**A Contemporary Reading**:   
‘Contemplation on Colonised Country” by Garry Worete Deverell (from *Contemplating Country: More Gondwana Theology*)

Conversion… will certainly never happen if Indigenous knowledges and practices continue to be seen as interesting but exotic and marginal: pretty and decorative, like a dot painting on the wall of a suburban home that is otherwise entirely European in style. Conversion only comes, I believe, when the stability and apparent ‘success’ of a particular paradigm starts to come undone. Many of us hope that the ecological emergency that is slowly starting to penetrate even white Western consciousness, in tandem with the collapse and imminent implosion of settler churches and their supporting theologies, may create the kind of crisis in which Christian settlers will eventually turn to what the world’s oldest living cultures might have to contribute.

Insofar as the Christian faith can be an ally in that learning and unlearning… myself, and many others, are happy to be identified as Christian. But the Christian faith we embrace will be necessarily different from settler ways of being Christian. Our Indigenous faith remembers that Christianity arose in a colonial setting as a protest against the excesses of the Roman empire and against the Judaean leaders who collaborated with empire in their oppression of ordinary people. Our faith remembers that Jesus was a keen observer of the processes and cycles of local ecosystems, and that he counselled his hearers to attend to the lessons he observed there in the parables. Our faith remembers that Jesus blurred the difference between bread and his body, wine and his blood: all these things being, for him, a dying and a mourning by which life and joy is given anew, as much in country and ecosystem as in human community. Our faith remembers that Jesus was concerned, most of all, with the last and the least, the forgotten victims of oppressive structures and regimes. In him we see ourselves, and we hear in his message the voice of our Creator ancestors who say that life is not yet spent, but that there is a hope yet for a better tomorrow.

For challenge and inspiration in First Nations theology

We give thanks.