EKKLESIA IN ACTS — LINGUISTIC AND THEOLOGY: A VENTURE IN METHODOLOGY

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The formulation of our theme suggests a definite point of view concerning methodology in biblical theological research. Since any new approach, and especially one suggesting the use of modern linguistics is often frowned upon, our venture in this direction will have to be preceded by a number of introductory remarks.

It is a distinctive feature our our time that the methodology of biblical research is being questioned over a very large field and among scholars of widely differing backgrounds and traditions. In the Anglo-Saxon world we are being reminded of a crisis in biblical theology. This is countered in Germany by a large volume on biblical theology. The questioning however also concerns hermeneutics and exegesis. The concern with hermeneutics which dominated the field during the last decades is now leading to a renewed probing of the principles for an "effective hermeneutic". Discussion in this field takes place on a world-wide scale and has also found partners in this country. Landes in 1971 could also speak of a crisis in the field of exegesis. Earlier Käsemann could speak of a "Getümmel der Auseinandersetzung" and then state: "In solches Getümmel gehört heute auch die historisch-kritische Exegese". This topic is as widely discussed as that of hermeneutics. Of special interest in this connection is the emergence of the Redaktionsgeschichte as a result of the general discontentment with the "results" reached by the formgeschichtliche study of the New Testament. Belatedly interest in these techniques of analyzing biblical material has also been shown in this country.

Of greater importance however is the appearance of a number of works highly critical towards the practice of exegetes and their use of generally accepted methods and techniques. I would like to draw attention to only three recent articles, two by English authors and one by a German.

Miss Hooker wrote about the abuse of methodological techniques often made by New Testament scholars. "My subject is that much-used (and usually mis-used) term 'methodology'. My plea is that we should stop pretending to know the answer when we do not. My argument is that the tools which are used in an attempt to uncover the authentic teaching of Jesus cannot do what is required of them". Her scathing analysis of the usual practice of Formgeschichtlicher is summarized in this way: "The tool of form-criticism can tell us about form; it also tries to tell us about the use which has shaped the material into that form. But it cannot tell us anything about the material itself and its reliability — except where, by a comparison of parallel traditions, it..."
can be clearly seen that elements have been added to the material or changed. Nor can form-criticism tell us about the history of the material before it took its present shape''.

She then goes on to study the criteria of traditio-historical criticism for rediscovering the teaching of Jesus, viz. the principle of dissimilarity and the principle of coherence. In nine very neat remarks she shows up these principles for what they are: the very subjective presuppositions of scholars which are very unscientifically being advocated as clear results of a scientific study of the New Testament. Similarly some other criteria such as that of the “pillar sayings”, Aramaisms, the elimination of the “I form” son of man sayings, the elimination of references to the Old Testament, and the acceptance of “anything which is incompatible with the evangelists plan and purpose”, are examined and found wanting.

Miss Hooker finds herself despairing that no assured results are obtainable by these methods, although they are the only tools we have.

The second article to which I am briefly drawing attention is one by Peter Stuhlmacher. In this most fascinating analysis of the state of affairs in the field of hermeneutics, Stuhlmacher discusses the three main pillars of the historico-critical method: criticism as “die Haltung des methodischen Zweifels”; the principle of analogy, whereby past “events” are judged on their possibility by comparison with present experience; the principle of correlation, according to which events are correlated to each other as cause and result.

This method as applied by liberal historicism led theology into a cul de sac from which Barth tried to rescue it by determining the boundaries of historical criticism which was reached when criticism blinded one for the essential concern of theology, viz. God who was revealing himself in Scripture. Barth however did not solve the problem of the conceivability of history which figures irrevocably in the German philosophical climate. The questions left open by this lapse were answered by Bultmann through synthesizing on the basis of Heidegger’s philosophy historical criticism and theological exposition of Scripture by means of what is called the existentialist interpretation. This system however suffers from the ailment of all philosophically based systems in that it is bound in by its own time. “Die existentiale Interpretation des Neuen Testaments ist ein grossartiger Versuch theologischer Textauslegung im Rahmen der philosophischen und theologischen Anforderungen vor allem der ersten Hälfte unseres Jahrhunderts. Sobald aber die Voraussetzungen dieses Versuches geschichtlich nicht mehr tragfähig sind, ist er zu modifizieren und ein neues Auslegungssystem zu suchen.” In doing this we will have to bear in mind the gains which this method brought along. First of all a new understanding of reality and history will have to be developed on the basis of scriptural interpretation. Concerning exegetical method we will have to put to work the gain of understanding that exegesis implies the presupposition of the expounder. “Bultmanns Hinweis auf die hermeneutische Funktion des Vorverständnisses hat hier zwar schon
This leads to the point on account of which Stuhlmacher has been discussed here. The three principles of the historico-critical method should be extended to include a fourth, that of listening — listening carefully so as to understand the content of the text as understood by the tradition. "Dieses vierte Prinzip nenne ich das des 'Vernehmens', und ich meine damit das heute notwendige Pendant zum methodischen Zweifel. Zu diesem Zweifel . . . muss nämlich in der Historie die Bereitschaft hinzukommen, den Anspruch der Tradition, ihres Wirklichkeitsgehaltes und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte aufzunehmen und zu verarbeiten."26

In my view the contribution of this position (notwithstanding its unacceptable alliance to the idea that a definitive history of philosophy has to form the basis of scriptural research) is to be found in the introduction of the principle of listening to the text. By this principle the emphasis has been shifted from a subject, trying critically and objectively to assess an object, to the text itself in which the church has been hearing for ages the voice of God. The text becomes the subject: God is speaking through this text; through this text God is addressing man in his need; this voice should be heeded by carefully listening in order to understand its message.26

Does an approach such as this help to alleviate the despair of Miss Hooker? I believe it does, in that it points our search towards the understanding of a message which does on the one hand have history as its basis and deals with God's salvation in history,27 but which on the other hand is not interested in history as history and therefore defies most historical questioning of its text.28 Furthermore the salvation historical nature of scripture and the fact of its being a book of history (a book written by men, a book with a history) presupposes usage of every human facility, usage of every available method, of every critical faculty to our disposal, to enhance listening and understanding.29

The third critical study to which I referred was that by James Barr.30 I mention this study because it discusses the relative relationship of linguistic study and biblical theology: each has its own directionality but linguistics can have value for the study of theological questions.31 "One of the main services which semantic study renders to biblical theology is to guard it against premature theological evaluations of biblical data."32 Although methodological observations on exposition and understanding of Scripture show a great reluctance on the part of theologians to take note of modern linguistics33 this issue is no longer avoidable in serious scholarship where the intention of listening to the text prevails.34 Generally there exists an overlap between the linguistic and the theological approaches although
the theological approach is not tied down by a linguistic approach. "The semantic studies have to be carried on in any case as part of basic Hebrew scholarship, independent of their utility for theology. But in whatever way theology relates itself to semantic studies, it has to accept this basic principle: in so far as theology makes appeal to linguistic phenomena, in so far also it is bound to submit itself to the sort of tests and strictures imposed by the modern study of language."

The contention is gaining field that it is not possible to view the text itself as of primary importance in understanding Scripture, and to allow the text itself to dictate the approach to it; that it is not possible to listen to the text in such a way that its own voice is being heard, without making appeal to linguistics. And in making use of modern linguistics and its techniques it is a fact that real gain can be achieved.

The debate on the crisis in exegesis and in biblical theology; the renewed perception that the basis of all theological reflection is irrevocably bound to the biblical text having a message which claims to be listened to and to be understood; the conviction that modern linguistics forms an indispensable aid in the process of understanding because it becomes the instrument by which the voice of the text comes to life — all these considerations led me to venture into a relatively new field in order to try and determine the meaning, the message, which Luke wanted to convey to his readers when he chose to use the word *ekklēsia* in a number of contexts.

In venturing on this study it may be advisable to remember a word by H. J. Cadbury that one should not be disappointed when the linguistic approach does not yield results for the dominant interests of theology. Such a study clearly has value in itself. On the other hand as theologians we will be interested in any results which do have a contribution to make towards our theological understanding of Scripture. Should any results be forthcoming we will welcome them as a contribution to our main aim in studying the Bible and we will be happy to have discovered that an approach which places the text itself and its understanding foremost, may help us to loosen the ties which so often binds biblical research and which is responsible for the crisis existing in biblical studies.

Our first concern will be with a synchronic case study. We will try to determine the semantic values of *ekklēsia* in Acts by means of componential analysis.

The word *ekklēsia* occurs twenty three times in Acts in more or less fifteen contexts. It may perhaps be of some importance when trying to discern the structure of this book, to note that whereas *ekklēsia* is very evenly distributed throughout the whole middle section, it does
not occur in chapters 1—4 and neither in chapters 21—28. For the rest there is an occurrence in every chapter excepting chapters 6 and 17, while it occurs twice in chapters 8, 11, 12, 14, 20; thrice in chapter 19 and four times in chapter 15.

Sometimes, as in 8:1; 11:22; 13:1 it occurs with a qualification regarding a certain place. This also happens in 7:38 where the reference is to the ekklēsia at Sinai. In 9:31 it is qualified as the ekklēsia of a whole region. In 19:39 we find the qualification ennomos which defines this ekklēsia as a lawful one, or one properly constituted. In 20:28 the qualification is either tou Theou or tou Kuriou. In all the other cases ekklēsia is used absolutely (5:11; 8:3; 11:26; 12:1; 12:5; 14:23; 14:27; 15:3; 15:4; 15:22; 15:41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32; 19:41; 20:17).

In order to do a componential analysis we have to draw up a table listing the differentiating components on one side and the contexts on the other. To find the differentiating components we will have to bear in mind, not only the direct qualifyers but distinguishing markers in the context as well.

The contexts yielded the following components, which on closer scrutiny were not all found to be of a differentiating nature; totality; part; religious group (disciples — often vis à vis Jews); believers; persecuted (often); meeting (religious assembly); community; religious action; organization; political action; political meeting (unofficial); political meeting (official); God's possession; religious group in Old Testament (God's people); receivers of God's living words; receivers of the Spirit.

From the above mentioned list we now have to select those semantic markers which will allow us to differentiate between various class meanings of ekklēsia, if such a variety in class exists.

Now comparing the contexts in our table it becomes clear that with the exception of three occurrences all other contexts refer to a religious group, often designated disciples and often marked off over against the Jews. The three exceptions are found together in one context, in 19:32, 39, 41, and these all refer to a political meeting.

We conclude that the semantic markers "religious group" over against "political meeting" form the watershed which divides the twofold use of ekklēsia by Luke, or in other words, which distinguishes between a twofold class of ekklēsia as used by Luke. We can say this still differently: Luke has two meanings, two ideas, which he wants to convey to his readers and he now uses the one word ekklēsia to bring over these two meanings or ideas.
We can now also start to draw a diagram of the semantic values of *ekklesia* in Acts. It will have two diagonal legs, the one carrying those contexts which refer to a *religious group* and the other those that refer to a *political meeting*. Not only because it occurs so often, but also, and especially because Luke often uses it without direct markers, it is clear that *ekklesia* as designation for a religious group was foremost in his mind. This is the important class in Luke's mind, so we will place that in the first or left-hand side.

Among each of these classes we will now have to look for further distinguishing markers. First of all those pertaining to "*religious group". We can start off by eliminating some of the components from the list above. An analysis of the contexts shows that components such as believers; persecuted; religious action; organization; God's possession; receivers of God's living words and receivers of the Spirit, do not function as differentials, i.e. they do not distinguish between different usages, but they rather act as essential components, i.e. they help us to define the essential characteristics of the "object" to which the word under discussion refers. To these markers we will have to return later on.

We are left then with the distinctive markers: totality; part; religious meeting; community. It now becomes clear that our real division will be that between "community" and "religious meeting". Having marked these on our diagram we are now left with the last two markers viz. "totality" over against "part". A look at the table of components and contexts will allow that "part" is sometimes, but not always found together with "meeting"; and concerning "community" it is not always clear whether "part" or "totality" fits the case, whereas it is clear that in some cases "totality" is definitely paired with "community" and in other cases "part" is definitely paired with it. This state of affairs suggests that here we do not have true differentiating markers, although some scope for difference in situation should be allowed for. Initially we may take this into account by differentiating between "total community" and "local community", deciding in cases of overlap where the preference lies.

We now turn to the other leg of the diagram dealing with "political meeting". Our table of components and contexts shows at a glance that this marker should semantically be sub-divided into "official political meeting" and "unofficial political meeting". The one remaining marker "political action" covers both these items and has no differentiating function but is rather an essential component.

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We will now have the following diagram:

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  ekklēsia
   /       \
  /         \
religious group  political meeting
   /       \                            /       \
community       total community       community
   /       \                            /       \      /       \      /       \    
religious meeting religious meeting official political meeting unofficial political meeting
   /       \                            /       \
community       community
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With a view to this diagram it is clear that we still have to describe the distinctive features of each individual member of each class and follow it up by suggesting possible translational equivalents.

To accomplish the first task we could simply count up those features found to be describing essential components of the class. This would lead us to the conclusion that the community, as totality and as a local group, were believers, quite often persecuted by Jews, were people to whom God spoke, showing signs of organization and of a suggestion of being God's possession, and contemplating religious action. We could then conclude that the abstract meaning was to be described in terms such as "community of God" and "local community of God". The religious meeting could be described as "worshipping assembly". The description of the political meeting may be deemed sufficient as it is.

There is a grave possibility, however, that in following this practice we would have overlooked something essential. On the other hand it seems as if the boundaries of semantical analysis has been reached. Should we not proceed to supplement our findings by probing other techniques of theological research, such as ascertaining the possible historical background of Luke's usage of *ekklēsia*? We do not have the space here to complete such a review, but we may offer some remarks.

First of all it is interesting to note that the expression *ekklēsia tou Theou* (or *tou Kuriou*) occurs only once viz. in the last instance, Acts 20:28. Since this expression heavily marks the meaning of
ekklesia in this instance one is led to ask why it occurs here and only here. Did Luke have a tradition about this speech, or did he use it here because he knew that it was a beloved expression of Paul? Was he consciously introducing terminology which was known from the Septuagint and is this “loaded” meaning of ekklesia presupposed in Luke’s other applications of the word in the sense of a religious group?

Pointers in this connection could be the following. The first occurrence of the word in Luke’s two volume work appears in Acts 5:11. It was used here without any direct markers, implying that the meaning of the word was clear to Luke and that he accepted it to be clear to his readers. Elsewhere he sometimes uses indirect markers in order to locate the community or worshipping assembly either locally or chronologically. According to Luke Paul still used to mark the word in order to distinguish it and avoid misunderstanding. To Luke this clearly is no longer necessary.

This is a very important observation since Luke’s own work (19:32, 39, 41) shows his awareness to the fact that ekklesia in the hellenistic environment of the first century would ordinarily, when unmarked, evoke the idea of a political meeting. Yet he uses the word unmarked in a totally different sense which is in accordance with Paul’s usage as described by him in 20:28. His reference to the ekklesia of the desert in Stephen’s speech clearly puts forward a redemptive-historical understanding of God’s revelation in history and suggests without fail the continuity of God’s work of salvation as experienced by Stephen’s community who were obedient to God (other than the case with the Jews who were disobedient). Here ekklesia is the saved community with whom God erected his covenant and to whom He gave his Word and to whom He promised a future prophet. They were the community of our fathers (7:38, 39) whom God gathered through Abraham to be God’s people, freed to serve God (7:6—8, 17, 34).

The above mentioned facts lead us to a theologically pregnant understanding of Luke’s usage concerning ekklesia. To him ekklesia need not be marked so as to be understood in the sense of God’s covenant people who lives in obedience to God’s word and promise. In the context of his preaching it is impossible to misunderstand this community in the sense of a hellenistic political meeting. Even the use of this word for describing the worshipping assembly does not derive from the meeting for political purposes but from the fact that God covenanted his people so that they could be his community, set apart to serve God (7:6—8).

We can now complete the diagram showing the linguistic values of ekklesia. The abstract meaning for the total community would be “God’s people”, and for the local community “God’s local people” expressed in the form “God’s people at...”. Instead of “worshipping assembly” should be used “God’s people at worship.”
We may also suggest some translational equivalents. To use "church" or even "congregation" for the first and/or second terminals would be to disregard the gain reached by our study. The forms "God's people" and "God's people at ..." remain our best dynamic equivalents and can be used unchanged. The third terminal may perhaps be expressed by "assembly". For the fourth and fifth terminals "official" and "unofficial political meeting" can be retained, but something like "mass meeting" or "mob" may be suggested for the fifth.

We may conclude this section by asking: what is our gain? Was it worth our while? In addition to the gain fostered by the dual approach of linguistic and theological techniques, we may point out the gain towards clarity in the compilation of a dictionary. E.g. neither sense nor logic can be discerned in Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich's compilation of meanings and usages of *ekklēsia*: 1. assembly (as a regular political body); 2. assemblage, gathering; 3. congregation of Israelites; 4. of the Christian church or congregations — a. church meeting; b. church or congregation as totality living at one place; c. of house churches; d. church universal; e. local as well as universal church: a) of God β) of Christ γ) of both δ) other specific designations, e.g. *ekklēsia* of holy ones.

At least as far as Acts is concerned we can now indicate five clear terminals and their possible translational equivalents. In Acts *ekklēsia* gives expression to the following designations: 1. God's people; 2. God's local people — translated: God's people at ...; 3. God's people at worship — translated: (?) assembly; 4. official political meeting; 5. unofficial political meeting — translated: (?) mass meeting or (?) mob.

3.

The next stage in our investigation would have to consist of a detailed analysis of each passage dealing with the religious group, in order to determine its structure (discourse analysis); its immediate constituents (IC Analysis), in order to determine the syntactical coherence on the surface structure; lastly a semantic level analysis in order to determine its deep structure.

Our space forbids dealing with all the contexts concerned. We will illustrate our concern by restricting ourselves to one passage, viz. Acts 20: 17—35.41

The first task then consists in completing a discourse analysis of this passage.42 Its structure has to be analysed because this may lead us to a better understanding of what it is all about, by noticing the pivot points of each period within the pericope. These can be discovered by determining the kola and their relationship. Behind this procedure lies the recognition that an author's "message" cannot be understood from the details of his argument so that a sum of words and their meanings can be regarded as the total idea which he wanted to express. Rather an author's "message" has to be understood as a whole. Smaller units are to be understood in the light of the whole.
Therefore each unit (pericope) has to be determined and its smaller units then be understood in the light of what he wanted to convey to his readers in the pericope as such.

Of course this implies the old criterion of context, but by this means we are trying to establish the context and its "message" scientifically.

By kolon is meant the smallest thought unit within the structure of the author's argument. Kola can be grouped together in a relationship which forms a larger unit, the period. And these again make up the pericope.

To determine the kola we followed the rule — to which I am indebted to Prof. J. P. Louw in his seminar on linguistics: a kolon is formed by a noun phrase part which can be inbedded indefinitely, and a verb phrase part which cannot, since the verb cannot be inbedded by another verb, although the noun phrase part following on this verb can again be inbedded indefinitely.

[The outline on the following four pages is a presentation of the colometric division and relationships of the pericope Acts 20:17-35.]

Paul's admonition to the elders of Ephesus

1 The circumstances (vss. 17-18a)
(1) (Paulos) ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μιλήτου πέμψας εἰς Ἐφέσον
(2) (Paulos) μετεκαλέσατο τοὺς πρεσβύτερους τῆς ἐκκλησίας
(3) (αὐτοῖς) ὡς δὲ παρεγένοντο πρὸς αὐτοῦ

2 Recollections of Paul's past (vss. 18b-21)
(5a) ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε (μὲ)
(5b) πῶς (ἔγω) μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἐγενόμην τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἀπὸ πρῶτης ἡμέρας ἀφ’ ἤς ἐπέβην εἰς τὴν Ἄσίαν
(5c) (ἔγω) δουλεύων τῷ κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ δακρύων καὶ πειρασμῶν τῶν συμβάντων μοι εἰς ταῖς ἐπιδοκίμασι τῶν Ἰουδαίων

(5d) (ἔγω) ὡς αὐθεν ὑπεστειλάμην τῶν συμφερόντων
(5e) (ἔγω) τού μὴ ἀναγγέλῃ ὑμῖν δημοσίᾳ καὶ κατ’ οἶκος
(5f) καὶ (ἔγω) διδάσκαλος ὑμᾶς δημοσίᾳ καὶ κατ’ οἶκος
(5g) (ἔγω) διαμαρτυρόμενος Ἰουδαῖοις τε καὶ Ἑλλησίων τὴν εἰς θεόν μετάνοιαν καὶ πίστιν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν

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3 Paul’s principle in present and near future situation (vss. 22-24)

(6) καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἡγώ πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ
dεδεμένος τῷ πνεύματι
μὴ εἰδῶς τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ συναντήσουσα μοι
πλήν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἁγιόν κατὰ πόλιν
dιαμαρτύρεται μοι
λέγον ὅτι δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν

(7) ἀλλ’ (ἐγὼ) οὔδενὸς λόγου ποιοῦμαι τὴν
ψυχῆς τιμῶν ἐμαυτῷ
(8) (ἐγὼ) ὡς τελείωσόν τὸν δρόμον μου
(9) καὶ (ἐγὼ) ὡς τελείωσόν τὴν διακονίαν
ὅτι ἔλαβον παρά τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ
διαμαρτύραθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ

4 Conduct of elders in future situation at Ephesus (vss. 25-35)

(10) καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἡγώ οἶδα ὅτι ὑμεῖς πάντες
οὐκέτι δυσεῖν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου
ἐν οἷς διῆλθον κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν

(11) διότι (ἐγώ) μαρτύρομαι ἐν τῇ ὁμορον ἡμέρᾳ ὑμῶν
(12) διότι (ἐγώ) μαρτύρομαι ὅτι καθαρὸς εἰμι ἀπὸ
tοῦ σίματος πάντων
1. ού γάρ ὑπεστειλάμην
tοῦ μὴ αναγγεῖλαι πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ
θεοῦ ὑμῖν

2. (13) ὑμεῖς προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς
καὶ ὑμεῖς προσέχετε πάντι τῷ ποιμνίῳ
ἐν ὧν ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον ἔθετο
ἐπισκόπως
ποιμανέων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ

3. (14) ἦν περιποίησατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος
tοῦ ἱδίου

2. (15) ἔγώ οἶδα ὅτι λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰσελύουσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς
μετὰ τὴν φρίξειν μου

3. (16) καὶ ἔγώ οἶδα εἰς ὑμῶν ἄνδρας ἀναστήσονται
λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα
τοῦ ἀποσπάν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὁπίσω

3.(17) διὸ (ὑμεῖς) γρηγορεῖτε

καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ (ἔγω) παρατίθεμαι ὑμᾶς τῷ

θεῷ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ
tῷ δυναμεῖν οὐκοδομῆσαι
καὶ δοῦναι τὴν κληρονομίαν ἐν τοῖς

ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν
5 The departure (vss. 36, 37)

(22) καὶ αὐτὸς ταῦτα εἰπὼν προσηγξατο σὺν πάσιν αὐτοῖς θεῖς τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ
(23) ἦκαν δὲ κλαυθμὸς ἐγένετο πάντων
(24) καὶ (αὐτοῖ) κατεφίλουν αὐτὸν ἐπιπεδάντες ἐπὶ τὸν πρόσωπον τοῦ Παύλου διδυμόμενοι μάλιστα ἐπὶ τὸ λόγῳ ὡς εἰρήκει ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ Παῦλος ὁ ἄνθρωponse
We only draw attention to the pivot points because these are our main interest, and pass over some very interesting features of the structure itself.

In paragraph 1, the pivot point is kolon no. 4; in paragraph 2, it is kolon no. 5d; in the third paragraph kolon no. 9; in the fourth kolon no. 14; and in the fifth it is no. 25. As will become clear from the following, kolon no. 14 is the important one on which the whole pericope hinges.

This means that on the surface structure Luke wanted to convey the following idea: 1) Paul spoke to the elders saying: 2) (you know that) I have neglected nothing that was of value (in preaching and teaching to you and in witnessing to unbelievers); 3) I have completely filled out the service which I received from the Lord, viz. to witness to the good news about God's grace; 4) now you also have to look after and feed God's ekklesia. 5) The elders then escorted Paul to the boat.

In these phrases we have now captured a picture of what it is all about. Paul's speech deals with the fact that he himself always remained faithful in the fulfilling of his task as a minister of the word; the elders of Ephesus have to do the same. By noticing the inner relationships of paragraphs 3 and 4 this summary can be filled out with more details, but we will refrain from doing this on account of the limitations of this paper.

So now we know what it is all about. But do we also have a clear picture of what Luke wanted to convey to his readers by means of this unit of ideas? What was his "message"?

To ascertain this our next step will be to analyse this surface structure syntactically, i.e. we have to sort out what goes with what in the surface structure. Our procedure is called immediate constituent analysis because we will be trying to group together those parts of the structure which form immediate constituents of each other.

Again an example will have to suffice. For this purpose we will make use of kolon 14 because this was found to contain the point on which the whole pericope turns. With a view to translation it will be advisable to affix kolon 13 as well.

In the following diagram the syntactical analysis is shown by the links drawn beneath the Greek words.

In the same diagram we have also marked the semantic components by means of which the deep structure can be determined. These are noted above the line.

By means of these two processes it becomes possible to complete the semantic level analysis by compiling kernels, by which we here understand the short sentences containing the actual "message" that
the author meant to transpose, the deep lying meaning contained in his surface structure. For the purpose of translation these kernels have then to be formed into a paraphrase from which a translation can be made.

**Deep structure Acts 20:28**

**Kolon 13**

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
O & E & O \\
\text{εὑρεῖς} & \text{προσέχετε} & \text{εἰσνομεῖς} \\
\end{array} \]

You have to watch out for yourselves.

**Paraphrase**

You have to be watchful with a view to what is in your own interest.

**Translation**

You have to watch out for your own sake. (You have to watch out for your own interests.)

[For the analysis of the deep structure of Kolon 14, see facing page.]
Kernels (compare diagram on p. 89).

1. You also have to watch over the whole flock.
2. The holy Spirit appointed you over the flock.
3. You were appointed to supervise/care for the flock.
5. By this means God acquired a possession.
6. His possession is the people that He gathered for Himself.
7. You were to tend like shepherds to the people of God.

Paraphrase

In addition you also have to watch the interest of the whole of God's flock because the Holy Spirit appointed you to care for God's flock. By means of the sacrifice of His Son God acquired as His own possession a people which He gathered together in order to belong to Him. Now in addition to watching out for your own interests, you also have to watch out for the interests of this whole flock of God, because the Holy Spirit appointed you over it to care for it and to tend the people of God like shepherds.

Translation

Kolon 13. You have to watch out for your own sake.

Kolon 14. In addition you also have to watch out for the sake of the whole flock of God. First because they are God's people whom He acquired as His own possession by means of the sacrifice of His Son and whom He gathered together as His own people. Second because the Holy Spirit appointed you to care for God's people and to tend them like shepherds.

To be complete this paper would have had to contain full analyses such as the above and would then have had to follow it up by an analysis of theological relevant material offered by the techniques used. Our limited scope prevented us from doing this, although we have gained a better insight into the meaning of ekklēsia by means of our componential analysis and have shown the way by which further linguistic analysis could be useful for the determination of theologically important material. Our one example may again be brought to account to illustrate this procedure.

Understanding the structure of the whole and the place of verse 28 (kola 13. 14) in this whole, and understanding the deep level meaning of the author; understanding also the specific terminal meaning of the words used in the structure, e.g. ekklēsia here used in the meaning "God's people" — all these considerations lead us to definite theological conclusions concerning ekklēsia. The religious community of believers in Christ, the community saved by Jesus' sacrificial death, who reside at Ephesus, is to be understood as God's eschatological people which at least show some form of continuance with the Old Testament people of the covenant. They are a community which displays a cer-
tain organisational form. They have a certain relationship with an apostle and with elders who form part of the community. This relationship is based on the proclaiming of God’s message in their midst.

Furthermore God’s people exist in times of great spiritual and bodily danger. In this situation God’s message to them is all important. Therefore the faithful proclamation of his message is of existential importance to the people of God.

In the above theological synopsis I did not try to be exhaustive especially since the basis for discussion was of necessity narrowed down so very much. Even so, some idea can be derived of fruitful conclusions reached on the basis of sound linguistic analysis paired with theological reflection.

Mr. Chairman I have arrived at the end of what could perhaps be called my “example story” or even my “adventure story”. I’m sure I’ve also reached the end of your patience. May I hope that somehow I have also touched on some aspects of the methodology of biblical research that will allow for further travel along the fruitful way of God’s message for those persecuted strangers who are his own people?

Footnotes:


(2) H. J. Kraus, Die biblische Theologie — ihre Geschichte und Problematik, Neukirchener Verlag, 1970.

(3) B. C. Lategan, Vereistes vir effektiewe N. T. hermeneutiek, Nederduitse Geref Teol Tyds 14 (1973), 150—160.


(7) E. Käsemann, Vom theologischen Recht historisch-kritischer Exegese, Zeits Theol Kirche 64 (1967), 259—281; ad rem 259.


(13) Hooker, op. cit., 570.


(18) Stühlmacher, op. cit., 126–128.


(26) Cf. also Lategan, *Voorlopers*, passim (footnote 5).


(30) See footnote 11.

(31) Barr, op. cit., 18.

(32) Ad loc.

(33) Lategan, *Vereistes*, 159.

(34) Barr, op. cit., 18f.


See Barr, *Semantics*, 12.


For the following see Nida, *Toward a science of translating*, p. 57ff.

The symbols used here are as follows: O = Object; E = event; A = abstract; R = relational.