

At the Origins of Christianity: from Division to Inclusion

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RESUMEN Nuestro tiempo ha sido testigo de la creación de una multitud de fronteras de distintos tipos y dimensiones. Las religiones han sido acusadas de ser responsables de la construcción y fortalecimiento de dichas fronteras, que dividen los pueblos. De aquí que sea importante volver al origen del cristianismo para conocer la perspectiva original de los primeros cristianos acerca de esta cuestión.

PALABRAS CLAVE Lucas-Hechos, orígenes del cristianismo, división, inclusión, universalismo, análisis narrativo.

SUMMARY *Our time has been witness to the creation of a multitude of many new frontiers, in increasing number, kind, and size. Religions have been accused of being responsible for making and strengthening those boundaries, that divide the peoples. Hence, it is important to return to the origin of Christianity to identify the original perspective of the first Christians on this issue.*

KEYWORDS *Luke-Acts, Origins of Christianity, Division, Inclusion, Universalism, Narrative Criticism.*

The time we live in is characterized by the frequently repeated slogan: “a global village transcending all boundaries.” Paradoxically, however, we have witnessed the creation of a multitude of many new frontiers, in increasing number, kind, and size.

Religions have been accused of being responsible for making and strengthening those boundaries that divide peoples, by promoting such events and movements as invasions, wars, ghettos, hermetic groups, and fanaticism. Christianity in particular, has been pinpointed for causing and promoting such actions and groups. Examples of this are highlighted by both the crusades and the colonization of the Americas.

Hence, it is important to return to the origins of Christianity to identify the original perspective of the first Christians on this issue. Was division the original behavior of Christianity? What did the first Christians think and say about this?

The first literary work about Christianity in general is the double-volume work, Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles.¹ There we learn not only about the life of Jesus, but also about the first Christians. Since Luke-Acts is a very long narrative it is not possible to study the whole double-volume literary work in one paper. Paying attention to the narrative importance of different passages in connection with our topic, I will focus on how Luke tells a story, calling attention to the voice of the narrator. The Luke-Acts narrator seldom speaks in the first person, choosing to efface himself in order to focus his audience's attention on his story. Yet the narrator is the voice through which a particular set of interests, norms, and values are presented.

My aim is to underline what the narrator is highlighting through the literary design of the work. In this way I will be able to focus on several important texts within a lengthy narrative. But how does the narrator highlight a particular text within such a long narrative? How can we know the narrator's emphasis in his whole literary work? I will consider six different literary tools that I will briefly explain and give an illustrative example throughout Luke-Acts. Thus we will be able to decode the language and structure used by Luke to present the original Christian attitude and message: a movement from frontiers and division to communion and inclusion. I will try to show Luke's particular vision of this topic and how he transmits it to the implied reader.

1 Certainly, Luke-Acts is not the only work of the origins of Christianity. This short paper will be focused only on Luke-Acts, though. I will refer to the author as Luke and to his work as Luke-Acts or the Lukan composition. Following the majority of the scholars, of whom the first was H. J. CADBURY, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York 1927) 8-11, I consider Luke-Acts as two parts of a single account, the Lukan work. M. C. PARSONS – R. I. PERVO, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis, MN 1993), have challenged scholars to examine what was in danger of becoming an unquestioned and unexamined assumption and have called attention to differences in genre and style between the Gospel and Acts. Nevertheless, their challenge has led to a stronger and more defensible case for the unity of Luke-Acts. As I. H. MARSHALL, "Israel' and the Story of Salvation: One Theme in Two Parts", in: D. P. MOESSNER (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel. Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Lnt1 1; Harrisburg, PA 1999) 340-357, has showed, it seems apparent that Luke intended Acts to be an essential part of the Gospel (Acts 1:1; Lk 1:1-4), with significant narrative connections between the two books.

I. A GEOGRAPHICAL UNIVERSALISM

The connection between geography and storytelling in secular literature has been studied by Beck.² Writers artfully make use of geographical location to affect their readers, predominantly in shaping the meaning of a story through the role geography can play in the development of the plot. The Bible may not be a geography book, but it is a book filled with geography. In addition, biblical writers add theologically meaningful geographical locations to the plot, such as the Temple in Jerusalem. Because some biblical storytellers exploit geography and location to achieve strategic literary and theological ends, geographical location plays a key role in biblical studies. The temporal and spatial coordinates of events may be significant for how readers understand what is reported in a narrative.³

I claim that the geographical disposition of Luke-Acts is used by Luke to express the overcoming of division brought by the Christ event. I affirm it because of two major reasons: the centripetal movement of Luke's Gospel which becomes a centrifugal one in Acts; and the progressive decrease of the Temple and increase of the household throughout Luke-Acts.

First, while the third Gospel starts (Lk 1:5.25) and ends (Lk 24:50-53) in Jerusalem, Acts starts from Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-5) but does not end in Jerusalem; instead, Acts ends in Rome (28:16-31).⁴ The centripetal force that drags Luke's entire Gospel to Jerusalem through the Lukan travel narrative becomes a centrifugal force that, starting from Jerusalem, arrives at the confines of the land represented by the capital of the Empire. Not only do we find this centripetal movement at the end of the third Gospel (εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ: Lk 24:52)

2 In J. A. BECK, *God as Storyteller: Seeking Meaning in Biblical Narrative* (St. Louis, MO 2008) 106-110, the chapter entitled "Narrative Geography Defined," Beck proposes a method for narrative-geographical analysis with three consecutive steps: identify the formal references to geography, show how they increase our understanding, and integrate the geography into the narrative analysis. See as well the chapter entitled "The Storyteller and Narrative Geography," in J.A. Beck, *Translators as Storytellers. A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique* (StudBL 25; New York 2000) 166-172.

3 Readers may respond differently to the story if an event occurs on a mountain (Lk 9:28-36) in a boat (Lk 5:3-11), in private (Lk 6:12) among a crowd (Lk 6:17-18), or on a Sabbath (Lk 6:1-5).

4 K. BALTZER, "The Meaning of the Temple in the Lukan Writings": *HThR* 58 (1965) 277, and E. LARSSON, "Temple-Criticism and the Jewish Heritage: Some Reflexions on Acts 6-7": *NTS* 39 (1993) 394, have seen an *inclusio* in Acts similar to that in Luke's Gospel. For them, Acts begins in Jerusalem, the Temple-city, and it closes with a quotation from Is 6:9-10, drawn from the Temple vision (Acts 28:26-27). In my opinion the reader is not able to perceive that *inclusio* because there is no direct reference to the Temple in Acts 28:26-27.

and centrifugal one at the beginning of Acts (ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ: Acts 1:8), but also in the second account of the conversion of Paul (Acts 22:17-21). Paul affirms that he went to Jerusalem (εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ: Acts 22:17) and, being in the Temple, saw the risen Jesus who said to him: “go from Jerusalem (ἐξέλαθε ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ: Acts 22:18).” As the apostles receive the mandate of the risen Jesus to set off from Jerusalem to the confines of the land (Acts 1:8), now Paul receives from the risen Jesus the mandate to leave Jerusalem.

And second, as the importance of the Temple decreases in Acts, the importance of household progressively increases. In the Gospel the story begins (1:5-23) and ends (24:50-53) in the *Temple*. In Acts, however, it begins (1:12-14) and ends (28:30-31) in the *house*. At the end of the third Gospel, after the ascension of Jesus, the disciples “return to Jerusalem, where they were continually in the *Temple* blessing God” (Lk 24:52-53). However, in the beginning of Acts, after the ascension of Jesus, the disciples “return to Jerusalem (...) and they went to the room upstairs where they were staying” (Acts 1:12-13), and they receive the Spirit “that filled the entire *house* where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2). In fact, as Jesus enters Jerusalem going directly to the *Temple* (Lk 19:45), Paul enters Jerusalem going directly to a *house* (Acts 21:4). After the miraculous liberation of the disciples, the angel orders them: “Go, stand in the *Temple*” (Acts 5:20). However, later, after the miraculous liberation of Peter, the angel drives him to the streets of the city (Acts 12:10) and “to the *house* of Mary” (Acts 12:12). At the beginning, the Jewish authorities head for the *Temple* in order to find the first Christians (Acts 5:26-27). But, as the narrative advances, “Saul was ravaging the Church by entering *house* after *house*” (Acts 8:3).

Furthermore, L. Michael White supports the idea that the Jewish community, after the destruction of the Temple, translated certain values of the Temple to the synagogue.⁵ Something similar could be said among the Christians, translating some of the values of the Temple to the primitive Christian community or to the houses where they lived.⁶ According to Elliot,

5 L. M. WHITE, *From Jesus to Christianity* (San Francisco 2004) 90-92. P. BILLERBECK, “Ein Synagogengottesdienst in Jesu Tagen”: *ZNW* 55 (1964) 143-161, and A. MENES, “Temple und Synagoge”: *ZAW* 50 (1932) 268-276, hold that the architecture and the liturgical movement in the synagogue took over several elements of the Temple cult.

6 Luke, calling the Temple *house* (οἶκος: Lk 6:4; 11:51; 13:35; 19:46; Acts 7:47; 7:49), helps the reader to make the transition from the Temple of Jerusalem to the households. In this way, the reader can easily see that the functions of the Temple have been assumed by the household. See G. BACHELARD – M. JOLAS, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston 1994).

in the Lukan economy of salvation, the Temple and the household represent opposed types of social institutions, but only one of which, the household, is capable of embodying the structures, values and goals of an inclusive Gospel of inclusion.⁷ I do not believe that in Luke-Acts both institutions are opposed, but agree with this latter idea. The houses of the first Christians progressively supplant the Temple's importance and authority throughout Luke-Acts because household accepts every kind of people much better than the Temple, which divided the people.

II. THE COMMISSION STATEMENT OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS (LUKE 10)

According to the narrator, God's purpose is realized through chosen instruments, persons commissioned by God to carry out some aspect of this purpose. At various points in Luke-Acts there are statements of the commission which has been received by Jesus, the twelve, or Paul, as we have just seen. These commission statements are also programs for action by particular characters and keys to the general plot of the macro-narrative.⁸

The mission of the 70 (72) is one of these commission statements (Lk 10:1-21). The mission of the 70 (72) is peculiar to Luke (10:1-20).⁹ It appears that Lk 10:1-12, the sending of the 70 (72), while adding new features, repeats several affirmations of Lk 9:1-6, the sending of the twelve.¹⁰ Luke is the only Gospel with a mission "doublet," and Luke usually avoids doublets in his

7 J. H. ELLIOTT, "Household and Meals Versus Temple Purity Replication Patterns in Luke-Acts": *BTB* 21 (1991) 107. See as well J. H. ELLIOTT, "Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: a Contrast in Social Institutions": *HTS* 47 (1991) 88-120, especially 115-118.

8 I borrow the expression and meaning of *commission statement* from R. TANNEHILL, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts I* (Philadelphia, PA 1986) 21-22.

9 Luke has redacted it with the material that he had from the sending of the twelve in Mark (Lk 10:4 parallels Mk6:8-9), *Q*, (Lk 10:1-12 is paralleled by Mt 9:37-38 and Mt 10:7-16, while Lk 10:13-15 is paralleled by Mt 11:20-24, and Lk 10:16 is paralleled by Mt 10:40), and has added his own material and understanding (Lk 10:17-20 is without any parallel).

10 For example, Lk 10:4 repeats Lk 9:3-5. In addition, there are similarities in form (structure of sending and return: 9:1-6, 10; 10:1-16, 17-20), and in content (kingdom: 9:2; 10:9b, 11; healing: 9:2; 10:9a; subjection of demons: 9:1; 10:17; no provisions: 9:3; 10:4; and divided response: 9:5, 10:10, 16). Luke himself links both missions, affirming that the Lord appointed 70 (72) "others" (εἄτεροι: 10:1) thus implicitly referring to the other twelve chosen first.

Gospel.¹¹ I will focus on the material peculiar to Luke in an attempt to discover his purpose in narrating this new mission. I claim that the mission of the 70 (72) is meant by Luke as a preview of the future Gentile mission, which includes all the different peoples on the earth.

Of special interest is the number 70 (72), only found in Lk 10:1. Why would Luke have chosen that number? It might have been a round number,¹² but it could also have been a symbolic number with a particular significance for him. Just as the twelve obviously called to mind the twelve tribes of Israel,¹³ there are good reasons to suggest that the number 70 (72) was meant by Luke to represent the number of the peoples on the earth suggested by Gn 10:32. Genesis 10 is often referred to as the *table of nations* because it records the genealogy of the 70 (72) nations of the post-diluvian world, who descended from Noah and his three sons. From these, the nations spread abroad on the earth and repopulated the world after the universal flood. Some Lukan manuscripts follow the MT of Gn 10:2-31, which lists the 70 offspring of the sons of Noah.¹⁴ Other manuscripts follow the LXX, where the descendents of Shem, Ham, and Japheth number 72.¹⁵ This textual problem of whether the number is 70 or 72 only serves to strengthen the connection with the tradition of the number of nations in Genesis 10. From a very early point, the Christian copyists of Luke-Acts connected the mission of the 70 (72) with the number of nations which repopulated the world after the universal flood. The mission of the 70 (72) might be seen as anticipating the Gentile mission in Acts,¹⁶ where the

11 For instance, the duplication of the feeding miracle (Mk 6:32-44 and 8:1-9; Mt 14:13-21 and 15:32-38) is avoided by Luke (only Lk 9:10-17).

12 So N. GELDENHUYS, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (NIC; Grand Rapids, MI 1954) 299.

13 Lk 22:30 promises that the twelve apostles will sit in judgment on the twelve tribes of Israel. On the number of twelve apostles and its connection with the twelve tribes see J. P. MEIER, "Jesus, the Twelve, and the Restoration of Israel", in: J. M. SCOTT (ed.), *Restoration. Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (JSJ.S 72; Leiden 2001) 365-404, and R. BAUCKHAM, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts", in: J. M. SCOTT (ed.), *Restoration. Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (JSJ.S 72; Leiden 2001) 469-477.

14 These main manuscripts are the following: a A C L f¹ and f¹³.

15 The main manuscripts are the following: P⁷⁵ B D, along with Old Latin and Syriac versions.

16 As D. P. BÉCHARD, *Paul Outside the Walls. A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20* (AnBib 143; Roma 2000) 228, has proved, many of the same motifs used to define the missionary experiences of the 70 (72) disciples in Luke 10 are later repeated in the missionary episodes in Acts: work of healing and proclaiming God's reign (Lk 10:9; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23.31); the possibility of acceptance or rejection (Lk 10:8-12; Acts 13:51; 18:6); the subjection of demons in Jesus' name (Lk 10:17; Acts 3:6; 4:10.30; 16:18; 19:13); authority over Satan (Lk 10:18-19; Acts 13:10; 26:18); and

twelve remained attached to Jerusalem while many others left to spread the good news of Jesus even to many other nations.¹⁷

The mission of the 70 (72) presents Jesus' mandate of going to houses and staying in the same house (Lk 10:5-7; Mt 10:11-13). Only Luke narrates Jesus' command of "taking what food and drink they have to offer" (Lk 10:7), and even repeats this command (Lk 10:8). Luke does not say overtly that Jesus commanded the disciples to break the Jewish dietary laws, but the commands of Lk 10:7-8 are strange if the 70 (72) were to minister only to Jews.¹⁸ The Lukan Jesus commands the (70) 72 to eat and drink what is set before them, anticipating the dismantling of Jewish-Gentile social barriers in Acts 10–11, when Peter saw all kinds of animals and was ordered to eat (Acts 10:11-13).¹⁹

Finally, Luke does not present Mt 10:5b-6, which limits the missionary effort to Israel, without evangelizing Samaria or the nations: "Do not make your way to Gentile territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go instead to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."²⁰ The restrictions on the mission are absent in Luke, even in the first mission of the twelve. There are no restrictions, implying a mission addressed to all the peoples.

The mission of the 72 was meant by Luke to be a symbol and anticipation of the future Gentile mission. Luke has rewritten the history of salvation

the promise that nothing will harm the witnesses (Lk 10:19; Acts 5:17-26; 12:6-11; 14:19-20; 16:25-40; 27:9-44). Likewise the joy (χαρά) attributed to the 70 (72) disciples upon their return from the successful mission often characterizes the missionaries in Acts (Lk 10:17-18; Acts 8:8; 12:14; 13:48.52; 15:3).

17 Who were these 70 (72) that appear with such importance in Luke's Gospel? It is striking that the name *Acts of the Apostles* is not entirely justified, because there is no detailed knowledge of the twelve, who do not get nearly as much attention as could be anticipated. On the contrary, an extensive set of characters, who are not in the list of the apostles, appears. For example, Stephen, in Acts 6:8–7:60; Philip, in Acts 8:6-40; some Jerusalemites, in Acts 11:19-24; Paul and his helpers, Barnabas, Jude and Silas, Timothy, and Apollos, in Acts 15:22-40; 16:1-29; 17:4-15; 18:5.24; 19:1.22; Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, and Tychicus and Trophimus, in Acts 20:4.

18 In fact it seems that the ministry of the 70 (72) missionaries takes place in Samaria. Jesus sent them out ahead of him, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting (10:1), and he was walking through Samaria (9:52.56) which was a schism from Judaism.

19 Other passages of Acts that insist on the absence of any dietary law are Acts 15:19-21 with the Council at Jerusalem and its letter to the Gentile believers (Acts 15:23-29). While Acts 10 annuls the distinction between clean and unclean animals, Acts 15 progresses to dietary freedom and deals with the ways in which animals are killed and prepared for eating.

20 Perhaps Luke did not know of Mt 10:5b-6. However, Luke does not present Mk 7:24-30 either, even though Matthew does (Mt 15:21-28), when Jesus says to the Syrophenician woman, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to little dogs" (v. 26). Although this passage is located in a pagan region, Tyre, Luke could have omitted the whole incident, which is dominated by the Jewish disparagement of the Gentiles from the lips of the Markan Jesus.

with a certain openness, shaping his Gospel in such a way so as to make his task of describing the mission to the Gentiles in Acts easier. It seems that the Gospel lays the groundwork for Acts, and it does so consciously.

III. THE ORDER OF THE SEQUENCE OF THE NARRATIVES (ACTS 8–10)

The impulse for following a sequential order derives from both ancient and contemporary sources: on the one side, from the Lukan prologue (Lk 1:1–4) in which Luke claims to have written his narrative (διήγησις)²¹ in order, successively, in a sequence (καθεξῆς); and, on the other, from hermeneutical work that emphasizes narrative itself as the bearer of meaning.²² The order in which the events are narrated is a literary tool used by the narrator to underscore his interests. The order is important because readers are expected to consider each new episode in light of what has gone before.

After the stoning of Stephen, the first Christians scatter and go from place to place preaching the Good News (8:1). There is a progressive process of inclusion of Gentiles, made up of different stages: first, the Samaritan Pentecost (8:4–25); second, the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40); and third, the Gentile Pentecost (10:1–48).

First, Philip goes to a Samaritan town and proclaims Christ to them (8:4–5). Because of the success of Philip's mission at Samaria,²³ Peter and John go down there and pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit (8:14–17). This Samaritan Pentecost is striking because the Samaritans were historically linked to Jews, but they cannot be strictly considered Jews and were in mid-position between the Jews and the Gentiles.²⁴

21 The noun διήγησις refers to the narrative that "many others" have written (Lk 1:1). However, implicitly Luke refers to it when he affirms that he, in his turn, has decided to write it (Lk 1:3).

22 See P. RICCEUR, "Interpretative Narrative", in: R. M. SCHWARTZ (ed.), *The Book and the Text. The Bible and Literary Theory* (Cambridge, MA 1990) 237–257.

23 Nowhere does Luke report greater triumphs for the Gospel than in Samaria. The reports about mass conversions among Jews in Jerusalem (2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1.7) are always associated with the rejection of the Gospel by the authorities of Israel. In Samaria it is different. Here the masses unanimously accept the Gospel (8:6). Although Simon Magus has deceived the entire population (8:9–11), this entire population is baptized by Philip, Simon Magus included (8:12.13).

24 I believe that Luke does not consider Samaritans as one hundred percent Jews, but as a separate group of people, not only

Another stage in the inclusion of Gentiles is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40),²⁵ whose religious status is imprecise. He could be classified as a Jew because he had been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem (8:27: προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ) and, coming back, he was reading the prophet Isaiah (8:28). However, he could also be classified as Gentile, because he was an Ethiopian, a eunuch,²⁶ and an officer at the court of the kandake, or queen of Ethiopia (8:27).²⁷

The last stage in the inclusion of the Gentiles is Peter's meeting with Cornelius and the Gentile Pentecost that happened at Cornelius' house (Acts 10).²⁸ Cornelius' Latin name, his profession as a centurion of the Italica cohort (10:1), and his characterization as an ἀλλοφυλὸς (10:8)²⁹ present him as a pagan. In fact, both Peter and the Jewish-Christians of Jerusalem consider him to be a pagan (10:28-29; 11:3). But although Cornelius is a pagan, he is characterized by Luke in a specific way, as a devout *God-fearer* (10:2). He does not fit into the normal definition of a pagan.³⁰

with geographical differences, but also with ethnic and religious differences. The Samaritans did not receive Jesus because he was making for Jerusalem, and the Samaritans used to worship in the temple on Mount Gerizim (only in Lk 9:51-53) using only the Samaritan Pentateuch. The parable of the Good Samaritan underlines the difference between the Jews, the priest and the Levite, and the Samaritan (only in Lk 10:29-37). In the account of the ten lepers, all the stress is on the fact that the only grateful one was a Samaritan, with the obvious implication that the rest were Jews. In fact, the Samaritan is named by Jesus as "this foreigner" (ὁ ἀλλογενῆς οὗτος; only in Lk 17:18).

25 Studying different ancient references, D. MARGUERAT, "Luc, metteur en scène des personnages", in: C. FOCANT – A. WÉNIN (eds.), *Analyse narrative et Bible. Deuxième Colloque internationale du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004* (BETHL 191; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2005) 292, claims that Ethiopia was considered in the first century as the extremity of the Roman Empire; the Ethiopian eunuch represents men coming from all parts of the earth.

26 Dt 23:2 says: "A man whose testicles have been crushed or whose male member has been cut off must not be admitted to the assembly of Yhwh."

27 According to E. HAENCHEN, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen 1977) 303-304, Luke's vagueness in identifying the Ethiopian is intentional.

28 J.-R. RACINE, "L'hybridité des personnages: Une stratégie d'inclusion des gentils dans les Actes des Apôtres", in: C. FOCANT – A. WÉNIN (eds.), *Analyse narrative et Bible. Deuxième Colloque internationale du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004* (BETHL 191; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA 2005) 563, emphasizes that Peter crosses the border of division with the pagans. His coming into Cornelius' house is framed in slow motion through the verb εἰσελθεῖν used over 3 verses, Acts 10:25-27.

29 This noun is used very often in the LXX for Philistines, who were not only simply pagans, but enemies of Israel.

30 M. J. COOK, "The Mission to the Jews in Acts: Unraveling Luke's 'Myth of the «Myriads»'", in: J. B. TYSON (ed.), *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People. Eight Critical Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN 1988) 120, claims that the God-fearers serve a transitional function from the Jews to the pagans. This is why their placement is only in the middle chapters of Acts (10:2.22; 13:16.26).

Luke has progressively presented different characters in an increasing degree of paganism to destroy the division between Jews and pagans.³¹ Samaritans who had been Jews but are now an schism from Judaism, the Ethiopian eunuch with his imprecise religious status, and Cornelius with his paganism but closeness to Judaism, present to the reader examples of progressively more pagan people that become Christians. I agree with Racine, who suggests that this progression in order is a narrative strategy that tries to shade in the distinctive lines between Jews and Gentiles.³² Christians accept either Jews or Gentiles including them in the same people.

IV. DELIBERATE REPETITION: THE THREE ACCOUNTS OF PAUL'S VOCATION (ACTS 9; 22; 26)

If the narrator decides to repeat the same event, or type of event, or a specific expression, then the audience knows that it has significance in the narrative.³³ The repetition of characteristic terms or expressions gives to the text a distinctive physiognomy,³⁴ and creates a *Leitmotiv* in the narrative; a leading-expression, a structural reminder guiding the reader's movement through Luke-Acts by alerting the reader to what is central to the story.³⁵

While words are repeated to demarcate separations and emphasize the author's message, the repetition of a scene or event also has a purpose. This narrative redundancy technique is one to which Luke resorts when he espe-

31 The rabbi Cohen has proven that we can speak about progressive degrees of Judaism as well. Both concepts, increasing degrees of paganism and of Judaism, are connected. S. J. D. COHEN, *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 31; Berkeley 1999) 341, says, "the degree of social interaction between Jews and non-Jews was sufficiently great that it was not always easy to tell who was a Jew and who was not." On these ethnic "distinctions," see E. D. BARRETO, *Ethnic Negotiations. The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 294; Tübingen 2010).

32 RACINE, "L'hybridité des personnages: Une stratégie d'inclusion des gentils dans les Actes des Apôtres", 559.

33 This *deliberate repetition* is referred to by G. GENETTE, *Figures III* (Poétique; Paris 1966) 77-182, as *frequency*.

34 For example, A. VANHOYE, *Traduction structurée de l'Épître aux Hébreux* (Rome 1963) 3, uses this literary device of repetition to clarify the structure of the epistle to the Hebrews.

35 F. W. BURNETT, "Prolegomenon to Reading Matthew's Eschatological Discourse: Redundancy and the Education of the Reader in Matthew": *Semeia* 31 (1985) 93-94, speaks of *education of the reader* by redundancy.

cially wants to impress something upon the reader. Repetitions provide stability to the story by contributing to characterization. For example, there are three times when Luke narrates Paul's conversion (Acts 9; 22; 26). The three accounts present the mission entrusted to Paul including all humanity. In the first one, speaking about Paul, Jesus says to Ananias: "this man is my chosen instrument to bring my name before Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). In the second one, Ananias says to Paul himself: "you are to be his witness before all humanity" (Acts 22:15).³⁶ In the third one, Jesus says directly to Paul: "I send you to the people of Israel and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:17). On each of these three occasions, the mission to the Gentiles is the central part of Paul's commission.

The narrator uses this technique to clearly highlight the mission by Paul to all humanity by divine intervention from the very beginning of Paul's mission. Paul is the character who has been best characterized throughout Acts, and not only through these three narratives. Out of around one thousand verses, Paul is in the foreground in more than six hundred, while Peter appears in only two hundred and fifty verses. Paul, in short, is the main character of Acts. To understand Paul's mission is to understand the meaning that Luke tries to give to his narrative. While Peter is the first who preaches the Gospel to Gentiles (Acts 10), Paul really fulfills Christian mission by going beyond the Diaspora. What Peter pioneered as a new step, Paul took up as a permanent pattern.

V. USE OF TECHNICAL TERMS: *λαός* AND *ἔθνη* (ACTS 15:18)

There are two terms to refer to Jews and to non-Jews, that repeatedly appear throughout Luke-Acts: *λαός* and *ἔθνος*. Generally speaking, Luke reserves the singular *λαός* to speak of Israel and the plural *ἔθνη* to speak of the Gentiles, as *technical terms*.³⁷ However, Acts 15:14 is a clear case in which Luke

36 This expression reaches its full meaning when the Lord tells Paul: "Go! I am sending you out to the Gentiles (*ἔθνη*) far away" (Acts 22:21), expression whose force comes to the reader at the conclusion of the speech (Acts 22:22-23). Only the second account presents this revelation directly by the Lord in the Temple, while the words of Ananias are uttered in Damascus.

37 This clear distinction comes from the LXX, in which the term *ἔθνη* usually translates the Hebrew term *גוֹיִם*, while the term *λαός* is the Greek translation of *עַם*. On these terms with their profane and religious meanings, in which *λαός-עַם* refers to being part of the Jews and *ἔθνος-גוֹי* refers to opposing to the Jews see N. WALTER, "עַם" *epnoj*", in: EWNT I, 928; G. BERTRAM – K. L. SCHMITZ, "עַם" *epnoj (epnikoj)*", in: ThWNT II, 361; H. STRATHMANN – R. MEYER, "גוֹי" *laoj*", in: ThWNT IV, 32-34.

assigns λαός, God's people, to the ἔθνη, the Gentiles building a communion between Jews and Pagans different from the previous opposition.³⁸

Dupont, de Kruijff, and Dahl contend that there are four different OT passages connected with Acts 15:14: the closest one is Dt 14:2; the expression is slightly different in Dt 7:6; and there are two identical passages, Ex 19:5 and 23:22.³⁹ The modifications of detail in Acts express the biblical formulation with a meaning that does not correspond to the primitive OT pattern.⁴⁰ The formulation of Acts 15:14 expresses not the election of Israel as God's people, as the old biblical pattern holds, but the entrance of the Gentiles into the *people of God*. Acts 15:14 affirms that God (ὁ θεός) took (λαμβάνω) from the Gentiles (ἐξ ἔθνων) a people (λαός) for his name; the Gentiles (ἔθνη) are now part of God's people (λαός). The terms λαός and ἔθνη, which designated mutually opposed and exclusive entities, are now compatible.⁴¹

The passage contributes not only the incorporation of the Gentiles into God's people, but the way in which they will enter, simply as Gentiles and without circumcision and obedience to the Law (15:5.19.20).

VI. THE POSITION OF PASSAGES WITHIN THE NARRATIVE

If the order of the sequence of the narrative is important, the *position* of a passage within the whole macro-narrative is important too. The impor-

38 Acts 18:10 is the unique case in which Luke assigns λαός to the Christians.

39 See J. DUPONT, "LAOS VEX EQNWN (Act. XV,14)": *NTS* 3 (1956-1957) 47-50; J. DUPONT, "Un peuple d'entre des nations (Actes 15,14)": *NTS* 31 (1985) 221-235. T. C. DE KRUIJFF, "Das Volk Gottes im NT", in: J. PFAMMATER – F. FURGER (eds.), *Theologische Berichte III. Judentum und Kirche: Volk Gottes* (Einsiedeln 1974) 127, adds a fifth text, Zc 2:15. N. A. DAHL, "A People for his Name" (Acts XV.14)": *NTS* 4 (1958) 323, adds three more texts as OT background of Acts 15:14: Ez 36:24; 36:28; 37:23. The number of similar texts of the OT indicates that Acts 15:14 is modeled upon a general pattern rather than upon any individual passage. "The whole speech from v. 14 through v. 18 is a composition of Luke based upon the Greek Bible" says N. A. DAHL, "A People for his Name" (Acts XV.14)": 320.

40 The main modifications are that the election of the Israelite chosen people (ἐκλέγομαι, προαιρέομαι and περιούσιος) is not present in Acts, and that in Acts those that are being elected are not only the people of Israel, but also those from the Gentiles (ἐξ ἔθνων: origin or proceeding).

41 Furthermore, Luke inserts a literal quotation from the Greek text of Am 9:11-12 with a small nuance of Jr 12:15, which says as well that "all the nations [...] will look for the Lord" (Acts 15:16-17), highlighting the communion between different peoples, Jews and Gentiles.

tance of the order underlines specific *positions* because the order is created by specific *positions* of passages within the Lukan narrative: the beginnings and ends of each part, highlighted moments that have special importance for understanding the different character, or the first and last speeches of each character often present programmatic features. This is why we shall now briefly study the first and last speeches of the main characters of Luke-Acts: Jesus, Peter, and Paul.

1. JESUS' FIRST AND LAST SPEECHES (LUKE 4; 24; ACTS 1)

Jesus' first speech takes place at the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30). Putting this event at the beginning of Jesus' public life, Luke has designed this event in Nazareth as the programmatic inauguration of Jesus' ministry, thereby giving it a specific significance.⁴²

The scriptural quotation from Isaiah highlights the salvation offered by Jesus (Lk 4:18-19). This salvation embraces different groups of people, the afflicted, captives, the blind, the oppressed, and it is explained by the examples of those who bring salvation to non-Jews, even to enemies like Phoenicia and Syria, (4:25-27; see 1 K 17:9; 2 K 5:14), namely Elijah, sent to a widow in Sidon, and Elisha, cleansing the leper, Naaman the Syrian.⁴³ These references are still more striking because their acts for non-Jews are not very prominent in the common biblical portrayal of Elijah and Elisha.⁴⁴ The Lukan Jesus, however, isolated the passages in which they performed signs to those outside of Israel.

42 The reasons why commentators, for example R. TANNEHILL, "The Mission of Jesus According to Luke 4:16-30", in: R. TANNEHILL (ed.), *The Shape of Luke's Story. Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR 2005) 21-27, use the term *programmatic* to describe the passage are the following two. First, while the three synoptic Gospels narrate this preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, only Luke brings it forward and places it at the beginning of Jesus' public life (Mt 13:53-58; Mk 6:1-6). Luke considers Lk 4:16-30 the same episode as Mk 6:1-6 because when he follows Mk 4:1-6:45, he omits Mk 6:1-6. Second, as Jesus outlines his mission, this passage sets out the program for Jesus in the Gospel as well as anticipating central themes in Acts.

43 A. FALCETTA, *The Call of Nazareth. Form and Exegesis of Luke 4:16-30* (CRB 53; Paris 2003) 76-82, remarks that the presentation of Jesus through the quotation of Isaiah and the examples of Elijah and Elisha are a specific Lukan characterization of Jesus because they appear only in the Lukan account.

44 The cycle of Elijah (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 1) and the cycle of Elisha (2 Kings 2-13) present numerous wars against the non-Jews. In addition, in Elijah's triumph over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah slaughtered the prophets of Baal (1 K 18:40).

The reference to these prophets, narrative prototypes of Jesus,⁴⁵ who benefit Jews and also Gentiles indicates a major group toward which the mission is moving.

On the other hand, Jesus' last speech, right at the end of the Lukan Gospel, after Jesus' resurrection and before his ascension, also presents this major group including different peoples (Lk 24:44-49). The risen Christ affirms that "the forgiveness would be preached to all nations (εις πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this" (Lk 24:47-48). In addition, Luke interweaves both parts of his narrative, Luke's Gospel and Acts, referring twice to this same Jesus' last speech: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς)." (Acts 1:8). This repetition is made up of the expressions εις πάντα τὰ ἔθνη/ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Lk 24:47a; Acts 1:8c). The expression ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς appears in Acts 13:47 as well.⁴⁶

Acts 13:47b	τέθεικά	σε	εις φῶς	ἔθνων
Acts 13:47c	τοῦ εἶναι	σε	εις σωτηρίαν	ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς

This verse manifests the parallelism between σωτηρία and φῶς; salvation is expressed by the symbol of light. And it parallels ἔθνη and ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς, which become two synonymous expressions. The expression ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς does not have a merely geographical meaning, but means the commu-

45 Elijah and Elisha are scriptural models for Jesus' healing ministry, including with foreigners: a foreign officer's servant in 7:1-10, parallels Elisha's healing of Naaman, servant of the King of Aram, referred to in Lk 4:27; and Jesus' raising of the widow's son in 7:11-17, found only in Luke, recalls Elijah's raising of a widow's son in Sidon, referred to in Lk 4:25-26. For other accounts of Jesus' ministry to outsiders in Luke's Gospel, see the great crowd of people from Tyre and Sidon (Lk 6:17-19, which is in Mk 3:7-8, but not in Matthew); Jesus' words that foretell a future of mercy and grace for pagan cities (Lk 10:13-14); the healing of the Gerasene demoniac (Lk 8:26-39), where the presence of a herd of pigs and swineherds, and the fact that the event takes place in the Decapolis, suggest a Gentile district (Lk 8:32-34); note also the preaching about the sign of Jonah (Lk 11:29-32), in which non-Jews are portrayed as more receptive of Jesus than Jews. See R. F. O'TOOLE, *The Unity of Luke's Theology. Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Good News Studies 9; Wilmington, DE 1984) 101; É. L. MBILOZI, *D'Israël aux nations. L'horizon de la rencontre avec le Sauveur dans l'oeuvre de Luc* (Frankfurt am Main 2006) 14.

46 The expression of Acts 13:47, attested in Dt 33:11; Ps 46:10; 48:11; 72:8; Prov 17:24; Job 28:24; Mic 5:3; Zc 9:10; Is 46:9; 48:10; 62:11, is studied in W. C. VAN UNNIK, "Der Ausdruck **εἰς ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς** (Apg. 1.8) und sein alttestamentlicher Hintergrund", in: W. C. VAN UNNIK (ed.), *Sparsa collecta. Evangelia, Paulina, Acta I* (NTS 29; Leiden 1973) 386-401.

nion even with Pagans.⁴⁷ Luke changes the terms but retains the same meaning.⁴⁸ This repetition of the same topic as spoken by the Lukan Jesus before his ascension, in his last speech, underlines the importance of this meaning for the narrator.

The end of Luke's Gospel provides the basis for the missionary nature of the Christian faith: because of Jesus' command, his followers should preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. In speaking of the future, Jesus gives a commission which will guide their actions, not only to his contemporary followers, but also to later Christians.⁴⁹

The beginning of Acts is more precise than the end of the Gospel. It constitutes an "announcement of the subject," a brief formula which presents the theme to be discussed.⁵⁰ It has a programmatic function because the four places mentioned in Acts 1:8, "Jerusalem," "throughout Judaea," "Samaria," and the "earth's remotest end" will be important hinges for the narrative of the diffusion of God's word. Acts 1:1–8:4 describes the events in Jerusalem; the spread of the Gospel in Judaea and Samaria is narrated in Acts 8:5–40; Acts 9 and the following chapters mainly describe the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8 synthesizes the movement from the particular boundaries to beyond the boundaries.

47 T. S. MOORE, "'To the End of the Earth': The Geographical and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke". *JETS* 40 (1997) 399, affirms: "To the end of the earth is not limited to only one aspect of the expansion (geography) but rather carries ethnic significance as well. Geographically the phrase denotes the end of the world in a general sense. In its ethnic significance it denotes the movement of the gospel into the Gentile world." Similar opinions are held by J. DUPONT, "La conclusion de l'Évangile et l'introduction des Actes", in: J. DUPONT (ed.), *Études sur les Actes des Apôtres* (LeDiv 45; Paris 1967) 403-404 and C. M. MARTINI – N. VENTURINI, *Atti degli Apostoli* (Venezia 1965) 38.

48 In addition, both expressions are presented by the narrator as a correction of previous nationalistic affirmations by disciples of Jesus. The disciples of Emmaus hoped that Jesus would be the one to set Israel free (Lk 24:21). Jesus qualifies the affirmation, entrusting to his disciples the liberation not just of Israel, but of all the nations (Lk 24:47). At the beginning of Acts, the disciples ask Jesus whether the time has come for him (Jesus) to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). Jesus corrects this question, entrusting a universal mission to them, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judaea and Samaria to the earth's remotest end (note the conjunction *ἀλλὰ* in Acts 1:8).

49 The end of Luke's Gospel is open to the future because it invites the reader to perform what has been commanded to the disciples. J. DUPONT, "L'Apôtre comme intermédiaire du salut dans les Actes des Apôtres", in: J. DUPONT (ed.), *Nouvelles études sur les Actes des Apôtres* (LeDiv 118; Paris 1984) 132, claims that "the readers become witnesses of the offer of salvation to all nations."

50 I borrow this expression from VANHOYE, *Traduction structurée de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, 3, who uses this literary device to reveal the structure of the epistle to the Hebrews.

This initiative by the risen Jesus, who entrusts this preaching beyond the boundaries to the disciples, appears in Matthew's Gospel as well (Mt 28:19-20).⁵¹ However, while Matthew does not say anything of its realization, Luke extensively describes the deeds of that preaching in Acts. According to Luke, the realization of the mission to preach is important enough to be narrated in great detail.⁵²

2. PETER'S FIRST AND LAST SPEECH (ACTS 2; 15)

Peter's first long speech, after Pentecost, presents a preview of the universal offer of salvation achieved by Jesus. Although the speech is addressed to Jews staying in Jerusalem, Peter's words, the audience of his speech, and those who received the Holy Spirit, bear witness to this message addressed to Jews but possessing universal connotations. First, Peter takes advantage of the universalism of the passage Joel 3:1-5a, which Peter, with a slightly adapted quotation, cites at the beginning of his discourse (Acts 2:17-21)⁵³ and again in his final exhortation (2:38-39). Peter affirms that God will pour out his Spirit on "all humanity" (2:17),⁵⁴ that salvation "is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away (μακράν),⁵⁵ for all those whom the Lord our God is calling to himself" (2:39), and

51 It also appears in Mk 16:15 and Mark affirms its fulfillment in one verse: "They, going out, preached everywhere" (Mk 16:20). However, these verses of Mark's Gospel are part of the end of Pseudo-Mark, Mk 16:9-20, which was not written by Mark.

52 D. L. BALCH, "akribwǵ ... grayai (Luke 1:3)", in: D. P. MOESSNER (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel. Luke's Narrative Claim Upon Israel's Legacy* (LIntl 1; Harrisburg, PA 1999) 229-239, studies what historians meant when they claimed to write ἀκριβῶς, and he translates it as "fully" (Lk 1:3: ἔδοξε κάμολι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι). According to him, ἀκριβῶς is governed by the infinitive γράψαι, not by the participle παρηκολουθηκότι. Luke is not claiming "to have followed accurately," but "to write a full narrative," which includes the universal mission developed in Acts.

53 If Luke cites Joel 3:3-4 in Acts 2:19-20, it is not because of the apocalyptic description of the Day of the Lord that it contains (Joel). The description of the sun that becomes darkness and the moon that is transformed into blood seems ill-placed since nothing of this sort happens at the Pentecost event (Acts 2:20). It is in order to arrive at verse 5a of Joel, in which universal salvation is mentioned: "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21= Joel 3:5a).

54 This "all humanity" is specified by means of sons, daughters, young people, old people, slaves, men, and women (2:17-18). The narrative traces the partial fulfillment of this universalistic promise as Samaritans (8:15-17) and Gentiles (10:44-46) receive the Spirit.

55 In Acts 22:21, Paul relates a vision in which Jesus ordered him: "I am sending you out to the gentiles far away (μακράν)." Eph 2:13-17 repeatedly identifies "those who are far off" (μακράν) with Gentiles, while "those who are near" are understood to be Jews. Moreover, in the OT, Gentiles are called those that are "far away" (μακράν: Zc 6:15; Is 49:1; 57:19).

that that salvation will affect the whole world, described as “the sky above and the earth below” (2:19). The result is a salvation not only for a particular people, but extended to “all who call on the name of the Lord” (2:21).

Second, the audience is in fact made up of Jews staying in Jerusalem, but the Lukan description is “devout men coming from every nation (ἔθνη) under heaven” (2:5). Luke indicates the wide range of origins of the hearers, even listing the places from which these people came (2:9-11). According to Béchard, the list of nations in Acts 2:9-11 is an *update* of the *table of nations* tradition found in Gn 10:2-32.⁵⁶ Luke, listing the nations of Acts 2:9-11, seems desirous of showing a broad representation of Jews from throughout the world, evoking a communion that includes the Gentiles.

Finally, those who received the Holy Spirit, the apostles, begin to speak in other languages (2:6). The action of the Holy Spirit does not make the audience understand the language of the apostles, but makes the apostles speak in the native languages of all the members of the audience. Pentecost is a multiplication of the languages that the first Christians speak in order to reach all peoples. This fact embraces all the cultures expressed by those languages.

The last speech of Peter (15:7-11) is clear not only because of its connection with the pagan Cornelius event,⁵⁷ but also because Peter affirms that God chose him to teach the good news to the Gentiles, and thus they become believers. God showed his approval of them (Gentiles) by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to “us” (Jews), and God made no distinction between “them” and “us” (15:7b-9a).

56 Although Luke makes no explicit references to the names and motifs found in Genesis 10, several allusions, both direct and indirect, to the biblical traditions about Noah strongly suggest that Luke was familiar with Gn 10:2-32 writing Acts 2:9-11. Luke’s catalogue of nations includes representatives of each of the family groups descended from Noah’s three sons. Of the sixteen peoples and places named in Acts 2:9-11, nine are also found in Josephus’ updated version of Gn 10:2-32 (JOSEPHUS, *The Jewish Antiquities*, 1,6,1-4). And frequent allusions to the central motifs of Genesis 10 found in other OT books suggest its wide acceptance as an authoritative description of the nations of the world: 1 Chronicles 1:1-2:2; Ezekiel 38-39; Is 66:18-20; Daniel 11. See BÉCHARD, *Paul Outside the Walls*, 209-224; and M. C. PARSONS, “The Place of Jerusalem on the Lukan Landscape: an Exercise in Symbolic Cartography”, in: R. P. THOMPSON – T. E. PHILLIPS (eds.), *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts. Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (Macon, GA 1998) 163.

57 Peter appeals to his meeting with the pagan Cornelius, acknowledging what the Jews in Jerusalem already know about his meeting (15:7). In fact, after his meeting with Cornelius, Peter went to Jerusalem to justify his conduct (11:1-18). Now, again in Jerusalem, he appeals to the Cornelius incident so that it functions as a proof (15:7-9): as the Gentile Cornelius learnt the good news from Peter and Cornelius received the Holy Spirit, so the Gentiles are saved in the same way as the Jews are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.

3. PAUL'S FIRST AND LAST SPEECH (ACTS 13; 26)

Paul's first speech is located in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia. Up to Acts 13, Luke has developed Paul's mission among Jewish synagogues (9:20-22) or the Christian community (11:26) with short references to his preaching. However, Acts 13:16-47 presents the first long speech of Paul at the beginning of Paul's mission narrative. It is a prototype of the Pauline universal mission because Antioch of Pisidia, together with Antioch of Syria, is a paradigmatic town of the preaching to the Gentiles and that preaching is the ultimate reason for the council of Jerusalem (Acts 14:26).⁵⁸ The arrival point of the episode in Antioch is the quotation of Acts 13:47: "The Lord has commanded me, saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"⁵⁹ In addition, Acts 13:47 resembles Acts 26:23, the last long speech of Paul.⁶⁰ There, it is affirmed that "he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." In his last speech, Paul gives a "definition" of his preaching and again claims that he had been appointed by the Lord to people and Gentiles, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light (Acts 26:18). Paul's first and last speeches present the same features. Both speeches resemble each other and they both present Paul as light for all humanity regardless of their provenance.

VII. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this lecture I affirmed that Christianity has been sometimes pinpointed for the cause and promotion of boundaries, wars, ghettos,

58 On the preaching to Gentiles in Antioch see E. MENA SALAS, "Condiciones para una misión cristiana a los gentiles en el entorno sirio. El ejemplo de Antioquía": *EstB* 64 (2006) 163-199, and E. MENA SALAS, "También a los Griegos" (*Hch* 11,20): *factores del inicio de la misión a los gentiles en Antioquía de Siria* (Plenitudo temporis 9; Salamanca 2007) 77-157. Mena Salas analyzes the conditions that make possible the conversion of the first Gentiles to the Christian faith: the continuity between the missionary and the convert in their social, cultural, and religious ideas.

59 On the narrative importance of these words see C. DIONNE, *L'Évangile aux Juifs et aux païens: Le premier voyage missionnaire de Paul* (Actes 13-14) (LD 247; Paris 2011) 259-311.

60 Although the last words of Paul are pronounced in Rome (Acts 28:28: "this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen to it"), his last long speech takes place in Cesarea (Acts 26:2-23).

and hermetic groups that divide the peoples. The presentation of Jesus and the early Church by Luke, however, cannot be understood in these terms. Luke-Acts clearly proposes the formation of the new global, universal community focused on the inclusive vision.

In the vision of the narrator of Luke-Acts, Jesus' mission consisted of radical practice of fellowship with all, especially with the marginalized and outsiders. According to him, Jesus promoted an incipient growth of an inclusive community through the commission of an inclusive mission to his disciples. The first followers of Jesus, according to Luke-Acts, did not see religion as a boundary, and they realized that the mission was to facilitate the emergence of such an open community under the Fatherhood of God. In order for the Christianity of today to uphold the same value of universalism, it is challenged to return to the original spirit of the first century models and paradigms. Are the Christians of today willing to be so radical in their option for universalism? If they do not, have they any right to call themselves "Christians," "Jesus' followers," and representatives of his values?

