

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Thomas Torrance, Mark 16:19–20 and the ascended Christ's prophetic role

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Abstract

This article argues that, unlike some exegetes (e.g. Francis Moloney), Thomas Torrance correctly interpreted Mark 16:19–20 in support of a theology of the ascended Christ's continuing prophetic activity. In the ministry of the Word, Christ remains present and at work witnessing to himself. This prophetic office, associated with and not to be separated from his kingly and priestly functions, is not to be played down. He is the primary agent forever actively involved in Christian proclamation.

Keywords: ascension; Mark; priest; proclamation; prophet; T. F. Torrance

Despite the ascension of the risen Christ being confessed in both the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds and celebrated from early centuries in Christian liturgy and iconography, the ascension has not always attracted theological attention.¹ In modern times, Thomas Forsyth Torrance (1913–2007) has been a shining exception. He attended to the christological implications of the ascension, and did so in the light of the threefold office of Christ as king/shepherd, priest and prophet.² The ascension brought Christ to a new stage in his exercise of this threefold office, and not least in his prophetic role attested by Mark 16:19–20. It is to Torrance's understanding of this post-ascension *prophetic* role that this article attends.

Post-ascension prophetic activity

Torrance understood Christ's post-ascension prophetic activity to be manifested and effective in the church's ministry of the Word. When the church proclaims, it is Christ who proclaims: 'it is Christ's own *kerygma*, his self-proclamation, which through the Spirit he allows to be echoed and heard through the preaching of the Church, so

¹For exceptions, see 'Ascension of Christ', in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edn (Oxford: OUP, 2005), p. 114; James D. G. Dunn et al., 'Ascension of Christ', *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, vol. 2 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 908–30; Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); Farrow, *Ascension Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Alfons Weiser et al., 'Himmelfahrt Christi', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 15 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), pp. 330–41.

²T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1976), pp. 106–58.

that their *kerygma* about Jesus Christ is made one with his own *kerygma*.³ Torrance distinguished (but did not separate) the apostolic and subsequent proclamation: 'It was the special function of the Apostles to translate the self-witness of Christ into witness to Christ, the self-proclamation of Christ into proclamation of Christ by the Church.'⁴ Both then and later, 'in and through the preaching and teaching of that Word, it is Christ himself, the incarnate and risen Lord, who is *mightily at work*, confronting men and women with himself and summoning them to believe and follow him'.⁵ In the ministry of the Word, 'Christ effectively ministers himself to us'.⁶

In this context Torrance appealed to Mark 16:19–20: 'the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them [the eleven], was taken up into heaven (*anelēmphthē*) and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed (*ekēruxan*) everywhere, while the Lord worked with (*sunergountos*) them, and confirmed (*bebaiountos*) the word (*logon*) by the signs that accompanied it' (NRSV, corrected).⁷ These verses complete the 'longer ending' of Mark (Mark 16:9–20), which the majority of biblical scholars understand to be a later addition to the Gospel. While possibly written in the early second century, these verses belong to canonical scripture and express the faith of the first generations of Christians.⁸

In Mark 16:20 the risen and ascended Jesus is recognised as the primary co-agent, working with the visible proclaimers and confirming with signs their proclamation. By calling their message 'the word', the author of the Markan addition used a term that, as the Acts of the Apostles and, above all, the Gospel, First Epistle and Revelation of John witness, was already fairly widely used to identify the incarnate Word of God. Being the object of the post-ascension proclamation, the Lord Jesus confirmed himself, the Word of God, through the signs that accompanied the church's proclamation.⁹

Torrance's principle – when the church proclaims it is Christ who proclaims – finds a modern counterpart in the Second Vatican Council's 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*): 'he is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in church' (§7). A later paragraph teaches, without citing any scriptural authority, that 'in the liturgy God speaks to his people and Christ is still proclaiming his Gospel' (§33). Yet this constitution went on to weaken the sense that Christ is present not only through the reading of the scriptures *but also through the word of preaching*. It explained the purpose of the homily as drawing on 'the sacred text' to 'expound' the 'mysteries of faith and the norms of Christian life' (§52). To put it in these terms is to understand the homily as primarily an *instruction about the revealed mysteries and moral norms* rather than as an encounter

³Ibid., p. 119.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid; emphasis added

⁶Ibid., p. 120.

⁷Ibid., p. 119.

⁸On Mark 16:9–20, see Joseph Hug, *Le finale de l'Évangile de Marc* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1978); Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 1088–96.

⁹Andrew T. Lincoln summarises the growing use in the New Testament of *Logos* as a title for Christ (*The Gospel According to John* (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 94–8), but fails to mention how Luke uses the term/title in Acts. 'The word of the Lord' or 'the word of God' throughout Acts 'represents most often the good news about Christ': Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), p. 524.

with Christ, *the mystery of God* (Eph 3:4), *the living Word of God*, and the supreme moral norm.¹⁰

Mark 16:9–20 and recommissioning for proclamation

Like the majority of commentators on Mark 16:9–20, Joel Marcus questions the provenance of the longer ending to the Gospel. He concludes with others that, 'overall, 16:9–20 gives the impression of being a compressed digest of resurrection appearances narrated in other Gospels'. He sums up the thrust of this (again, probably early-second century) addition as the eleven (male) disciples now being 'rehabilitated' and 'recommissioned'.¹¹

Let me set out what this recommissioning for prophetic proclamation involves. The disciples are to 'go into the whole world and proclaim (*kēruxate*) the good news (*euangelion*) to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptised will be saved but the one who does not believe will be condemned' (Mark 16:15–16). Here the risen Jesus then promises not his powerful presence with the missionaries, but that healing the sick, 'speaking in new tongues' and other 'signs' will 'accompany those who believe' and 'use my name' (Mark 16:15–18). The Markan ending then goes on to note the aftermath: the eleven 'went out [presumably from Jerusalem] and proclaimed (*ekēruxan*)¹² everywhere (*pantachou*), while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with the signs that accompanied it' (Mark 16:20).

In the transition from Jesus' instruction to the report of what actually transpired, a mission to 'the whole world' and 'the whole creation' becomes a mission 'everywhere'. Also, the instruction to 'proclaim the good news' is followed simply by 'proclaimed', with the object of the proclamation specified a few words later as 'the message' or, more accurately, 'the word'. And although the risen Jesus names baptism as the proper believing response to the proclamation (Mark 16:16), baptising is not explicitly mentioned as an essential part of the mission with which the eleven engaged themselves. Jesus describes his missionaries as 'those who believe'; he specifies five kinds of signs that using his name will effect. The final verse of the longer ending to Mark reports that signs did accompany the proclamation of the word, but without specifying their nature.

But that closing verse also goes beyond Jesus' original commission to state that he 'worked' with the missionaries and to specify that, through the signs which accompanied their proclamation, he himself 'confirmed' this proclamation.¹³ What happened when the word was proclaimed involved his active, personal presence and not merely results (that also take the form of miraculous, visible signs) which believers should expect from using the name of Jesus or appealing to his authority. We can compare the longer commission and the briefer execution as in the table.

¹⁰See G. O'Collins, 'Vatican II on the Liturgical Presence of Christ', *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), pp. 89–104. On Christ as the supreme moral exemplar, see Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses* 5.1.1: 'there is no other way to learn than to see our Master and hear his voice with our own ears. It is by becoming imitators of his actions and doers of his words – that we may have communion with him'. Adelin Rousseau et al., *Sources Chrétiennes* 153 (Paris: Cerf, 1969), pp. 15–16 (author trans.).

¹¹Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, p. 1090.

¹²The NRSV presumes here to add 'the good news', even though the Greek text leaves unspecified the object of the proclamation.

¹³Where the risen Christ in Matt 28:20 simply promises 'I will be with you', Mark 16:20 specifies two ways in which he remained with those he commissioned: he 'worked with them' and 'confirmed' their message with signs.

Commission (Mark 16:15–18)	Execution (Mark 16:20)
'Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation'	'they went out and proclaimed everywhere'
'The one who believes and is baptised will be saved'	-----
'These signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons ... they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover'	'The Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that accompanied it'

While proclamation to the whole world figures in both the commission and its execution, the commission stresses more the universality of the mission by the repetition: 'the whole world' and 'the whole creation'. Neither faith nor baptism are expressly mentioned as outcomes of the actual proclamation. Whereas the commission specifies five kinds of signs, the execution merely speaks in general of 'the signs' that accompanied the proclamation. The commission promises – to 'those who believe' and use the Lord's name, rather than to those who proclaim and use his name – that they will bring about spectacular signs. This commission promises that these signs will accompany the mission and result from 'using the name' of the Lord. The account of the execution goes further by stating that the Lord himself worked with the proclaimers and confirmed their message with signs that accompanied the proclamation.¹⁴ It thus stresses that he remained effectively present in this universal, *prophetic* activity.

Morna Hooker, without entering into details, refers this summary of the mission to the Acts of the Apostles: 'the picture of the disciples preaching everywhere and the Lord working with them is reminiscent of Acts'.¹⁵ This remark requires and deserves unpacking. In the Lukan view of things, the risen Jesus needs to be withdrawn from the visible scheme of things before the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost. The ascension does not, however, mean that Jesus has gone away, as it were on an indefinitely long, sabbatical leave in another universe. He remains powerfully, if invisibly, present in and to the church and its missionaries. Here distinctions may seem to become a little blurred. Luke can move from cases of guidance by the risen and ascended Lord (Acts 9:10–16; 18:9–10; 22:17–21) to cases of guidance by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 16:6) without distinguishing clearly between them. At least once he reports guidance by 'the Spirit of Jesus' (Acts 16:7). Does Luke intend here the Spirit that comes from Jesus, the Spirit who is somehow identical with Jesus or the Spirit who brings us to Jesus? Are the risen Jesus and the Holy Spirit interchangeable? As regards the initial coming of the Spirit, Luke distinguishes Jesus as the divine co-Sender from the divine Spirit who is sent or poured out (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33). Although Luke often refers in a

¹⁴Joachim Gnlika feels justified in commenting that the missionaries themselves experienced the cooperation of the risen and ascended Lord in his *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Neukirchen-Vluyn/Mannheim: Neukirchener Verlag/Patmos Verlag, 2010 [1977]), p. 358.

¹⁵M. D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 591. Eduard Schweizer agrees: 'what Luke does in Acts may be seen in embryo here' (*The Good News According to Mark*, trans. H. Madvig (London: SPCK, 1970), p. 378). Rudolf Pesch sees Mark 16:20 as summarising Acts 'in nuce': *Das Markusevangelium*, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), p. 555. This comment calls for modification, inasmuch as neither Mark 16:20 nor the rest of the longer ending (namely, Mark 16:9–19) refers to the Holy Spirit, unlike Acts, which contains nearly one quarter of all references to the Spirit in the New Testament (see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, p. 520).

seemingly undifferentiated manner to the powerful guidance of Jesus and that of the Spirit in the spread and life of the Christian community, it is the risen Jesus who pours out the Spirit. As Peter says at the first Pentecost, 'being exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he [the risen and ascended Jesus] has poured out what you both see and hear [namely, the effects of the Spirit]' (Acts 2:33).¹⁶

It is notable that, in this passage from Acts, Peter goes on at once to quote a verse from Psalm 110:1: 'the Lord said to my Lord, "sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool"' (Acts 2:34–5). Jesus himself may have quoted this verse (Mark 12:36; 14:62) and so encouraged the first Christians into making it a key text for indicating his divine status (e.g. Heb 1:13). The sitting at God's right hand could be associated with Christ's assuming universal sovereignty and being enthroned as *kingly ruler* of the cosmos: he 'has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him' (1 Pet 3:22). But Mark 16:19, without quoting Psalm 110:1, simply linked the sovereign *sessio ad dexteram Dei* with the ascended Christ's *prophetic* activity for the advantage of human beings.

Christ's activity at the right hand of God

In this way, the ascension of the risen Christ is completed, as Vincent Taylor recalls, with 'sitting at the right hand of God'.¹⁷ This *sessio ad dexteram Dei* (called in the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds 'sitting at the right hand of *the Father*') is associated with an active role of the ascended Christ. We may detect three ways in which the New Testament presents this active role: in connection with the *present*, *past* and *future*.

First, the Letter to the Ephesians speaks of 'the immeasurable greatness of his [God's] power (*dunameōs*) for us who believe, according to the working of his great power (*kata tēn energeian tou kratous tēs ischuos autou*). God put this power to work (*hēn energēsen*) in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places' (Eph 1:19–20). This passage from Ephesians stresses the divine power expressed through four nouns, stating not only that it works on the crucified Christ himself, but also that it is exercised here and now in/through the risen and ascended Christ 'for us who believe'. The passage understands Christian faith as resulting from the power presently at work in Christ sitting at God's right hand; it will cite other effects of this power, in particular, Christ's becoming 'head over all things for the Church' (Eph 1:21–2). *Kingly* power seems to be intended here.

Elsewhere Christ's *priestly* activity is to the fore when the *sessio ad dexteram Dei* is invoked. Thus, after speaking of the Holy Spirit 'interceding for us/the saints' (Rom 8:26–7), Paul moves to talk of 'Christ Jesus', after his death and resurrection 'interceding for us at the right hand of God' (Rom 8:34). This continuing activity of the risen and ascended Christ *ad dexteram Dei* expresses the ongoing *priestly* mediation of Christ, which is expounded by Torrance in *Theology in Reconciliation*.¹⁸ In particular, the eucharist is 'what it is' because of its grounding in 'what God in Christ has done, does do, and will do for us in his Spirit'.¹⁹ We return below to this priestly mediation.

Second, the examples cited from Ephesians 1:19–20 and Romans 8:34, respectively, refer to the ascended Christ's activity seated *ad dexteram Dei* and here and now

¹⁶On the Holy Spirit in Acts, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, pp. 519–28.

¹⁷V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1966 [1952]), p. 613.

¹⁸T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975).

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 107.

benefiting 'us who believe' (plural). The Acts of the Apostles, however, pictures Christ 'standing' at the right hand of God *in the past* and having done so for the benefit of an individual: as Stephen was about to be stoned to death, 'he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look", he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God"' (Acts 7:55–6). Four reasons show this passage to be unusual or even unique not only among those passages associating Christ's being at the right hand of God with the past but also among all passages 'placing' the ascended Christ there.

- (1) Apart from Revelation 1:13 and 14:14, this is the only time we find a New Testament reference to the Son of Man outside the four Gospels.
- (2) Nowhere else is the risen and ascended Jesus represented as standing rather than sitting *ad dexteram Dei*.
- (3) Nowhere else does a New Testament author write of Christ having been *seen* sitting or standing at the right hand of God.²⁰
- (4) Nowhere else is Christ at the right hand of God represented as having done something for an individual.

With respect to the significance of this passage, exegetes differ over details. The ascended Christ acted to speak (as judge or advocate) 'forensically' for an individual believer facing martyrdom. Or was it to welcome the martyr into heaven that the risen and ascended Christ 'rose to his feet' at the right hand of God?²¹ Either way, Christ *ad dexteram Dei* did something in the past, and did it for an individual believer.

Apart from the Stephen episode, several other New Testament passages present the *sessio ad dexteram Dei* simply as the past outcome of Christ's prior activity: for instance, 'when he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb 1:3; see also 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22). The *sessio* crowned and completed in the past what Christ had already done.

Thirdly, some passages, like Colossians 3:1, mention Christ's being 'seated at the right hand of God' and link that to what he will do *in the future* at the second coming. Thus, the Christians of Colossae are to maintain constantly a heavenly perspective until the end: 'when Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory' (Col 3:4).

What of Mark 16:19–20, which mentions the *sessio ad dexteram Dei* and was of particular concern for Torrance in illuminating the preaching of the Word? Clearly, in the vision of the Markan ending, Christ's sitting at God's right hand did not disengage him from present activity. Appealing to Mark 16:19–20, Torrance could write of Christ as 'mightily at work' in the ongoing preaching of Word – the present field of his prophetic mission.²² To illuminate further what was at stake in Torrance's appeal to the final verses of Mark in order to illuminate Christ's prophetic activity, let us examine comments from three exegetes.

²⁰Rev 5:6 gets close to such a vision, with its apocalyptic picture of the Lamb of God standing near the throne of God; see G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 350–5.

²¹See Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, pp. 1440–3.

²²Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, pp. 119–21.

Nineham, Schweizer and Moloney on Mark 16:19–20

In the final verses of the long ending added to Mark's Gospel, as in the whole of that addition, the Holy Spirit is not explicitly mentioned. Only the risen and ascended Jesus is named as 'working with' the disciples and 'confirming by signs' their prophetic proclamation of the word. The Spirit does, however, enter a passage in Hebrews to which Dennis Nineham refers: 'how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested (*ebēbaiōthē*) to us by those who heard him, while God added his testimony (*sunepimartuountos*) by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will' (Heb 2:3–4).

This exhortation not to fall away, rather than being directly concerned with apostolic proclamation to the world, is addressed to members of an existing Christian community who have previously accepted the witness of the apostolic generation ('attested to us by those who heard him'). Their acceptance of this witness was prompted by the divine testimony (expressed in 'signs, wonders and various miracles') and by 'gifts of the Holy Spirit' that have been distributed. God, rather than the ascended Christ, is named as being present and actively witnessing when the gospel was proclaimed and received in faith.

To an extent this passage from Hebrews concurs with Mark 16:20. It does not, however, fully fit the observation Nineham makes when he brings together the two passages: 'from his heavenly throne the risen Christ continues to guide and help his followers'.²³ The risen and ascended Christ, who sits at God's right according to the closing verses of Mark 16, works with and confirms the *proclamation* of missionaries rather than guiding and helping his followers in general.

Nineham follows here what Vincent Taylor had earlier suggested about Mark 16:20: 'the idea of the co-operation of the Exalted Christ with the disciples has a parallel in Hebrews 2:3–4'.²⁴ The cooperation intended by the final verse of Mark does not point to a general 'cooperation with the disciples' but is notably specific: it pertains to working with and confirming missionary proclamation of the good news. And, unlike the passage from Hebrews, no mention is made of the Holy Spirit.

Commenting on Mark 16:20, Schweizer weakens the force of the Lord's 'working with' the apostles in their proclamation: 'the agents of the proclamation are the disciples whom the resurrected One receives back into his service'. His 'power, dominion, and victory are manifested in the proclamation'.²⁵ Beyond question, the apostolic proclamation manifests his 'power, dominion, and victory', but that manifestation takes place precisely because the risen and ascended Lord is 'working with' the missionaries and 'confirming' his active presence with various signs.

Francis J. Moloney tends to modify even more the full force of what Torrance correctly found in Mark 16:20. Moloney writes: 'fundamental to the missionary activity of the early church was the conviction that the missionaries were doing the work of the Lord'.²⁶ True, but the Markan verse expresses a more startling conviction: it was in a strong sense that 'the missionaries were doing the work of the Lord', since he was working with them. You can do the work of someone without that person working with you,

²³D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark* (London: Penguin, 1992 [1963]), p. 452.

²⁴Taylor, *Gospel According to Mark*, p. 613.

²⁵Schweizer, *Good News According to Mark*, p. 378.

²⁶F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), p. 359.

but Mark 16:20 represents the Lord working with the apostles and actively confirming their proclamation with various signs.

Moloney adds: 'the author [of the Markan appendix] recalls the prodigious signs that the believers [and the proclaimers, please!] were able to do, and indicates that the authority of the absent Lord [communicated] to his missionary church is certified by these and other signs'. Jesus 'is no longer present to them as he was during his days on earth', but, 'despite his physical absence, they [the missionaries] are acting with his authority'.²⁷

Moloney speaks of a 'physical absence' of the risen and ascended Lord. But does Christ's being invisible necessarily entail a physical absence? Modern science has established the physical presence of innumerable invisible agents; they are actively present, despite their being physically invisible. What Moloney says about 'the authority of the absent Lord' seems to suggest a situation in which others (i.e. the missionaries) act with this authority, while the Lord himself is simply absent. Unquestionably the eleven do act with his authority, but Mark 16:20 goes beyond mere authorisation: the Lord works with them and confirms with signs their message. This justifies Torrance's claim that when they proclaim the message it is Christ who actively proclaims the message. It is not merely the case of missionaries proclaiming the word because they have been authorised by Christ to do so.

Moloney describes the signs that accompany the proclamation as 'evidence of the authority of the risen Lord, enabling them [the apostolic missionaries] to perform successfully what they have been commanded to do'.²⁸ But surely Mark 16:20 claims something more? It is the power of the Lord *who works with them* that enables them to carry out their mission successfully. Torrance, rather than Moloney, correctly respects the full force of what the Markan addition states about the prophetic activity of the risen and ascended Christ.

Conclusion

In *Space, Time and Resurrection* Torrance appeals to Mark 16:19–20 to present the ascended Christ *ad dexteram Dei* being actively and *prophetically* present when his apostles and other ministers proclaim the good news. 'The Lord himself', he writes, 'is immediately present with them in his Spirit, making the preaching of the Gospel effectual as Word and Power of God'.²⁹

Torrance also attended to the closely related, active, *priestly* presence of the risen Christ in the liturgy of the church: 'ministers [visibly] lead the worship of God's people, declare the forgiveness of sins, and celebrate Baptism and the Lord's Supper'. But, invisibly, 'through the power of his Spirit it is Christ himself who confers forgiveness, builds up his Church on earth, renews it in the power of his resurrection, and presents it as his own Body to the Father'.³⁰ In *Theology in Reconciliation* and *The Mediation of Christ*, Torrance developed at length the priestly function of Christ, the high priest who intercedes for us *ad dexteram Dei* (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).³¹

²⁷Ibid., p. 361.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, p. 122.

³⁰Ibid. On the same page, Torrance also explains how the risen Christ, in his kingly/shepherding role, governs the church.

³¹See T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975); and idem, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992). For an account of Torrance's presentation of

Yet Torrance rightly used Mark 16:19–20 to legitimate his view of the active presence of the ascended Christ continuing also in his *prophetic* role. That has been the main conclusion established by this article. Torrance did not champion this prophetic function independently but within the full scheme of Christ's threefold office as prophet, priest and king/shepherd. Hence at appropriate points the article has also pointed out how Torrance linked Christ's prophetic office with his priestly and kingly role.

Christ's priesthood, see G. O'Collins and M. K. Jones, *Jesus our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), pp. 224–9.

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