ACTS

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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To my colleagues at Dallas Theological Seminary,
Talbot Theological Seminary, Tyndale House, Bengelhaus,
and the universities of Aberdeen and Tübingen for their friendship,
fellowship, encouragement, and instruction

And, most especially, to Sally Bock, whose life defines faithfulness

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Series Preface

The chief concern of the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT) is to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness. We hope thereby to attract the interest of a fairly wide audience, from the scholar who is looking for a thoughtful and independent examination of the text to the motivated lay Christian who craves a solid but accessible exposition.

Nevertheless, a major purpose is to address the needs of pastors and others involved in the preaching and exposition of the Scriptures as the uniquely inspired word of God. This consideration affects directly the parameters of the series. For example, serious biblical expositors cannot afford to depend on a superficial treatment that avoids the difficult questions, but neither are they interested in encyclopedic commentaries that seek to cover every conceivable issue that may arise. Our aim therefore is to focus on problems that have a direct bearing on the meaning of the text (although selected technical details are treated in the additional notes).

Similarly, a special effort is made to avoid treating exegetical questions for their own sake, that is, in relative isolation from the thrust of the argument as a whole. This effort may involve (at the discretion of the individual contributors) abandoning the verse-by-verse approach in favor of an exposition that focuses on the paragraph as the main unit of thought. In all cases, however, the commentaries stress the development of the argument and explicitly relate each passage to what precedes and follows it so as to identify its function in context as clearly as possible.

We believe, moreover, that a responsible exegetical commentary must take fully into account the latest scholarly research, regardless of its source. The attempt to do this in the context of a conservative theological tradition presents certain challenges, and in the past the results have not always been commendable. In some cases, evangelicals appear to make use of critical scholarship not for the purpose of genuine interaction but only to dismiss it. In other cases, the interaction glides over into assimilation, theological distinctives are ignored or suppressed, and

the end product cannot be differentiated from works that arise from a fundamentally different starting point.

The contributors to this series attempt to avoid these pitfalls. On one hand, they do not consider traditional opinions to be sacrosanct, and they are certainly committed to doing justice to the biblical text whether or not it supports such opinions. On the other hand, they will not quickly abandon a long-standing view, if there is persuasive evidence to support it, for the sake of fashionable theories. What is more important, the contributors share a belief in the trustworthiness and essential unity of Scripture. They also consider that the historic formulations of Christian doctrine, such as the ecumenical creeds and many of the documents originating in the sixteenth-century Reformation, arose from a legitimate reading of Scripture, thus providing a proper framework for its further interpretation. No doubt, the use of such a starting point sometimes results in the imposition of a foreign construct on the text, but we deny that it must necessarily do so or that the writers who claim to approach the text without prejudices are invulnerable to the same danger.

Accordingly, we do not consider theological assumptions—from which, in any case, no commentator is free—to be obstacles to biblical interpretation. On the contrary, an exegete who hopes to understand the apostle Paul in a theological vacuum might just as easily try to interpret Aristotle without regard for the philosophical framework of his whole work or without having recourse to the subsequent philosophical categories that make possible a meaningful contextualization of his thought. It must be emphasized, however, that the contributors to the present series come from a variety of theological traditions and that they do not all have identical views with regard to the proper implementation of these general principles. In the end, all that really matters is whether the series succeeds in representing the original text accurately, clearly, and meaningfully to the contemporary reader.

Shading has been used to assist the reader in locating the introductory comments for each section. Textual variants in the Greek text are signaled in the author's translation by means of half-brackets around the relevant word or phrase (e.g., ⌜Gerasenes⌝), thereby alerting the reader to turn to the additional notes at the end of each exegetical unit for a discussion of the textual problem. The documentation uses the author-date method, in which the basic reference consists of author's surname + year + page number(s): Fitzmyer 1992: 58. The only exceptions to this system are well-known reference works (e.g., BDAG, LSJ, *TDNT*). Full publication data and a complete set of indexes can be found at the end of the volume.

Robert Yarbrough
Robert H. Stein

Author's Preface

This work represents the completion of a commitment made in the early 1980s to produce a commentary on both Luke and Acts. There were times when I wondered if I was crazy to agree to this. On the one hand, there are many excellent commentaries on both books, although there were fewer when I originally agreed to do both books. Second, the life of Jesus and the issues raised by Acts are two very distinct areas of NT studies, each representing its own specialty and having a unique literature. One could say, like the old chewing-gum commercial, "Double your pleasure, double your fun," but I often sensed that I had doubled the bibliography and the issues to tackle. Nonetheless, what I have learned in this study and tried to convey has been richly rewarding. The examples of these first saints have much to teach us today.

I took on this assignment at the time because no one recently had written a major commentary on both works and because Luke-Acts is the product of one author telling one story in two volumes. That Luke-Acts was a single work had been little appreciated in the way commentaries handled both works. Luke's innovation needed a careful treatment, especially from an evangelical perspective. So much skepticism had mounted around both Jesus and the earliest church in twentieth-century NT study that a fresh look at these two works was needed. Since the time of that commitment, two authors, Joseph Fitzmyer and Luke Timothy Johnson, have produced an excellent set of critical commentaries on Luke-Acts. Fitzmyer brings a superb understanding of the first-century context to his work, and Johnson knows the Greco-Roman context and the literary themes that enlighten the work. Still, my sense is that issues of importance about the nature of our text, what it can teach the church today, and certain historical issues still needed work. So I offer this commentary, well aware that there is much more that could be said. There comes a time, however, when a commentator must decide that his labor is sufficient to serve the reader well. That is my prayer, especially for those who preach Luke-Acts, rich as it is with history, theology, and pastoral concern for the identity of Christianity and the Christian message.

I owe special thanks to many who encouraged the development of this commentary. Professor Doctor Martin Hengel of the University of Tübingen hosted me on a 2004–5 Humboldt Stiftung scholarship,

which allowed me to complete this work. It was my third opportunity to spend a year in a place that has become a second *Heimat*. Our numerous conversations about the early church and its history, held in his home, provided a wealth of insight and wisdom for which I am grateful. The administration and the Department of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary afforded me a sabbatical leave and allowed me to function as a research professor so that I was free for this work. Brittany Burnette performed an admirable task as research assistant and conversation partner, as did Stratton Ladewig and John Edwards. My editors at Baker Academic deserve praise for the thoroughness of their work: Jim Kinney, Wells Turner, and series editor Robert Yarbrough. Finally, my wife, Sally, with whom I will celebrate thirty years of marriage this year, has had to live with this project for most of our married life. Our last child went to college two years ago, but in many ways our nest has not been empty because of this work. Yet she also faithfully looked at all the material so that I could be sure I had written in such a way that someone without excessive training could benefit. For such faithfulness I dedicate this work to her, for she has borne the greatest sacrifice with the highest level of grace.

I complete this work on the sixtieth anniversary of the freeing of the prisoners of Auschwitz, effectively ending the Holocaust. As one of Jewish descent, this has special meaning for me. No act against humanity shows the searing reality of sin within us as much as this event from our own recent past. Acts is a story about God's work of love in Jesus to liberate us from what is so destructive for all of us. If this commentary helps give but a glimpse of the great light that Jesus brought to the world, which was experienced by his followers, then my intentions will be met. I have written for both the scholar and the pastor, as well as for the student of Acts, but more than that, I have written in the hope that the gospel, which is so powerfully described and presented in this biblical book, will become more real for those who study Acts.

January 27, 2005
Tübingen, Germany

C. Summary: Community Life (2:42–47)

This passage summarizes the life of the community both internally (v. 42) and with those outside (vv. 43–47). The early believers hold their possessions in common and also go to the temple, reflecting their embrace of the Messiah. This messianic faith has not caused them to separate from Jewish practice and worship. Their interaction and engagement with those outside has sparked even more growth. In Acts we never see a community turned so inward that taking the message to those outside and engaging with those outside is forgotten or ignored.

Exegesis and Exposition

42And they were devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching ⌜ ⌝ and the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs came through the apostles ⌜ ⌝. 44And all those who ⌜believed⌝ were together and having all things in common. 45And they were selling their possessions and goods and were distributing them to all, as any were having need. 46And each day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they were partaking of food with glad and grateful hearts, 47praising God and finding favor with all the people. And the Lord added to those who were being saved each day.

2:42

Community life is summarized as involving four key areas: apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread together, and prayer. The newly formed community functions by the believers' devoting themselves (ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες, *ēsan de proskarterountes*) to these activities. The expression "devoting themselves" has the idea of persistence or persevering in something (BDAG 881 §2; *EDNT* 3:172; Barrett 1994: 162). The imperfect periphrastic construction speaks of the ongoing devotion that they have. Of its ten NT occurrences the verb appears six times in Acts (1:14; 2:42; 2:46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7). It echoes the unity of mind Luke describes in Acts 1:14. In these four ongoing activities, much of the basic work of community appears. Luke favors such summary texts (also Acts 4:32–37; 5:12; 16; Marshall 1980: 83–84; esp. Witherington 1998: 157–59). In Acts 1:6–6:7 Luke uses such summary texts about the community to underscore that this group has bonded together effectively. Schneider (1980: 286) notes that the four items noted appear in two basic groupings: teaching and fellowship, which includes breaking of bread and prayer. If so, the teaching includes the practical art of sharing

life with each other at all levels, as the discussion of the term "fellowship" below will show. Although the picture here is summarized in ideal terms, Luke is not beyond showing problems and how they were dealt with later (Acts 5–6). The acts are each highlighted with articles—"the" teaching, "the" fellowship, "the" breaking of bread, and "the" prayers (Wallace 1996: 225).

The first activity is the apostolic teaching (διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων, *didachē tōn apostolōn*). Reference to teaching using the term διδαχή appears thirty times in the NT, five of which are in Luke-Acts (Luke 4:32; Acts 2:42; 5:28; 13:12 [of Paul and Barnabas's teaching]; 17:19 [of Paul's teaching at Athens]). Instruction is an important part of the new community. The centrality of Jesus and the preparation of members to share in the new life and witness are key community concerns. Later the apostolic teaching, called "your" teaching by opponents, will fill Jerusalem, the only other reference to the apostolic teaching (Acts 5:28). Matthew 28:19–20 expresses the task as "teaching them to observe all I commanded you." It likely would have included all kinds of instruction like what we see in the Gospels and Epistles: ethical and practical teaching and a grounding in the central promise God had given in Jesus.

Next comes the mention of fellowship, or, more precisely, sharing in common (κοινωνίᾳ, *koinonia*; Witherington 1998: 160). This is the only use of this term in Acts. It occurs nineteen times in the NT, fourteen of which are in Paul. The term speaks of communion or fellowship (its Semitic equivalent, 1QS 6.7; 5.1). It was often used of the type of mutuality that takes place in marriage (BAGD 438–39 §1; BDAG 552; 3 Macc. 4:6). In this verse, the description appears in a context surrounded by terms of shared activity. The term can have overtones of mutual material support that looks to alms and generosity (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13), but this is only a part of the sense, not the whole, as verse 44 will indicate explicitly by using other terms (*pace* Johnson 1992: 58). Still, the wordplay with κοινά (*koina*, in common) in verse 44 shows a material element also is involved in the term. Luke points to fellowship to underscore the personal interactive character of relationships in the early church at all levels (so Fitzmyer 1998: 270). There is a real sense of connection to, between, and for each other.

Third is the breaking of bread (κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, *klasei tou artou*). The reference to breaking of bread appears only twice in the NT, here and in Luke 24:35, where it refers merely to table fellowship. It is unclear here whether the phrase refers to the Lord's Supper (so NLT) or is a reference to taking some meals together, of which the Lord's Supper was a part. The verb κλάω (*klaō*, break) appears in Acts 2:46; 20:7, 11; and 27:35. In 2:46, the reference seems to be used broadly of meals, suggesting a broad use here as well, although 20:7 appears to refer to the table on the first day of the week. What makes the choice hard to decide is that the Lord's table was part of a larger meal in the

earliest church (a full discussion appears in Barrett 1994: 163–65; see also Michiels 1985). Most of the references in this context seem broad, which would suggest a broad reference here. Jervell (1998: 155) argues that a sacramental understanding of this term is not in view, given the generic Jewish understanding of the term. He also notes how verse 46 looks to a broader context for breaking bread. Either way, the phrase suggests the intimate interaction and mutual acceptance that was a part of community life.

Finally, there is reference to prayers (προσευχαῖς, *proseuchais*). This noun appears thirty-six times in the NT, twelve of which are in Luke-Acts and nine of which are in Acts (1:4; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4; 10:4, 31; 12:5; 16:13, 16). Of eighty-five NT occurrences, the verb "pray" (προσεύχομαι, *proseuchomai*) appears thirty-four times in Luke-Acts, sixteen of which are in Acts (Luke 1:10; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 28; 9:18, 28–29 [2x]; 11:1–2 [3x]; 18:1, 10–11; 20:47; 22:40–41 [2x], 44, 46; Acts 1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:9, 30; 11:5; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8). A community at prayer is something Luke emphasizes about community life. It seeks God's direction and is dependent upon God because God's family of people do not work by feelings or intuition but by actively submitting themselves to the Lord's direction. The plural with the article ("the prayers") could suggest that some set prayers were used. Another option is that the expression refers to an entire range of praying, both set and more spontaneous. The use of set prayer on occasion is likely in light of the facts that (1) set prayers existed in Judaism, (2) a tie to the temple where set prayers were made is expressed in 2:46 and 3:1, and (3) the Lord taught the disciples such a fixed prayer (Luke 11:2–4). The setting here of the community functioning by itself apart from a temple rite suggests, however, that the reference to prayer is broad, although it may well have included such set features (Bruce 1990: 132).

2:43 The community generates ongoing fear (φόβος, *phobos*) among "every soul" of those outside the community (note the imperfect verb [ἐγίνετο, *egineto*, came] used twice in this verse). The term "soul" (ψυχῇ, *psychē*) matches verse 41 as a reference to people. The fear described here is likely to be similar to that seen in Acts 2:37, where divine activity is associated with the group (Luke 1:12, 65; 2:9; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37). Such activity causes all to take careful, respectful, even nervous notice of what is happening inside the community (Acts 5:5, 11 [reaction to Ananias and Sapphira]; 9:31 [church walks in the fear of the Lord]; 19:17 [after the sons of Sceva's failed attempt to imitate Paul]; 1QH 4.26). Luke-Acts has twelve out of forty-seven NT occurrences of φόβος.

The apostolic activity includes wonders and signs (see discussion at Acts 2:19), one of which will be detailed in 3:1–10, followed by a speech of explanation (see also 5:1–11; 9:32–11:18). This replicates the pattern of deed and word that Luke's Gospel also used to describe Jesus's activity.

God had been at work through Jesus, as Peter's speech in Acts 2:14–40 showed. That work has extended beyond Jesus's crucifixion. Now the work continues through the apostles, indicating that God supports the new community as well.

2:44–45 The quality of mutual caring is highlighted in verses 44–45, as the believers are together and treat everything as belonging to everyone, holding all things as common between them. Like the phrase "those who received" in 2:41, "those who believed" describes those who have responded to the message of this new messianic community ("all the believers" in NIV, NLT; 4:32; 5:14; 10:43; 13:39; 22:19 [all present tense]; only 4:32; 11:21; and 19:2 have the aorist). The members of this new community are called believers because of their response of faith in the preached message.

The expression of their being "together" (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, *epi to auto*) recalls the unity depicted in 1:15 and 2:1. This expression is repeated in verse 47 (4:26 completes the occurrences in Acts, five of ten in the NT). It is disputed how to translate this phrase, but "together" or "at the same place" is likely (BDAG 363 §1cβ).

The believers are also holding items in common (κοινά, *koina*). Out of fourteen occurrences in the NT, this adjective appears only four times with this sense (Acts 4:32; Titus 1:4; Jude 3; Untergassmair, *EDNT* 2:302; in the other cases, it means "impure" or "unclean," e.g., Mark 7:2). Acts will note this "commonness" again (4:32). In both cases, the remark is seen as a favorable indication of the depth of fellowship and mutual care at work in the community. That a community is really functioning with appropriate love and compassion is evident when material needs are also a concern and are being generously provided.[1]

This sharing of material things in common is not a required communalism but a voluntary, caring response to need, as the end of verse 45 shows. The verbs for "sell" (ἐπίπρασκον, *epipraskon*) and "distribute" (διεμέριζον, *diemerizon*) are iterative imperfects (Moulton and Turner 1963: 67): this sharing was done again and again. Everything Luke says about this indicates that he sees such provision as a very positive act, an act of genuine care. The size of the group may well have made this possible, but the later effort by Paul to raise money from Gentiles for this community shows that it functioned across communities as well (2 Cor. 8–9). Acts 5:4 makes clear that such a donation was not required, in contrast to the requirement at Qumran among the Essenes (1QS 1.11–12; 5.1–3; 6.2–3; CD 9.1–15; 1QS 9.3–11, but there the motivation was to ensure purity). That the later church did not keep the practice speaks to the authenticity of this scene. Notes about possessing all things in common are not

1. The other reference to this term in Acts refers to "common" (unclean) food (10:14; 11:8). In Acts 10 and 11, the term relates to Jewish ideas of purity. People are no longer seen as unclean by Peter, as a result of his experience in 10:28.

unusual as a sign of ethical virtue in the culture (Philo, *Good Person* 12 §86; *Hypothetica* 11.10–13; *Abraham* 40 §235; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.5 §20 [of the Essenes]). The Greek view was that friends share things in common (Plato, *Republic* 4.424A; 5.449C; *Critias* 110C–D; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1168B.31; Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 30.168).[2] Later rabbinic Judaism argued against it (*m. ʾAbot* 5.10; Johnson 1992: 9).

Community members are moved to sell what they own, both possessions and goods, and give the proceeds to those in need (Codex D supplies a clarifying addition: as many as had possessions or goods sold them). Some scholars suggest that this reflects their expectation that Christ would return soon (Barrett 1994: 168), yet the reason given is not eschatological but social. They are motivated by concern for the needs of the community (χρείαν, *chreian*, need; perhaps as Jesus taught in Luke 6:30–36 or from the OT and Deut. 15:4–5; Polhill 1992: 121). Jesus's teaching about not hoarding material provisions from God also may well provide background (Luke 12:13–21). The same motivation appears in Acts 4:35, and failure to meet such needs in 6:3 among Hellenist widows leads to a complaint and resolution in the church (20:34 and 28:10 complete the uses of the term "need" in Acts). The verb in the imperfect shows that this is an ongoing distribution. As people are having (εἶχεν, *eichen*) need, they receive help (Witherington 1998: 162; Haenchen 1987: 192; BDF §325, §367; the verb is used with iterative ἄν, *an*). This means that people did not sell everything all at once. The picture is of a community that cares for all of its members, even those in material need.

2:46 The nature of early church worship surfaces in this verse. Each day they are at the temple precincts together (3:1–10; 4:1; Solomon's portico: 5:12, 20, 25, 42; προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδόν, *proskarterountes homothymadon*, persisting together; a phrase that is only here and in 1:14). This is an indication of the Jewish character of their faith in this early period. The phrase καθ' ἡμέρα (*kath' hēmera*) has a distributive sense, meaning "day to day," and of its seventeen NT occurrences, appears five times in Luke and six times in Acts, including twice in this scene (see v. 47). Regular attendance at the temple reflects Jewish practice for those in Jerusalem. Nothing about this is seen as unusual for Jewish believers in Jesus.

This fellowship, like Jewish practice, extends beyond the sacred space (Jervell 1998: 157). They also break bread (20:7, 11) in their homes. The phrase κατ' οἶκον (*kat' oikon*) could mean in various homes, as it is parallel to the distributive reference to each day earlier in the verse (Barrett 1994: 170). So these believers worship and fellowship together in their

2. For discussions of such sharing as an ethical virtue, see Mealand 1977; Klauck 1982; van der Horst 1985; Witherington 1998: 162; Conzelmann 1987: 23n6; and Bruce 1988a: 74n114.

everyday environments. They share the table with joy. This is the only verse where the combination ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι (*agalliasei kai aphelotēti*, glad and generous) appears in the NT; the second term is a hapax in the NT and is absent from the LXX. The use of the preposition ἐν (*en*) with these two terms points to association and has the force of an adverb (Moule 1959: 78). Joy and sincerity are present. There is no special sense to the meal here. It is only a reference to regular meals. Luke often notes the joy that comes with faith, a theme that reaches back to the hymns of Luke 1–2.

2:47 The note of joy coming from the fellowship of the community also extends over into praise to God (αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεόν, *ainountes ton theon*) and having favor (ἔχοντες χάριν, *echontes charin*) with those outside the community, or "all the people" (ὅλον τὸν λαόν, *holon ton laon*). This way to express praising God appears in six of its eight NT occurrences in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; Acts 2:47; 3:8–9 [2x]; Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5). The finding of favor is noted only here in Acts. This combination of terms (ἔχω χάριν, *echō charin*) appears in a few NT texts (Luke 17:9 [the phrase means "to thank" here]; 2 Cor. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:12 [to be thankful]; 2 Tim. 1:3 [to thank]; Heb. 12:28 [to be grateful]; also in the OT: Exod. 33:12; in Judaism: 1 Esd. 6:5; Fitzmyer 1998: 272). The idea is that others are appreciative of this new community ("good will of all the people" in NLT, NET). A vibrant community extends itself in two directions: toward God and toward neighbor. A veiled reference to obedience to the great commandment appears here.

In sum, Luke affirms the internal fellowship, intimacy, and engagement of the community. This positive activity is accompanied by joy and glad hearts, and their worship and praise of God are ongoing. But this is not an isolated, private club or a hermetically sealed community. Their reputation with outsiders also is good.

This good reputation apparently impacts their witness: Luke concludes the summary with a note that as each day passes, the Lord adds to the number who are being saved. The phrase καθ' ἡμέραν (*kath' hēmeran*) is yet another distributive use of κατά.[3] This is an effective community as it is growing at a regular pace. The imperfect προσετίθει (*prosetithei*) is iterative: God is continuously adding to the numbers (Wallace 1996: 547). As it is the Lord God who calls (v. 39), so it is the Lord God who adds to his community. The phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (*epi to auto*) probably means simply "to itself," although in the LXX it could refer to the community, which is what the "it" is here (Johnson 1992: 60; Pss. 2:2; 4:9 [4:8 Eng.]; so D adds after it "in the church," an explanatory gloss). The participial use σῳζομένους (*sōzomenous*, those who are saved) appears only here and in Luke 13:23 in Luke-Acts and looks back to Acts 2:21.

3. On *kata*, see v. 46, where it is also used for "day by day" and for "various" houses.

It is yet another way to describe believers, with verse 44 (those who believe) and verse 41 (those who receive the word).

This entire unit stresses the solid community start the earliest church enjoyed. It still lived and reflected its Jewish context, going to temple, but, beyond that, gathered in homes for instruction, prayer, fellowship, and the breaking of bread together. Conversion led to immediate follow-up and care for instruction, spiritual nurture, personal fellowship, and the meeting of basic needs (Fernando 1998: 129). The early believers cared so much for each other that they sold or gave personal items to meet those needs. Glad, joyful hearts and praise to God characterized them. Witherington (1998: 163) observes that the community's "presence and witness were infectious." The note of growth at the end of this unit is related to the community work and fellowship God was bringing about within the new community. Their life as a community was a visible part of their testimony. In sharing Christ, they also gave of themselves. One can share Christ not only by what one says about him but also by showing the transformation that following him brings about. As Polhill (1992: 122) suggests, "Luke's summaries present an ideal for the Christian community which it must always strive for, constantly return to, and discover anew, if it is to have the unity of the spirit and purpose essential for an effective witness." Stott (1990: 82–87) speaks of a learning church, a loving church, a worshiping church, and an evangelistic church. In other words, the church is to be a place of spiritual growth and spiritual praise, a place that is relational enough to meet needs, engage the culture, and share Christ.

With Acts 2:42–47 ending as it does, Luke wants to leave no doubt that there is an important connection between community life and the "favor" the community experienced with outsiders. This kind of engagement has a positive effect on mission. Everything about the Gospels and Acts tells us that God's people are to take the initiative to show community and serve those around them. Much in Western culture drives us to an individualism that undercuts this development of community. We are taught to have things our way and that being able to have our individual needs catered to is how to measure the success of an organization. In our culture, our individual needs and rights come before any needs of the group. The biblical picture is not of what someone receives from the church, although one does receive a great deal, but of what one gives and how one contributes to it. The portrait of the early church in Acts shows that community and the welfare of the group were a priority. This attitude reflected spiritual maturity that allowed the church to grow. In the case of this earliest community, the believers' preaching was matched by their community, making a powerful testimony for their mission. When the early church said that God cared, the care they gave their own demonstrated this.

Additional Notes

2:42–44. A few MSS add "in Jerusalem" after "the apostles' teaching" in verse 42 (D and some Vulgate MSS) and at the end of verse 43 after "through the apostles" (E, 33, 104, a few Syriac MSS). Other MSS have the addition of the phrase with a second mention of fear after the discussion of apostolic wonders, a seemingly more natural placement but also repetitive ($\mathfrak{P}^{74}$, ℵ, A, C, and Ψ). The additions are not original because their various locations across the MSS simply indicate that they are trying to make clear that the story is still in Jerusalem. The second reference to fear seems redundant and is placed more logically after the reference to wonders, making it an easier reading. The more difficult reading, placing fear at the front of verse 43, appears in B, D, Byz, and Itala.

2:44. It is hard to know whether the present-tense participle (πιστεύοντες, *pisteuontes*, read by $\mathfrak{P}^{74}$, A, C, D, Ψ, and Byz) or the aorist participle (πιστεύσαντες, *pisteusantes*, read by ℵ, B, 36) is original here. It makes no real difference to the sense. The present tense is common in Acts (see vv. 44–45 above).