

Note: In addition to the text of my paper, I offer readers the use of my analytic, gender-inclusive translation of the Didache for use while reading my paper. This translation facilitates seeing the unity and flow of topics upon first reading.

Apprenticeship in the Way of Wisdom Within the Apocalyptic-Orientated Didache Communities 50 – 70 C.E.¹

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Any community that cannot artfully and effectively pass on its cherished way of life as a program for divine wisdom and graced existence cannot long endure. Any way of life that cannot be clearly specified, exhibited, and differentiated from the alternative modes operative within the surrounding culture is doomed to growing insignificance and to gradual assimilation. Faced with these harsh realities, the **Didache** unfolds the training program calculated to irreversibly alter the habits of perception and standards of judgment of novices coming out of a pagan life style.² The content and the modality of this process of human transformation can be gleaned from the verbal clues conveyed within the text itself. The task of this essay is to unravel these clues and to recover the passion, the content, and the methodology whereby those proponents of the Jesus movement associated with the **Didache** set about to form and transform the lives of gentiles into that Way of Life calculated to gain entrance into the kingdom when the Lord-God comes to earth.

The Oral Character and Use of the Didache

The **Didache** represents the first concerted attempt by householders (Crossan 1998) to adapt the way of Jesus to the exigencies of family, of occupation, of home--the very things that Jesus and his wandering apostles had left behind (Theissen 1977). Paul did this for the communities he founded. The twelve apostles undoubtedly did this for the community at Jerusalem. From Paul, however, we have only occasional letters. From the Twelve, we have nothing. The Acts of the Apostles only gives passing details regarding community life in the Jerusalem church and in the churches founded by Paul. The **Didache**, in contrast, offers a full-blown description of nearly every aspect of community life

The **Didache** is an anonymous document. Like so many other books in the Christian Scriptures, it didn't belong to or originate with a single individual. It belonged to various communities of householders who had received a Way of Life revealed to them by the Father through his servant Jesus. Given the manifest clues of orality³ within the **Didache** itself, one can be quite certain that it was originally composed orally and that it circulated on the lips of the members of this community for a good many years before any occasion arose which called for a scribe to prepare a textual version.

Initially, the ordering of the material in the **Didache** may seem ragged and confusing. Upon careful examination, however, one can discover the organizational thread that accounts for the flow of topics and reveals the marvelous unity hidden below the surface from beginning to end. This is the same organizational thread that those who originally recited the **Didache** relied upon for ordering their recitation. The organizational thread is this: the **Didache** unfolds the comprehensive, step-by-step, program used for the formation of a gentile convert.⁴ By following the order of the **Didache**, mentors training novices were assured of following the comprehensive and psychologically sound path that master trainers before them had created by way of codifying their tested and proven method of apprenticing novices in the way of divine wisdom--the Way of Life.

Whether "the Twelve" Authored the Didache

The sole complete manuscript of the **Didache** that has come down to us was discovered in 1873 by Archbishop Bryennios in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulcher located in Istanbul. The manuscript itself has two titles. The first and short title is **Training of the Twelve Disciples**. The second and long title is **Training of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles**. Since both the short and long title begin with the Greek word **Didachê** ("Training"), this explains why scholars use the first word of both titles as a shorthand reference to the entire work. Moreover, in English translation, scholars have rendered **didachê** as "teaching" rather than "training." My preference for "training" will be explained shortly.

The two titles (#1a)⁵ found on the eleventh-century manuscript that has come down to us cannot be presumed to be those used during the first century. The **Didache** clearly offers internal evidence that it puts forward "training" (1:3) given by "the Lord" (9:3)--whether this was transmitted by the "twelve apostles," however, is problematic. Outside of the titles, the **Didache** itself never mentions "twelve" apostles. More importantly, when the subject of "apostles" does come up, this title was applied to charismatics passing through the community (11:3-6). If these "apostles" were indeed the Twelve, then it remains difficult to understand why their stay would

be limited to one or two days (11:5), why some of them would be inappropriately asking for silver (11:6), why some of them would be tearing down the received tradition (11:2). The "apostles" familiar to the framers of the **Didache**, therefore, were neither the Twelve nor the founders of the Didache communities. The distinct possibility remains, therefore, that "the Twelve Apostles" was deliberately introduced only at the point when apostolic authorship was recognized as an absolute necessity for any work seeking inclusion in the canon of approved books. Thus, authorship cannot be decided on the basis of the received titles.

Division and Progression of Topics

The **Didache** does not have a topic paragraph serving to specify the overall purpose of the text and to name the progression of topics to be treated. Nonetheless, the framers of the **Didache** did make ample use of topic sentences (or phrases) to signal the beginning of new sections. In addition, the author used summary statements (4:14b, 13:1f, 15:4) and final cautions (4:12-14a, 6:1f, 11:1f) in order to bring closure to blocks of material before passing on to the next topic. When attention is given to these linguistic clues, the **Didache** breaks down into five topical divisions. Each of these divisions occupies progressively smaller fractions of the entire text as shown by the numbers in parentheses:

- I. Training Program in the Way of Life (44%) **Did.** 1:1-6:2
- II. Regulations for Eating, Baptizing, Fasting, Praying (21%) **Did.** 6:3-11:2
- III. Regulations for Hospitality/Testing Various Classes of Visitors (15%) **Did.** 11:3-13:2
- IV. Regulations for First Fruits and for Offering a Pure Sacrifice (10%) **Did.** 13:3-15:4
- V. Closing Apocalyptic Forewarnings and Hope (09%) **Did.** 16:1-8

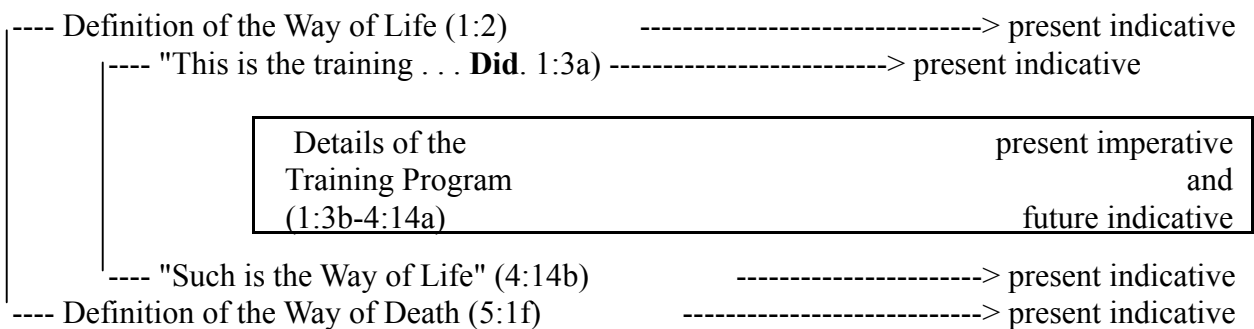
Each of these five subdivisions has enough internal coherence to stand alone. When placed together in their given order, however, they reveal a deliberate progression. Within Part I, there is also a deliberate progression. This will become clear in what follows.

The Opening Definitions of the Way of Life

The opening line of the **Didache** serves as a topic sentence: "There are two ways: one of life, the other of death" (1:1). The Way of Life is defined immediately (1:2), but one has to pass through four chapters before the Way of Death is finally defined (5:1f). The framers did not use these definitions in order to confront their hearers/readers with an existential choice between the Way of Life and the Way of Death. Rather, they pulled these two definitions apart in order to frame their main attraction, that is, the training program that occupies the central eight-tenths of Part I. The training program itself is introduced with a fresh topic sentence (1:3a) and is closed with a summary statement (4:14b). This second framing device reinforces the centrality of the

training program and again demonstrates that the definitions of the Two Ways have only a subsidiary interest for the author.

The rhetorical shifts in Part I of the **Didache** confirm this emphasis. The text opens with the Way of Life being described in the present indicative. The tone is descriptive. As soon as "the training" begins, however, the text shifts into the imperative. Concrete demands are being made. The mentor directly addresses the one being trained. Given the oral character of the **Didache** (#11d) and the prevalence of mnemonic aids, one can surmise that the spiritual guide had the entire Two Ways committed to memory. Within this section, therefore, one "overhears" the authoritative "word of God" (4:1) that is being spoken by the spiritual master. As soon as "the training" is finished, the text returns to the indicative in order to take up the description of the Way of Death (5:1f). Seen as a whole, Part I may be visualized as follows: the two definitions (in the present indicative) frame the central training program (in the present imperative and future indicative):



The Two Ways

The notion that there are two well-defined paths would have been familiar to a Jewish audience (#1b, #1h). Psalm 1, for instance, contrasts "the way of the righteous" with "the way of the wicked." The first-named are defined as those who "delight . . . in the law [Torah] of the Lord" (Ps 1:2). Standing in this tradition, it is no surprise that the Jesus movement was known in some circles as "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). This was undoubtedly due to the fact that its members were trained in "the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17), "the way of the Lord" (Acts 18:25), or "the way of God" (Acts 18:26)--terms used repeatedly in the Septuagint. In 2 Peter, false teachers are spoken of as having left "the way of truth" (2:2), "the right way" (2:15), "the way of righteousness" (2:21) in order to follow "the way of Balaam" (2:15). According to the Q Gospel, Jesus contrasts "the narrow gate" with "the wide gate" (Mt 7:13f; Lk 13:23f). The former "way is hard" but "leads to life" while the latter "way is easy" but "leads to destruction." In each of these cases, the two-way mentality is evident; yet, in none of these cases is there the suggestion that the **Didache** was known or used to flesh out the exact meaning of the Way of Life.

Within the Hebrew Scriptures, Jeremiah was sent by the Lord to say to the people: "Behold I set before you the Way of Life and the Way of Death" (Jer 21:8). In the **Apocalypse of Baruch** (c. C.E. 100), the Jewish author writes that the Lord "established a covenant for them at that time and said, 'Behold I have set before you life and death'" (19:1). Similar passages can be found in Dt 11:26-28; Prv 2:1-22, 4:18f; **Sibylline Oracles** 8:399. All in all, the Way of Life and the Way of Death served as evocative metaphors for giving voice to the challenge the Lord God made to Israel.

The Way of Life Defined By the Negative Golden Rule

The **Didache** defines the Way of Life using two functional definitions. The first definition summarizes positively what must be done; the second definition summarizes negatively what must be avoided. The first definition summarizes one's relationship with God; the second, with one's neighbor.

The Way of Life was frequently characterized as consisting in loving God. Twice each day, in the morning and the evening, for example, Jews recited the **Shema** (Bradshaw 1991:19). The first line begins, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God," and the second continues, "You shall love the Lord your God. . ." (Dt 6:4f). In Mark's Gospel, accordingly, when a scribe asks Jesus what is the "greatest commandment," Jesus responds by reciting these very same lines (Mk 12:29ff) and the scribe commends him for so doing. In Luke's Gospel, the scribe is described as "a lawyer" who asks not for the "greatest commandment" but, "What must I do **to inherit** eternal life?" (Lk 10:25) Jesus turns the question back to his inquirer, "What is written in the law [Torah]? How do you read?" (10:26). In this portrait, the inquirer delivers the second line of the **Shema** and the positive Golden Rule, and Jesus commends him saying, "You have answered right; do this and you will live" (10:28). Thus, whether on the lips of Jesus or on the lips of a Jewish lawyer, the **Shema** served to specify the "greatest commandment" and the route to "eternal life." This naturally shows up in the **Didache** as the first functional definition of the Way of Life.

The joining of loving God and loving neighbor would also be foundational within Judaism. According to the **Mishnah**, the priests in the temple recited the decalogue prior to the **Shema** (**m. Tamid** 5:1). In the first century **Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs**, Dan teaches his sons, "Love the Lord throughout your life and one another with a true heart" (**Testament of Dan** 5:3), and Issachar teaches his sons, "Love the Lord and your neighbor" (**Testament of Issachar** 5:2). Philo (d. C.E. 50), when describing the special commandments given to the Jews by God, notes that everything can be divided into two categories: (1) "the regulating of one's conduct towards God by the rules of piety and holiness" and (2) "[the regulating of] one's

conduct towards men [women] by the rules of humanity and justice" (**Special Laws** 2.63).

The Way of Life As Implying an Apprenticeship

After defining the Way of Life using the dual definitions, the **Didache** turns its attention to "the training [required for the assimilation] of these words" (1:3). As explained above, the definitions of the Way of Life and the Way of Death served to frame the main attraction, that is, "the training" program which occupied 78% of Part I and 36% of the entire **Didache**. Since 36% of the entire **Didache** is devoted to this "training," it is not surprising that the entire manuscript was, at some point in time, given the title **didachê**.

The Greek word **didachê** makes reference to the training that a master-trainer (**didaskalos**) imparts to apprentices or disciples. In classical Greek, basket weaving, hunting with a bow, and pottery making represent typical skills transmitted under the term **didachê** (**TDNT** 3.135). For our purposes here, it is significant to note that the verb **didaskein**--customarily translated as "to teach"--was normally used to refer to a prolonged apprenticeship under the direction of a master:

Thus, **didaskein** is the word used more especially for the imparting of practical or theoretical knowledge when there is a continued activity with a view to a gradual, systematic, and therefore all the more fundamental assimilation (**TDNT** 3.135).

When one examines the particulars of the training outline, it is apparent that one does not arrive at the skills necessary to "love those who hate you" (1:3c) or to "judge with justice" (4:3) merely by being told to do so on one or two occasions. Accordingly, while all the English translations prepared to date have been content to translate **didachê** as "teaching," it is evident that the force of **didachê** is better rendered as "training" or "apprenticing." Moreover, in our contemporary society, "teaching" is associated with classroom instruction, and, in the popular mind, this often evokes the passing on of information from professor to student. The word "training," on the contrary, has the advantage of suggesting the dynamics of an apprenticeship wherein novices gradually and progressively assimilates the performance skills of a master-trainer (**didaskalos**). In what is to follow, the terms "master-trainer," "mentor," and "spiritual parent" will accordingly be used in preference to "teacher" to identify the one who trains.

Whether Each Novice Had a Single Spiritual Mentor

The **Didache** offers evidence suggesting that each novice was paired off with a single spiritual master. The principal clue for this is the fact that the entire training program (save for **Did.** 1:3) addresses a single novice using the second-person singular. If, under normal circumstances, a single spiritual master were assigned the training of many or all the novices within a community, one would have expected that the second-person plural would have been used throughout. Furthermore, within the Way of Life training program, the novice is instructed to actively remember and mull over the life and the training of "the one speaking to you the word of God" (4:1). This use of the singular here points in the direction of each novice having a single master. So, too, when regulations are put forward for choosing the water for baptism (7:2f) and for ordering "the one being baptized to fast beforehand" (7:4), in each case the singular is used--again confirming the expectation that each candidate was baptized individually by a single individual--presumably the one who was their spiritual mentor and parent.

The **Didache** does not tell us how someone attracted to the Way of Life would come to have a spiritual mistress or master. One can surmise that the one coming forward to request admission would do so because of a keen admiration felt for the Way of Life of one or more members. Since the community gatherings were closed to outsiders (9:5), this limited personal attraction would be the basis for seeking admittance (4:10). If the community member to whom the potential candidate was initially attracted did not have the time, the temperament, or the skill to train a novice, one can further imagine that the community would have discussed among themselves who would be best fitted, by virtue of their sex, age, availability, temperament, state of life, and spiritual advancement to serve as spiritual master in the case of a particular candidate coming forward.

Since women in the ancient world were accustomed to be trained by other women (#1g, #2b), and since it would have been a source of scandal for a man to be alone for prolonged periods with a woman unrelated to him, it would be presumed that, save for special circumstances, women were appointed to train female candidates and men were appointed to train male candidates.

Remembering One's Mentor, the Presence of the Lord, and "Trembling"

Those who trained novices were not transmitting something of their own creation. Rather, such masters were "speaking to you the word of God" (4:1); hence, something which they themselves had received. When one explores the eucharistic prayers, it will become apparent that Jesus is identified as 'the servant who revealed the Way of Life.' The master, in consequence, was also understood as a servant of the Father revealing to the novice the Father's wisdom for living. Where his "dominion" was addressed and taking effect in the life of the novice, there and then the **Didache** speaks of the presence of the Lord being felt--"there the Lord is" (4:1).

The **Didache** notes, in passing, that the novice becomes one "trembling through all time at the words that you have heard" (3:8). Here again, the internal clues of the **Didache** demonstrate that the Way of Life was not received as mere information. Having been set upon the path of life by "the God who made you" (1:2), the novice trembled with excited anticipation and reverential fear. This was the way that Israel originally experienced the word of the Lord from Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:16) and the way that others after them came to discover the transforming power of God's word (e.g., Ezra 9:4, Is 66:2, Hab 3:16). Thus, among the rabbis, it was a commonplace to remember that every master taught his disciples "with awe and fear, with trembling and trepidation" (**b. Berakhot** 22a) (#1h).

Praying for Enemies and Turning the Other Cheek

Seen from the vantage point of an orderly progressive of topics, however, the initial section dealing with praying for enemies and turning the other cheek would appear to be placed at the head of the training program because new recruits had to be immediately prepared to respond to the abusive treatment by outsiders (1:3f). When examined in detail (Milavec 1995), the "enemies" in this case were not highway robbers or Roman soldiers, but relatives and friends who had become "enemies" due to the candidate's new religious convictions. Thus, praying and fasting (#4c) for such "enemies" functioned to provide the necessary orientation for sustaining a comprehensive non-violent surrender to the abusive family situation hinted at in **Did.** 1:4.

Among other things, the abusive family situation envisioned the forcible seizure of the novices goods (1:4[D]), and the candidate was instructed to yield completely to such hostile acts and, at the same time, to surrender his goods to beggars (1:5), not due to any compulsion, but simply because his/her "Father" wished it. Implicit here is the contrast between a natural father who may be authorizing the tight-fisted seizure of his daughter's or son's assets with that "new Father" who generously gives to all and invites imitation. The possibility of understanding the text as addressing such existential needs at the beginning of the training process cannot be

sought unless it is presumed that the **Didache** reflects a training process fashioned and modified over a period of time to address the situation of real candidates.

The Two Rules of Giving

Within the training program, the issue of giving is taken up at the very beginning and, again, near the very end. The first giving (1:4) is presented in the present imperative and represents the kind of giving the candidate was expected to practice immediately upon entering upon his/her apprenticeship. The second section on giving (4:5-8), however, is much more than a reinforcement of the earlier giving. Now everything (save **Did.** 4:5) is presented in the future tense and the focus is on the routine "taking and giving" and the much more extensive "partnering" of all one's resources "with your brother [or sister]" (4:8) (#2m, #2o). The future tense used here could function as a mild imperative (as in English) but then this would leave the awkward situation whereby two diverse rules of giving are provided and no attempt is made to harmonize them. On the other hand, if one examines the second set of rules for giving, one discovers that this later giving involves sharing one's resources with members of the community--a situation that would prevail only after the time the candidate had gained admittance as a full member of the movement through baptism. These two sections which deal with giving, far from being a senseless repetition occasioned by the mindless combining of preexistent sources, represents a thoughtful progression wherein the giving of the first kind aptly develops habits of mind and of practice that prepare for and insure the kind of giving necessitated following baptism. Since the first rule of giving is intended for immediate implementation, it is presented as an imperative. The second section on giving, being in the future tense, then accurately reflects preparing for what is to come and is not yet. Here, again, by allowing that the **Didache** is more than a wooden collage of sources and by allowing that it reflects a training program in action, one can gain hints as to the pastoral genius underlying its composition.

How the Jewish Decalogue Was Adapted for Gentiles

The negative Golden Rule concerns itself with avoiding "as many things as you might wish not to happen to you" (1:2). **Did.** 2:2-6 proceeds to spell these things out in detail. First a decalogue (#1m) adapted to gentiles is offered. Then, five speech failings and five evil dispositions are prohibited. All of this is then brought to closure by naming three classes of persons (2:7): (a) those whom one is bound to lovingly reprove--misbehaving members (looking ahead to 4:3 and 15:3); (b) those whom one cannot reprove and can only be prayed for--outside "enemies" (1:3) and insiders who are "shunned" (15:3); and (c) those whom one loves unreservedly and generally need no correction--"mentors" and "saints" (4:1f).

The framers of the decalogue (2:2) retained the linguistic structure whereby the Lord

delivered his Torah to his people on Mt. Sinai (Ex 20:1-17, Dt 5:6-21). Thus, one finds here the tenfold repetition of **ou/ouk** followed by a verb in the second-person singular future tense. The use of the future tense works well here insofar as it indicates what the Lord will expect of those intent upon loving him.

Since the novice could not have known what the Lord wanted him/her to be and to do prior to this moment, the decalogue would not have been presented to the novice as a rebuke. This harmonizes with Jewish practice in training proselytes--no gentile was blamed for not having been raised as a Jew (Novak 1983:110-115; 1989:38). On the other hand, it can be presumed that the novice asked questions relative to the scope of each of the terms of the decalogue and that the novice reflected upon his/her own life in contrast to the Way of Life. These periods of clarification and self-examination might have passed over into feelings of regret or repentance. In cases where this repentance spilled over into fits of depression or of self-negation, the spiritual mentor must have been quick to remind the candidate that their Father in heaven was formerly unknown to them and that they were naturally misled by well-meaning parents and household gods. From this point onward, however, the candidate would be expected to honor and to "love the God who made you" (1:2).

Why the Way of Life Omits the First Five Commandments

If the **Didache** deliberately omitted each of the first five commandments, what might this say about the social situation of novices preparing to enter the community?

1. The first commandment prohibits honoring any other gods other than or alongside the one Lord. At the beginning of the **Didache**, the Way of Life is defined as meaning "you will love the God who made you" (1:2)--thereby affirming, from the very start, a positive form of the first commandment. So, too, the **Didache** warns against becoming a diviner, an enchanter, or an astrologer (#1u) for these things lead to "idolatry" (3:4). After the close of the Two Ways, the novice is told that eating "the food sacrificed to idols . . . is worship of dead gods" (6:3)(#3c). Hence, one might conclude that the first commandment might have been omitted because it was redundant (#1n).

2. The second commandment prohibits making or using a "graven image" (Ex 20:4). For a gentile whose public buildings, private homes, and even the money used in the market place were routinely decorated with such images, it would have been entirely unworkable to imagine that all of this could somehow be discarded, effaced, or replaced. Hence, for gentiles, the second commandment would have been nearly impossible to maintain unless they entirely abandoned their homes and cities. Hence, one might conclude that the second commandment was omitted because not even God could demand the impossible.

3. The third commandment prohibits swearing a false oath while calling upon God to witness to the truth of what one is saying. The **Didache** has five speech infractions after its "decatalogue." Among these, swearing falsely is named first (2:3). Hence, one might conclude that restating the third commandment at **Did.** 2:2 would have seemed redundant.

4. The fourth commandment prohibits profaning the seventh day with work. For gentiles, the Sabbath rest (Ex 20:8f) would have imposed an unworkable expectation since the Roman lunar calendar governing public life made absolutely no provisions for a cessation of work every seventh day (#4a). The "days of rest" named in the Roman calendar only occasionally coincided with the Jewish Sabbath and, even then, such days were ordinarily devoted to public festivals in honor of this or that god. Since the members of the **Didache** depended upon the work of their hands, the fourth commandment would have imposed severe economic hardships. Hence, in order to safeguard a higher good, one might conclude that the Sabbath rest was suppressed (#1o).

5. The fifth commandment requires children to honor their parents. Gentiles could hardly be trained to honor their parents (Ex 20:12) when that "filial piety" so highly prized by Romans would have made the desertion of ancestral gods and the abandonment of their parental upbringing unthinkable (#12b) save in those instances wherein an entire patriarchal household converted to the Lord as a group (e.g., as in the case of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10). In the Synoptic Gospels, one finds what Crossan refers to as "an almost savage attack on family values" (1994:58). Sayings such as "I have come to set a man against his father . . ." (Mt 10:35f) and "Call no one your father on earth" (Mt 23:9) serve to illustrate how inter-generational strife (Crossan 1994:60) arose as parents endeavored to use their authority to block the conversion of their adult children. Given the implication of **Did.** 1:3f (namely, that many or most novices were encountering hostile resistance to their conversion from parents and siblings), it became impossible to honor their parents and, at the same time, to honor the God of Israel. Accordingly, using a pattern of social displacement, novices preparing to enter the community are wisely directed to honor God as their true Father (1:5, 9:2f, 10:2) and the members of the community as their true siblings (4:8). Hence, in order to safeguard a higher good, one might conclude that the obligation to honor parents was suppressed. Not even God could demand two contradictory commitments.

In retrospect, the above discussion makes it evident that the omission of the second, fourth, and fifth commandments was not accidental. The framers of the **Didache** deliberately modified the Jewish decatalogue in order to enable gentiles to walk in the Way of Life while continuing to live in Roman society. This, in itself, makes clear that the Way of Life was not designed for use in the synagogue (#1j).

Why the Way of Life Adds Six New Commandments

If the deliberate omissions from the decalogue of Exodus 20 constituted pastoral adaptations, then one might suspect that the six additional prohibitions made to the Didache's decalogue were also equally purposeful. Properly speaking, the six break down into three pairs.

1. The first pair (A3 and A4) prohibits pedophilia and illicit sex (**porneia**). A3 might be literally translated as "you will not corrupt boys" (**ou paidophthorêseis**). Pedophilia was practically unknown among Jews (**Testament of Levi** 17:11); hence, it is not surprising that the Torah given to Moses contains no mention of it. Outside of Judaism, however, pedophilia was widely practiced and, within limits, was socially acceptable within the Hellenized world (#1q). When the **Didache** specifically proscribes sexually corrupting "boys" (2:2), it is specifically singling out a practice that many male neophytes had experienced firsthand as part of their early initiation. One should not imagine that the **Didache** was an innovator here, however, since ancient Jewish authors amply demonstrated their repugnance for this socially sanctioned pedophilia when writing to gentiles (#1q).

Along with pedophilia, the decalogue introduces **ou porneuseis**--a prohibition against **porneia** ("illicit sex"). The term **porneia** effectively embraces "every kind of unlawful intercourse" (Bauer:693b). The commandments regarding "adultery" (#1p) and "pedophilia," consequently, appear to prohibit specific kinds of illicit sex. Why then does the **Didache** insert a general prohibition against **porneia**? The original ten commandments contained no such prohibition. However, entire chapters of the Torah (Lv 18, 20) are devoted to spelling out a wide range of prohibited sexual relations. Thus, the framers of the **Didache** must have added this commandment against **porneia** by way of alerting gentiles that the Way of Life required them to avoid incest (Lv 18:6-18, 20:9-12, 17, 19-21), menstruating wives (Lv 18:19, 20:18), prostitution (Gn 38:24, also Lv 21:9)(#1r).

2. The second pair of added commandments prohibits magic and **pharmakeuein**, a term that literally meant "to give drugs" but could also apply to the preparation of medicines using incantations to insure their supernatural efficacy (Kohlenberger:1065). The term **pharmakeuein** can refer to "compounding poisons" (Niederwimmer 1998:89); yet, in this context, the term is not linked with murder but with magic as in the case of Pseudo-Phocylides: "Make no potions, keep away from magical books" (149). Magic and potions did not compete with the respectable religious rites of the established religions but provided "the illegal insider dealing of people who were overambitious to achieve a personal end" (Fox:37).

3. The third pair of added commandments pertains to abortion and infanticide (#1s). These two prohibitions are closely linked and the addition of the post-partitive conjunction **de** ("and")

signals this close connection. Since deliberate abortion and infanticide were not even considered as options in Jewish circles while, at the same time, they were widely regarded within Roman culture as a normal mode of family limitation (**ABD** 1.34; Fox:343), these two infractions were repeatedly underscored in the Jewish sources created for gentile instruction (**Pseudo-Phocylides** 184f; Josephus, **Ag. Ap.** 2.202; **Sibylline Oracles** 2.281-285).

In sum, one can conclude that the framers of the **Didache** deliberately modified the Jewish decalogue so as to exclude precisely those injunctions that would have been impossible to maintain within a gentile cultural milieu and, on the other hand, to include three pairs of infractions that were particularly odious to Jewish sensibilities. Since all three pairs would have been condoned by most gentiles, the insertion of these pairs clearly implies that the novice was expected to alter his/her moral sensibilities during the time of his/her training. When it came time "to reprove against failings" (4:3) or to "confess in full your failings" (4:14), it can be surmised that the novice would be ready to judge and to be judged by standards remarkably different from those prevailing in popular culture. The counter-cultural force of the **Didache** thus becomes apparent.

The Five Speech Infractions

After the decalogue, five speech-infractions are proscribed using the same linguistic structure found in the decalogue. In the interests of brevity, no special comment will be offered here.

After the five speech infractions, a positive mandate is used to summarize: "Your word will not be false nor empty, but will be fulfilled by action" (2:5). A "false" word implies a deception; an "empty" word implies an unfulfilled promise. The novice, in every situation, is trained to have his/her words match his/her deeds.

Five Prohibited Dispositions

Following the decalogue and the five speech infractions, five injurious dispositions are proscribed (2:6). The first two dispositions (covetous and greedy) are associated--both pertain to an inordinate attachment to goods. The last two dispositions (bad-mannered and arrogant) may also be associated--both pertain to an inordinate attachment to one's self-importance. These pairs frame the term "hypocrite" and one can imagine that the hypocrisy referred to is intimately linked with the attachment to goods and to one's self-importance--a hint that needs to be applied when "hypocrites" (#4d) are encountered in fasting and praying (8:1f).

Spiritual Parenting

Once the negative prohibitions are accounted for, the training moves on to delineate how one must cultivate the discipline to act and think in such a way as to remain far from any of the grievous infractions named. At the same time, there is a mood transition signaled by the fact that the novice is now, for the first time, to be routinely addressed as "my child." This verbal clue signals that the mentor at this point becomes, by implication, a "mother" or "father" transmitting to his beloved "offspring" wisdom for living (#1t). One is prepared for this transition by **Did.** 2:7 which starts out by saying, "you will not hate any person," and ends up by noting that "some you will love more than your own soul." First among those in the latter category will be one's spiritual father or mother whom the novice "will remember night and day" and "honor as [the] Lord" (**Did.** 4:1).

The Greek expression **teknon mou** literally signifies "my offspring" without regard for age or sex. In this context, it cannot be supposed that the master-trainer is the biological father or mother of the novice. Within the Septuagint, **teknon mou** is already used metaphorically as an intimate form of address (Gn 43:29) or to denote a novice in relationship to his trainer and mentor (1 Sm 3:16, 26:17). The gender-inclusive term aptly captures the fact that the **Didache** addresses women and their concerns. In contrast, Jewish wisdom literature normally addresses the gendered "my son" and then proceeds to warn against being intoxicated by loose women (e.g., Prv 5:20). Even the Sermon on the Mount, when closely analyzed, exclusively addresses men and male concerns.⁶ The wisdom of the **Didache**, therefore, stands apart by deliberately offering training to women. Such training insures that women were empowered to be active participants within community affairs⁷ and "does not concern itself with rendering a household code whereby wives are subordinate to their husbands" (Rose-Gaier in Crossan:371).

If one extrapolates the evidence even further, one might even imagine that the appearance of "my child" at the midpoint of the training program may signal the tragic case of many novices who, by this point, have despaired of winning over their biological fathers and/or mothers by prayer and fasting (1:3). In the face of this loss, such persons would have the need to bear their grief and to share their struggles with another "father" or "mother" who stands for them and with them in their new commitments (#1t).

The Five Fences

Did. 3:1 serves as a fitting opening to the five illustrations of how to avoid major infractions by keeping guard against minor infractions that might not be serious in themselves but which form a slippery slope toward great infractions. In Jewish circles, this would be recognized as erecting a "fence" (#1v). The linguistic repetition is evident in each of the five cases, and, quite evidently, **Did.** 3:1-6 formed an oral unit bound together by a single logic.

The progression of the five topics, however, remains puzzling. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers five illustrations of how the righteousness of his disciples must exceed "that of the scribes and the Pharisees" (Mt 5:20), but only murder and adultery are treated in common with those topics named in the **Didache**. The flow of topics, meanwhile, does not parallel what one finds in the decalogue, save again, for murder and adultery. Murder and adultery were the gravest sins against one's neighbor, hence, it is no surprise to find them treated first by the framers of the **Didache**. Idolatry comes next. Hence, one must suppose that the framers of the **Didache** were acutely aware that gentile converts had to be warned against seemingly innocent practices that formed the path leading to idolatry. The same holds true for thefts and blasphemies.

After focusing upon a list of special virtues to be cultivated (3:7-9), the novice was trained to regard everything as happening providentially: "You will accept the experiences befalling you as good things, knowing that, apart from God, nothing happens" (3:10). In the face of sickness, poverty, failure, misunderstanding, therefore, the novice had to learn to reinterpret such "misfortunes" as "good things" ordained by God. Epictetus, a first-century Cynic philosopher, made this same point by calling his disciples to take an oath "never to distrust, nor accuse, nor murmur at any of the things appointed by God" (**Discourses** 1.14). In brief, Epictetus advised his disciples "to make the best of what is in our power and take the rest as it occurs" (**Discourses** 1.1). "And how does it occur?" Epictetus responded: "As God wills" (**Discourses** 1.1). Thus, even many pagans would easily have grasped how murmuring or grumbling regarding one's lot could lead to blasphemy ("cursing God") (3:6).

The Art of Reconciliation

Being a realistic program, the **Didache** no sooner holds out the future promise of finding "rest" among the "saints" (4:2) when it turns to the darker side: "dissent" and "fighting" (4:3). The novice will be given an active role in preventing or in defusing the harmful effects of such community-splitting conduct. The actual practice of reconciliation and judging are presented in full detail in 15:3. At this point, consequently, the future tense signals what the novice has to anticipate after becoming a member of the community. When actually a member, then the details of this practice will be fully explained and illustrated.

Three Special Household Rules

After dealing with the sharing of resources, the **Didache** puts forward three household rules. Taken together, the three rules imply that the typical candidate had children and slaves (#1x). The owning of slaves was not something reserved for the very rich since craftsmen (#2a) of ordinary means frequently purchased one or more slaves to work with them in the family business.

In the case of children, they were to be trained from their earliest years "in the fear (**phobon**) of God" (4:9). The **Didache** does not give any guidelines as to when and how such children were to be introduced into the community. No provisions, for example, are made for infant baptisms (#3g). Nor, for that matter, did the framers of the **Didache** imagine that parents trained their children "in the Way of Life." Presumably, since the choice for the community was an adult decision prompted by the Spirit (4:10b), parents were expected to train their underage children in appropriate ways until such time that they came forward, in early adulthood, and asked for admittance. In any case, parents were not to withdraw their guiding and protecting hand from their children.

In the case of slaves, the issues were more complex. Within pagan households, it was taken for granted that household slaves served the same deities to whom their masters were attached. In a Christian household, however, this was not to be the case. The overall sense of **Did.** 4:10 appears to be that God calls masters and slaves alike without regard to their social status; hence, masters must not despise or harshly treat their slaves for they clearly are "the ones hoping in the same God as you" (4:10a). Then, the spiritual mentor addressed the slaves directly. This might be a hint that the training itself took place in the home of the candidate where household slaves were naturally present. Such a rule comes in the wake of **Did.** 4:10 where it has been noted that masters were not to treat their slaves harshly. The central thrust appears to be that slaves hearing that their masters have limitations ought not to serve as an excuse to lose respect or take advantage of them. Just as in the case of children, slaves were expected to "fear the God who is over both of you" (4:10) until such time that they were moved, under the impulse of the Spirit, to ask to be initiated into the Way of Life. Thus, the mentor (and not the master or mistress) admonished the household slaves then present to be subject to their "lords" (masters) and to obey them as representatives of God with the same "shame and fear" (4:11).

The Solemn Final Admonitions

Following immediately upon **Did.** 4:11, the novice is told to "hate every hypocrisy and everything not pleasing to the Lord" (4:12). This generalized rule would appear to stand in for all the cases not considered during the time of the training. This rule would appear to follow on

what went immediately before: the novice is bound to please his Lord in the same way that household slaves were bound to please their masters.

The second admonition recalls that everything received must be "guarded" as "the rules of the Lord"--again emphasizing the source and character of the training received (recall **Did.** 4:1). Furthermore, **Did.** 4:13 appears to imply that what has been received and memorized is the totality of the training program, no more nor less. This final admonition must also signal that some have endeavored to alter what has been set forth. This issue will come up again in **Did.** 11:1f and the prophets will be named as the expected troublemakers in this realm.

The final admonition points to the future: "in church [i.e., in the assembly], you will confess your failings" (4:14). The framers of the **Didache** thereby insured that the particulars of the Way of Life would be the weekly matter for an examination of conscience and of public admission of failure. For the moment the candidate is unfamiliar with the eucharist, hence the details of **Did.** 14:1-3 are not presented. This will come later. For the moment, it suffices that the novice be forewarned that a regular confession will take place in the assembly and that this confession insured that "you will not go to your prayer in an evil conscience" (4:14).

Warning Against Innovators

All in all, the opening chapters of the **Didache** are devoted to a training program calculated to pass on and to preserve a way of life. Here one finds the repeated use of the imperative voice, systematic attention to details, and, most especially, sober warnings against those who might water down, change, or undercut what has been put forward (4:13, 6:1, 11:2). Taken together, these traits signify that the framers of the **Didache** had a personal investment in preserving a training program that, to some degree or the other, might not have always been consistently and completely operative in the preparation of new members for baptism.

Food Prohibitions

The absolute prohibition against eating "the food sacrificed to idols" (6:3) occurs after the conclusion of the training program and just prior to baptism. One could imagine that the sources used by the editor of the **Didache** placed them outside the Way of Life instruction and, as a result, the editor was constrained to make an awkward addition after the close of the Two Ways section. On the other hand, the placement of this important and absolute injunction may have evolved in order to address a practical purpose. As long as candidates were in training, they were obliged to refrain from attending the sacred community meals (9:5). Of necessity, therefore, most candidates would have been constrained to take part in family meals wherein, either regularly or periodically, some offering was made to the household gods as part of the

meal or some portion of the meats served had been previously offered at a public altar. Only with baptism a few days away, therefore, could the candidate be bound by this new rule.

The Rite of Baptism

Once the **Didache** declares its preference for flowing water, it immediately provided exceptions for instances where flowing water is not available (7:2f). The "other water" allowed in exceptional circumstances is still or standing water (Rordorf 1972:506; Barnard:139n3). Nothing is said regarding any emergency on the part of the person being baptized, hence, following the logic of the text itself, the **Didache** must be read as implying that some places did not have the preferred water and thus alternatives were being set forth. In the case of still water, however, cold water was to be given preference over warm, undoubtedly because it was closer to natural, flowing water (#3i). If neither cold nor warm standing water was available in sufficient quantity, then the one baptizing might, as a last resort, douse the person by pouring water over the head three times.

The **Didache**, using the aorist imperative, instructs those baptizing: "Immerse in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (7:1). It would be misleading here to imagine that one has here a "baptismal formula" (as suggested by Kavanagh:38, Rordorf 1972:504f, Niederwimmer 1998:126) and that baptisms were performed, as today, with the minister saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, etc." Had such a formula been used, one would have expected some such entire formula to be spelled out as in the case of the eucharistic prayers. Furthermore, the Hebraic expression of acting "in the name of x" has to do with the way that a disciple or a servant is authorized **to act** due to the training or mandate received from his master. According to the Christian Scriptures, for example, the Twelve heralded the Kingdom of God and apprenticed disciples "in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18; 5:28; 9:27, 29). At other times, they are presented as baptizing (Mt 28:19; Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5, 22:16), healing (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:7), and exorcising demons (Acts 19:13-16) in this same name. Contrary to a widespread misunderstanding, "there is in the New Testament no belief in the magically [or even supernaturally] potent names; in fact, there are no mysteriously dreadful words or names at all" (TDNT 5.278).

Once it becomes clear that the trinity of names did not constitute a liturgical formula, then one has to ask whether the action of immersing constituted the entire rite. This seems improbable. In fact, the **Didache** specifically points to the words of the rite when it says, "having said all these things beforehand" (7:1). Thus, every baptism was an affirmation of the Way of Life and a warning against the Way of Death. Most probably, the candidate and the one who trained him/her entered into the pool of water where the baptism would be performed. One can imagine that the assembled believers then formed a circle around the two. The trainer would

then be in a position to face the candidate and to address him/her with the words of life. Thus, what the **Didache** calls the "word of God" (4:1) would be addressed to the candidate in the second-person singular by their spiritual father/mother. The candidate would already know how to find the presence of the Lord in these words due to his/her training.

The closing line, "This is the Way of Life!" (4:14b), probably served as a liturgical refrain and, quite possibly, following Jewish parallels, was sung by all present (#5a). The mentor reciting the Way of Life might have chosen to inflect the ending of certain lines (e.g., the last line of 1:3, 1:4, 1:6, 2:2, etc.)--immediately signaling that the entire community should come in, chanting in unison, "This is the Way of Life!" Alternately, the mentor may have boldly recited this line at given points as a signal that all were to chant together the refrain. Thus, at one and the same time, the candidate would recapture the warm feelings associated with hearing the words of the Lord voiced by his/her spiritual parent, and, at the same time, the chanted refrain would bring home to the candidates that their spiritual "family" found their identity within this same Way of Life. Then, once the Way of Life was finished, the Way of Death would be defined and repudiated. Here, again, the line, "May you be saved, oh children, from all of these things" (5:2b), probably served as the liturgical refrain and repeatedly emphasized the ultimate blessing offered by the community (see 16:2).

All in all, the rite of baptism most probably took place according to the following schema:

1. Community gathers in the place of baptism (most have been fasting for two days)
2. Candidates led in by their spiritual mentors (all grow silent)
3. Mentors recite the Way of Life and Way of Death with the appropriate refrains
4. Each candidate is immersed, dried off, and re clothed in a dry tunic
5. New members are warmly embraced and kissed (same sex only) by their new family
6. Lord's Prayer is prayed together for the first time
7. All retire to a home for a fast-breaking feast (the eucharist)

The Pre-baptismal Fasting

Baptism marked a turning point. Social bonds were being broken, and new ones were being forged. Following baptism, every day would be spent visiting the saints and "rest[ing] upon their words" (4:2). Prior to baptism, however, most candidates probably felt the keen anticipation of entering into their new way of life along with the anxiety attendant upon the irreversible step that would cut them off from most of their family and friends. Anticipation and anxiety dulled the desire to eat (#3f). During these few days, it is no accident that the candidate was told to fast (7:4). The one baptizing and able members of the community fasted in solidarity with the candidate (7:4). During this period, all "the food sacrificed to idols" eaten by the candidates was expelled, and they were prepared for eating only the pure and sacred food at the homes of "brothers and sisters" since the former communion meals binding them to ancestral gods would now be forever forbidden to them. The fast, therefore, hardly needed a theology. It was an experience looking forward toward a promised future: more immediately, inclusion within the community of saints but then, more importantly, inclusion in the final gathering from the four winds into the Kingdom that the Lord-God would establish when he came (10:5, 16:6f).

Overall Unity of the Didache

This short exploration has endeavored to show that the **Didache** was not a randomly assembled collage of borrowed materials. Rather, from beginning to end, the framers of the **Didache** laid out the time-tested ordering of topics used by seasoned mentors training new members. At key points, the progression of topics was deliberately designed to address the felt needs of the candidate and/or to ready the candidate for new experiences that would follow shortly. All in all, the pastoral genius of the **Didache** was that it insured a systematic, user-friendly guide for mentors that enabled them to profit from the skills and experience of the seasoned mentors who went before them.

Needless to say, while the **Didache** was an oral template memorized by mentors (and, with the unfolding of the training, by their candidates as well), no one ought to imagine that training consisted of merely repeating the words of the masters. On the contrary, each mentor was expected to illustrate, inquire, question, listen to, and challenge his/her candidate such that, not only the words, but the deep meanings of the Way of Life were being suitably assimilated and applied at every step of the way. As in the case of every wise "father" or "mother," the mentor was expected to use the oral template as a reliable guide but to present it in such a way as to take into account the particular circumstances, particular strengths and weaknesses, particular fears being exhibited by the candidate.

The **Didache** begins immediately by offering the gentile candidate the key orientation that

characterizes the Way of Life, namely, loving God and loving one's neighbor (1:2). Everything that follows is commentary designed to reveal the substance of "these words" (1:3) and to orientate a gentile for full participation in the community of the saints. At every step, the order of topics follows the needs of the candidate: (a) Initially, the pressing concern is preparing the candidate for abusive treatment at home (1:3-5); (b) Midway, the language of "my child" predominates signaling the deepening of the "father-son" or "mother-daughter" relationship (3:1ff); (c) Near the end, the future tense is used to prepare the candidate for the community living that he/she has not yet known (3:9ff). Baptism is the rite of passage (7:1-3). Just prior to baptism, the rule of eating is given (6:3). As the candidate is fasting (purging his/her body of food sacrificed to idols), he/she is being prepared to live the rest of his/her life (a) eating the safe food of the community table and (b) abstaining from food twice each week (8:1). At the close of the baptism, the newly baptized pray the Lord's Prayer with the community for the first time (8:2) and anticipate doing the same three times each day for the rest of their lives (8:3). All, then, join in the festive first eucharist (9-10). Given the festive character of new members being welcomed by their "family," the confession of failings normally used prior to the eucharist is deliberately suppressed and described later (14:1-3). Given the presence of prophets at the eucharist that the newly baptized encounter for the first time (10:7), the extended instruction on prophets and other visitors (11:1-13:2) is given following the first eucharist. Following this, the rules for first fruits are explained and the prophets are singled out as the ones who can best be counted upon to offer up a rich, spontaneous prayers of gratitude to the Lord (13:3). Finally, the newly baptized (a) are prepared to participate in the confession of failings at their second and subsequent eucharists (14:1-3), (b) are alerted to the special honor due to bishops and deacons (15:1-2), something missed in the excitement of the first eucharist, and (c) the rules for reproof and shunning are explained in detail. Participation at multiple eucharists undoubtedly stimulates a deep concern for the eschatological hope of the community. Thus, at some teachable moment, the final formal task of the mentor is to explain in detail the solemn warnings (16:1-2) and the sequence of events that will culminate in the Lord's coming to establish his kingdom on earth (16:8).

Conclusion

Upon inspection, therefore, the **Didache** exhibits a remarkable unity and purposeful progression of topics. Both men and women candidates are systematically trained to develop notions of excellence and performance skills that duplicate (and eventually rival) those of their mentors who exemplify and reveal the way of wisdom. The timing and sequence of the training itself was perfected by masters as responsive to the changing needs of the candidate and the proximity of their entrance into community life. The **Didache** opens by introducing the candidate to that pivotal orientation toward love of God and love of neighbor that recapitulated and sums up all the particulars of the Way of Life. At the end of the training in the Way of Life,

the awesome rite of baptism recapitulates and celebrates the Way of Life and irreversibly alters the identity of the candidate as a "brother" or "sister" within a community bent upon supporting their quest for perfection in daily living. The **Didache** closes by evoking the expectation of that glorious day when the Lord-God will come atop the clouds of heaven (16:8) and gather into the Kingdom those whose lives have exhibited this perfection (16:2). Thus, the **Didache** traces how training to walk in the way of wisdom anticipates an exalted end.

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+++ Endnotes +++

¹ The **Didache** has been widely understood as citing either Matthew's Gospel or some combination of the Matthean or Lucan traditions. From this vantage point, it followed that the date of composition had to be set beyond the 80s and that the Synoptic material could be used to help interpret and understand the **Didache**. Thanks to my work with Willy Rordorf, I came to an early appreciation of the possibility that the **Didache** might have been created without any dependence upon a known gospel. My extensive study of this issue (Milavec 2003:Chapter Eleven) demonstrates that the internal logic, theological orientation, and pastoral practice of the **Didache** runs decisively counter to what one finds within the received gospels.

The repercussions of this conclusion are of decisive importance for the dating and the interpretation of the Didache. If one supposes an early second century origin for the Didache, for example, then one is naturally disposed to find points where the Didache shows dependence upon one or more known Gospels that were then in circulation. The widespread supposition of Gospel dependence, therefore, has blocked most scholars from seriously entertaining the possibility of a mid-first century origin of the Didache. The supposition of Gospel dependence has also encouraged an "inappropriate" interpretation of the text. If one supposes, for example, that the Didache made use of Matthew's Gospel, then one could justifiably make use of Matthew's theology and church practice by way of clarifying the intent and background of the Didache. On the other hand, if one supposes that the Didache is independent of Matthew, then it would be unwarranted to use the Gospel of Matthew to clarify obscure segments of a text created outside of its influence. My conviction that the Didache was composed independent of any known Gospel thus means that the Gospels can provide studies in contrast and comparison but that they cannot be used by way of filling in the intent of the framers of the Didache. Within my commentary, consequently, great importance is placed upon allowing the internal evidence of the text to speak for itself free of the influence of what was believed and what was done elsewhere. The case of the Didache is thus comparable to that of the **Letter to the Hebrews**. As soon as it was discovered that Paul was not the author, then it was likewise required that Hebrews be interpreted based upon its own internal logic and rhetoric quite independent of the theology of the authentic Pauline letters.

2. Michael Polanyi notes that all deep knowing implies a way of being in one's body and a way of being in the world that cannot be transmitted by a mere telling in words. Nor can such knowledge be entirely analyzed, dissected, and made plain such that a detached observer could discern the foundational principles involved and, through progressive steps in clear logic, arrive at the same affirmations as the teller. Polanyi repudiates the ideal of critical, detached knowing as unrealized and unrealizable (both in science as well as in religion), and Polanyi explains that this is so by virtue of the fact that all knowledge is embodied knowledge relying upon tacit skills:

If we know a great deal that we cannot tell, and if even that which we know and can tell is accepted by us as true only in view of its bearing on a reality beyond it . . . ; if indeed we recognize a great discovery, or else a great personality, as most real, owing to the wide range of its yet unknown future manifestations: then the idea of knowledge based on wholly identifiable grounds collapse, and we must conclude that **the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other must be predominantly tacit** (Polanyi 1966:61).

In the end, for an adult to learn the ways of a master, he/she has to submit to a prolonged apprenticeship. Polanyi notes that, even in an apprenticeship, learning depends upon a certain sympathy that exists between the novice and master. This sympathy begins in the spontaneous admiration that prompts the novice to establish a master-apprentice relationship in the first place. This sympathy operates throughout the apprenticeship itself, giving the novice the means to enter into and to assimilate the performance skills exhibited by his/her trusted master:

The pupil must presume that a teaching which appears meaningless to start with has in fact a meaning which can be discovered by hitting on the same kind of indwelling as the teacher is practicing. Such an effort is based upon accepting the teacher's authority (Polanyi 1966:61).

Authority within the context of an apprenticeship is not to be confused with authoritarianism. The master of a craft does not intend to accept the compliance and admiration of disciples in order to rule over them but rather to transform them into skilled performers. The authority of a master, consequently, is directed toward progressively enlarging the performance skills of novices such that they, in the end, demonstrate that they understand his/her words because they share the way of being and doing that is upheld and prized by the community to which they belong.

Applying this to the **Didache**, it becomes clear that novices were not intent upon entering an authoritarian system where they were simply told what to do and what not to do. Rather, novices came forward intent upon achieving for themselves the way of being and of doing (the wisdom) exemplified by those mentors whom they admired. This demanded an interior transformation that could only be achieved due to trusting person-to-person contacts over an extended period of time in what Polanyi would describe as an apprenticeship.

3. Within the **Didache**, the vocabulary and the linguistic structure itself displays a one-sided preference for orality. Thus, the **Didache** defines the Way of Life and immediately goes on to

specify the "training" required for the assimilation "of these **words**" (**Did.** 1:3). The novice is told to honor "the one **speaking** to you the **word** of God" (**Did.** 4:1) thereby signaling that oral training was presupposed. Moreover, the novice trembles "at the **words** that you have **heard**" (**Did.** 3:8).

In every instance where the **Didache** cites specific mandates from the Hebrew Scriptures, the oral aspect (as opposed to the written) is highlighted: "It has been **said**" (**Did.** 1:6); "The Lord has likewise **said**" (**Did.** 9:5); "This is the thing having been **said** by the Lord" (**Did.** 14:3); "As it has been **said**" (**Did.** 16:7). The same thing can be presumed to hold true when citing the "good news" (**Did.** 8:2, 11:3, 15:3, 15:4; see #11e). Accordingly, the **Didache** gives full attention to speaking rightly (**Did.** 1:3b, 2:3, 2:5, 4:8b, 4:14, 15:3b) and entirely neglects false or empty writing. At the baptism, the novice is immersed in water "having **said** all these things beforehand" (**Did.** 7:1). Thus, when the novice is warned to watch out for those who "might make you wander from this way of training" (**Did.** 6:1), one surmises that defective words rather than defective texts are implied. The same holds true, when later in the **Didache**, the baptized are warned only to receive him/her who "should train you in all the things **said** beforehand" (**Did.** 11:1) indicating that even the **Didache** was being heard. Finally, faced with the end time, each one is alerted to the importance of frequently being "gathered together" (**Did.** 16:2). This enforces an earlier admonition to "seek every day the presence of the saint in order that you may rest upon their **words**" (**Did.** 4:2)--thereby signaling once again how verbal exchange was paramount when "seeking the things pertaining to your souls" (**Did.** 16:2). The one misbehaving, accordingly, was reproofed "not in anger [i.e., angry words], but in peace" (**Did.** 15:3). Those unable to abide by the reproof received were cut off from hearing or being discussed by community members: "Let no one **speak** to him/her, nor let anyone **hear** from you about him/her until he/she should repent" (**Did.** 15:3).

From beginning to end, therefore, the vocabulary and linguistic structure of the **Didache** reinforce oral performance. The literary world of seeing, reading, writing, and editing are entirely passed over in silence (Henderson 1992:295-299). This feature has repercussions as to how the **Didache** was accordingly created, transmitted, interpreted, and transformed in "a culture of high residual orality which nevertheless communicated significantly by means of literary creations" (Achteimer 1990:9-19, 26-27).

4. The detailed examination of any text results in the formation of hypotheses, theories, and interpretative matrices that enable the researcher to integrate the clues of the text into meaningful wholes. In effect, there is no neutral starting point in research. Everyone coming to a text, even if for the first time, is already predisposed by what he/she expects to find and what he/she already knows about the text.

As a scholar dwells within the clues of a text for a prolonged period, he/she eventually comes to define an **origination hypothesis** that endeavors to account for the peculiarities of the text and to provide an overall understanding of its origin, use, and content. The formulation of this origination hypothesis and its verification (or falsification) is much more complex than is normally supposed. In my commentary (Milavec 2003) time is taken to explore and evaluate various contending origination hypotheses. Within the limitations of this paper, however, such a study would be tedious and distracting. I contend myself, therefore, with offering my origination matrix as a working hypothesis and proceed immediately to examine the particulars of the text.

5. Throughout this paper I have made judgments regarding the many alternative opinions held by previous scholars. In order to glimpse the interior logic and progression of topics in the text itself, I have eliminated this technical discussion. As I go forward, however, I have listed the cross-references (#4c = Chapter Four, box c) to the specialized material found within the four hundred boxes in my thousand-page commentary (Milavec, 2003). Interested persons are welcome to ask me for the technical discussion within one or more such boxes by contacting me at milavec@ameritech.net.

6. In Matthew 5-8, training is directed first and foremost to men. Phrases like "angry with his brother" (5:22) and "your brother has something against you" (5:24) and "eye of your brother" (7:4) reflect the mediterranean world in which men inhabited the public spaces and needed to make peace with each other. The women in the courtyards, meanwhile, are silently passed over. Jesus' observations about the one "looking at a woman lustfully" or "divorcing his wife" (5:28, 31) again captures only the male point of view. This is another testimony of the independence addressed in n. 1 above.

In contrast, while the **Didache** focuses upon issues that apply particularly to women (2:2[A8], 13:5), other aspects apply particularly to men (2:2[A3], 13:3). The household codes of **Did.** 4:9-11 are noticeably inclusive. In fact, my gender-inclusive translation makes it evident that women and women's issues were being addressed throughout the **Didache**. See n. 6 below.

7. The only function specifically reserved for men was the one in which negotiations with outsiders (nearly always men) was mandatory (15:1). Niederwimmer interprets **Did.** 15:1f to mean "that the local officials, together with the prophets and teachers (or, to the extent that the last two groups are absent, they alone) lead the worship service that formerly was in the hands of the prophets and teachers alone" (1998:202; also held by Catholic scholars, such as Schillebeeckx 1981:23). Rordorf, for his part, reads **Did.** 15:1f in a more radical manner: "the bishops and deacons are charged to replace them" (1998:228; also held by Catholic scholars, such as R. Brown 1980:336) as presiders at the eucharist. Schöllgen, in contrast, takes the position that "these matters remain in the dark" (1996:59). Going beyond Schöllgen, I would argue that the **Didache** provides sufficient evidence to decide that neither the prophets nor the bishops presided at the eucharist (see #6o and #9f). From my reading of the evidence, the presider at the first eucharist would have been the presider at the baptism, namely, the mentor who had "fathered" or "mothered" the candidate. Space prohibits me from developing this topic here. One can be sure, however, that if women were being trained by women, then the logic of the text and the practice of Roman **collegia** would lead us to surmise that these same women were baptizing and eucharistizing.

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