and 16:8 is not a weakness to be smoothed away within this construction but part of its content: this virtue is exercised by people who are afraid, not by people who have already been reassured.

Its negative boundary is drawn from 2 John 9, and the drawing of it demands care. The customary translations, which render ὁ προάγων as “anyone who runs ahead” or “anyone who goes too far,” remain in fact disputed. Terry Griffith demonstrates that many modern translations over-interpret this verb, that the Old Latin variant *qui recedit* and the variant παραβαίνων point rather toward a sense of departure than of advance, and that a more neutral rendering runs approximately: “anyone who goes forth and does not remain in the teaching of the Messiah.”¹⁹ The present construction need not decide that debate in favor of either side, for both readings yield the same boundary. Whether he runs ahead or goes out, what is censured is a human being who occupies the position of going ahead and does not remain (μὴ μένων). The boundary of this virtue may therefore be stated firmly: faith that follows after is walking behind the one who goes ahead; it ceases to be a virtue at the moment the one who follows after takes over the position in front. And it is precisely at that point that Mark 6:45 and 11:9 meet 2 John 9.

Finally, its point of failure must be stated directly. This virtue is open to abuse in at least two ways. It may romanticize absence, so that a negligent teacher justifies his negligence by claiming that he is withdrawing; whereas the fourth feature requires a clear indication of

¹⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Terry Griffith, “The Translation of ὁ προάγων in 2 John 9,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 67, no. 1 (2016): 137–44.

direction beforehand, and there is no indication of direction without a presence that precedes it. It may also be enlisted to disparage institutionalized formation, as though every educational structure were a form of possession and presence; what is criticized, however, is not the institution but its claim. Both abuses signal that this virtue demands a careful derivation at the level of praxis, and that derivation is the work of the section that follows.

A pedagogy of following after: Reconstructing the locus, authority, and telos of Christian religious education

A virtue that is not derived into practice will remain an interesting theological essay without consequence. This section, accordingly, is treated not as an implication but as a construction in its own right, and it targets the three points most affected should the virtue of following after be accepted: the locus of formation, the authority of the teacher, and the *telos* together with the manner of its measurement. The three are chosen not on grounds of completeness but because it is within these three that the pedagogy of presence-as-possession operates most deeply and least consciously.

The reconstruction of the locus is the most immediate. Within the Markan motif, the promised place of encounter is neither the tomb, where the message is delivered, nor Jerusalem, where the whole drama reaches its climax, but Galilee, the region of origin, the place where the first disciples were called and where they had worked before they were called (Mk. 16:7; cf. 1:16–20). Formation does not culminate at the site of proclamation; it culminates at the place to which people return. For Christian religious education in Indonesia, which structurally proceeds along two tracks, as a school subject and as catechesis within the church, the consequence is not the abolition of either track but the lowering of its claim. School and church are places at which direction is indicated, not places at which encounter is stored.

Its derivation is concrete enough to be tested. A process of formation designed in accordance with this virtue will be arranged so as to end outside itself: at home, at work, in the neighborhood, and within the plural social spaces where learners actually live. A learner's "Galilee" is the place of origin he leaves each morning and returns to each afternoon. The evaluative question worth asking is therefore no longer how active he is within the space of formation, but what occurs in the place to which he returns. The shift sounds simple, yet it inverts our habitual measurement, which almost invariably takes intensity of presence within the institution as the indicator of formation.

The reconstruction of authority touches the figure most difficult to touch within our context: the teacher. The model the text offers is in fact remarkably simple: the young man clothed in white possesses nothing of what he announces; he points to a place that has been vacated, he names a direction, and thereafter he vanishes from the narrative. Within this framework, the authority to teach is an authority to point, not to hold. Gert Biesta's framework helps to sharpen the point: education is concerned not only with qualification and socialization but also with subjectification, and it is precisely this third dimension whose outcome cannot be guaranteed. Education that genuinely educates is therefore "weak" education, education that accepts risk rather than education that yields predetermined outcomes.²⁰ A teacher who

²⁰ Gert J. J. Biesta, *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2013). Cf. Biesta, *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), and *Good Education in an Age of Measurement* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010), for the development of the qualification–socialization–subjectification triad.

possesses presence will always be tempted to eliminate that risk; a teacher who merely points a direction has no alternative but to bear it.

Here a safeguard must be installed, for the distance between pointing a direction and neglecting one's task is exceedingly thin. To point a direction requires knowledge of the direction, which means that the formation of teachers becomes more decisive rather than less. The difference lies in what is mastered: the teacher masters the map, not the destination; he knows the road to Galilee but does not possess the one who awaits him there. In this connection, Thomas Groome's *shared praxis* approach—long a framework of reference within Christian religious education, proceeding through five movements from present action, to critical reflection, to encounter with the Christian Story and Vision, and on to decision—remains relevant and largely compatible.²¹ What the virtue of following after adds is an element Groome does not foreground: that the movement does not halt at the decision the learner takes but at the place to which he must go. *Shared praxis* culminates in commitment; a pedagogy of following after culminates in departure. It should be noted that in *Will There Be Faith?* (2011), Groome himself extended his framework in a direction increasingly attentive to the everyday life-context of learners, a development that converges in part with the emphasis upon locus proposed here.

The reconstruction of the *telos* bears most heavily upon curriculum documents. The messenger's formulation establishes the order unambiguously: "there you will see him"; the seeing occurs after he has gone, not before (Mk. 16:7). The learning outcomes for Christian religious education and character formation, however, as formulated within the national framework, tend to be arranged in the reverse order: understanding is positioned as the prerequisite and action as its fruit.²² The virtue of following after proposes a limited but genuine inversion. A formulation such as "learners are able to explain the meaning of Christ's resurrection" is not mistaken, but it halts at the dimension of qualification. A formulation consonant with this motif would run approximately thus: learners are able to recognize where the message of the resurrection sends them, and to take the first step in that direction without waiting for all their doubts to be settled.

At the level of assessment, methodological honesty is worth more than completeness. A *telos* that assumes the form of departure is difficult to measure within a single semester, and this article will not pretend to supply a tidy instrument for something that is fundamentally long-range. What can be proposed is only a shift of orientation: assessment that is narrative and longitudinal rather than momentary; portfolios that document what learners do beyond the classroom; and the involvement of parties in "Galilee"—family, community, and workplace—as sources of information, and not the teacher alone. And one thing must be stated openly: some of what this virtue forms cannot be measured within the span of time available

²¹ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); and *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry — The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991).

²² Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, No. 032/H/KR/2024 [Decree of the Head of the Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Educational Assessment, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology], on Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education under the Merdeka Curriculum, Appendix on the Learning Outcomes for Christian Religious Education and Character Formation.

to us. A curriculum that acknowledges that limit is more honest than a curriculum that conceals it behind a rubric that merely appears complete.

The three reconstructions converge upon a single point that is uncomfortable and yet unavoidable. Mark twice records that walking behind the one who goes ahead produces fear, and the Gospel ends with a fear that is left unresolved (Mk. 10:32; 16:8). Christian religious education formed by this motif cannot, therefore, promise certainty to its learners; what it can promise is a direction and someone who has already arrived there. Within the plural Indonesian context, this simpler promise carries an advantage that is by no means small: a faith formed by departure is less liable to become a faith that defends territory, because from the outset it has never possessed territory to defend.

Conclusion

The New Testament does not call Jesus' tomb empty; what it calls empty is rather the proclamation and the faith—were Christ not raised—so that the predicate of emptiness migrates from space to act and relation, and what remains at the mouth of the tomb is not an adjective but a verb of motion. That verb, *προάγει*, is strung within the Gospel of Mark into a five-step motif that consistently takes the rights formerly lodged in human hands and returns them to Christ, with fear as the marker at both its opening and its close. From this motif, the article has constructed “faith that follows after” as a formative virtue: the disposition to set out because he has already set out, with the firm boundary that it ceases to be a virtue the moment the one who follows after takes over the position in front. Upon that basis, it has proposed a reconstruction of Christian religious education at three points: a locus that shifts from the institution to the place where learners are, a teacher's authority that points a direction instead of holding control, and a *telos* that situates understanding after departure. What an education of this kind promises is not certainty in this place, but an encounter in the place he has already gone before us.

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Credit authorship contribution

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