

“As Even Some of Your Own Poets Have Said”

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Introduction

Intertextuality studies have caused biblical scholars to expand the borderlines of literary and rhetorical context.¹ And if recognizing the echoes within the canon expands the borderlines, how much more so will the intertextual echoes found outside the canon? Pluralistic social and philosophical worlds existed in ancient times that greatly influenced the earliest writings of the Old and New Testaments. Although examples abound,² cases from the book of Acts alone are pervasive. This brief investigation examines one of the most obvious and analyzed exemplars, Acts 17:28 “For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’”

H. J. Cadbury identified 26 speeches in Acts that comprise about a 5th of the text.³

¹ A. C. Thiselton. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 39, “Texts function in this approach as generative matrices of further meaning projected by other texts through a textual network or textual grid. ... These are instances in which ... a later biblical (Old Testament) writer takes up an earlier biblical text in order to “re-use”, “re-contextualize”, “extend”, “reformulate”, “re-interpret” or “transform” it. Thus the pre-existing text as “deposit of tradition” (*traditium*) is pressed into the service of the actively ongoing tradition (*traditio*).” Or as R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), states, 14, “The phenomenon of intertextuality—the imbedding of fragments of an earlier text within a latter one—has always played a major role in the cultural traditions that are heir to Israel's Scriptures: the voice of Scripture, regarded as authoritative in one way or another, continues to speak in and through later texts that both depend on and transform the earlier. ... The revisionary hermeneutical operations that later came to be called midrash were already manifest in the work of the writers of the biblical text, who collected, interpreted, and transmuted still earlier texts and traditions.”

² As noted below, only three exact quotations from Greek literature can be cited, namely, 1 Cor 15:33, Titus 1:12, and Acts 17:28c. The same connection can be made with Jewish sources such as Jude's use of Enoch. However, scholarship continues to describe echoes, patterns, and allusions. For example, 1 Cor 8:2 and Gal 6:3 echoing Plato's *Apology*, 1 Cor 13:1-3 and its structural correspondence with Tyrtaeus, *frag.* 9:1-11, or 1 Cor 12:4-11 with the *Iliad* 13.729-734 and the *Odyssey* 8.167-177. See R. Renehan, “Classical Greek Quotations in the New Testament,” *The Heritage of the Early Church*, ed. D. Neiman and M. Schatkin (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 195; Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 15-46. Distinctions must be made between actual quotations and other gnomic commonplaces long ago current in the classical world (e.g., 1 Tim 6:10 as a certain proverbial saying). Renehan even questions the commonly accepted quotation in 1 Cor 15:33 often cited as from Menander, and his lost play *Thais*, which may be dependent on Euripides). Renehan's intention is not to deny the biblical writers' sophistication as theologians or that they had read such works like Euripides, but to increase awareness of the commonplaces in the Hellenistic milieu.

³ H. J. Cadbury, “Speeches in Acts,” *The Beginning of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Jackson and K. Lake, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1933), 5. 402-403. The table given represents the slight modifications by K. L. Cukrowski. *Pagan Polemic and Lukan Apologetic: The Function of Acts 20:17-38*. Unpublished dissertation, Yale University. 1994, 7. See also M. Dibelius, “The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography,” *Studies in Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven, trans. M. Ling (London: SCM Press, 1956), 150, for a similar list of 24 speeches.

Peter (8)	James (2)	Stephen (1)	Paul (10)	Non-Christians (5)	See also
1:16-22	15:13-21	7:2-53	13:16-41	Gamaliel 5:35-39	Jesus 1:4-8
2:14-40	21:20-25		14:15-17	Demetrius 19:25-27	Jesus 6:2-4
3:12-26			17:22-31	Clerk 19:35-40	Gallio 18:14-15
4:8-12			20:18-35	Tertullus 24:2-8	Paul 27:33-34
5:29-32			22:1-21	Festus 25:14-21, 24-27	
10:34-43			23:1-6		
11:5-17			24:10-21		
15:7-11			26:2-29		
			27:21-26		
			28:17-20		
			28:25-28		

P. Schubert increased Cadbury's numbers identifying 25% of Acts as speeches but noting that if one counts the immediate context, then 75% of Acts relates to the speeches.⁴

Scholars have long recognized Luke's familiarity with Hellenistic philosophy. For example, R. Renehan cites W. Nestle as one who cogently argues, "The author of Acts was familiar with Euripides' tragedy, the *Bacchae*."⁵ Likewise, Luke uses speeches similar to Thucydides having Paul say what was most appropriate for the situation. "Luke creatively and faithfully shapes the speeches toward his own purpose."⁶ Several of the speeches are among the best known texts in the NT. With skill, tact, and vibrant language with brevity, variety, appropriateness, and force, the speeches in Acts compare favorably with other recorded speeches by writers of the same period. Subsequently, the speeches in Acts as a literary device explain to the reader the meaning of the events.⁷

Similarly, the Luke's Areopagus speech functions as the second major encounter Paul has with Greeks (cf. Acts 14:8-20). M. Dibelius outlines the Areopagus speech as follows:

- (1) Introduction (Acts 17:b-23)
- (2) Body
 - (a) God, Creator and Lord of the cosmos, needs no temples, for God does not need anything (vv. 24-25)
 - (b) This Lord created humans to seek God (vv. 26-27)

⁴ P. Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87 (1968): 16. See also J. T. Townsend, "The Speeches in Acts," *Anglican Theological Review* 42 (1960): 150-159; C. F. Evans, "Speeches in Acts," *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux*, ed. Albert DeScamps and André de Halleux (Gedloux, Belgium: Duculot, 1970), 287-302; F. F. Bruce, "The Speeches in Acts—Thirty Years After," *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 51-68; D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987) 124-128.

⁵ R. Renehan, "Classical Greek," 21-22.

⁶ Cukrowski, *Pagan Polemic*, 19-20.

⁷ Cadbury, "Speeches in Acts," 402-403.

- (c) Humans are the “offspring” of God, which excludes all worship of images (vv. 28-29)
- (3) Conclusion: God commands repentance and has appointed a person to judge the world (vv. 30-31)⁸

D. L. Balch examines in detail how Paul’s Areopagus speech is related to the contemporary debates of his day.⁹ Citing C. K. Barrett, “In view however of this relation between the Areopagus address and Stoicism it is not unreasonable to think that Luke mentioned the Stoics in v. 18 in order to prepare for the allusions, and to suggest that he mentioned the Epicureans for the same reason.”¹⁰ Balch concludes that a Stoic model deeply influenced the construction and content of the speech by comparing it to Posidonius and Dio Chrysostom’s *Oration 12*.¹¹ J. H. Neyrey goes further by asserting that Paul’s argument compares favorably with Stoic philosophy commonly held by reasonable people but counters Epicurean perspectives that need to be rejected.¹²

Cukrowski sees five reasons for examining Luke’s historiography in light of Greek literature.¹³

Luke defends Christianity not only through rebuttals of certain stock charges, but also through depictions that make Christianity appear more philosophical.¹⁴ ... Luke sets the account in the cultural capital of the ancient world. ... Second, Luke sprinkles the account with allusions to Socrates.¹⁵ But above all, we should not overlook the allusive references to Socrates: Paul speaks in the marketplace to every man—like Socrates.¹⁶ They think he is introducing new gods—like Socrates.¹⁷ And Socrates came before the

⁸ M. Dibelius, “Paul on the Areopagus,” (1939), *Studies in Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven, trans. M. Ling (London: SCM Press, 1956), 26-77.

⁹ D. L. Balch, “The Areopagus Speech: An Appeal to the Stoic Historian Posidonius against Later Stoics and the Epicureans,” *Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 52-79.

¹⁰ C. K. Barrett, “Paul’s Speech on the Areopagus,” *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World*, ed. M. E. Glasswell and E. W. Fashole-Luke (London: SPCK, 1974), 69-75.

¹¹ Balch, “Areopagus Speech,” 73.

¹² J. H. Neyrey, “Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy: A Study in Stereotypes,” *Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 118-134.

¹³ Cukrowski, *Pagan Polemic*, 59-62.

¹⁴ Also seen in Justin *Apology* 2.2-8 (“I found this philosophy [i.e., Christianity] alone to be safe and profitable” [2.8]); and Minocius Felix *Octavius* 20.1 (“One might suppose, either that Christians of today are philosophers, or that philosophers of old were already Christians”).

¹⁵ E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971, 527. For example, Acts 17:18-20; Plato, *Apology* 24 BC; and Acts 5:29; Plato, *Apology* 29D.

¹⁶ Acts 17:17; Plato, *Apology* 30A; 33A, B.

¹⁷ Acts 17:18-20; Plato, *Apology* 24 BC; 26B.

court on that account and was sentenced to death. ... Third, Paul appears conversant with pagan literature, citing Aratus. ... Fourth, Paul is not only conversant with pagan literature, but also with Stoic philosophy. ... Fifth, many scholars have highlighted the portrayal of Paul as a ‘babbling’ in 17:18.¹⁸

The anonymous citation of authors was common in classical and Hellenistic writers.¹⁹ Although there are many echoes and proverbial commonplaces, only three exact quotations can be known for sure, Titus 1:12, 1 Cor 15:33, and Acts 17:28c. Although there have been many attempts to find other citations, the earliest commentators who knew the ancient literature well do not find any. Renehan notes that the consensus of such scholars as “Clement, Origen, Basil and the two Gregories, Augustine, and Jerome” make for a convincing probable case that these are the only three.²⁰

The possible allusion in Acts 17:28a “For in him we live and move and are” has been traced to Plato’s *Timaeus* 37C, to Dio Chrysostom’s *Oration* 12.43, Epictetus 1.14.6, and others. On the one hand, since Plato’s work is prior, then it could be the source for the commonplace for other later works. On the other hand, the most popular hypothesis claims the phrase is a quote from a poem ascribed to Epimenides.²¹ Ishodad is named as the commentator who fostered this view. However, “The theory claimed that the Syrian exegete Ishodad preserves a paraphrase of the ancient poem is now generally rejected, and in any case even Ishodad names Aratus, not Epimenides or the eponymous Minos of his poetry, as the author of the words considered here.”²² Furthermore, Renehan is convincing that this line is more probably Luke’s own creation.²³ Renehan goes on to say that reference to plural poets does not refer to two quotations or to two poets but an idiom often used to introduce one or possibly more poets.²⁴

¹⁸ Cukrowski, *Pagan Polemic*, 59-62. Cukrowski’s examination of Luke-Acts is only showing representative evidence and not exhaustive evidence and is careful not to say Luke is representing Paul as a philosopher. Subtle redactions and compositions by Luke, however, do depict Paul with philosophical traits. Pages 90ff examines carefully Acts 20:17-38 and Plato’s *Apology*. Likewise, Dibelius, “Paul on the Areopagus,” 53, notes the numerous parallels in Seneca.

¹⁹ H. J. Cadbury and K. Lake, “Acts of the Apostles,” *The Beginning of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Jackson and K. Lake, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1933), 4. 218.

²⁰ Renehan, “Classical Greek,” 45.

²¹ K. Lake, “Your Own Poets,” *The Beginning of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Jackson and K. Lake, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1933), 5. 246-251. M. Soards, as late as 1994, still follows Lake’s identification of Epimenides as the source of the quote citing the evidence from Diogenes Laertius. *M. L. Soards, The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. However, Cadbury and Lake, “Acts,” 217, acknowledge the improbability of Epimenides as the source.

²² M. J. Edwards, “Quoting Aratus: Acts 17,28,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 83.3-4 (1992) 266 n.1.

²³ Renehan, “Classical Greek,” 40. R. Renehan, “Acts 17:28,” *Greeks, Romans, Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979) 347-53

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

Most scholarship recognizes that Acts 17:28c “For we are indeed his offspring,” is a quotation from Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5. Aratus began his work with a eulogy to Zeus.²⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, I.xix. 91. 4 f. first recognized this literary connection. “Aratus was born about 310 B. C. of a good Cilician family, in either Soli or Tarsus. He was the pupil of Menedemos and Menecrates, and the friend of Zeno the Stoic, and his writings show considerable Stoic influence. . . . His most famous composition was the *Phaenomena*, a treatise in verse on Astronomy, which was very popular and used for many generations as a school book.”²⁶

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring; (*Phaenomena* 1-5).²⁷

The quote has parallels with Cleanthes (a contemporary of Aratus and a possible student of Zeno), Dio Chrysostom’s *Oration* 12.27, 29, 39, 43, 47, 61, 75, 77, and also quoted by Aristobulus, *frag.* 4, cited by Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 13.12.²⁸ The quote could easily be a well-known adage that does not require that Paul or Luke knew or read Aratus. Luke may have known the quote from Aristobulus, a Jewish source (contra Dibelius). Aristobulus changes to *Dios* to *Theou* except in the first line where the metre does not permit. Edward’s bias about what Luke could or would do comes through when he concludes that Aristobulus is the source for Luke rather than thinking he would have used a phrase attributed to another deity.²⁹ We need to exercise caution whenever we conjecture what someone could or would do, read, or know.

Dibelius concludes,

This idea of God’s relationship with men is, however, as already shown, certainly Hellenistic. Thus the strangeness of the Areopagus speech in relation to the piety of the Bible and its familiarity with philosophy became especially evident in this theme, not one sentence of which accords with what we are accustomed to find elsewhere in the Old or New Testament. And that would still be completely true even if the hypothetical derivation of the sentence ‘in him live, move and exist’ were false. For God’s relationship with men is taught by philosophy in the very same context in which the idea appears in the Areopagus speech. It lays a basis for correct conception of the gods and brings about independence of ancient religious forms.³⁰

Verse 28 brings Paul’s defense of the charge that he is proclaiming strange or foreign gods to a close.³¹ L. T. Johnson notes, “As in his midrashic arguments, Paul immediately picks

²⁵ Lake, “Your Own Poets,” 246.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Aratus, *Phaenomena*, trans. G. R. Mair. Loeb Classical Library 37 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 207.

²⁸ Dibelius, “Paul on the Areopagus,” 73, 78.

²⁹ Edwards, “Quoting Aratus,” 269.

³⁰ Dibelius, “Paul on the Areopagus,” 52-53.

³¹ Soards, *Speeches in Acts*, 98

up the key word, *genos* (“family/offspring”) for his conclusion”³² thus not stressing a new teaching but continuity with antiquity.³³ Greek philosophy and Jewish thought argue for a living God, not an idol, because we are living beings.

Again, the quotation does not necessarily mean that Luke or Paul knew firsthand these sources. The excerpt could easily be a commonplace, proverbial language in the common milieu.³⁴ Another possible option is that Aratus is using the earlier poem of Cleanthes to Zeus. So Cadbury is cautious enough not to make too much of the evidence available and concludes that the identification of the author or the source is not as important as to how the quotation functions. The Greek quotation seems here to play the same role as OT quotations do in speeches to Jews earlier in Acts.³⁵ In the best sense, the text functions as a proof-text.

Not only is the philosophical world of Luke and the philosophers he directly addresses complex, but also the philosophical landscape of the sources for the quotations and allusions he utilizes. Luke is not only conversant in other symbolic worlds, he recognizes the truth and the value those constructs possess. Johnson cautions not to make too much of the evidence but at a minimum, Luke “recognizes it [Greek philosophy] as a legitimate conversation partner in the approach to God.”³⁶ The Areopagus sermon is “A Hellenistic speech about recognizing God, and about recognizing him philosophically.”³⁷

The source of the formula is not a settled issue but consensus dictates that the phrase derives from Stoicism.³⁸ Conzelmann notes the “value ... in the fact that it documents for us how a Christian around A.D. 100 reacts to the pagan milieu and meets it from the position of faith.”³⁹ Dibelius concludes that Luke gives the future a means by which the Christian message is to be spread in the Hellenistic culture. “The Areopagus speech became a symbol of Christian theology in the environment of Greek culture.”⁴⁰

Implications

So far, I have said little new. The readily available evidence presented above seems to have little consequence for most preachers. I would like to offer three tentative implications related to intertextuality, postliberal homiletics, and cross-cultural communication.

³² L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 316.

³³ Cukrowski, *Pagan Polemic*, 37.

³⁴ Similarly, some people today have difficulty distinguishing the sources of phrases that may originate with the Bible, Shakespeare, *Poor Richard*, or *Reader’s Digest*.

³⁵ H. J. Cadbury, “Additional Note 20,” *The Beginning of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Jackson and K. Lake, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1933), 5. 251.

³⁶ Johnson, *Acts*, 319.

³⁷ M. Dibelius, “Paul in Athens,” *Studies in Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven, trans. M. Ling (London: SCM Press, 1956), 81.

³⁸ P. Colaclides, “Acts 17:28a and Bacchae 506,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 27.3 (1973) 161-164.

³⁹ H. Conzelmann, “The Address of Paul on the Areopagus,” *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L. Keck and J. L. Martyn. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, 1980), 218.

⁴⁰ Dibelius, “Paul on the Areopagus,” 77.

1. The philosophical world and the use of texts intertextually represent a more complex situation than we tend to appreciate. Expository preaching has relied heavily on identifying the boundaries of the text. The intertextual studies of M. Fishbane and R. Hayes⁴¹ spur us to see the expanding borders of a text—theologically, socially, and historically. Past tense words are continually re-appropriated for present tense purposes in order to re-envision future realities. This present study reviews the literature about the NT's use of non-canonical literature thus extending the boundaries previously considered by Hays and Fishbane.
2. I am fascinated with the possibilities that postliberal theology has for homiletics. The New Homiletic sometimes remains shackled to a positivist worldview that generates an ever-widening gap between the world of the text and our world.⁴² The capacity of the text

⁴¹ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 460, describes two types of utilizing older traditions in newer situations: transformative and non-transformative. "...'traditum' has been supplemented in one way or another. In what follows, the material will be separated into two formal categories: those instances of exegesis which are non-transformative in nature, that is, where the interpretation of the oracular 'traditum' do not change the content of the oracle, and may even be part of its presentation; and these instances which are essentially transformative in nature, that is, where the 'traditio' readapts, reapplies, or otherwise revises an older 'traditum'." See also J. L. Kugel, *The Bible as it Was* (Belknap Press, 1997); and J. L. Kugel and R. A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, Library of Early Christianity vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986).

The hermeneutical move of texts re-interpreting texts that Hays sees in the NT and Fishbane in the OT is not unlike rabbinic midrashim and the exegesis of the Second Temple era. Devorah Dimant, "Peshet." *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 244-251, describes the 4th sense of peshet as meaning the particular exegetical method of Qumranic commentaries where contemporary events are read into older prophecies. These may appear at times arbitrary, but are based on an existing exegetical tradition. R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 14, quotes Michael Fishbane, "Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel." In Hartman and Budick *Midrash and Literature*, 36, indicating the canon of Scripture remained open to reworkings and revisions until the early rabbinic period. "Within ancient Israel, as long as the textual corpus remained open, Revelation and Tradition were thickly interwoven and interdependent, and the received Hebrew Bible is itself, therefore, the product of an interpretive tradition." See also, L. McDonald and J. Sanders (eds.), *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002).

⁴² D. H. Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999, 185-192, calls into question the metaphor of "translation" where Scripture is understood as "source" and theology as "translation." Similar critique could be given to the metaphor "bridge." See also, G. A. Lindbeck. "Scripture, Consensus and Community." *The Church in a Postliberal Age*. Edited by J. J. Buckley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, 212, speaking of translation (a method of correlation) as a metaphor "their interpretations tend to replace Scripture rather than to lead to it thus failing to contribute to the formation of a community." A similar critique could be given to S. Farris, *Preaching That Matters: The Bible and Our Lives* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), 10, 129, where he uses the word "bridge" to describe analogy. Farris' analogy acts as an encounter rather than a journey towards community formation. Analogy, as a strategy to create connectedness between the "Then" and the "Now" contributes to the proverbial gap.

If not translation or bridge, then what models or metaphors best describes the hermeneutical transaction between text, preacher, and congregation? Utilizing multiple models and metaphors keeps the process dynamic. I have utilized "horizons", "spirals/helix", "contextualization", "dialogue", "triangulation", "witness", "enactment", and "trifocals" to name a few. Although E. Farley's thoughts

to communicate a message to the community creates an enactment rather than a translation.⁴³ An enactment is more than just explaining or reiterating the texts at hand or correlating the text by analogy to experience but allows these texts to speak a present tense word.⁴⁴ When the Word of God comes alive, a change of existence of the community is possible. The listening community moves from unbelief to faith.⁴⁵

A postliberal understanding of the nature of performative language⁴⁶ claims that scripture creates a reality for the listener to enter (intratextuality).⁴⁷ However, Luke seems

need to be garnered cautiously, his triangulation model is provocative. Three ongoing interpretive activities of critical historical studies, theological reflection, and situational analysis keeps the gospel, the kingdom of God, as contemporary proclamation. Edward Farley, "Toward a New Paradigm for Preaching." In T. G. Long and E. Farley, *Preaching as a Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992, 173. See also D. M. Wardlaw, "Preaching as the Interface of Two Social Worlds: the Congregation as Corporate Agent in the Act of Preaching." In A. Van Seters, *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology and Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1988, 55-94.

R. Allen speaks of this as a theology of mutual critical correlation that he derives from H. G. Gadamer that conceives the relationship between the gospel, a text, a preacher, and a congregation as a dialogue. R. Allen, "Why Preach from Passages in the Bible?" In T. G. Long and E. Farley, *Preaching as a Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992, 181.

See M. Ellingsen, *The Integrity of Biblical Narrative: Story in Theology and Proclamation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990, 9-12 for an interpretation of Lindbeck, Childs, and Frei for preaching narrative that is correspondingly critical of the "translation" metaphor. He notes the translation metaphor is a method of correlation and labeled as "experiential-expressive model" that translates biblical texts into conceptualities that are more relevant and in so doing changing the conceptual framework of the Bible itself. "For if Christianity's claims always must be correlated with contemporary human experience in order that they be God's Word, then the Word of God can never be said to stand unambiguously over against and criticize contemporary experience," 27.

⁴³ The word "transaction" may carry financial or legal baggage beyond my usage, but I want to emphasize the transformative and performative aspects of preaching. Likewise, "enactment" may carry the idea of a single event in the life of an individual rather than a journey of communal formation.

⁴⁴ Charles L. Bartow, *God's Human Speech: A Practical Theology of Proclamation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 131, states, "What preachers ... need to look for with reference to the implementation of criteria number one in the analysis of preaching is what may be called the 'present-tense' tone of the sermon. If the Scriptures are understood not only denotatively, but also connotatively, not only as dated documents, but a living speech intended to evoke worlds of alternative human beings with God on the turf of contemporaneous life, there is no need for what has been called "ping-pong" speech, exposition followed by application. "This is what the text meant, here is what the text means now." Whatever the exegetical method behind the sermon, in it, with texts of Scripture, God speaks to us in the present."

⁴⁵ See W. Willimon's, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002, 120-130, postliberal move of how the narratives of Scripture recreate a world in which the community of faith may dwell.

⁴⁶ N. Lash, "Performing the Scriptures," in R. Lischer's *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. See also S. E. Fowl & L. G. Jones. *Reading in Communion: Scripture & Ethics in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, 62.

to allow a less limited understanding of narrative worlds by his willingness to expand the borderlines of the term “text.” Luke not only acknowledges the existence of the Hellenistic philosophical world, but also is quite conversant and respectful of that world. For him, it is not just the OT, the Jesus tradition, Q, Mark etc. that provide him his sources. Other texts, commonplaces, philosophical worldviews, also have realities that do not necessarily need converting but embracing. Postliberals are urging us to give the words of the text priority, and rightly so. But in our efforts to counter-balance previous attempts to be contemporaneous, let us not overshift the conversation. I applaud the efforts in the renewal of seeing how biblical writers themselves hermeneutically used texts. But that is not the only witness as demonstrated by Luke.

The speeches in Acts do need to be analyzed in how they function within context in order to extend Luke’s understanding of the gospel. The Areopagus speech provides a defense and moves to a Christological conclusion. Yet, Luke’s method does not employ OT scripture, the narrative of Jesus, or the character of Jesus (contra Frei⁴⁸) to create a reality for these Athenians to enter but embraces their present tense fields of understanding already in existence.

Furthermore, Luke’s intent is not just to create a world through the performance of language. He has specific referential content about the nature of deity. The dichotomy between the performative and referential nature of language leads to a false dualism and a pedantic bi-polar debate.⁴⁹

3. A third implication has links to studies concerning cross-cultural communication. As the American landscape becomes increasingly multi-cultural, even preachers in rural settings must move beyond their comfort zones. The language of a culture does not necessarily have to be “baptized” or seized, but can be appropriated within its own framework. How will these approaches nuance present conversations with other world religions or philosophical conceptions? And closer to home, how can we communicate with folks in our own backyard who do not know the language of theology. B. Witherington has concluded, “From a rhetorical point of view the function of the quotation or quotations here is to cite an authority recognized by one’s audience to support one’s point. It would have done Paul no good to simply quote the Scriptures, a book the audience did not know and one that had no authority in the minds of these hearers. Arguments are only

⁴⁷ G. A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984, 118, “Intratextual theology redescribes reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating Scripture into extra scriptural categories. It is the text, so to speak, which absorbs the world, rather than the world the text.” Two related terms need to be clarified. “Intratextual” as used by Lindbeck refers to allowing scripture to create a world for the reader to engage where as “intertextual” refers to one text relating to another text.

⁴⁸ H. W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1974).

⁴⁹ C. L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997 also differentiates between the existential (and thus individualistic) nature of the New Hermeneutic's “language event” and the postliberal move toward the performative nature of language. Campbell demonstrates that this difference (creating of an experience vs. transforming lives) is the primary difference between the New Homiletic (and their dependence on the New Hermeneutic) and a postliberal homiletic.

persuasive if they work within the plausibility structure existing in the minds of the hearers.”⁵⁰ Similarly, Dibelius states, “The author’s intention is obvious. He wants to show how the Christian message should be preached in his day that is in the last decades of the first century. In giving only one sermon addressed to Gentiles by the great apostle to the Gentiles, namely the Areopagus speech in Athens, his primary purpose is to give an example of how the Christian missionary should approach cultured Gentiles.”⁵¹

I do not see Witherington or Dibelius saying that Luke is simply being opportunistic, but presupposing a deeper integration of Christianity with Greco-Roman culture. Therefore, not for pragmatic purposes, but as an ethical choice, we too need to critically engage in multiple-dialectic conversations with other symbolic worlds that engage us everyday. Where in our daily lives do we see truth? How do others perceive reality? How can we listen to and learn from others who not only read Christian Scriptures from various stances but also reality itself?

⁵⁰ B. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 530.

⁵¹ Dibelius, “Paul in Athens,” 79. See also, J. J. Kilgallen, “Acts 17:22-31: An Example of Interreligious Dialogue,” *Studia Missionalia* 43 (1994) 43-60.