

332 *Two exercises for you to try*

I've claimed before that anyone translating the Bible does so by choosing words in their own language that chime in with their overall understanding of what God is trying to say to us through the Bible.

So I accept that Tom Wright's translation (which I find really helpful) echoes his belief that the gospel, as proclaimed by the early church, is not *primarily* about my sin and how Jesus died to forgive me and bring me into a new relationship with God. That's a glorious and essential result of the gospel, but it's not what the early church proclaimed, announced, preached.

So, recently, I read through his translation of Acts and, in soft pencil, I wrote notes relating to what Tom believes to be the gospel as they understood it – an announcement that, in fulfilment of the OT prophecies, something very significant actually *happened*: Jesus lived, preached, taught, healed, was killed, came back to life, was seen and touched, then returned to God. The second strand of the gospel was that – again as a fulfilment – Jesus is now Lord, King, Messiah and that one day he will return to this earth so that finally and fully God will dwell with us, and all will be restored (i.e. something *will happen*). The third strand is that here and now God's kingdom is being brought to bear, in power, here on earth; we will see people's behaviour changing and a community being established of people who bow to Jesus' authority (i.e. something *is happening* now).

[Sorry, Tom, I hope this isn't too far off what you're saying.]

So I wrote 'WH' for statements about what had happened, 'AU' for things about Jesus' authority, 'RT' for Jesus' return, and scribbled 'commun' and 'behav' as appropriate; a lot of this referred back to the Bible they had at the time. For me, an eye-opening exercise!

Now I'd like to try an imaginative exercise. We're going on a (rather extravagant) church long weekend away to visit a church 2000 miles away, our long-standing twinning.

Their minister said it would be really wonderful if we could share Communion together and, as they are a fairly poor church, she asked if we would bring the necessary equipment with us [do adjust this for your own church, dear reader]: maybe guitars and a keyboard, PA equipment, a projector and a big screen? And whatever we need for the Communion, whether that's a few wooden trays with holes in for little glasses of wine, or a full silver Communion Set (candles, if you like); and our minister is invited to wear whatever she feels is appropriate for the Communion.

One slight twist is that this church weekend is also a time-travel, to Corinth in about 60/80 AD.

And on the Sunday afternoon, we might like to break into groups and have a Bible study on Luke 22:15-22 and 1 Cor 11:23-26.^[211 What is communion?]

Do let me know how the weekend goes.

Paul Bev. 17.6.24