This study aims to examine the nature and practice of Jesus’s teaching ministry. Some scholars emphasize that Matthew does not describe Jesus as a teacher, but as a Prophet, a Savior, Lord, Messiah, or the Son of God. However, Matthew characterizes Jesus’ figure as a teacher who trains his disciples for their missional identity, role, and life pattern in the Kingdom of God. My proposal is that the essence of the Matthean Jesus is a teacher and his teaching ministry is missional. Here, the term missional is rooted in God’s sending act which explains the identity and activity of the Sent one(s). Matthew demonstrates that Jesus, as a model of an outstanding teacher, taught his disciples. Jesus sends them to all nations for the fulfillment of his mission. As Jesus did, they should also teach and train all nations to keep his commands and teachings.

**JESUS AS A TEACHER**

Quite a few scholars regard Jesus’s identity as the “Prophet,” “Savior,” “Lord,” and “Messiah,” but not as “Teacher.” In particular, J. D. Kingsbury argues that the Matthean Jesus is not a teacher but the “Son of God.” For Jesus, the title teacher is used by only Judas Iscariot, opponents, and strangers. These characters are categorized into the opponent group in the Gospel. Kingsbury sharply points out a set of antitheses in two passages 8:19-20 and vv. 21-22.

a. Scribe (8:19) vs Disciple (8:21)
b. Jesus as a teacher (8:19) vs Jesus as Lord (8:21)
c. The scribe decides to follow Jesus (8:19) vs Jesus summons a disciple to follow him (8:22)

Kingsbury makes two points. Firstly, a scribe calls Jesus a teacher, whereas his disciples designate him as Lord. Secondly, this antithetic structure manifests Jesus’s divine authority over his calling and the sacrifice of disciples. Here, Jesus’s discipleship (“follow,” 4:18-22) does not highlight his identity as a teacher. Kingsbury argues that Matthew employs the verb ἀκολουθέω (“coming or going after a person in time, place, or sequence”) more than 25 times from the ecclesiastical perspective. That is, the word should be construed in terms of discipleship (4:25; 8:1, 10, 19, 22; 19:21; 10:38; 16:24; 20:29). For Kingsbury, the central theme of discipleship is that to follow Jesus means personal sacrifice such as “the loss of family or goods or breaking with a former way of life (cf. 4:20, 22; 9:9; 19:28).” Warren Carter supports Kingsbury by stating that the verb follow implies “the nature of discipleship as one of call and response” to a new way of life and an eschatological destiny (3:12).

However, in my estimation, Matthew identifies Jesus as a teacher in both senses. First, calling Jesus a teacher cannot be written off as a typical title for a hostile group. Robert H. Stein appropriately points out that the original Aramaic title “Rabbi” (“teacher,” 23:7, 8) is not merely used 45 times in the gospels, but also that Jesus designates himself as a teacher (23:8; cf. 10:24-25) who proclaimed the divine law and taught in the synagogues like other rabbis. There is no room to suspect that Matthew intends to format his writing in terms of Jesus’ teaching ministry with divine authority (4:23 and 9:35; cf. διδάσκων “teaching” of the phrase “And when Jesus finished these things” in terms of his instructing act, 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; “discourses” 5:1-2, 13:1-2, 24:3-4). To put it clearly, Jesus identifies himself as a teacher (26:18; cf. 23:8). The term διδάσκαλος (“teacher”) is used 11 times (8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36, 23:8; 26:18). Jesus expresses himself directly (26:18) and indirectly in his teaching four times (10:24-25; 23:8). The other seven times he is addressed by religious authorities. Although the scribe who is eager to follow Jesus has the same view on Jesus as his contemporaneous rabbis and students, there is no doubt that Matthew portrays Jesus’s public ministry as a teaching ministry.

In chapter 4:23, Matthew highlights Jesus’s public activity in the threefold ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing (διδάσκων, κηρύσσων, and θεραπεύον). The author repeats Jesus’s “teaching”...
and “preaching” in 11:1 (διδάσκειν and κηρύσσειν) while using the term “healing” (θεραπεύειν) in the previous chapter in the narrative of his sending of the disciples (10:1). The author intends to put the words in the infinitive form, so that his reader can perceive Jesus’s ongoing three-fold activity throughout his gospel. Our attention is paid to the “teaching” in 28:19-20 (διδάσκοντος). Jesus commands the disciples to teach their disciples and keep all the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus and his disciples’ main ministry is teaching as a teacher.

Therefore, Jesus is portrayed as a teacher in the Gospel of Matthew. He introduces himself to his disciples as a teacher, who teaches and trains his disciples. His followers first had to learn from him (23:8). They learn the lifestyle of the kingdom of God. Jesus presents the life pattern to them. At the same time, they are trained by him as the teachers (or “scribes”) of the Kingdom (13:52).

Second, Jesus was a teacher who trains them to live in the Kingdom of God (10:5, 16 and 28:19-20). As Kingsbury and Carter argue, Jesus certainly emphasizes his discipleship as the new family (6:33; 19:16-30). The usage of the word “brother” in Matthew 4:18-22 characterizes a group of disciples to be called on their familial relationships as a new family, which is born in obedience to God’s will to be called on their familial relationships as a new family. Matthew 4:18-22 characterizes a group of disciples as a learning group. Matthew pays attention to the verb μάθετε stems from μαθητεύω in the same cognition of μαθητής; as a result, those who come to Jesus are devoted to his learning process. Jesus’s teaching and discipline start from the bottom of the disciples’ holistic lifestyle by going beyond the broad sense of a dominant rabbinic training pattern such as accompanying a teacher, listening and learning from him, and living with him. To be sure, disciples’ segregation from their lives is their first step to participate in Jesus’s intensive discipleship for three years in sharing another lifestyle with each other. In a word, Jesus lived with his disciples. They could not mutually have concealed their word-deed habit, life pattern, temper, or even bad habit, earthly desire, wrong spiritual life, and so forth. Jesus’s discipline models a teacher’s life to his disciples and he follows it intellectually and spiritually. As Jesus recognizes disciples’ imperfections in terms of “less-than-perfect,” he helps them actualize the life of ideal disciples appearing in his teaching.

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JESUS’ MISSIONAL TEACHING MINISTRY
The teaching ministry of Jesus is missional. The concept of the term missional is rooted in God’s identity, life, and actions, who sends his son into the world (10:40). Jesus taught and trained his disciples to live with God in his Kingdom.

Jesus’ Missional Life
The central theme of Jesus’s teachings is about the life of God’s Kingdom. What the disciples learned from Jesus was how he lives as the sent one of God in the missional context (5:16). They learned by seeing, feeling, and experiencing Jesus and the kingdom of God, which Jesus is realizing in him (12:28). In accompanying his disciples wherever (8:19-20, 24), he shows himself to them in the course of teaching and training in order that they can feel, meditate, speculate, understand, convict, and practice through

17. Kingsbury, “Place,” 137, 141.
18. Juan Luis Segundo, The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics

22. cf. Stein, Method, 10.
Jesus teaches his disciples about a missional life pattern in God’s Kingdom through the Sermon on the Mount (5:16, 38-42; 7:1, 3-5).26 There are two different understandings of Jesus’ Sermon. On the one hand, F. J. Matera notes that the Matthean Jesus proclaims the righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount which is pleasing to God, and realized it in his life.27 He understood Jesus on the ethical aspect.28 On the same level, Stanley Stowers tries to examine a moral figure in the depiction of the Matthean Jesus as a teacher of ethics. He observes the Matthean Jesus differently than other gospels (“a teacher of mysterious teachings about the coming kingdom of God in Mark,” and “a teacher of teachings about his [Jesus] own identity in John”). In his article, Stowers examines “the idea of universal ethic for individuals and the demand for perfection” from a Stoic inspiration point of view,29 for he postulates that Matthew reflected Jesus’ teachings on the Law in association with the divine will (Stoic) to perfect all actions of humans in their life justly, courageously, wisely, and lovingly.30 Basically, Stowers’ view is opaque in that Matthew does not highlight in Stoicism. Nonetheless, it is significant that he connects the concept of the term “perfection” (τέλειός 5:48) with that of the term “righteousness” which is “not simply the performance of actions that in themselves are generally accepted as morally good, but rather that such actions be done with the right moral disposition that is the equivalent of doing God’s will.”31

On the other hand, Donald A. Hanger rejects the moral understanding of “righteousness.” He argues that the concept of “righteousness” should be construed in the sense of the saving activity of God but not in the ethical sense (3:15; 5:6).32 In particular, he notes that the “righteousness” in Matthew 5:6 (“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled”) connotes the eschatological ‘justice’.33 To be sure, he does not repudiate the validity of the moral teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, but rather by setting apart the meaning of “demands for salvation,”34 he highlights the recipients (people) of the kingdom of God who should obey God’s commandments.35 These commandments (22:40, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “love your neighbor as yourself”) were handed over to Jesus’ disciples through his mouth (28:19, “everything that I have commanded you”). Therefore, Jesus’ disciples’ righteousness originates from the obedience of His teachings ascribed from the observation of the Torah.36 The phrase “being perfect” does not mean holiness or being blameless, but living with a whole heart in the realm of God’s kingdom (5:20; 6:33).37 In other words, true disciples should pay homage to God by being subordinated to His eschatological sovereignty according to a new covenant in Jesus Christ (5:3, 10; 7:21).38

In this sense, Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is concerned about the disciples’ ethical life in the sphere of God’s rule. Specifically, they should live God wholeheartedly and love their neighbor as themselves.39 This means “doing greater righteousness.”

Differences in these scholars’ interpretation might be problematic in the soteriological approach. Ethically, Jesus’ disciples will not be able to live in the kingdom of God unless his disciples are perfect. On the other hand, if God allows the disciples to enter his kingdom by his grace, Jesus’ teachings are not about the demand for salvation, but about the way his people live. To me, Jesus’ teachings mean that those who live in the kingdom of God certainly live in a community of salvation under God’s present and futuristic kingship. It must be ethical and moral for them to live holy lives by the word of God. Their holiness is already demanded from the moment they belong to the holy God. They must live a holy and righteous life in God’s Kingdom. For this, Jesus teaches and educates his disciples to reach God’s holiness, even if it has an incomplete form of life. Relatively, if those

25. Stein, Method, 8.
37. Kingsbury, “Place,” 137.
who would follow Jesus and believe in God do not keep Jesus’ teachings, they are neither living in the realm of Jesus’ rulership nor will live in his futurist Kingdom.

In this sense, Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is concerned about the disciples’ ethical life in the sphere of God’s rule. Specifically, they should live God wholeheartedly and love their neighbor as themselves. This means “doing greater righteousness.” It is convincing that Matthew makes sense of the cause and the result of eschatology in the same way. In Matt 25:31-46, Matthew focuses on the criterion (deeds of love) of the final judgment to separate between the true disciples and the false disciples. “Love” in Matthew is the essence of Law-to separate between the true disciples and the false disciples. The disciples’ lives let people glorify God. These people mean ones missional (5:48; 6:33; 28:18-20). In 5:16, the disciples’ lives must be righteous lives lead people to God the Father (5:45, 48). They are the light of the world (5:14). Just as Jesus bears witness to God and his Kingdom in teaching and doing in daily life, so, too, should the disciple live a life of the people of the heavenly Kingdom (5:1; 8:19; 6:24; 20:26-27). When Jesus called them to “follow after me” in the process of his mission, they should always live his life pattern and mission appearing in his doings and words (16:24-26). This fact is certainly clear in the story of Jesus’ sending of the disciples (28:19-20). Matthew links “teaching” with “doing” by accentuating “obeying” and “keeping.” In particular, Matthew repeats the particular verb “doing” (ποιέω) 83 times, so that he underlines Jesus’ new teaching.

The climax of Jesus’ training appears in Matthew 16:24 (“If anyone would come after me [σκοτίω μου], let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me [ἀκολουθεῖτο]”). Specifically, the preposition σκοτιῶ ("come after") and the verb ἀκολουθεῖον ("follow") echo Jesus’ calling and teaching in Matthew 4:19 and in 10:38 respectively. Simultaneously, the preposition is articulated in 16:23, so that the expression “following after [Jesus]” means to carry out the things of God that Jesus himself is undertaking. For this, Jesus denies himself and abandons his life (26:36). Therefore, the statement “following” prerequisites Jesus states “take up his cross and follow me” (10:38 and 16:24). The phrase “his (disciple) cross” is paralleled to Jesus’ own cross. That is to say, Matthew highlights that disciples certainly do the same way as their teacher showed an example. When they take over Jesus’ teaching ministry (28:16-20), their calling must presuppose them living according to Jesus’ lifestyle. As Jesus live a life of the Sent One for the fulfillment of his mission, so must the disciples achieve their mission in life. This is the essence of discipleship and their teaching ministry in missional contexts (28:20).

Therefore, Jesus teaches the disciples to follow his life pattern in the Kingdom of God. He continues to train them to be the light of the world (5:14). Those who see their lives will know God and glorify him (5:16). Jesus’ teaching ministry purports to educate the missional disciples in this world.

The Disciples’ Missional Teaching Ministry
Jesus’ teaching ministry must be the disciples’ ministry to continue his missional work. His mission in light of God’s calling was to bring the Kingdom of God into the world and realize it on earth (4:17, 23; 9:35-38; 10:1, 5; 28:19-20). His teaching, proclaiming, and healing ministries focus on the achievement of his mission. And Jesus called the disciples to “a single defined group,” who are chosen and trained as successors of his three-fold activity (διδάσκων ["teaching"], . . . και ἀπεσταλμένους ["proclaiming"] . . . και ἰασάκον ["healing"], 4:23 and 9:35; cf. 10:1-28; 28:16-20). Then, Jesus sent them into the world, which is their mission in light of Jesus’ calling and sending act. First of all, the mission of the disciples is involved with the specific task, “I will make you fishers of men.”

43. Warren Carter, Matthew and the Margins (JSNTSup 204; Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 2000), 279.
45. Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 239; Howell, Matthew’s Inclusive Story, 255.
47. Charles, “Garnishing,” 5; Yieh, One Teacher, 29.
50. Minear, “Disciples and the Crowds,” 30, 32; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 76.
changes his disciples’ mission from exclusively “Jews” to “Gentiles.” However, his theory is not supported by Matthew. The disciples must bear witness in the synagogues and among the Gentiles (10:17-18). Accordingly, Matthew describes the continuity of their witness for the house of Israel and the Gentiles.

In the literary structure of the disciples’ mission, my proposal is that Matthew places three ministries of Jesus in 10:1 (“healing”), 10:7 (“proclaiming”), and 28:20 (“teaching”). Matthew 10:1-16 presents that Jesus gave his twelve disciples authority (ἐξουσία) over unclean spirits to “heal” every disease by sharing one of his activities, as the pericope in 28:16-20 describes his eleven disciples’ participation in two remaining activities of Jesus (“preaching” and “teaching”) allowed under Jesus’s authority (28:18, ἐξουσία). In a word, Matthew not only highlights the realized kingdom of God, in which the disciples of Jesus are acting as agents for God’s redemptive work (10:1-4; 16:19-18; 28:18-20) but also highlights God’s absolute sovereignty to which the coming kingdom and the ultimate accomplishment of the gospel (10:31; 24:10, 43; 25:19; 28:20). Therefore, the goal of the disciples’ ministry of “making disciples” is “to observe all that I have commanded you” under Jesus’s kingship (28:18-20).

As Jesus did, so must the disciples teach people to keep Jesus’s commands by living their lives in the Kingdom of God (28:19-20). The method of their teaching ministry is certainly identical to Jesus’s method in terms of “the example of a teacher and the following of the disciples” (5:1; 8:19; 6:24; 20:26-27). As Jesus did, the disciples continue to teach and show the Kingdom and its life pattern (10:1-4; 28:19-20).

**Implications for Today’s Christian Mission**

Jesus’s ministry as a teacher in the Gospel of Matthew suggests two points for Christian missions today. First, the teaching ministry during the mission is the act of teaching the kingdom of God and the discipleship of Jesus. The purpose of the disciples’ mission was to spread the Gospel of Heaven and heal so that those who gathered could live as God’s people. Second, Jesus taught the kingdom of God through his life and the way of life in it. The disciples were also sent to teach Jesus and his kingdom and his teachings throughout their lives.

Today we have a variety of educational programs. We are developing textbooks, established curriculum, and effective educational activities. However, without denying their need, we must examine the nature of our teaching ministry. We must explain the kingdom of God in our place of life and show how to live in the Kingdom. If our missional work focuses only on the delivery of the message of the gospel, it can be written

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55. Just as Matthew presented the Kingdom of God with the authority over all unclean spirits, every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (10:1), so do they. Just as Jesus was repudiated by the Jewish people, so they will have to be persecuted the Jews and the Gentiles (10:14-25), “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher and the slave as his master.” See C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet & co. ltd., 1935), 41; Bo Reicke, *“A Test of Synoptic Relationships: Matthew 10:17-23 and 24:9-14 with Parallels,” in New Synoptic Studies* (ed. William R. Farmer; Macdon: Mercer University Press, 1985), 225.
56. All activities of Jesus’s disciples are subordinate to God’s providence (vv. 30-31) and eschatological judgment (v. 26). This idea should be understood within the particular structure of Matthew, the so-called kingdom of God. Matthew depicts the Kingdom of God in two phases: the present kingdom (6:33; 11:12; 12:28; 13:24-30, 36-43; 16:19, 23:13) and the future kingdom (4:17; 5:19; 8:12; 16:28; 25:1-13; 26:29). See Kingsbury, *Matthew, 128-60; Reid, “Matthew,” 795.*
CONCLUSION
Matthew describes Jesus as a teacher. The author testifies that Jesus calls himself a teacher. The role of Jesus as teacher is to train and teach his disciples to continue his missional work. He taught his disciples the kingdom of God and how to live in it. And he himself showed the pattern of life in the heavenly kingdom through life. The disciples, like Jesus, must proclaim the kingdom of God at the site of their missional work and exercise the power of his authority. They should teach people to know God and live in him. They should show what it is to live in the pattern of life of God’s Kingdom in their lives as Jesus did. That is the role of a true missional teacher. Therefore, the teaching ministry in our missions must be missional.

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