

**The Jesus Seminar's Quest for the Historical Jesus**  
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**Introduction**

Like prospectors digging for gold, the Fellows (voting members) of the Jesus Seminar carefully sifted through the gospel tradition in hopes of uncovering authentic nuggets which would reveal the "real" Jesus who had been buried beneath the rubble of Hellenistic myth. Those familiar with the Seminar's work know that they have found very little gold, and this is no less true for the canonical gospels. Of the sayings attributed to Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, only fifteen percent can be traced back to the historical Jesus; the remaining eighty-five percent were fabricated by the evangelists and placed upon the lips of Jesus. It would be easy to dismiss these results as indicative of the radical skepticism of a previous age. This, however, is not possible since the Jesus Seminar is presently committed, with evangelistic zeal, to the public dissemination and academic imposition of their "assured results." Those scholars who have responded to the Jesus Seminar thus far have focused solely on the final product, *The Five Gospels*, while ignoring those crucial six years, between 1985 and 1991, that gave rise to it. And yet it was during that formative period that the Seminar defined itself, set goals, revealed motives, identified assumptions, and described methodologies. While not neglecting *The Five Gospels*, this paper intends to concentrate on those critical early years to understand better the Jesus Seminar's quest for the historical Jesus.

## I. The Beginning of the Jesus Seminar

Not only was the Jesus Seminar the brain-child of Robert Funk, but apart from his intentional and persistent efforts, the Seminar would never have moved beyond its ideational conception. Funk's vision for the Jesus Seminar can be traced to the early 1980s when he prepared to write a book on the historical Jesus. While searching for a critical list of authentic sayings, Funk discovered the "cupboard was bare."<sup>i</sup> In 1985, to correct this shortcoming, Funk founded the Jesus Seminar, a professional organization of North American gospel scholars. The original sponsor of the Seminar was Polebridge Press, which Funk created in 1981 and has since served as its publisher. In 1986 Funk formed the Westar Institute, a private non-profit research institute headquartered in Sonoma, California, to become the legal home of the Jesus Seminar. (In 1995, the Westar Institute relocated to Santa Rosa, California). Funk's intentions for the Westar Institute, however, were much broader than for the Jesus Seminar; it was to serve as a scholarly 'think tank' and an advocate for religious literacy. Prior to forming the Jesus Seminar, Funk established *Foundations and Facets Forum*, a monthly journal to be sponsored by Polebridge Press and to serve as a forum for discussion of the Seminar's work. A more popular means of communication came with the creation in 1988 of *The Fourth R*, a bi-monthly magazine published by Polebridge Press, and sponsored by both the Westar Institute and the Jesus Seminar.

The Editorial Board of Polebridge's *Foundations and Facets* series served as core members for the newly formed Jesus Seminar: Robert Funk, Chair, John Dominic Crossan, Fred Francis, Burton Mack, and Robert Tannenhill. (Later, Funk would share the Chair with John Dominic Crossan). Funk then secured twenty-five more scholars to serve as founding members

("Fellows") of the Seminar. In all, twenty-nine scholars are listed by the Jesus Seminar as "Charter Fellows."<sup>ii</sup> With these Charter Fellows in place, the Seminar offered three-levels of membership: Active and Corresponding Fellows (which were later merged and called simply "Fellows"), Associates and Student Associates, and Research Associates. According to Marcus Borg, the requirement for a Fellow was, and continues to be, "typically a Ph.D., in relevant areas of gospel research."<sup>iii</sup> While both Fellows and Associates were allowed to contribute to the discussion on the authenticity of individual sayings, only Fellows were permitted to vote.

With the publication of *The Five Gospels* in 1993, the Jesus Seminar could boast a total of seventy-four Fellows.<sup>iv</sup> Funk has identified these Fellows variously as "leading scholars,"<sup>v</sup> "established academic scholars,"<sup>vi</sup> "gospel specialists,"<sup>vii</sup> and a "distinguished group of biblical scholars,"<sup>viii</sup> who are best described as "critical scholars":

The Fellows of the Jesus Seminar are critical scholars. To be a *critical* scholar means to make empirical, factual evidence--evidence open to confirmation by independent, neutral observers--the controlling factor in historical judgments....Critical scholars practice their craft by submitting their work to the judgment of peers. Untested work is not highly regarded. The scholarship represented by the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar is the kind that has come to prevail in all the great universities of the world.<sup>ix</sup>

These comments by Funk are significant because the Jesus Seminar seeks academic credibility in order to substantiate its claim of attaining a "scholarly consensus." For this reason, Funk not only lists the names of the seventy-four Fellows of the Jesus Seminar in *The Five Gospels*, but he provides their credentials, i.e., academic degrees and current positions. Also contributing to this claim of a "scholarly consensus" is the Seminar's assertion that its Fellows represent "mainstream" biblical scholarship. Funk writes, "The Fellows of the Jesus Seminar, like critical scholarship generally, represent a wide spectrum of religious belief."<sup>x</sup>

It was at semiannual meetings that the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar, typically thirty to forty, came together to discuss and debate, and then to vote on individual or groups of Jesus' sayings.<sup>xi</sup> Prior to these meetings, position papers on the sayings to be discussed were prepared and circulated. These Seminar Papers served as recommendations to the Seminar and become the basis for discussion at the meetings. Also a preliminary ballot was mailed to each Fellow to determine which sayings were the most controversial. These sayings, then, became the focus of attention, both in papers and discussion.

The Jesus Seminar's method of voting has become its trademark both in New Testament Studies and in the popular media. At the first meeting, the Fellows agreed to cast votes anonymously on individual or groups of sayings by placing an appropriately colored bead into a polling box. Four different colors were used, with each representing the degree of authenticity.

Red	=	"words that Jesus probably uttered"
Pink	=	"words that could probably be attribute to Jesus"
Gray	=	"words that could probably but not certainly be attributed to later voices"
Black	=	"words that Jesus almost certainly did not utter" <sup>xii</sup>

According to Funk, "Red should be reserved for words and aphorisms that conform in both form and content to what Jesus may have said."<sup>xiii</sup> A common vote among the Fellows was gray, which "frequently functioned as an 'I'm not sure' vote."<sup>xiv</sup> At the end of each meeting, an official vote was taken on the sayings under consideration. Each Fellow's vote indicated his/her scholarly opinion about the authenticity of that particular saying or group of sayings. The colored beads were then tallied and a color assigned to the saying.<sup>xv</sup> The color of a particular saying, then, represented for the Jesus Seminar a majority vote or "scholarly consensus" on the

authenticity of that saying.

An important dimension of the Jesus Seminar is its commitment to public disclosure and accountability. In describing the agenda of the Seminar at its first meeting, Funk said,

We are not embarking on this venture in a corner. We are going to carry out our work in full public view; we will not only honor the freedom of information, we will insist on the public disclosure of our work and, insofar as it lies within our power, we shall see to it that the public is informed of our judgments. We shall do so, not because our wisdom is superior, but because we are committed to public accountability...If we are to survive as scholars of the humanities, as well as theologians, we must quit the academic closet...At all events, we must begin earnestly to report on our work to a wider public and then to engage that public in conversation and conference.<sup>xvi</sup>

Since that 1985 meeting, the Jesus Seminar has diligently sought to make its results accessible to the public, regularly making press releases about its voting outcomes. The Seminar has also used other media to "get the message out," such as a teleconference and video tapes<sup>xvii</sup>

One of the consequences of this media attention, according to Funk, has been persecution.

This was actually anticipated by Funk at the Seminar's inaugural meeting.

What we are about takes courage, as I said. We are probing what is most sacred to millions, and hence we will constantly border on blasphemy. We must be prepared to forbear the hostility we shall provoke. At the same time, our work, if carefully and thoughtfully wrought, will spell liberty for other millions. It is for the latter that we labor.<sup>xviii</sup>

Arthur J. Dewey, a Seminar Fellow, would later confirm the fulfillment of Funk's prophecy:

"since its inception the Jesus Seminar has been denounced from pulpits, sensationally played up in the press, and subjected to various allegations and invective."<sup>xix</sup> Another Fellow, Mahlon H.

Smith, observed that the Jesus Seminar has been criticized by scholars as well as laity: "Censure and invective come as often from the learned elite as from a poorly informed public. That the Jesus Seminar has been railed at in pulpit, press, and ivory tower is neither surprising nor the

cause of undue alarm."<sup>xx</sup> These kinds of criticisms, according to Funk, have come from the theological left as well as the theological right: "the work of the Seminar has drawn criticism from the skeptical left wing in scholarship--those who deny the possibility of isolating any historical memories in the gospels at all. Of course, it has also drawn fire from the fundamentalist right for not crediting the gospels with one hundred percent historical reliability."<sup>xxi</sup>

## **II. The Goals and Motives of the Jesus Seminar**

At the first meeting of the Jesus Seminar, Robert Funk set two goals for the Seminar. The first goal was to identify and inventory all the sayings attributed to Jesus in the first three centuries C.E. This primary inventory or "raw list" was accomplished in 1986 with the publication of John Dominic Crossan's *Sayings Parallels: A Workbook for the Jesus Tradition*.<sup>xxii</sup> Crossan's *Sayings Parallels*, which catalogued 503 items or roughly 440 independent sayings, served as the official workbook of the Jesus Seminar. For sources, Crossan drew not only from the canonical gospels, but extracanonical literature. To facilitate the evaluation process, Crossan divided these sayings into four categories according to literary form: thirty-three parables, 287 aphorisms, eighty-one dialogues, and eighty-eight stories. Using this fourfold division, Crossan placed the sayings in parallel columns listing variant forms of the same saying. At a glance, the reader can observe the differences and similarities among this wealth of comparative material.

The second goal of the Jesus Seminar was to establish a "critical list" of authentic sayings, sayings which probably originated with Jesus himself. "We intend to examine every fragment of the tradition attached to Jesus in order to determine what he really said--not his

literal words, perhaps, but the substance and style of his utterances."<sup>xxiii</sup> The Seminar recognized at the outset that it was impossible "to recover the precise words of Jesus."<sup>xxiv</sup> For this reason, the Seminar sought the *ipsissima vox* ("very voice") of Jesus, rather than the *ipsissima verba* ("very words") of Jesus. The "voice of Jesus," for the Jesus Seminar, refers to the substance or sense of what Jesus said rather than to the specific words that he used. At the Seminar's first meeting, John Dominic Crossan would further clarify this goal by arguing that the Seminar actually seeks the *ipsissima structura* ("very structure") of Jesus' sayings.<sup>xxv</sup> The structure is the core of a saying as opposed to its many variations in the developing tradition. Crossan's clarification, which better reflects their methodology, was subsequently adopted by the Seminar.

The creation of the Jesus Seminar was based upon four motives, three of which Funk identified during his opening remarks at the first meeting of the Jesus Seminar. The first motive, according to Funk, was to respond to the widespread interest in what Jesus actually said, not only among students but among the laity as well. Funk states, "Make no mistake: there is widespread and passionate interest in this issue, even among those uninitiated in the higher mysteries of gospel scholarship."<sup>xxvi</sup> Because this academic interest does exist among the laity, Funk believes that scholars have a duty to make the best of scholarship accessible to them. And it is precisely this obligation that the Jesus Seminar intends to fulfill.

The Jesus Seminar was secondly formed in response to a new period in biblical scholarship. This is especially true in New Testament Studies, according to Funk, because these scholars now have access to new sources,<sup>xxvii</sup> new study instruments,<sup>xxviii</sup> new translations of New Testament apocrypha,<sup>xxix</sup> new paradigms,<sup>xxx</sup> and new foundations in editing and publishing primary source materials. Funk observes that these developments are taking place primarily in

North American scholarship, which now "threatens to come of age."<sup>xxxix</sup> Funk is convinced that New Testament Studies stands at the threshold of a new stage in academic history, a stage in which a new tradition of scholarship is in the process of being created. Funk further believes that the Jesus Seminar will play a significant role in the creation of this new scholarship. One of the ways it will do this, according to Funk, is by uniting a New Testament scholarship that up till now has been fragmented and isolated. Funk states, "Creating a tradition of scholarship means that our work must finally and firmly become accumulative."<sup>xxxix</sup> This can be done by intentionally building upon the work of previous scholars. Funk points specifically to sixty-plus books that have been written by Fellows of the Seminar and the writings of its patron saints, Amos N. Wilder, Norman Perrin, and Fred O. Francis. Funk concludes that only as the Fellows interact with these exemplary scholars and each other can they hope to become accumulative in their efforts, and thus make a significant contribution to this new stage in North American scholarship.

The third, and theological, motive for the creation of the Jesus Seminar was to provide a new portrait of Jesus based upon the best of this accumulative scholarship. Funk writes,

What we need is a new fiction that takes as its starting point the central event in the Judeo-Christian drama and reconciles that middle with a new story that reaches beyond new beginnings and endings. In sum, we need a new narrative of Jesus, a new gospel, if you will, that places Jesus differently in the grand scheme, the epic story...We require a new, liberating fiction, one that squares with the best knowledge we can now accumulate and one that transcends self-serving ideologies. And we need a fiction that we recognize to be fictive.<sup>xxxix</sup>

By "fiction," Funk means, "a selection--arbitrary in nature--of participants and events arranged in a connected chain and on a chronological line with an arbitrary beginning and ending. In sum, we make up all our 'stories'--out of real enough material, of course--in relation to imaginary

constructs, within temporal limits."<sup>xxxiv</sup> According to Funk, all narrative accounts are fictions, whether they're narratives about ourselves, our nation, the Western tradition, or the history of the world. Funk further observes that religious fictions are especially problematic because, quoting from Frank Kermode's, *The Sense of an Ending*, "[they] are harder to free from mythical 'deposit.'"<sup>xxxv</sup> Quoting Kermode a second time, Funk describes the precise nature of this problem: "If we forget that fictions are fictive we regress to myth."<sup>xxxvi</sup>

This third, theological, motive, of course, is based upon the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Funk rejects the later because it has regressed into myth, i.e., a fiction not recognized to be fictive. This regression into myth, according to Funk, has occurred among the majority of American society, who interpret the biblical narratives literally. Although Funk does not attempt to falsify the traditional portrait of Jesus (in fact, Funk believes that fictions are not subject to proof or falsification), he implies that it has lost its "operational effectiveness." Funk believes that this happens to all fictions when "they fail to account for enough of what we take to be real in the everyday course of events." The "we" here must refer to scholars, since Funk has already indicated that most Americans accept the traditional portrait of Jesus. Therefore, the Jesus Seminar was created partly to benefit scholars for whom the traditional portrait of Jesus has lost its operational effectiveness.

Why was it necessary for the Seminar to concentrate on the sayings of Jesus? One reason was clearly to provide what the Seminar believed to be a historically accurate portrait of Jesus. Another reason was that the language of the historical Jesus alone opens up the fantasy of the kingdom of God. This fourth, theological, motive is developed in Funk's programmatic essay, "From Parable to Gospel: Domesticating the Tradition."<sup>xxxvii</sup> Building upon Bultmann's dictum,

"The proclaimer became the proclaimed," Funk argues that while Jesus' parabolic language created a secondary world called the kingdom of God, the primitive Christian communities domesticated this language by assimilating Jesus into the tradition and by superimposing upon the tradition the categories of their habituated life-world. Because of the complexity and centrality of this fourth, theological, motive, it must be examined more closely.

For his understanding of Jesus' language, Funk acknowledges his indebtedness to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Of special interest to Funk is Husserl's concept of *Lebenswelt* ("life-world"), which is that sphere of reality that most waking adults take for granted. This life-world is characterized by belief in the existence of other people and the common experience of a shared reality. The "natural attitude" of most adults is the suspension of doubt in regard to this reality. In contrast to this received or habituated life-world, Funk introduces J. R. Tolkien's concept of secondary life-worlds. According to Tolkien, a true fairy tale creates a secondary world which, through the suspension of doubt, provides a new horizon of meaning. But as this secondary life-world begins to compete with the inherited life-world, the latter seeks to discredit it. "However, the establishment of a new fantasy demonstrates the magic beyond truth: all our worlds are fantasies. A fantasy is nothing more or less than a circumspective totality of significations to which we give ourselves."<sup>xxxix</sup> In other words, Funk believes that all life-worlds, whether habituated or secondary, are fantasies.

But what in the world does phenomenology have to do with the historical Jesus? Funk believes that Jesus of Nazareth used parables and aphorisms to create a secondary life-world, a fantasy called the kingdom of God. For Funk, then, it is the revelatory language of Jesus, and not Jesus himself, that conveys the kingdom of God.

The Christian faith is rooted in the language of Jesus rather than in the primitive Christian kerygma or the Easter event, contrary to Bultmann. To sum up the previous argument, parable, aphorism, and parabolic act are the threshold opening onto the new reality, the fantasy, called the kingdom.<sup>x1</sup>

Funk is convinced that the language of Jesus reveals the kingdom of God and is therefore the only proper object of Christian faith. The historical Jesus in this scheme is simply the purveyor of this kingdom language. The good news is not the "Jesus has come in the flesh," but that he has revealed a secondary life-world, the fantasy of the kingdom. This kingdom, however, arrives not in the person of Jesus but in his revelatory language. If this is true, then the recovery of the language of Jesus should be the objective of any quest for the historical Jesus. But this is no small task, according to Funk, for the language of Jesus was domesticated by primitive Christian communities as the tradition moved from parabolic speech-act to narrative gospel. This process of domestication, as well as the Jesus Seminar's method for recovering the language of Jesus, will be discussed later in more detail. Suffice it to say at this point, a fourth, theological, reason for the formation of the Jesus Seminar was the recovery of the revelatory language of Jesus which alone is the proper object of Christian faith.

The third and fourth, theological, motives for the creation of the Jesus Seminar appear to be its real driving force. The ultimate goal of the Jesus Seminar has clearly been the discovery of the historical Jesus, whether to create a new fiction or to recover his revelatory language. Funk writes, "In pursuit of the historical Jesus, they [the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar] used their collective expertise to evaluate the authenticity of more than 1,500 sayings attributed to him [Jesus]."<sup>xli</sup> Elsewhere Funk implies that the Jesus Seminar actually initiated the Third Quest for the historical Jesus: "The Jesus Seminar was organized under the auspices of the Westar Institute

to renew the quest of the historical Jesus."<sup>xlii</sup> Funk is closer to the truth when he writes, "The creation of the Jesus Seminar coincides with the reemergence of interest in the Jesus of history."<sup>xliii</sup>

### **III. The Assumptions and Methodology of the Jesus Seminar**

As with any historical investigation, such as that undertaken by the Jesus Seminar, numerous presuppositions precede and support the methodology applied. One of the most significant assumptions of the Jesus Seminar is its belief in the fluid nature of the gospel tradition.

In oral cultures and communities tradition is not fixed in writing, but is passed on as talk, and, as common experience proves, talk is more liquid, so to speak, than writing. The fluidity of talk is restrained by two factors. One is the structure of stories or sayings; the other is the use of fixed words or phrases. Otherwise, in oral communities purveyors of the tradition freely omitted, invented, modified, enlarged.<sup>xliv</sup>

The fluid nature of oral tradition allowed it to be freely modified and created by the oral performer to address new audiences and new circumstances. Regarding the gospel tradition, Marcus Borg writes, "[Jesus'] followers modified and created sayings for at least two reasons: they adapted early material to new situations and settings; and they created new material, either to address new situations, or to express new convictions about the significance of Jesus."<sup>xlv</sup>

Because of the fluidity of the gospel tradition, the Jesus Seminar has focused on the most reliable tradition, which they identify as Jesus' sayings. Rejected almost completely are the recorded events and chronology of Jesus' life in the gospels. Funk writes, "The narrative contexts

in which the sayings of Jesus are preserved in the gospels are the creations of the evangelists. They are fictive and secondary. Fellows of the Seminar have rejected the Markan outline of Jesus' life and the portrait of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet as secondary.<sup>"xlvii</sup> But even the sayings of Jesus are treated with great skepticism: "The greater part of the sayings tradition was created or borrowed from common lore by the transmitter of the oral tradition and the authors of the gospels."<sup>xlviii</sup> Only those sayings found in the earliest traditions are given much credence. According to Funk, the "oral memory best retains sayings and anecdotes that are short, proactive, memorable--and oft repeated."<sup>xlix</sup> Because parables and aphorisms are most characteristic of Jesus' oral speech, the Jesus Seminar identifies them as the earliest sayings in the Jesus tradition. These two forms of speech, then, make up the bedrock of the Jesus tradition.<sup>li</sup>

Another important assumption of the Jesus Seminar is its dating of sources. Borrowing imagery from archaeology, the Seminar distinguishes different layers or strata within the Jesus tradition. The historical Jesus, of course, is to be found at the earliest stratum of tradition: "Jesus' own words lie, as it were, at the bottom of the layers of tradition."<sup>li</sup> According to this model, later strata represent different stages in the developing tradition. The stratification of sources adopted by the Jesus Seminar is illustrated by the chart below.<sup>li</sup>

100-150 C.E.	Gospel of Mary
80-100 C.E.	Matthew, Luke, John, Egerton Gospel, Gospel of Peter
60-80 C.E.	Mark, Signs Gospel, Didache
50-60 C.E.	Sayings Gospel Q, Gospel of Thomas, Letters of Paul
30-50 C.E.	Oral Period
0-30 C.E.	Jesus of Nazareth (crucified in 29 C.E.)

In its stratification of sources, the Jesus Seminar located Q and the Gospel of Thomas (GTh) at the earliest stratum of the written tradition, 50-60 C.E. The GTh is especially important for the

Seminar because it provides a "significant new independent source of data for the study of the historical Jesus,"<sup>lii</sup> and because it proves the existence of the ancient genre of "sayings gospel." Funk argues that the discovery of the GTh in 1945 answered forever the genre question for the Q-hypothesis: "The Gospel of Thomas changed all that. Thomas, too, is a sayings gospel that contains no account of Jesus' exorcisms, healings, trial, or death."<sup>liii</sup> As sayings gospels, then, both Q and the GTh follow on the heels of the Oral Period, 30-50 C.E.

The Jesus Seminar used a variety of methods to determine the authenticity of Jesus' sayings. A helpful outline for understanding the primary methods of the Seminar can be found in a one-page article, "Testing the Waters at Bay," in which Funk responds to several hypothetical questions about the Seminar's work.<sup>liv</sup> Questions two and three address the methodology of the Jesus Seminar: What shall be our methodology for a formal analysis of the sayings of Jesus? What shall be our methodology for a substantive analysis of the sayings of Jesus? The first question of formal analysis is concerned with the role of literary form in the determination of authenticity. In response to this question, Funk lists two books: John Dominic Crossan's, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (1983)<sup>lv</sup> and his *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (1985).<sup>lvi</sup>

Although Crossan employed traditio-historical criticism in both books, he described this method more fully in *In Fragments*. In this book, Crossan examined 133 aphorisms attributed to Jesus in Mark and the hypothetical Q-document, as well as their variants in other canonical and extracanonical sources.<sup>lvii</sup> Crossan defined this distinct literary form as "a concise statement of a principle or precept given in pointed words."<sup>lviii</sup> Like proverbs, aphorisms are isolable from their context and involve an intensifying of language. But, in contrast to proverbs which were based

upon collective wisdom, aphorisms were based upon personal insight and authority. Aphorisms, in fact, stand over and against common wisdom. Crossan's goal in *In Fragments* was to determine "how the aphoristic tradition works and what the aphoristic tradition does with its material."<sup>lix</sup> As Crossan studied the transmission of the aphoristic tradition, he observed the way in which the aphoristic core, i.e., the basic structural unit of the aphorism, generated a variety of forms. The aphoristic core, for Crossan, is a generating matrix with an inherent proclivity to evolve. In other words, the aphoristic core developed within the tradition according to its own tendency, i.e., intrinsic laws of structural development. Crossan noticed that individual sayings tended to combine and form aphoristic compounds, which in turn coalesced into small complexes called clusters. Crossan points to the GTh and Q as examples of this clustering process. Eventually these aphoristic clusters attached themselves to conclusions, dialogues, and stories.

Through his investigations Crossan was able to trace the aphoristic tradition along a path of linear development, thus allowing him to reconstruct the transmissional process. Based upon this information, Crossan created a generative (or generic) model which described the rules and regulations that governed the transmission of the aphoristic tradition. Through these efforts, Crossan was able to identify three distinct levels of aphoristic tradition: original (oral speech-act), transmissional (oral transmission of tradition), and redactional (transmission of textual tradition). Bernard Brandon Scott provides a helpful description of Crossan's work.

From one point of view, Crossan is furthering Bultmann's analysis of the *meshalim* in his *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Crossan is creating a taxonomy for aphorism, seeking its rules of transmission. These rules fall under three headings: the genre itself, its variation in transmission (how it undergoes changes in word and structure), and its transformation (how it grows from single

item to larger units).<sup>lx</sup>

Regarding the variations in transmission, Crossan observed three types of alterations in the aphoristic tradition. First, there were the performancial or stylistic variations in which the aphoristic core was retained but the structure was altered, e.g., contractions, expansions, substitutions, transpositions, and conversions. Second, hermeneutical variations occurred, which resulted in substantive changes in the meaning of the aphorism. Finally, Crossan observed translational variations in which change took place in the construction of a given text. For Crossan, the historical Jesus is to be found prior to any of these variations, at the beginning of the transmissional process.

In "Testing the Waters at Bay," Funk raised a second hypothetical question: "What shall be our methodology for a substantive analysis of the sayings of Jesus?" At issue in this question is the role of the substance or content of a saying in determining authenticity. Funk responds to this question by referring to his then forthcoming article, "From Parable to Gospel: Domesticating the Tradition."<sup>lxi</sup> In this article, Funk describes his understanding of the substance of the sayings of the historical Jesus, as well as the transformation these sayings underwent in the transmission of the tradition. For Funk, Jesus' sayings were pervaded by tension, a tension that was created by Jesus' intentional use of hyperbole, antithetical statements, and structural ambiguity. This tension, according to Funk, was accentuated by the subversive nature of Jesus' message.

Both the form and content of the language of Jesus indicate that he announces a fundamental reversal of the destinies of men. This reversal is related to expectations as informed by the everyday or received world. Moreover, this reversal is a perpetual state of affairs in the kingdom: whatever man comes to expect, to rely on, is perpetually refused; but to him who expects nothing, who is

truly profligate, who is a genuine victim in the ditch, the kingdom arrives as a gift.<sup>lxii</sup>

Through his parables and aphorisms, Jesus sought to subvert the deceptive, habituated life-world of his hearers and in its place offer ultimate reality, the fantasy of the kingdom. Because the secondary world of the kingdom involves a cosmic inversion of received certainties, Funk believes that some people will prefer the security of their inherited life-world and opt out of the parabolic fantasy offered in the kingdom of God.

The substance of Jesus' sayings, then, is their subversive nature. And yet the sayings of Jesus in the gospels do not appear to be that subversive. Funk argues that the Jesus tradition was domesticated as it moved from parabolic speech-act to narrative gospel. In other words, the tension that characterized the subversive language of the historical Jesus was released as Jesus was painted into the narrative picture, God was made immanent, the terms of Jesus' language were assimilated into the categories of the habituated life-world, and eventually the primitive Christian communities included themselves within the tradition. These developments in the tradition, however, "lead to the disenchantment of the fantasy, so that the arrival of the kingdom is pushed off into the future...the messiah must then return to achieve what he did not achieve the first time through."<sup>lxiii</sup> Funk contends that Jesus does not appear in the phenomenal field of his own language, but is instead simply the herald of the miraculous arrival of the kingdom of God. Funk also believes that the primitive Christian communities domesticated the tradition in order to release the tension in the language of Jesus and thus eliminate the risk of subverting their inherited life-world. Funk calls this a "Pharisaic ploy to manage the text."<sup>lxiv</sup>

This domestication of the tradition, according to Funk, can be observed in the

transmission of the tradition. In its original oral form the language of Jesus, which was characterized by parables and aphorisms, was not self-referential; it simply conveyed the fantasy of the kingdom. But as the tradition moved from orality to literacy it became self-referential: "Self-reference means that attention is being diverted from the kingdom as fantasy to Jesus as the future bringer of the kingdom."<sup>lxv</sup> Funk identifies two linguistic steps in which this process occurs. The first linguistic step is the creation of the pronouncement story in which Jesus' sayings were set within a minimal narrative context. This is problematic for Funk because once Jesus appears in the narrative the parabolic and aphoristic form become self-referential. The second linguistic step is the miracle story where Jesus is assimilated into secular categories and portrayed as a miracle-worker. The narrative gospels would now seem to serve as a culmination in the domestication of the tradition. Funk argues, however, that "The gospel form is not itself a further stage in the same linear development. It is rather a compromise in which the community of faith gives expression to its life-world and then embeds Jesus in it."<sup>lxvi</sup> The result of this, according to Funk, is a kerygma which is the fully mythologized expression of the faith of the primitive community. "It is mythological in the sense we have been using the term: the Christ as God's messiah and the deity itself are thought to be immanent to the life-world of the community."<sup>lxvii</sup>

Although the historical Jesus is embedded into the habituated life-world of the primitive communities, Funk believes that the subversive nature of Jesus' message is not completely lost. Funk is convinced that even though the tradition is domesticated, it recalls elements of Jesus' original subversive message.

the Jesus tradition clearly contravenes the tradition of interpretation which was

superimposed upon it...The gospels embody paradoxes and anomalies, which means that they arrest and even reverse the trend visible in the miracle stories and legends: the words of Jesus are an uneasy memory in tension with the emerging secular faith (faith that squares with interpretive categories of the received world).<sup>lxviii</sup>

By exploring these anomalies and tracing the development of the tradition, Funk argues that it is possible to recover the language of the historical Jesus, the substance of which is the subversive message of the kingdom.

Funk recommends the criterion of dissimilarity for identifying the core of the Jesus tradition. This is based upon the belief that Jesus offered a radically new life-world through his message of the kingdom. Troublesome to Funk are those who attempt to locate Jesus within the Jewish apocalyptic of late antiquity. By doing this, Funk believes, these modern scholars "only indulge the proclivities of the primitive community and contravene the bedrock of the Jesus tradition."<sup>lix</sup> Funk observes this same trend in the current sociological movement which seeks to locate Jesus generally within the habituate life-world of first-century Judaism. Funk writes,

It may be true that Jesus stands in full continuity with his 'conceptual-cultural antecedents,' but in that case he would not be very interesting. As Whitehead has said, 'It is more important that something be interesting than true.' To be sure, discontinuity cannot be assumed; it can be accepted only on unequivocal evidence. And it is this evidence which the parables and aphorisms of Jesus offer in abundance...For this reason, the quest of the historical Jesus can be renewed only as a quest aimed at the life-world inspired by the fantasy of the kingdom, in relation to the habituated life-world which functioned and functions as its 'out of which.'<sup>lxx</sup>

Funk argues that the language of the historical Jesus subverted the received life-world and conveyed the fantasy of a secondary life-world, namely, the kingdom of God, and was therefore completely distinct from first-century Judaism. Funk concludes, "the measure of success may thus be the extent to which this quest contravenes the tradition to which it belongs. Put

theologically, the strength of the tradition lies in its power to invoke its memory against its own proclivity to domesticate the tradition.<sup>lxxi</sup>

For the Jesus Seminar, the authenticity of a saying attributed to Jesus is determined by both formal and substantive analysis. Regarding the form of Jesus' sayings, the Seminar applied the method of traditio-historical criticism, which traces the development of specific literary forms within the history of the tradition. Characteristic of Jesus' oral speech, according to the Seminar, are parables and aphorisms. The substance of Jesus' sayings, on the other hand, is their subversive nature. By applying the criterion of dissimilarity, the Jesus Seminar was able to distinguish the unique message of Jesus from both the habituated life-world of ancient Judaism and the later voices of the primitive Christian communities. It was primarily through his parables and aphorisms that Jesus attempted to subvert the habituated life-world of his hearers and to offer in its place the fantasy of a secondary life-world called the kingdom of God. In form and substance, then, the Jesus Seminar places priority on the parables and aphorisms of Jesus. These alone constitute the bedrock of the Jesus tradition.

#### **IV. The Results of the Jesus Seminar's Efforts**

To be included among the results of the Jesus Seminar is the production of a "raw list" of all the sayings attributed to Jesus in the first three centuries. This was actually accomplished by John Dominic Crossan's *Sayings Parallels* (1986). Another result is the Seminar's creation of a critical Greek text of the canonical gospels,<sup>lxxii</sup> and, on the basis of this text, the creation of a new translation, the Scholars Version (SV).<sup>lxxiii</sup> The SV was used for the Seminar's *The Gospel of Mark: Red Letter Edition* (1991) and *The Five Gospels* (1993). The crowning efforts of the translating committee came with the publication of *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars*

*Version*, which was edited by Robert J. Miller.<sup>lxxiv</sup> The goal of these translators was "to produce in the American reader an experience comparable to that of the first readers--or listeners--of the original."<sup>lxxv</sup> The Jesus Seminar emphasizes that the SV is free from the dictates of ecclesiastical authorities. In fact, "The Scholars Version is authorized by scholars."<sup>lxxvi</sup>

In the spring of 1991, the Jesus Seminar completed phase one: the collection and evaluation of all the sayings attributed to Jesus in the first three centuries. In total, the Seminar examined 1,544 versions of 518 different sayings. With the publication of *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (1993), the Jesus Seminar's conclusions are generally accessible. These results are vividly portrayed through the Seminar's color coding of Jesus' sayings: red, pink, gray, and black. In the "Index of Red & Pink Letter Sayings" in *The Five Gospels*,<sup>lxxvii</sup> fifteen sayings are listed as red.<sup>lxxviii</sup> In these sayings, the Jesus Seminar has the greatest degree of historical confidence. Less assured, but still included in the database for determining the historical Jesus, are an additional seventy-five sayings that were designated pink. The remaining 418 sayings were colored either gray or black. The chart in Appendix A indicates the authenticity of Jesus' sayings as found in individual sources, which are listed in order of historical reliability. Luke and Matthew fared well largely because of their common source, Q. The GTh ranked highest with a total of 21.3% of its 202 sayings colored red or pink.

So what kind of Jesus emerges from the Jesus Seminar's database of authentic sayings? The Jesus Seminar intends to leave the implications of their results to the work of individual scholars. But even though the Seminar has not adopted an official portrait of the historical Jesus, some of the Fellows of the Seminar have offered their interpretations of the data, most notably Robert Funk,<sup>lxxix</sup> John Dominic Crossan,<sup>lxxx</sup> Marcus Borg,<sup>lxxxi</sup> and Burton Mack.<sup>lxxxii</sup> In a 1989

article, Funk drew some implications from the work of the Seminar, relying especially upon a Seminar Paper presented by Leif Vaage at their fall 1989 meeting.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> The title of Funk's article is telling: "Jesus the Social Gadfly."<sup>lxxxiv</sup> In his Paper, Vaage argued for the authenticity of several Q sayings found in Luke, 7:33-34, 9:57-58, 9:59-60, and 14:26.<sup>lxxxv</sup> On the basis of these sayings, the historical Jesus emerges in contrast to John the Baptist, for whereas the Baptist was an ascetic, Jesus was "on the town" eating and drinking to excess. Unlike John, Jesus chose to be a public figure, one who did not concern himself with proprieties and who associated with the dregs of society, e.g., toll collectors and sinners. Jesus also challenged law and custom by his deviant behavior and absurd admonitions. Funk concludes, "He appears to be a tramp or street person, or perhaps a wandering sage like the Cynic philosophers common in the Mediterranean world. Jesus seems to live on the margins of society, at variance with ordinary norms."<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

In another article, Funk develops further his conclusions about the historical Jesus.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> According to Funk, the portrait of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet is no longer viable, it has died a "scholarly death." The historical Jesus, Funk believes, neither expected the end of the world nor his return after his death. And although Jesus was indeed crucified, he never predicted his death, let alone have foreknowledge of it. Furthermore, Jesus never intended to found a new social order, such as the church. And even though Jesus never spoke of himself as the Messiah, he had much to say about the Kingdom of God, a mythic and symbolic kingdom which was present in his words and deeds. In this kingdom, people would experience the reversal of roles, especially the rich and the poor, and enjoy full reciprocity.

So then, who is the historical Jesus? According to Funk, "Jesus was a popular teacher,"<sup>lxxxviii</sup> who "enjoined subversive forms of social behavior and practiced those same tenets

himself.<sup>lxxxix</sup> This portrait of Jesus as a non-apocalyptic, subversive teacher, who offered an egalitarian kingdom, is confirmed by John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and Burton Mack.

And like Funk, these three Fellows have discovered a parallel for this image in the ancient Mediterranean world, namely, the wandering cynic philosopher. Funk believes that this interpretation has validity because it avoids the last temptation.

The last temptation is to create Jesus in our own image, to marshal the facts to support preconceived convictions. This fatal pitfall has prompted the Jesus Seminar to adopt as its final general rule of evidence: Beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you.<sup>xc</sup>

#### Appendix A: The Voting Record of the Jesus Seminar<sup>xcii</sup>

<u>Source</u>	<u>Savings</u>	<u>Red</u>	<u>Pink</u>	<u>Grey</u>	<u>Black</u>
Thomas	202	3 (1.5%)	40 (19.8%)	67 (33.2%)	92 (45.4%)
Luke	392	14 (3.6%)	65 (16.6%)	128 (32.7%)	185 (47.2%)
Matthew 420		11 (2.6%)	61 (15.5%)	114 (27.1%)	234 (55.7%)
Mark	177	1 (0.6%)	18 (10.2%)	66 (37.3%)	92 (52.0%)
PolPhil	9	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)
Didache	28	---	8 (28.6%)	4 (14.3%)	16 (57.1%)
POxy 1	9	---	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)
POxy 654	16	---	4 (25.0%)	7 (43.8%)	5 (31.2%)
POxy 655	5	---	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)
POxy 1224	3	---	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	---
DialSav 29	---	---	1 (3.4%)	2 (7.0%)	26 (89.7%)
John	140	---	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.6%)	134 (95.7%)
I Clem	7	---	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (71.4%)
II Clem	14	---	2 (14.3%)	4 (28.6%)	8 (57.1%)
ApJas	28	---	---	1 (3.6%)	27 (96.4%)
Pauline Corpus	8	---	---	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)
Revelation	10	---	---	1 (10.0%)	9 (90.0%)
GEbi	4	---	---	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)
Barnabas	4	---	---	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)
PEger2	3	---	---	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
GNaz	8	---	---	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)
Ign	8	---	---	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)

Herm	3	---	---	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Acts	4	---	---	---	4 (100.0%)
GPet	3	---	---	---	3 (100.0%)
James	2	---	---	---	2 (100.0%)
GHeb	1	---	---	---	1 (100.0%)
POxy 840	1	---	---	---	1 (100.0%)
II Peter	1	---	---	---	1 (100.0%)
Justin	1	---	---	---	1 (100.0%)

### Endnotes

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i. This is how Funk describes his experience of searching for a list of Jesus' authentic sayings. For Funk's own words, see *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition*, (Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1988): xi.

ii. Of these twenty-nine Charter Fellows, sixteen continued as members of the Jesus Seminar: William A. Beardslee, James R. Butts, Ron Cameron, John Dominic Crossan, Dennis C. Duling, Robert W. Funk, Charles W. Hedrick, Karen King, John S. Kloppenborg, John Lown, Lane C. McGaughey, Vernon K. Robbins, Bernard Brandon Scott, Dennis E. Smith, Hal Taussig, and John L. White. The remaining thirteen Charter Fellows would later withdraw their membership: M. Eugene Boring, James Breech, R. Alan Culpepper, Richard A. Edwards, R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, William R. Herzog II, Paul W. Hollenbach, Howard C. Kee, Werner H. Kelber, Burton L. Mack, Leo G. Perdue, Gary A. Phillips, and Robert C. Tannehell, *Forum* 1.1 (1985): 30.

iii. Marcus Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1994): 162.

iv. These seventy-four Fellows include the sixteen Charter Fellows listed above, plus an additional fifty-eight Fellows: Andries G. van Aarde, Harold Attridge, Robert Bateer, Edward F. Beutner, Sterling Bjorndahl, Marcus J. Borg, Willi Braun, Bruce D. Chilton, Wendy J. Cotter,

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Jon B. Daniels, Stevan L. Davies, Jon F. Dechow, Arthur J. Dewey, Karl E. Eklund, Robert T. Fortna, James Goss, Heinz O. Guenther, Walter J. Harrelson, Stephen L. Harris, James D. Hester, C.M. Kempton Hewitt, Julian V. Hills, Roy W. Hoover, Michael L. Humphries, Arland D. Jacobson, Clayton N. Jefford, F. Stanley Jones, Perry V. Kea, Chan-Hie Kim, Davidson Loehr, Sanford Lowe, Loren Mack-Fisher, Edward J. McMahon II, Marvin W. Meyers, J. Ramsey Michaels, L. Bruce Miller, Wisnome Munro, Culver H. Nelson, Rod Parrot, Stephen J. Patterson, James M. Robinson, John J. Rousseau, Daryl D. Schmidt, Phillip H. Sellew, Lou B. Silberman, Mahlon H. Smith, Michael G. Steinhauser, Robert F. Stoops, Johann Strijdom, W. Barnes Tatum, Leif E. Vaage, Paul Verhoeven, Wesley Hiram Wachob, William O. Walker, Jr., Robert L. Webb, Walter P. Wink, and Sara C. Winter.

v. *The Five Gospels*, 1.

vi. *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition*, xii.

vii. *The Five Gospels*, 5.

viii. One-page flyer, "The Jesus Seminar," distributed by Westar Institute.

ix. *The Five Gospels*, 34-35.

x. Robert Funk, et al, *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition*, 94. Marcus Borg writes, "'Mainstream' biblical scholarship refers to the type of biblical scholarship practiced in most university department of religious studies and in seminaries of mainstream denominations," in his "What Did Jesus Really Say?" *Bible Review* 5 (1989): 19.

xi. Not every saying was voted upon individually. Marcus Borg acknowledges that "Some blocks of materials were affirmed by unanimous consensus to be 'black.' The procedure involved assigning 'likely black' passages to a study group within the Seminar and then voting on their recommendations," in *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 179, n8.

xii. Robert Funk, "Polling the Pundits" *Forum* 1.1 (1985): 31-32. These designations were later popularized by Leif Vaage: red = "That's Jesus!", pink = "Sure sounds like him," gray = "Well, maybe," and black = "There's been some mistake," *The Five Gospels*, 37.

xiii. *Ibid.*, 37.

xiv. Marcus Borg comments, "Gray may thus point to uncertainty. Or, rather than meaning 'The consensus is gray,' gray may point to absence of consensus, indicating that the distribution of votes was 'all over the place,'" in *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 163.

xv. More specifically, a computer analysis of the voting provided a weighted average that determined the color to be assigned to specific sayings: A weighted average of .7501 and up resulted in a designation of red, .5001-.7500 in pink, .2501-.5000 in gray, and .0000-.2500 in

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black.

xvi.Funk, "The Issue of Jesus" *Forum* 1.1 (1985): 7, 10.

xvii.An example of "getting the message out" is the Jesus Summit, a national teleconference which addressed the theme, "The Historical Jesus and Contemporary Faith." Three Fellows made up the panel, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, and Burton L. Mack, while a fourth served as moderator, Karen L. King. The Jesus Summit was jointly sponsored on the Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network by Quest/Grace Cathedral, Harper Collins Publishers, and Trinity Institute. The Summit was televised via satellite on February 19, 1994, from Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. Numerous locations around the country served as down links for the Summit, allowing individuals to engage in dialogue with "Three of the world's preeminent Jesus scholars."

The Jesus Seminar has also made available several video tapes for the general public: Marcus Borg, "The Pre-Easter Jesus," John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography," Robert W. Funk, "The Gospel of Jesus and the Jesus of the Gospels," John Shelby Spong, "Did Christians Invent Judas," Stephen J. Patterson, "The Mystery of the Gospel of Thomas," Jane Schaberg, "Jesus' Birth: Illegitimate or Virginal?" Ronald F. Hock, "Away with the Manger: The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas," and Doug Adams, "Love, Grandma: The Humor of Paul's Letters." Finally, there is talk of a movie based upon the results of the Seminar's work. A movie is a distinct possibility since the Seminar has been retained as a consultant for a movie about Jesus' life, tentatively entitled, "Christ the Man." The film would be sponsored by Brookfilms and directed by Paul Verhoeven, who is himself a Fellow of the Jesus Seminar. See Arthur J. Dewey, "The Jesus Seminar: New Discussions on the Gospels," 136.

xviii.Funk, "The Issue of Jesus," 8.

xix.Arthur J. Dewey, "The Jesus Seminar: New Discussions on the Gospels," *Ecumenical Trends* 18 (1989): 133.

xx.Mahon H. Smith, "For Those Who Cast Stones: A Reply to Critics of the Jesus Seminar," *The Fourth R* 2.3 (1989): 2.

xxi.*The Five Gospels*, 5.

xxii.John Dominic Crossan, *Sayings Parallels: A Workbook for the Jesus Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

xxiii.Funk, "The Issue of Jesus," *Forum* 1.1 (1985): 7.

xxiv.Funk, "The Emerging Jesus," *The Fourth R* 2.6 (1989): 1.

xxv.Funk, "Polling the Pundits," 32.

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xxvi.Funk, "The Issue of Jesus," 8.

xxvii.Funk identifies the Gospel of Thomas, the Apocryphon of James, and the Dialogue of the Savior, as examples of these new sources.

xxviii.For example, Funk's *New Gospel Parallels* and Crossan's *Sayings Parallels*.

xxix.James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), and Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1992).

xxx.Funk says that scholars have discovered new paradigms "to parables and aphorisms as metaphors and poetry, to narratology, to reader-response criticism, to social description and analysis, and to many other promising ventures," in "The Issue of Jesus," 8.

xxxi.Funk, "The Issue of Jesus," 9.

xxxii.Ibid.

xxxiii.Ibid., 12.

xxxiv.Ibid., 11.

xxxv.Ibid.

xxxvi.Ibid.

xxxvii.Funk, "From Parable to Gospel: Domesticating the Tradition," *Forum* 1.3 (1985): 3-24.

xxxviii.Funk here relies upon the analysis of Husserl found in Alfred Schutz' *The Structures of the Life-world*.

xxxix.Ibid., 17.

xl.Ibid., 20.

xli.One page flyer, "The Jesus Seminar," distributed by the Westar Institute.

xlii.*The Five Gospels*, 34.

xliii.Ibid., 4.

xliv.*The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition*, 3.

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xlvi. *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 170-71.

xlvi. Funk, "The Emerging Jesus," *The Fourth R* 2.6 (1989): 11.

xlvi. *The Gospel of Mark: Red Letter Edition*, 17.

xlvi. *The Five Gospels*, 28.

xlix. Marcus Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 168.

l. Funk, *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition*, 6.

li. *The Five Gospels*, 18 and 128.

lii. *Ibid.*, 15.

liii. *Ibid.*, 12.

liv. Funk, "Testing the Waters at Bay," *Forum* 1.1 (1985): 13.

lv. John Dominic Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983). Crossan's *In Fragments* occupied much of the discussion at the Seminar's first session. To facilitate this discussion, the Jesus Seminar commissioned three scholars to review *In Fragments*: Bernard Brandon Scott, Werner Kelber, and Vernon Robbins. These reviews were subsequently published in *Forum*. See Bernard Brandon Scott, "Picking up the Pieces," *Forum* 1.1 (March 1985): 15-21; Werner Kelber, "From Aphorisms to Sayings Gospel and from Parable to Narrative Gospel," *Forum* 1.1 (March 1985): 23-30; Vernon Robbins, "Picking up the Fragments: From Crossan's Analysis to Rhetorical Analysis," *Forum* 1.2 (June 1985): 31-64.

lvi. John Dominic Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985).

lvii. Crossan's *Four Other Gospels* continues the application of traditio-historical criticism, although this time Crossan specifically examines four extracanonical texts: the Gospel of Thomas, the Egerton Gospel, the Secret Gospel of Mark, and the Gospel of Peter. Since the canon excludes as well as includes, Crossan believes, it cannot be fully understood apart from that which was excluded. Crossan here is largely responding to Helmut Koester's 1983 challenge to break down the arbitrary distinction between canonical and extracanonical texts in gospel research.

lviii. *In Fragments*, 3. Crossan borrows this definition from C. Hugh Holman's *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Bobbs-Merhill, 1972), 36.

lix. *Ibid.*, ix.

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lx.Scott, "Picking up the Pieces," 15.

lxi.Robert Funk, "From Parable to Gospel: Domesticating the Tradition," *Forum* 1.3 (1985): 3-24.

lxii.Ibid., 13-14.

lxiii.Ibid., 15.

lxiv.Ibid., 18.

lxv.Ibid., 18.

lxvi.Ibid., 19.

lxvii.Ibid.

lxviii.Ibid.

lxix.Ibid., 20.

lxx.Ibid., 22.

lxxi.Ibid., 24.

lxxii.Ibid., 8.

lxxiii.The general editors of the SV are Robert Funk and Julian Hills, and the editors of the apocryphal gospels are Ron Cameron and Karen King. The Translation Panel includes Harold Attridge, Edward F. Beutner, John Dominic Crossan, Jon B. Daniels, Arthur J. Dewey, Robert T. Fortna, Ronald F. Hock, Roy W. Hoover, Arland D. Jacobson, John S. Kloppenborg, Helmut Koester, Lane C. McGaughey, Marvin W. Meyer, Robert J. Miller, Stephen J. Patterson, Daryl, D. Schmidt, Bernard Brandon Scott, Philip Sellew, Chris Shea, and Mahlon H. Smith.

lxxiv.Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1992.).

lxxv.*The Five Gospels*, xiii.

lxxvi.Ibid., xviii.

lxxvii.Ibid., 549-553.

lxxviii.Included among the red sayings, listed here in descending order and according to source

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are: Other cheek (Q), Coat & shirt (Q), Congratulations, poor! (Q, Thomas), Second mile (Q), Leaven (Q, Thomas), Emperor & God (Thomas, Mark), Give to beggars (Q), The Samaritan (L), Congratulations, hungry! (Q, Thomas), Congratulations, sad! (Q), Shrewd manager (L), Vineyard laborers (M), Abba, Father (Q), and Mustard seed (Thomas, Mark, Q).

lxxxix. Although Funk has not yet produced a full-length monograph on the historical Jesus, he has written several articles indicating his conclusions.

lxxx. See John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); idem, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

lxxxii. Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus again for the First Time* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); idem, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

lxxxiii. Burton Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); idem, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

lxxxiiii. October 19-22, Toronto.

lxxxv. Funk, "Jesus the Social Gadfly," *The Fourth R* 2.5 (1989): 1, 9-10. Webster's Dictionary defines "gadfly" as, "a usually intentionally annoying person who stimulates or provokes others especially by persistent irritating criticism," *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1981): 464.

lxxxvi. Of these four sayings, three eventually received a pink vote, while the fourth received a gray vote, Lk. 7:33-34.

lxxxvii. *Ibid.*, 9.

lxxxviii. "The Emerging Jesus," *The Fourth R* 2.6 (1989): 1, 11-15.

lxxxix. Robert Funk, "The Jesus That Was" *The Fourth R* 5.6 (1992): 5.

lxxx. *Ibid.*, 6.

xc. *The Five Gospels*, 5.

xci. This chart is based upon the Jesus Seminar's voting record, as found in "Voting Records: Sorted by Gospels, by Weighted Average," *Forum* 6.3/4 (1990): 245-298.