New Blackfriars
DOI:10.1111/j.1741-2005.2011.01472.x

Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel

David McLoughlin

Abstract

The documents that represent Catholic Social Teaching are primarily papal and clerical. Following the approach of Herbert McCabe that CST is not a body of doctrine but is a response to concrete social circumstances, this paper notes the absence of serious engagement with the Bible in CST and particularly the teaching of Jesus. Using two parables as paradigms, we can see that Jesus was using the social and economic circumstances of his day to provoke debate and an imaginative response that might lead his listeners towards the kingdom of God. In developing the current state of CST, the Church must draw on the practical wisdom of already existing Church groups and must collaborate with groups outside the Church.

Keywords

Catholic social Teaching, historical Jesus, archaeology, parable, politics, economics

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has achieved a certain maturity and status, symbolised by the publication in 2004 of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.[1] The danger with such a text is that it gives a sense of solidity and permanence to something that from its beginnings has been a developing area of reflection and praxis and so inevitably capable of further change. In this paper I will reflect on one aspect of development and transition in CST and that is its reading of the Scriptures, specifically the Gospels.

The sources and authorities of CST are predominantly papal and clerical. The teaching is biblical in so far as texts are cited in a rather positivistic manner, and the early Christian writers, predominantly monks and bishops, are drawn on but in a fairly straightforwardly ethical reading without any serious attempt at contextualisation. The

---

[1] Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, C*ompendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (London: Continuum, 2006).

© 2012 The Author. New Blackfriars © 2012 The Dominican Council. Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2011, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK, and 350 Main Street, Malden MA 02148, USA

framework of natural law is called upon as the normative philosophical and rational perspective but this in itself has limits as it is already a vision based on faith and is one difficult to argue towards universally in a time of radical pluralism, never mind postmodern fragmentation. The appeal to classical doctrines of Christology, Trinity and Grace is more straightforward but even here the reading is particular. So, for example, the use of the Trinity in the early part of the *Compendium* focuses on the human person held in the community of divine loving relationships, but does not reflect on the diversity that those divine relations enable and sustain within the life of God, i.e. that the Father is not the Son and the Son and Father are not the Spirit but mutually identify each other in a shared life of diverse relations. Instead the *Compendium*'s analogy emphasises unity, solidarity, and communion. This is fine but perhaps not as immediately relevant and potent in an age that values and needs to negotiate necessary difference. Similarly the emphasis in Jesus teaching on the *Kingdom of God*, a social concept in self-evident tension with other models of rule, kingly and imperial, Jewish and Roman, also does not have a high priority. I will return to this limited engagement of CST with the life and practice of Jesus later.

At least the *Compendium* does not appeal to the authority of the papal document *Menti Nostrae* of 1950, which stated bluntly: 'the teaching that the Church gives in social matters . . . alone can offer a remedy to the present evils'.[2] Teaching there implied an authoritative central source addressing a passive and receptive faithful. How refreshing then to read John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* in 1981 exploring western society at the time and suggesting ways forward in creative solidarity with 'all those of good will'.

I was working in Italy at the time of its publication and the most perceptive comments and enthusiastic encomiums came from the Marxist and left-wing press, which said openly that while they could not accept the origins of this teaching or its ultimate eschatological reference they were more than willing to engage here and now with the Pope and the Church in the implied struggle for the dignity of all working men and women. It was an extraordinary moment of opportunity, a sort of *kairos*. But it was still Papal-led rather than an example of thinking coming up from the collective experience of the Church.

With the development of the Rome-based Synods every four years or so since the Second Vatican Council, this centralising tendency has grown. Now, there is obvious strength in being able to give a clear statement of principle – and we have seen this used to good purpose in the English Bishops document *The Common Good,* which provided a set of fundamental principles that could be brought into any current political and social debate if the Christian voice is to be heard and is to have a significant contribution. As a result of that short but highly influential and accessible document, many more British Catholics know the key principles of the essential dignity of human being created in the divine image, the sense of the common good and the call to solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, the importance of distributive justice, the call to a suitable subsidiarity that reflects human responsibility and dignity. There are equivalent statements from the American Bishops addressing peace, economic justice, and the role of women. The Bishops of the South Seas have issued important statements on Ecology, and the Brazilian and Mexican Bishops on Land Reform, and so on. But *these* statements are not taken up in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* even though they are more representative of a greater proportion of the Christian community than most of the great councils of early Church history that defined the shape of Christian faith.

---

[2] Pius XII, *Apostolic Exhortation Menti Nostrae, AAS 42: 657–702* (Rome, 23 September 1950).

There is a tension here in the development of CST between the development of self-evidently valid principles and the engagement with the particular contexts of our complex and multiform world, which, for all the reality of globalisation remains pluriform and irreducible to sameness and uniformity.

Implicit within our Bishop's *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching* is a strong sense of the CST as a branch of moral teaching based on sound doctrine.[3] But Herbert McCabe, a founder member of the Slant Group in the 1960s, which tried to think through the Church's Social Teaching in that time and context, has questioned this and suggested that it could be better seen as responses 'to concrete circumstances rather than the handing down of already traditional doctrine. It was simply a matter of preaching the gospel as best you can in a certain time and place.'[4] Notice, he suggests, that the status of CST is not quite that of defined doctrine but more like an appropriate response to the moment in the light of the gospel. In other words is a form of practical hermeneutics.

Yet just how particular can CST be? Take an example used by Noel Timms. He points to an inappropriate application of a warning of John Paul II about the dangers implicit in too close a link between unions and political parties, which made absolute sense in the context of Poland but was difficult to interpret in the pages of the English and Welsh Bishops' *Common Good*.[5]

---

[3] The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching* (London: CTS, 1998) p. 42.

[4] Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002) p. 86.

[5] Op cit, p. 94.

There is an appeal to a level of consistency and coherence in CST, in particular in the *Common Good* that does not bear close analysis. It does not take McCabe's qualifier of 'preaching the gospel as best you can in a certain time and place' seriously. Take for example the seemingly innocent statement, 'The fashioning of social teaching is a task the Church has undertaken down the ages.'[6] We know this is not true, to our great shame, with the history of slavery and its acceptance for many centuries, indeed into the 19th century, which Roger Rushton has so clearly mapped out in his 2004 *Human Rights and the Image of God*.[7] And we have yet to deal properly with Paul's 'neither male nor female' in Christ. The unconstructed patriarchal nature of ministry and governance within the Church remains an open sore.

Donal Dorr, who has done more for these islands in mapping out Catholic Social Teaching than almost anyone, in his careful 1992 study, *Option for the Poor*[8], points out that the trajectory between Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931, translated literally as *Forty Years After: On Reconstructing the Social Order and Perfecting it in the Light of the Gospel*, shows both continuity and real change. The context of the Church between 1891 and 1931 had changed radically. This is a post-war Church more immediately engaged and active in the world in reconstruction than the marginalised gathered community of Leo XIII. There was a new emphasis on organised lay social apostolates, specialist Catholic Action, and the beginnings of the Cardijn Movements. *Quodragesimo Anno* is more critical of social conditions and acknowledges the structural nature of socio-economic ills, and so implicitly the need for wider social reform. It is clear that the proper response to this is no longer the responsibility of individual charity but rather demands an organised and spiritually motivated laity to take up that challenge and task. It deliberately emphasises concepts like social justice and subsidiarity.

Of course, what it does not attempt to deal with, and some would argue (e.g. Honderich[9]) still fails to deal with, is any serious analysis of conflict. And yet it is conflict of one sort or another, which those of us who attempt to work out our vocation in the world of work have to deal with regularly, whether in industrial disputes, in questions of appropriate working conditions and health and safety, in prison reform, in the ethics of policing, or in relation to the war on terrorism. The gospel deals with conflict again and again but CST does not read it within in its original context, nor does the gospel see it as a "text" of provocation for our own context. The living out of the Church's social apostolate in movements like Pax Christi, the Movement of Christian Workers, the South American Basic Christian Communities involves an applied CST which is not easily derived from the rather clerical world of the tradition that seeks, sometimes too easily, for consensus and uniformity in its application of principles and that does not have to work immediately face to face with the fragmenting secular forces that are the normal context of lay men and women's lives.

---

[6] Ibid., p. 24.

[7] Roger Rushton, *Human Rights and the Image of God* (London: SCM, 2011).

[8] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor* (New York: Orbits, 1992).

[9] Ted Honderich, *Terrorism for Humanity: Enquiries in Political Philosophy* (London: Pluto Books, 2003).

If we take the tradition of CST from below, what the Jesuit John Coleman calls social Catholicism, then in the experience of Pax Christi, the Cardijn movements, the Christian Worker Movement of Dorothy Day and Maurin there is a rich practical wisdom. Yet the two have never had a simple and easy relationship despite the brief period of encouragement and affirmation by John XXIII and Paul VI:

In *Octogesimo Adveniens* Paul VI stated:

> In the face of such widely varying situations, it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgement and directives for action from the social teaching of the church. It is up to these Christian communities, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the Bishops who hold responsibility and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all people of good will, to discern the options and commitments which are called for in order to bring about the social, political and economic changes seen in many cases to be urgently needed. (OA4)

This was not the Vatican opting out of a serious engagement in the international world order but it was a recognition that engagement for change in the world can only come from within situations and it can only be built on alliances, here ecumenical and indeed secular, with other agencies of social action and transformation. It freed up a renewed subsidiarity that found expression in the American Bishops independent treatment of nuclear policy, and other statements by regional conferences. What has been lacking is any sustained drawing on these as sources for reflection at the macro level. In other words, there is still a tension here between the centre and the grass roots. This has become more problematic with the effective disappearance of some of the lay movements and the renewal of a centralising tendency in the last two papacies, which is partly the centre's response to the post-Vatican II reality of Catholicism as a global reality, which in turn is not without rich possibilities within the recent development of globalised economics and telecommunications.

Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel

At this point I want to return to the central theme: the use or lack of use or even abuse of the Bible in CST! The full title of *Quodragesimo Annos* in 1931 was: *On Reconstructing the Social Order and Perfecting it in the Light of the Gospel.* As though the gospel is just a given. I want to pick up on some developments of New Testament study in recent years that have immediate implications for CST.

The first is not historical criticism or exegesis but the results of archaeological work in Palestine in the last 100 years, some of it by Catholic Scholars who were forbidden from following the new historical-critical approaches to the Scriptures, some of it the result of purely secular research, agricultural and economic archaeology, which has led to an extraordinary explosion of knowledge about this part of the world. The result is that we know more about the political, social, economic, and religious context of Jesus' time than any generation since the end of the first-century.[10]

The result of this work, much of it completely secular, has been to give a completely new resonance to a great deal of the teaching of Jesus, which can now be seen in a richer multi-layered context. What is revealed is a world undergoing major political and economic transformation within the power play of Roman imperial policy. The Romans were only the last of a series of conquerors of this region but, as with all those who had gone before, they put their stamp upon their rule. They applied the same principles of control and economic coercion that they applied throughout their empire, hidden though it was by a very clever collaboration with the local authorities in Jerusalem and with the sons of Herod the Great, among whom they divided the region.

Effectively they controlled by manipulating mass debt and patronage through an oppressive system of taxation, using local officers to bear the brunt of the local populace's hate. They were involved in deliberate and consistent social engineering such that the people of the Land were being divorced from the Land. The new taxes, still a vestigial memory in Luke's Gospel chapter 2, 'When Quirinius was governor of Syria . . . ', and which Josephus speaks of as heavy and burdensome, were all part of the imposition of a new economics that involved money rather than barter. The people of the Land had not only to pay extra taxes in kind, and new import and export taxes on all produce entering the land, and for the privilege of using the new roads, but to do so they had to borrow to meet the new taxes, eventually mortgaging the land and then being forced to sell it when they fell behind with their payments. Many became day labourers, and land once owned collectively became organised into large estates, *latifundia,* under the control of absentee landowners, who lived in the new Greco-Roman cities of Caesarea and Sepphoris.

---

[10] I have found the following useful in thinking about this theme: J.D. Crossman & J.L. Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts*, (London: SPCK, 2001); S. Frayne*, Jesus, a Jewish Galilean*, (London: Continuum, 2004); K.C. Hanson, 'The Galilean Fishing Economy and the Jesus Tradition' in *Biblical Theology Bulletin,* vol. 27, 1997, pp. 99–111; J.L. Rousseau & R Arab, *Jesus and his World: An Architectural and Cultural Dictionary*, (London: SCM, 1995); M. Seasick, *Crossing Galilee: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus*, (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000); W. Stresemann, B.J. Malian, & G. Thiess, *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels,* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); C.P. Thieve, *The Cosmopolitan World of Jesus: New Light from Archaeology*,(London: SPCK, 2004).

Behind them they left stewards (*economoi*) to run the estates, collect produce and dues. We have Latin texts from the time that tell us exactly how the estates should be run and what these stewards were like: Cato's (234–149 BCE) *De agricultura* and Varro's (116–27 BCE) *Rerum rusticarum*, and the volumes of Columella's *De re rustica* (CE 4- ca70). What they speak of as good Roman practice is reflected in what we hear of good and bad stewards throughout the Gospels. In Jesus' stories we have his observations on this whole process. If you merely take his stories about the practices of stewards and their masters and place them within this now detailed economic map of his world, you have an incipient social analysis on the part of Jesus and the provocation to an alternative vision and praxis, which he summarises under the title "the kingdom of God."

The Parables of the Alternative Kingdom

Let us take a couple of Jesus' parables and read them against this backcloth. It is worth remembering that he taught these parables to groups, crowds, communities. They were intended to provoke discussion, conversation and raise awareness. They were the starting point of a process, not the end. They got people to a possible shared "light-on" moment, which could then have further consequences. If a group saw the implication of a parable, then they saw their world differently and had a choice to make: whether to stay with the way things were or to step out into this new "kingdom" way of looking at things.

Dives and Lazarus: the filthy rich and the dirt poor (Luke 16.19–31)

Here we have a representative of the powerful in the land dressed in purple clothes. These cost a fortune and imply a royal or imperial official, whose fine cotton is imported, then as now, at great cost from Egypt. Lazarus meanwhile is described as *ptōkos* – destitute, corpse-like, almost carrion for the wild dogs. Although the dogs alone are kind to him, licking his sores, which are the result of malnutrition. The social difference between the two protagonists could not be greater and, to underline this, Jesus emphasises the great gate that keeps Lazarus (whose name ironically means "God helps") excluded. If only the gate had been open, everything would have been different. The rich man dies and is no doubt buried with honour.

Up to now we have the Great Tradition's view of the order of things. But Jesus continues the story and the old order unravels. Now in paradise, like a privileged dinner guest, Lazarus reclines on the breast of Father Abraham and the Rich Man is in torment in Hades; not Hell but the place where you await the resurrection and learn the lessons you should have done in life. But what has the Rich Man learnt? He asks Abraham to command Lazarus to bring him water but Abraham reminds him of his life and that this is the consequence. There is a play here between the gate the rich Man could have opened at any time to have comforted Lazarus and the great gulf that now separates them. Next, the rich Man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers so they can avoid his fate. Abraham points out they already have all they need in the teaching of Moses. Again, notice how the rich Man speaks of Lazarus, as an insignificant slave. He has learnt nothing. And then that extraordinary, ironic sentence 'If someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' And Abraham's retort: if they have ignored Moses and the prophets, who spoke God's word, why would they listen to one resurrected?

Throughout, Abraham seeks the rich Man's recognition of Lazarus as equally a child of God. The language he uses of the rich Man is *teknon*/child, and the Rich Man indeed calls Abraham *pater*/father, but he remains within his own group and family-consciousness, he only cares about his brothers. He cannot see Lazarus as a child of Abraham and, therefore, as his brother, which is the teaching of the Torah. In the Torah the land is for all, its produce must not be hoarded but shared, so that even the widow, the stranger, and the orphan have enough (Lev 25; Deut 15:1–18). In telling this story Jesus places himself squarely in the prophetic tradition of Isaiah 1.16–17,5.7; Jeremiah 5.23–29; 21.11–14; Amos 2.6–11; 5.10–24 and Micah 3.1–3, 9–12, which condemns the exploitation of earlier generations of Kings and oppressive royal officials. But the story also highlights how class and family interests within the new economy have undermined the sense of solidarity among the people.

The parable gives the people a way of interpreting the two-tiered society of the time. That such a great divide could have opened up between the rich and the *am ha' aretz* – the people of the soil is the direct result of serious interest on loans, of high taxation and their consequences. The parables open up the reality but they also provoke thought – what could make a difference? In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Jesus allows Abraham to be the teacher. What is required is the re-establishment of a sense of mutuality, of fundamental relationship or kinship. Without this, it is possible for the rich to continue to exploit the poor, seizing land and building great estates through the manipulation of debt – the Roman imperial policy of *Latifundia* mapped out so clearly by Cato, Varro and Columella. The shared space that they all once inhabited as Israel, the people of God, has been undermined. Not only undermined but re-interpreted. The poor are meant to believe this is God's will or blessing.

As Jesus tells the story, this official interpretation unravels. The destitute on the street becomes the honoured guest at the heavenly banquet. How is this possible? Either something is wrong here or something is wrong in the afterlife. The story is strange since it includes the ordinary everyday world, a beggar at the door, with the world of the elite super-rich who are not part of the everyday. But as Jesus tells this story, his listener's begin to see the relationship between the stellar wealth of the minority super-rich and the growing poverty of the masses, and they have an insight into what might change things, a rediscovery and re-embracing of the vision of kinship and hospitality in Moses and the prophets. It is particularly fitting that Jesus should have used Abraham, whom the Jerusalem elite had used as the symbol of their class and its ethnic purity and who, in a certain sense, legitimated their rule (cf. John the Baptist's acerbic comments on this process in Lk 3.7–9). In Jesus' story, however, Abraham is now the one who restores true kinship and hospitality to the destitute (Lk 13.28–29). Such stories show Jesus in serious conflict over the interpretation of the Law and its application.

Workers in the Vineyard: solidarity lost and oppression revealed. (Mt 20.1–16)

Here we have day-labourers, some of whom would have been smallholders trying to supplement their subsistence living, some landless and destitute, no longer with the support of extended family or local community, some would be wandering and so strangers to the locals. So here we have differing working groups vying with each other for limited work. Any sense of solidarity and common identity has long gone. Normally it would be a steward hiring them, as the land-owners tended to live in the new cities and had little to do with the day to day running of the estate, but Jesus deliberately includes the owner here to again make the link between those at the top of society and those at the base. The normally invisible elite are here made present and, as such, accountable. Jesus heightens the conflict.[11]

They are harvesting grapes and the harvest is a bumper one. The owner must harvest at the optimum moment for the fruit and so he goes back again and again to the marketplace until he has enough labour to bring in the harvest. The owner offers the first group a denarius, a reasonable amount for a day's work, but not generous. It was enough to keep a small family fed and housed for a day. When he comes back he just tells the next group to go to work and he'll give them what is right. There is no negotiation. The next are told to go without any reference to pay; similarly the last lot for an hour. Throughout the story the landowner has total control.

The owner tells his steward to pay the workers in reverse, but orders him to give them all a denarius rather than a proportion of the daily wage equivalent to their hours. The owner is playing with them, it is a gesture of contempt, an insult implying that those who have worked all day are no more valuable than those who have worked for an hour. So shaming is the insult that the workers protest. If they don't, then the value of their work in the marketplace is undermined and they are implicitly accepting his right to pay less the next time, with disastrous consequences in that economic climate.

Note the owner does not address the group. He makes an example of one labourer, 'My friend, I do you no wrong, did you not agree with me for a denarius?' This implies falsely a mutually agreed contract. Then he expels the labourer 'Take what is yours and go'. He is sacked, he will not be hired again. The seemingly generous boss is revealed as something quite different: wilful, cynical and manipulative.

He turns to the group and gives his justification, 'I choose to give to this last what I give to you first lot'. The money is now his gift, no longer a wage earned. He says their complaint is evil in response to his goodness (literally 'is your eye evil because I am good?'). He speaks as though the land is his and he controls its fruit and profit, but the Torah teaches the land is God's and God alone distributes it to the people of the land. The Torah demands re-distribution in times of need and condemns hoarding for profit. Even the denarius he so generously gives is a subsistence wage. Read in this way Jesus 'story takes his listeners into the heart of the covenant and its liberating effect. It heightens the perversion of the covenant by the powerful rich, but it also shows up the lack of solidarity among the workers themselves – the rich man can isolate one worker and silence their initial protest. The debate after this parable must have gone on a long time!

---

[11] In both of the parables I have considered I am very influenced by the readings of Richard A. Horsley in *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant and the Hope of the Poor,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

Note again what Jesus is doing in these parables. He is drawing on the experience of the people, provoking them to see their world clearly but from a renewed perspective, that of 'the kingdom of God', and inviting them to become subjects of their own history. He empowers the exploited and oppressed to re-claim their history, to see it anew, and to participate in creating it. There is a danger when we read these texts that we spiritualise them and tend to take from them a personal message – what do they mean *for me*? We miss their essential provocative nature and their call to renew a collective vision of a creation under God, where all are of equal worth and where the distribution of the goods of the earth, and the sharing of them, and solidarity in service, are at the centre of our collective concern, rather than accumulation for profit and personal security. Above all, these are texts to provoke collective reflection, renewed imagination, discussion and debate, starting from the conflicted reality we find ourselves in. But they are never used this way in CST.

Jesus' life did not offer an alternative based on abstract ethical demands. It is not a worked out system. But it does provide some basic principles for an alternative critical practice: the practice of the reign of Abba, based on a common life of mutual compassion, forgiveness and engagement. His life inspired his disciples to prolong the logic of his practice in the new historical situations they would have to face. The main reason for the church to exist is to bear witness to the possibility of that practice of Jesus continuing in the world.

These stories are part of an on-going critique at the heart of the gospel of a political, religious and economic order that is undermining the rule or kingdom of God, an order that is destructive of the dignity of God's children, that has broken the solidarity of Israel, and is perverting the central institutions and structures that were meant to manifest and realise the merciful and abundant goodness of the Creator. The stories re-evoke the debt codes in balance with the ritual and purity codes. They show a choice on Jesus' part of specifically religious emphasis. Read against this background, the Gospels become a radical source, not simply for the content of CST, but as a provocation to engagement in an equivalent analysis and decision-making and community-building. It is a work still to be attempted in some parts of the Church. But from the grass-roots, in the Brazilian Basic Christian Communities, the South African attempts at contextual theology, the Young Christian Workers' Gospel enquiries, it has been happening for nearly 40 years and is being refined all the time. It is part of CST-from-underneath, which in every age is always somewhat in tension with CST-from-the-centre.

There are no answers in the Gospels to the immediate social problems of our age but there is wonderful inspiration to engage and reflect, and together to live and act out the rule of God in our time. There is a provocation for our imagination to thought and action, which I do not find immediately in contemporary CST. So no answers, but a provocation to engage critically with society and religion, and, in solidarity, to provide alternative models for society. The Church's history has many such models: monasticism, the Beguines, the Jesuit missions in South America, the Christian Worker houses of Dorothy Day. John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens* (1981) provided a critique of both the materialism of Soviet-style Marxism but also of open-market capitalism, yet the critique needs to be deepened, and sustaining and there needs to be some envisioning of alternatives. To do this requires greater collaboration with forces extraneous to the Church: with other religions, both genders, aware of being on a vulnerable planet.... A shared, contextual reading of the Gospels is provocative for the imagination and productive of the energy for such a task.

David McLoughlin
Newman University College
Bartley Green
Birmingham
B32 3NT
Email: d.b.mcloughlin@newman.ac.uk