

FROM PROMISED LAND TO RECONCILED COSMOS: PAUL'S SENSE OF 'WORLDVIEW', 'WORLDSTORY' AND 'WORLDPERSON'

Background to the enquiry and proposal

Two principal interests have sustained my biblical enquiries for over twenty-five years: biblical theology, and Greco-Roman antiquity. Both interests have been shaped by an enduring fascination with the apostle Paul's life and the architecture of his ideas. Biblical theology, for me, is the retelling of the biblical narrative(s) looking back from such Pauline assertions as "when the time had fully come," "the mystery has been revealed", and the will of God is "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." In my enquiry into Greco-Roman antiquity, my interest is in clarifying where Paul's life and thought was genuinely innovative.¹

In my reflections both on biblical theology and on Paul in Greco-Roman context, I continue to be animated by the challenges of dialoguing with people whose ideas and ventures are shaping society.² I hear in various Pauline assertions a nascent recasting of major intellectual traditions. I am thinking of such statements as "Where is the wise man, scholar, and philosopher? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"; "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise"; "in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; "we have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"; "we take every thought captive to Christ"; and "do not conform to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind".³ To mix labels ancient and modern, in these and other Pauline assertions, I hear the apostle reorienting theology, anthropology, epistemology, ethics, and history around Christology. In short, the entire intellectual enterprise was shown a new axis.

I have argued elsewhere that though there are "definite points of contact between Paul and the (Greco-Roman) paradigms of philosophy, theology, religion, and morality...to identify him with any of these paradigms is to lose more than we gain. Our conversation about Paul in the first century, and our conversation for the modern context, will only advance as we allow Paul the distinctiveness of his own life and thought."⁴

For some time my musings across these and other fields of interest have sought a larger integrative thesis for Paul the innovator. Readers of Paul usually emphasise his value for Christians. But the legacy of his letters is also public. Paul's letters belong among the greats of classical literature for the seminal and lasting influence they have had on western life and thought.⁵ My proposal today is in regards to this broader intellectual legacy.

¹ My doctoral research took up the suggestion of the classicist Albrecht Dihle that while scholars had located Paul's groups within the social patterns of the first century, scholarship lacked a "map" of the popular intellectualism of that time. I sought to sketch this popular intellectualism and to locate Paul within it. My aim was to show where Paul was conventional, where confrontational, and particularly where he was truly innovative. See *Conversing Across the Ages*, PhD dissertation, University of Western Sydney, 1997, the basis of *Reframing Paul: Conversations in Grace and Community*, Chicago: IVP, 2001. The present paper proposes a further trajectory of enquiry into the legacy of Paul's innovation.

² My research has unfolded in tandem with professional involvement with commercial, government, education and civic leaders. A centrepiece of this work has been the retelling of Paul's story in relation to some key tensions within the patterns of subsequent and current western thought and society. See for example, "Humility: The Tale of a Virtue" in *The Seven Heavenly Virtues of Leadership*, edited by Carolyn Baker, Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

³ Classical philosophy and society overwhelmingly censured change. Paul's use of the language of "transformation" (*metamorphoe*) was a striking innovation. See Edwin Judge, "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents", *Tyndale Bulletin* (1984) 35:3-24, and Strom, *Conversing*, pages 151-154.

⁴ Strom, *Conversing*, page 154.

⁵ This is a point acknowledged by Christian and non-Christian intellectuals alike. See for example Alain Gignac's discussion of the reading of Romans by neo-Marxist and postmodern philosophers Alain Badiou, Jacob Taubes and Giorgio Agamben:

Hypothesis in a nutshell

Paul was the first translator of a worldview out of its original cultural soil. Ever. Anywhere.

Let me summarise the argument to clarify what I *am* claiming and what I *am not*:

Paul saw Israel's Messiah as the 'worldmessiah', the king of a 'worldkingdom', and the second truly representative human, the second Adam, the true 'worldhuman'. My awkward neologisms seek to dramatise the Pauline categories of thought; in particular, that a Pharisee came to believe that the story of Israel could no longer be confined within Judaism. The covenantal and prophetic promise of land had been recalibrated in the Gospel declaration of the reconciliation of the whole earth. As Saul, he had devoted his life to the Jewish story and worldview. As Paul, he devoted himself to making known this story and its surprising resolution to peoples he formerly excluded from it. Paul did not invite Gentiles to join a Jewish story and way of life. Rather he radically altered the categories and referents of the Jewish story and worldview. Paul sought to make the story intelligible to Athenians, Corinthians and Ephesians on their own terms as their own story. Certainly Paul continued to teach Gentiles the Jewish origins of the story. This was a crucial strategy. But the story he now told excluded any claim by any group to nationalistic, geographic, imperial, cultural or intellectual priority. The story and worldview could be embraced by any group. It could be expressed in the linguistic, social and intellectual patterns familiar to them (even if at the same time the story critiqued those patterns). No prophet had ever done this (though some pointed in this direction). Not even Jesus. Indeed, it may be that no figure in antiquity had ever done this. If so, then Paul was arguably the first translator of a worldview out of its original cultural soil.

Paul's originality among Jewish forebears and contemporaries is not hard to demonstrate. But my larger hypothesis is of course impossible to prove. No one can hope to adequately compare the impact of every influential figure of antiquity. Nonetheless, the scale of impact I am claiming for Paul narrows the field of contenders. How many leaders or writers have triggered profound and lasting shifts that were *both* intellectual and social? Such a comparison is feasible within those traditions that have shaped the West up to and including the time of Paul: chiefly Greece, Rome, Egypt and the ancient Near East. Today I will simply assume my hypothesis has something going for it, and frame an argument around it. At the least I hope to arouse suspicion that, whether first or not, what Paul accomplished is likely to be without equal in scope and enduring impact.

Locating this hypothesis within the colloquium

On one level, my presentation today in a colloquium on biblical theology and land is pure opportunism: a chance to fly a kite. On another, it is entirely appropriate even if only as a bold statement of what I take to be Paul's disinterest in the question of the land. The data first.

Paul never used the vocabulary of 'land'. Zion appears in OT quotations but never as a category for the story or its *telos*. His references to Israel are to the people not to the land. There is of course considerable debate about how he viewed the ultimate place of his people in the economy of his Gospel. Whatever ways we read Romans 9-11 (and other texts), Paul never included Israel's homeland in any hope held out to his people. Jerusalem only appears in statements of fact (eg. the place where he met with the apostles; and the destination of the gift he intended to convey). There is one exception: the allegory of Galatians 4 in which Paul equated the theological significance of Jerusalem to that of Arabia!

"Reception of Paul by Non-Christian Philosophers Today", Romans Through History and Cultures Seminar (SBL Toronto 2002), at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/religious_studies/SBL2002/Philos.htm. My thanks to Gavin Drew for this link.

None of this is to distance Paul from his people and their scriptures. Paul's Gospel is unintelligible apart from the history and heritage of Israel. He viewed the OT narratives and categories as having reached their (surprising) *telos* in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. There is a 'global' hermeneutic to how Paul used the OT. When Paul built an argument from the OT for the significance of Christ, he almost always started with Abraham not Moses. For Paul the argument seems to carry the sentiment of Gen 12:1-3 ("and all nations on the earth will be blessed through you"), more than that of Exod 19:3-6 ("and so you will be for me a treasured people").⁶ Paul's vision of what Christ had accomplished by his death and resurrection was cosmic: it could not be nationally or geographically contained.

Am I putting Paul in a place Jesus alone deserves? Paul's story was after all his rendition of Jesus' story. But the Gospels do not show us Jesus as a translator of Israel's story. They show him as the one in whom the decisive chapter is being written. They reveal Jesus the prophet and Messiah who stood with his people even as he subverted their expectations of him and of their God. In this sense, Jesus was the story waiting to be translated: a Jewish Messiah carrying Israel's story up to a Roman cross, there abandoned by all but women, thieves and centurions. A Jewish Messiah who commissioned his disciples to proclaim the good news of his resurrection from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth, without a hint that anyone need ever return in pilgrimage. The story of Jesus was pregnant with significance. This is what Paul expounded and translated for the world.

Unpacking the idea of translation and Paul's accomplishment

What do I mean by 'translate'? Paul's forebears and contemporaries had viewed their story as bound to the traditions and geography of the nation. Paul placed it on a global stage. I would suggest that Paul was amplifying Jesus' novel exposition of the "kingdom of God". Jesus, it seems, confounded historic and contemporary expectations of this kingdom. Jesus undermined the expectation that the kingdom of God belonged to Israel in the ways they had assumed. Paul went further, radically 'de-Israelising' Israel's story in the light of the cosmic accomplishments of their own Messiah.

What Paul did with this story was startling to Jew and Gentile alike. He continued to tell the story within Jewish categories of thought. But he did not call Gentiles to embrace a Jewish way of life. He framed the story in ways that were intelligible to educated inhabitants of the Greco-Roman cities. But he did not reduce the story to the categories of the popular intellectualism of his day.⁷ His story and way of life required a response. But he never required converts to adopt his culture or language. He reframed the story and its implications for their lives in the terms of his listeners' own worlds, whomever they were: *their* language, *their* customs, *their* sources, and *their* categories. That is translation of a worldview. I should go further: that is arguably a translation unsurpassed both in content and methodology. But I am running ahead of myself. Was this a first?

⁶ N.T Wright among others has suggested that the logic of Romans 5-8 turns on the Exodus experience of Israel. If so, the point is that this Exodus takes place in one person on behalf of Jew and Gentile alike, and that it ends not in Jerusalem but in a redeemed cosmos. Paul's most sustained argument from Moses is 2 Cor 3 where he claims that the Corinthians' experience in Christ surpasses that of Israel and even Moses.

⁷ Considerable work has been done on Pauline innovations (Judge, Malherbe, Meeks, Winter, Forbes, Banks, Hock, Harris and many more). In the following terms, Paul makes a novel use of a traditional category or metaphor (often subverting its traditional intent): eg. lord, gospel, body, ecclesia, grace, righteousness, glory, power, strength, wisdom, knowledge, boast. In others he exalted less prominent or even despised terms: eg. transformation, service, weakness, love. He also employed new metaphors for society: eg. building, gift. It is similarly instructive to note the vocabulary he avoided: leader, virtue, courage, status, and ambition.

Paul's novelty is perhaps made clearer by comparison. Many before Paul had imposed worldviews; Alexander for example.⁸ Many had tried to transplant ideas into new contexts; like Plato in Sicily. Many had welcomed new concepts as supporting or augmenting the existing intellectual and social status quo; think of Cicero's and other Romans' love of Greek philosophers and poets. Much later, Mohammed represents a translation of sorts, but one that still requires conformity to a singular culture, language and geography.

[*An early postscript: What about Buddha?* Some discussants have suggested that Buddha (5th century BC) may be one figure who can claim priority to Paul as a translator of a worldview. I am no expert on the life of Buddha, nor on Buddhism in any of its forms. Nonetheless some general observations may put the comparison in perspective. The teachings of Buddha are almost entirely personal. They offer little by way of reframing social relations. Rather they present a personal way of life and a contemplative religion (in itself a remarkable innovation), but not a view of the world carried by a story of and for the world. Indeed, at heart, Buddhism is world-denying, not world-affirming. Buddhism suggests that the hope of humans lies in escape from the world through enlightenment; it advocates disengagement from all story, all culture, from everything that is physical and social about being human. Buddhism is a philosophy, a set of ideas for individual adoption. It is an extraordinary innovation. But Buddhism has no original or necessary grounding in culture; no story of the world for the world. The Buddhism popularised in the west today is viewed by some as a basis for humanitarianism and environmentalism. I would argue that in doing so Buddhism has come to share something of the Christian syncretism that characterises the West.]

To be translated, a worldview needs a story to retell, not simply ideas to reconceptualise and transfer. Worldviews all have stories.⁹ But I am suggesting something more: a worldview is not really a 'world' view without a 'world' story – without a 'worldstory', a worldview is just a 'localview', even if 'local' is very big.¹⁰ In a sense, no one could have translated a worldview, because no worldview had a worldstory.¹¹ Except one.

Israel's worldview rested on a worldstory ("through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed"). This worldstory carried explicit and implicit critiques of other worldviews and stories. Some holders of Israel's story had to live out their worldview in foreign soil (most famously Joseph, Moses, and Daniel). It is unclear to what extent these figures understood the story of their own people as in some way a story for the world held in trust by Israel. [In saying this I do not wish to minimise the vision of the prophets for the inclusion of the nations in the ultimate blessing of Israel and the earth.]¹²

Paul's letters assume a worldstory ("to bring all things in heaven and on earth together") that had been held in trust by Israel ("entrusted with the very words of God"). This worldstory turned

⁸ Alexander's accomplishments were extraordinary and long-lasting. His legacy was the spread of Greek language and culture often involving hybridisation with the cultures of conquered peoples. The story, the worldview and the legacy, however, never displaced the assumption of a superior culture (Greece).

⁹ For a discussion of worldview and story in relation to a critical realist epistemology, see N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992, pages 31-80.

¹⁰ I am of course being playful with my terms. Weltanschauung or 'worldview' generally refers to a view of life and/or of the world rather than an encompassing view of life for the world. I do not literally mean there are no worldviews only 'localviews'.

¹¹ It is interesting to note the time it took for genuine science to emerge in western intellectual history. Many scholars have suggested that classical philosophy did not give rise to science because it failed for the most part to articulate a clearly world-affirming cosmology. However it did give rise to (or arose from) mathematics and geometry, which are abstractions needing only limited physical reference. See for example the interplay of geometry and cosmology in Plato's *Timaeus* that informs what is for the most part a negative view of physical reality.

¹² A more global view seems latent in the recurrent phrase "that...may know that I am Yahweh" applied in both Exodus and Ezekiel, and nowhere else, to the prophet, to Israel, to foreign kings, to foreign nations, and to "the world".

on Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection. Paul recognised in Jesus and his accomplishment not only the Jewish Messiah, but the 'worldperson' ("Second Adam") who had fulfilled the worldstory. Having grasped the world dimension of the story, the cultural tie had to be cut. His language was unequivocal: "circumcision counts for nothing"; "I count it all loss" (referring to his Israelite identity and achievement); "the middle wall of partition has been torn down"; "there is neither Jew nor Gentile"; "Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem". For Paul, the story could not be about incorporating Gentiles into Israel, but of both being made into a new humanity living toward the resolution of a shared story. Neither Roman citizenship, nor Israelite heritage, could any longer define what it is to be human. Being human had been redefined by a man raised to heaven and the promise of being transformed into his likeness.

Paul is the first person whom we know to have made these connections on this scale. This is not to minimise the imagination and contribution of Peter and the rest in the first half of Acts. Yet their proclamation remained tied to Israel. Likewise, Peter's vision from heaven climaxed in his realisation that the Gentiles were no longer unclean. This was a significant breakthrough. But the man who would be called to give an account on Mars Hill needed, and found, far more. It was Paul who accepted the calling to carry the story to Athenians and Ephesians and Corinthians, peoples who knew neither the background to the story, nor the culture that had carried it. It was Paul who recognised that the story had to be taken to them because it was in fact their story. How he did so is one of the great stories of personal transformation, scholarship and genius.

Consider first of all the deconstruction of Saul. Paul, the former Pharisee, radically reconfigured in Christ his life-long devotion to the marks of covenant: Christ's faithfulness superseded his own devotion to law; God's yes in Christ to the covenant promises superseded Paul's own devotion to the restoration of land and temple. The architecture of Paul's thought remained in place, but the realisation of its *telos* in Christ, together with his calling to the Gentiles, began in Paul a process of theological reimagining and intellectual innovating for the task ahead. The debates continue over the extent of Paul's education within Hellenism as a youth growing up in the Roman colony of Tarsus. Whenever, however, and how much he learned, we will never know. But the letters and Acts show a brilliant mind conversant with the shape of classical and Greco-Roman thought, and an ex-rabbi who (now) works more from the Septuagint than from the Hebrew text. So how did he bridge these two worlds?

As Paul ascended Mars Hill he formed a message in his mind:¹³ he began with an idol (had any Jew ever positively expounded such a source?!); he nimbly exploited the theological disputes between the Stoics and Epicureans in his audience; he drew on the traditions of Epimenides and Aratus (and possibly Cleanthus); he wove in Jewish cosmology and the prophetic tradition; and he ended with a play on the founding motto of the Areopagus.¹⁴ This presentation did not pop into his head out of nowhere. Extempore speeches like that are built on great learning, rhetorical skill, and subtlety of mind.

The Corinthian letters reveal a masterful critique of Greco-Roman popular intellectualism couched in startling and unprecedented self-disclosure. Paul knew how rank and status worked in Corinth. He knew the complicity of education and rhetoric in the machinations of men who

¹³ I do not mean to minimise the hand of Luke in Acts 17. The recorded speech is surely not verbatim and most likely crafted to suit Luke's intent. Nonetheless it just as surely reflects the brilliance of the original.

¹⁴ See the classic works of Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, WUNT 49, Tübingen: Mohr, 1989, and "The speeches of Acts: II. The Areopagus address", *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 239-259. Also Strom, *Conversing*, page 143-45.

loved their own honour and ambition above all else. He knew how the courts worked. He understood patronage and the complexities of balancing deference and boasting. He turned the tables on standard Stoic metaphors and phrases. And all the while he articulated a radically alternate worldview grounded in the story and traditions of his forefathers but now recast in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

This surely shows a brilliant mind and a life of great intellectual labour. As far as I can see, Paul did what no one had ever done. There was no model. There was no methodological precedent. Neither Jewish nor Greek.

We should not minimise the scope or the cost of this endeavour. This was a commitment of a life not merely a mind. Paul's translation did not endear him to any but a small group of converts, and even *they* viewed him with mixed regard. Paul's translation left no part for Jewish nationalism. It ostracised him from his own people and especially from those who continued to assume the priority of Jerusalem and all that it entailed. The story dislocated him from his sense of personal and cultural identity. Unlike his compatriot Josephus, Paul did not find a new home outside Israel. He did not transfer his hopes to a new nation, empire or ruler. His Gospel profoundly critiqued the structures of Greek social and intellectual life. He refused the kinds of patronage his education and citizenship could secure. Eventually it could not help but antagonize Rome given that the story of Augustus/Rome explicitly claimed to be a worldstory. Paul's Gospel was a scandal to Jews, foolishness to Greeks, and sedition to Rome.

To return to the theme of this colloquium: Paul never discussed 'the land'. Paul the Pharisee – zealous for his people, his city and his temple in the face of Roman oppression and hubris – had ceased to be concerned with the land of his forefathers. Why? The story he now told was a worldstory – a story for the world. The central figure was a worldperson – a person for the world. The *telos* of his good news was the reconciliation of all things – heaven and earth, Jew and Gentile – under this worldperson. No nation, no land, no city, and no temple could convey or contain what Paul believed the God of Israel had accomplished through their own Messiah. The hope of a renewed land had been absorbed and eclipsed in the reconciliation of the cosmos.

Reading Paul's Gospel as worldstory and worldview

If the argument holds to this point, then the claim needs to be extended: I think we can argue that Paul, more than any other figure, is the architect and pioneer of something we take for granted in virtually every arena of local, national and global life – the assumption that cultures can be transformed by the translation of ideas modelled in a life given at one and the same time to service and to subversion.

This is not to minimise later translators, nor to suggest that the complexity of western ideas somehow all traces its way back to Paul. But it is to make a claim for the source of an idea:

The idea that a story, a way of being, a complex of ideas, a worldview, needs to be translated out of its cultural soil for the people to whom it (also) rightly belongs; and the concomitant idea that this translation needs to be done free from any requirement of affiliation to the original national, cultural or geographical context of the story.

Today the language of culture, worldview, paradigm and transformation is standard fare in commercial, political and social theory and commentary. It has long passed into the vernacular. Some of these terms are recent arrivals. None derive from Paul – though I note the originality of his use of the semantic field for 'transformation'. My argument is not that Paul coined all this, nor even that he prefigured it. My argument is that our preoccupation with change is the outworking of a collision of ideas (of Judaism and classical thought) for which Paul more than

anyone else is responsible. As I recall Edwin Judge saying, “Western thought is the product of a contradiction: that’s what makes it so fascinating.”

The shaping of western intellectual and social life defies any single explanation. Nonetheless history is never flat. It has a way of throwing up disproportionately influential figures, ideas and moments. That is my claim: that Paul’s passionately embodied ideas brought two iconic worlds together in a way unprecedented in method and scope, and perhaps unsurpassed in influence.

The story of Jesus was pregnant with significance. This is what Paul expounded and translated for the world. In doing so, Paul not only passed on the greatest story of all, but also bequeathed an extraordinary epistemological and methodological legacy. To turn one of his own lines of thought, the renewal of Paul’s own mind put into effect a transformation of the patterns of this world that continues to disturb conformity.

This reading of Paul might suggest lines of conversation with wider audiences. If the argument holds, then like his Gospel, Paul’s story and method belongs to the world, and it remains uniquely placed to inform that world, to bless it, and to subvert it. The need remains for translators.

ADDENDUM

The translation argument begs to be taken further: The more I ponder Paul’s achievement, the more I sense that the translation is not only *of* the message, but *is* the message. What God did in Christ is the foundation of all translation. This is in part at least the mystery to which Paul appealed: that “the Gentiles are now co-heirs”; and “Christ in you”. God in Christ. Christ in the world. Christ in you. This is Paul’s commission: “to make known the mystery hidden from ages past”.

Israel and her covenant were largely self-contained. [This is not to deny the extensive interaction between OT literature and contemporary cultural and religious traditions.] Israel existed for the nations (ultimately) but in a sense didn’t need them to know what God had done or would do. The Exodus would seem the exception. If the Exodus is the defining memory of God’s self-revelation and redemption, then in some sense Israel needed Egypt. But the nation’s self-understanding based upon memory of the Exodus is of an identity standing over-against the nations. Something shifted in this self-understanding experience through the exile. The visions of Ezekiel and Daniel require the nations. Certain strands in Ezekiel’s visions hint at a broader anthropology.¹⁵ Daniel’s visions portray a global and cosmic history. Perhaps this is the stuff of apocalyptic.

Something about these prophets seems to lean toward what Paul did. A hint at least. In any case, the wider self-contained self-understanding of Israel shifted with Jesus and particularly Paul. What God accomplished could not be known apart from its spectacular encounter with foreign peoples, ideas and cultures. It needed the world.

The Gospel *needed* ‘foreign’ soil. Its genius was its need as well as its ability to be translated. It was and is *inherently* incarnational, cruciform and resurrectional – it requires flesh and opposition (creation and fall) to create new life. [We might well see Hegel as a Pauline heretic!]

As much as Paul’s articulation of the Gospel rested on the themes and figures of the Jewish story that had carried it, the brilliance of his translation *required* the intellectual and social

¹⁵ I first explored this possibility in *Ezekiel 28:11-19 in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Tradition*, ThM thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1983.

architecture of classical Athens, the clashes of Hellenistic thought and culture, and the pervasive ideology of Rome. Without these there would be no letters to the Romans, Corinthians, or Ephesians. There would have been no exposition of Christ as cosmic. There would have been no embodiment of ideas capable of subverting the givenness of social hierarchy, dualism and imperialism.

It has been and continues to be ever so.

The brilliance of the creeds and of Augustine required Neo-Platonism and the myth of *Romanitas*. Luther and Calvin needed the Aristotelian revival. Edwards and Schleiermacher needed the Enlightenment. And vice-versa. Each was a translator. Each translation required its intellectual and cultural context. The shape of ideas and culture in every era of the West has always depended upon the legacies of the translators of Jesus and of (the translations of) Paul, and vice versa, even if only by reaction. Each turn in the history of ideas and culture has enabled and triggered new vistas of exposition whether by accommodation or by critique. Today's swirl of culture and ideas is no more foreign to the Gospel than was the swirl of culture and ideas in the first century. Our context is equally vital for this Gospel to find and give new life.

Creation is cultural. Incarnation is cultural. Redemption is cultural. Translation is cultural.

Paul put it simply: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ." Or, if I may co-opt him yet again, "Be translators of Paul as he was of Christ." We are not to be like the servant of Jesus' parable who buried the talent to preserve it. We are to take this Gospel, and in imitation of its brilliant original translation, we are to expound and enlarge it afresh in, for and by every era and culture.

The transposition of land to cosmos is yet another indicator that Christ *is* our hermeneutic.