

Hart's second presupposition follows on from the first. The translation ends with a "Concluding Scientific Postscript" in which Hart reveals that a major goal of his translation is to rightly understand the concept of punishment and the afterlife. This leads Hart to a long discussion detailing his understanding of αἰώνιος as an indefinite period of time rather than necessarily *eternal*. From here, Hart draws the conclusion that the New Testament is much more universalistic in its claims of each human's destiny than many in the West realize (p. 537). Hart's theological understanding that hell is not eternal but a place for all sin to be purged certainly is a factor in the way he translates words related to the duration of the afterlife (he also devotes a section to the concept of Gehenna and Hades). I say the first presupposition leads into the second because Hart tells us that his thinking is led, at least in part, "by a number of Christian theologians and exegetes (especially such explicit universalists as the great Alexandrian Clement and Origen, the "pillar of orthodoxy" Gregory of Nysaa...as well as other rhetorically reserved universalists, such as Gregory of Nazianzus" (p. 539). Such an admission makes one wonder if exegesis of the Greek text, or the reading of beloved Greek fathers drives such a long defence of Hart's understanding of hell and the afterlife. (And it should be noted that his reception and use of these church fathers is debatable.) In this postscript, Hart clearly favours ancient Eastern theologians and has no time for Augustinian influences, whether from the man himself or his reformed followers such as John Calvin (pp. 548, 551, 554).

In many ways Hart's translation is a remarkable achievement. Scholars and pastors working in the original languages will benefit from consulting Hart's work even when they disagree. The actual translation of the Greek text is helpful at many points. If Hart's goal is to make sure the Scriptures never become too common for those who read them regularly, then he has accomplished his goal. In this review, I have interacted mainly with Hart's introductory and concluding essays, in order to uncover Hart's own presuppositions that filter through the whole work in subtle ways. In my estimation, Hart has not overturned the Reformation with a footnote (in fact his postscript reveals some serious misunderstandings about Protestantism), but has given the serious Christian a wonderful resource. This includes Western, or even Protestants like myself, yet the wise reader will know that no Bible translation is free of the theological commitments of the translator.

**Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2015. (351 pp.) [ISBN: 9780802868848]**

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Many New Zealand pastors are concerned about why our churches are so ineffective at evangelism. Is it because we are not proclaiming the gospel? Or is it because we are not practicing the gospel by helping people in need? Gorman would answer that effective evangelism is not just about what Christians say or do but is more importantly about what we become. He answers the question with a rigorous explanation of how Paul addresses particular contexts in which the churches he wrote to could become the gospel they

believed in by practicing faith(fullness); love, hope, peace and justice. Gorman contends that, for Paul, the church's life together (centripetal activity) and its witness in the world (centrifugal activity) are integral to their participation in the mission of God (pp. 18–19).

*Becoming the Gospel* is the third of a “partly accidental trilogy” that explore Paul's theology and spirituality, each book building upon the earlier work (p. 2). Gorman unpacks the thesis of *Becoming the Gospel* in eight chapters that each deal with a particular aspect of the gospel. He does so with a multidisciplinary methodology consisting of: Pauline studies, hermeneutics, and missiology (p. 10). I will examine how these chapters answer the question about what makes for effective evangelism in the church today, since the pastors asking this question are included in the Gorman's targeted audience for this book.

In chapters one and two (*Paul and the Mission of God; Reading Paul Missionally*) Gorman explains his missional hermeneutic as firstly to identify Paul's vision of God's mission in the world and the role the churches were to play in that mission. Secondly, to discern from such a reading, our role in the divine mission today (pp. 21–22). Gorman understands Paul's perception of the mission of God as being to bring salvation to the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the gospel. Salvation is conveyed to the world via the preaching of the good news in word and deed. Consequently, salvation is received through faith that enters into full participation in Christ (p. 23). This is evident in Paul's participatory language for: baptism; faith and justification; in Christ and Christ within; clothed with Christ; *koinonia*; transformation; and the Greek prefix *syn-* (pp. 33–36). Gorman concludes that participation is essential, not only to salvation, ethics, and eschatology, but also to mission (pp. 61–62). Effective evangelism by the church today therefore arises from participation in the life of Christ, according to Gorman's Pauline, missional hermeneutic.

In chapter three (*Becoming the Gospel of faith(fullness), love and hope—1 Thessalonians*) Gorman proceeds to develop an understanding of what participation in the life of Christ involves by examining the common Pauline triad of faith, hope and love found in 1 Thessalonians and other Pauline letters. The various ways and frequency with which Paul uses this triad indicate how essential these theological virtues are to Christian life, identity and praxis (p. 64). Gorman concludes from his exegesis of 1 Thessalonians that Paul is writing a missional exhortation to a missional community encountering persecution as a result of evangelism (pp. 74–75). The Thessalonian church is a missional community of faith(fullness), love and hope displaying these virtues as concrete missional practices embodying the gospel in daily life. Therefore, these practices are “evangelistic” because as the community practices this triad, they bear witness to the gospel they incarnate (p. 89). Effective evangelism by the church today thus arises from participation in the life of Christ via missional practices of faith(fullness), love and hope, according to Gorman's exegesis of 1 Thessalonians.

In chapter four (*Becoming and Telling the Story of Christ—Philippians*) Gorman explores the missional significance of Paul's master story (the Christ hymn) as a narrative of sharing in the mission of the servant of God (Jesus) by practicing the faith, love and hope of his gospel story (Phil 2:6–11). It is a missional Christology for a missional people who must not only believe in the story but also tell it and live it in word and deed (pp. 115–116). The poetic text serves at least three missional functions corresponding to faith, love and hope that are evident as narrative patterns in the text (pp. 121–125).

Gorman's reference to Aristotle and Thomas's insights on virtue - that we become what we practice—is particularly relevant to why evangelism has become ineffective in western contexts today. He warns that since every community needs a master story, whenever the church dispenses with telling the gospel master story, a new one will fill the void, carrying with it a new and most likely alien way of being in the world. "The final consequence of this creedal amnesia will be that the church has nothing left to live for, or, if necessary to die for, that faithfully embodies the story of Jesus." (p. 130).

However, in Gorman's two prequels to *Becoming the Gospel*, he observes a fourth narrative pattern found in the Christ hymn and other Pauline texts, which is that of paradoxical power in weakness. Presumably, since this falls outside of Paul's triad of faith, love and hope, Gorman has omitted a discussion on this fourth narrative pattern of Phil 2:6–11. An explanation of the omission would have been welcomed, because the missional pattern of power in weakness seems to be a particularly difficult one for the contemporary church to practice. Failure to practice paradoxical power in weakness may also contribute to why the church has become evangelistically ineffective.

Another explanation for Gorman's omission of paradoxical power in weakness could be that in chapters five and six (*Becoming the Gospel of Peace (I) Overview; (II): Ephesians*) he recasts this pattern as becoming the Gospel of peace (*shalom*). He sees Paul's gospel of peace as the missing piece in New Testament studies (pp. 143–59). According to Gorman, pursuing peace and rejecting retaliation is an ecclesial missional practice endorsed by Paul, throughout his letters that involves making peace with God and with people (pp. 159–68). From an overview of Paul's peace vocabulary in Romans (pp. 169–79), Gorman then focuses on Ephesians to develop a deeper understanding of how the church becomes the gospel of peace (pp. 186–207). He poses another missional challenge for the contemporary church, "Perhaps the world might actually sit up and take notice of the Christian faith if Christians really did embody the gospel of peace" (p. 180).

Gorman could have remained in Philippians to explore becoming the gospel of peace if he follows recent commentators such as Witherington who interpret Euodia and Syntyche's dispute (Phil 4:2–3) as the key application of the Christ hymn (2:5–11; 4:2). It is disappointing that Gorman does not consider this because Paul's gospel-centric approach to Euodia and Syntyche's disagreement could be a helpful template for responding to co-worker conflict in mission teams today. Poor conflict resolution could well be another contributor to evangelistic ineffectiveness of the church.

In chapter seven (*Becoming the Justice of God—1 & 2 Corinthians*) Gorman considers the final aspect of becoming the gospel as presented by Paul. The Bible presents the justice of God as a "comprehensive, covenantal, relational mandate" (p. 213). Understood this way, justice is about having such a deep communion with God that one takes on God's character by practicing the justice of God. Justice and righteousness are therefore relational terms dealing with human community and wholeness, the setting right of wrongly configured relationships that is closely associated with the biblical vision of *shalom* (pp. 213–15).

Gorman examines Paul's language of justice and justification, with particular emphasis on 1 & 2 Corinthians, to answer the question of whether Paul was only interested in justification or also concerned about practicing the justice of God (pp. 217–57). He concludes that justice for Paul is continuous with the concerns of the prophets yet reshaped by the gospel of Christ crucified. By the power of the Spirit working

in and through the church, the eschatological day of justice has now arrived, even if only partially and proleptically. The church is therefore a community that bears the divine trait of justice as ecclesial practice (p. 257). If, as Gorman proposes, practicing justice is an essential part of becoming the gospel, then whenever the contemporary church fails to act justly or ignores injustice in our local community, we weaken our evangelistic effectiveness.

Gorman's closing chapter (*Becoming the Gospel of God's Justice/Righteousness and Glory: Missional Theosis—Romans*) places a new emphasis on participation in God's righteousness/justice and glory and explores Paul's language of theosis in Romans. He argues that a central theme of the letter is becoming like God by participating in the life of God (theosis) which is inherently missional (p. 261). Accordingly, Gorman rereads Romans as a text on cruciform, missional theosis (pp. 273–93). Paul's goal for the diverse communities of the Roman church is that they become more like the impartial God who justifies ungodly Jews and Gentiles alike to form them into one covenant people (p. 294). Gorman concludes that, "What will make the Roman community truly the antithesis of Romans 1-2, and a credible example of what God intended for humanity, is the community's gathering together in unity, Gentiles and Jews, to glorify God" (p. 293). Gorman proposes that the resultant witness of such racial unity will be the church's most powerful evangelistic tool (p. 293).

At the conclusion of each chapter, Gorman presents an example of a contemporary Christian community practicing the gospel. Practitioners will find these examples particularly helpful for envisaging how the gospel is lived today. However, the most important point Gorman makes about such examples is not that these ministries should be replicated elsewhere but rather, "intentionally practice cruciform faithfulness, love and hope wherever you are- and maybe in places where thus far you have been afraid to go" (p. 105). In my New Zealand Baptist context, we are good at copying ministries working effectively elsewhere, but not so good at recognizing why the ministry is effective. When we fail to recognize the ministry as only the conduit through which a Christian community delivers the gospel in word and deed, we set ourselves up for ineffective mission. Gorman points out that such replication will only be evangelistically effective if it (a) practices the gospel of faith(fullness), love, hope, peace and justice; and (b) does so centripetally with each other and centrifugally with those we minister to.

In Gorman's final reflections on becoming the gospel, he explicitly addresses why the contemporary western church has become so ineffective at evangelism. He believes that "Ultimately, the integrity and the impact of all Christian witness depends on the integration of message and mission" (p. 304). He sees the lack of integrity between preaching and living all of the gospel, and the public criticism of those focusing on different slices of the gospel, as the reasons why evangelism is so ineffective today. "However, as the church, by the power of the Spirit, becomes the gospel in its fullness by participating fully in the life of God manifested in Christ, the church offers an appropriate and credible witness to the gospel" (p. 304). Gorman warns, that this does not guarantee "success", as typically measured by humans. However, such an embodiment of the gospel will increase the likelihood that those who encounter it will meet the living God (p. 304).

Arguably, the biblical rigor that makes this book so credible also renders it less readable for the church practitioners who would greatly benefit from this book. Therefore, I invite Michael Gorman to write a summarized version of *Becoming the Gospel* especially for the pastors and church leaders he also wrote for (p. 10). With the help of the Spirit *Becoming the Gospel* shows the church how to become co-participants in the mission of God and so become effective at evangelism.