SUMMARY

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

The writings of the New Testament are composed and received in a culture dominated by orality. Therefore I involve in my research studies which highlight the orality in the tradition of the writings. In the Bible, the spoken word is transmitted by numerous dialogues and speeches. In Acts, Luke uses a series of speeches to communicate his message.

My research aims to gain insight into the way Luke communicates the Gospel through these speeches. A number are in Paul’s name. It concerns the person of Paul as seen by Luke, and not the historical Paul as he is known in his letters. The name Paul is used for the Lucan Paul.

In this study the central question is: how does Luke communicate his message to his receivers in his typifying of Paul as orator in Acts 13 and 17? This communication takes place on different levels. There is communication in the text where Paul in a speech addresses a particular audience. At the same time Luke communicates through the speeches with his intended readers. There is also communication with the reader of today.

Communication can be described as a process, in which an attempt is made to ‘make common’ the world of living and thinking of the transmitter and the receiver.

In this first chapter, I discuss forms of communication and research method, derived from the communication models of F. Heider, T.M. Newcomb and F. Schulz von Thun. These models refer to oral communication. These offer the possibility to describe Paul as speaker, his relationship to his hearers and his message.

When interpreting a text, the starting point can be chosen in the text itself, but also in the reader. Gadamer’s hermeneutical approach offers the opportunity to an integral approach to both the text and the reader. He pays much attention to the relationship between text and reader, with on the one hand an eye for the historical distance between the two, and on the other hand, for the input of the reader in interpreting the text. Gadamer gives no rules for interpretation, but describes processes which go with it.

Finally, I will discuss in this chapter the concepts used by Gadamer. These are the points of attention for my research.
Chapter 2 ACTS AND THE FIRST RECIPIENTS

The title of my research ‘With Luke Listening to Paul’ leads to the question ‘who is Luke?’ The approach is part of the general orientation of Acts in the framework of my research.

A large majority of researchers share the view that the author of the Gospel of Luke and of Acts is the same. It is thought that he was a Jesus’ follower of non-Jewish origin who might have belonged to the God-fearers. Following the example of the early-Christian tradition I refer to him as Luke. He describes himself as a traveling companion of Paul during different time periods. On the basis of the prologues, the genre, the narratives and theology, I examine the unity of both writings. In the ‘we-sections’ the author refers to himself as eyewitness of Paul’s missionary work.

To gain insight into the first recipients of Acts, I focus on dating. However, datings are surrounded by uncertainties due to the lack of significant data. As a starting point I take the most common period 80-85 AD. This means that the first historical reader lives in a time after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD and there is a removal going on between Jews and the community of followers of Jesus. Through the command to Theophilus Luke is looking to disseminate his writings through Theophilus’s social network. It is clear that the Gospel of Luke and Acts do not focus on one individual reader. From a narrative perspective it constructs a portrait of readers who see followers of Jesus who are familiar with Judaism.

Luke records the story of the proclamation of the Word of God. He does this in the then common Hellenistic style of history description. With a classic historian as Thucydides speeches function as a commentary on the story. With Luke, however, these have an essential function in the spreading of the Word. These speeches are placed in Acts according to a clear structure and occur at crucial moments in the story. The published speeches are not be taken as strictly literal reports or transcripts. Most scholars believe that the main points are passed on of what would have been said in those circumstances. A further exploration of the authenticity of the speeches is beyond the scope of my research.

My research focuses on the literary image in Acts of Paul, who communicates the gospel with people in different situations. Through this description of Paul, Luke communicates with his readers. This communication is addressed in Chapter 6. The actual reader/hearer hears how the way and the content of the Gospel is preached to Theophilus.

The writings of the New Testament are made and received in a world which was dominated by oral communication. Written texts were usually read out loud in public. There
is evidence that the authors of the New Testament deliberately gave oral/auditory indications in the text to help their listeners when listening.

In this chapter, I discuss these oral/auditory clues and address the fact that in the course of time, written texts of the New Testament were passed on both written and orally. Researchers state that instead of focusing on the written text as a model, attention should be given to orality and memory. Reading is then characterized as oral performance, sometimes conceived as entertainment. In this approach called performance criticism the written text is based on oral dimension. This view is not generally accepted. In the following sections, I discuss stylistic and rhetorical features of the speeches in Acts 13 and 17.

Chapter 3 THE GOSPEL BROUGHT TO JEWS

Using the following analysis of Acts 13: 13-48, I search for data to describe the communication within the narrative of this section in Acts. The attention is hereby focused on the display of Paul as retro, the content of his message, and the circle of his hearers. This exegesis provides the data for chapter 5 in which this communication is discussed.

Besides the communication of Paul with his hearers Luke also has a group of intended readers in mind. In the exegesis I also search for data relating to this second layer. This communication is the subject of chapter 6.

Luke speaks in Acts about a preaching Paul, but up to the speech in Acts 13 a further development of the content of Paul’s preaching is missing. With this speech in the setting of a synagogue Luke shows explicitly what the proclamation of Paul to the Jew means, and paints him as a Greek orator. Luke lists the themes which Paul uses in his preaching to the Jews. These are: (a) the God of Israel acts in the history of his people; (b) God fulfills his promises in and with the coming of Jesus; (c) justification for God can only be through Jesus by faith; (d) the Law of Moses does not justify; (e) Jesus is the Savior who was crucified, dead and buried; (f) Jesus is raised from the dead by God; (g) warning of a potential judgment; (h) call to repentance; (i) the Gospel comes first to the Jews, when rejected by them Paul turns to non-Jews.

From a rhetorical perspective I am exploring whether Paul possibly searched to connect to the prior readings in the synagogue and hence to his hearers. The speech turns out to have characteristics of classical rhetoric. Luke presents Paul explicitly as messenger in the wake of witnesses from the Scripture, hereby indicating his reliability as messenger, for the Scriptures are authoritative for his hearers, who are Jews and God fearers. On the following
Sabbath the service is attended by ‘almost the entire city’. A conflict arises with the Jews. Non-Jews respond with gladness to Paul’s words. The rejection by the Jews is, for Paul, reason to say that the Word of God first reached them, but that there is now also room for the preaching to the Gentiles.

I end the chapter with communicative explorations, relating to the communication contained in the text regarding Paul and his hearers in the meeting in a synagogue. As previously stated, the communication of Luke with the intended readers is addressed in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 THE GOSPEL BROUGHT TO GREEKS

In this chapter I give an analysis of Acts 17: 16-34, which data I use to describe the communication of Paul in Athens. Within the text Paul is in contact with different sections among the Athenians. At the same time Luke communicates with his intended readers. As in the previous chapter, I draw attention to Paul as orator, the content of his message and the circle of his hearers.

In the first century of our era Athens is considered a cultural center. It is in this very city the confrontation between the Gospel and the pagan world occurs. Luke demonstrates Paul’s interpretation of pagan images from a Jewish perspective. Paul’s dislike of the idolatry is expressed in the choice of words. He proclaims the Gospel in the synagogues and on the market, where he is in a debate with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The way he works and speaks reminds them of the famous Greek philosopher Socrates. With this image Luke demonstrates that Paul can be successful under the great intellectuals of his time. Hence the reader is told that the message of Paul is of great importance. With the note ‘because he preached Jesus and the Resurrection’ Luke provides the readers with the context in which the speech must be placed.

Paul justifies himself before the Areopagus Council. Whether this is a legal setting is for authors subject of discussion. The speech, which has characteristics of classical rhetoric, is particularly addressed to those named philosophers. For the intended readers Paul’s performance provides a critical approach in these for them well-known sections. As point of connection Paul uses the inscription ‘to the unknown god’ which he had seen on an altar in Athens, but there is no equivalence between the ‘unknown god’ and the God proclaimed by Paul. He is looking to connect with his hearers in the terminology he uses. With a quotation from the pagan poet Aratus he provides a bridge to his hearers. He does not mention the quote
casually, but lets it converge with words from Scripture. Although he gives no direct quotes, there are implicit references.

The original readers will recognize these which enhance the reliability and consistency of his message to non-Jews. The aim is to know and to serve the true God. The hearers in Athens are called to repent to Him. This call has its origin in the judgment day laid down by God about humanity. He will give this judgment ‘by a man he has designated for that purpose.’ God raised Him from the dead. Paul does not mention Jesus’ name.

The breaking point for the hearers is Paul’s talking about the resurrection of the dead. Some mock Paul. Others say they are willing to hear him again, keeping an open mind.

The confrontation of the Gospel with the pagan thinking in the center of the early culture seems limited in result, but is not without perspective. There are those who are connecting with Paul.

The communication of Paul with the hearers in Athens, and that of Luke with his intended readers will follow in the next chapters.

Chapter 5 PAUL: HIS WORD AND HIS HEARERS

In this chapter I give a brief characterization of Paul as a speaker in Acts 13 and 17. He passes on his message to a different group of hearers. The question is whether the different hearers also lead to a different message. To answer this question I compare the message of both speeches, followed by a picture of Paul’s hearers at said speeches. When examining the communication in Acts 13 and 17, I am using the models described in Chapter 1. These highlight the relationship of the speaker, the message and the hearer.

A comparison of the message shows in the following summary: First of all, God is the acting one in both speeches.

His acting in Acts 13 is especially focused on Israel as His people. It is specifically His people because He has chosen them to this end. In Acts 17 His acting pertains to the whole world and carries a universal character. The Cosmos owes its existence to Him and thus is His world. In Acts 13 the name of Jesus is mentioned as the Savior who, after He died on the cross, was buried and rose again. In Acts 17 He is not mentioned by name. He is the Risen one from the dead and in the future will judge mankind. Also in Acts 13 there is mention of judgment and there is a call to repentance, same as in Acts 17.

The message appears to have similar central themes for both Jews and non-Jews. These themes are: To serve God in the right way; Jesus is the One resurrected by God; there is
judgment by God; there is a call to repentance. However, there is a difference in the approach of Jesus. In the meeting in Antioch they speak about Him as Savior and the words about Him form a ‘word of salvation’ (Acts 13:26). This approach is lacking in Acts 17, where the reference to the history of Israel is not given.

In Acts 13 the hearers are Hellenistic Jews and God fearers. There appears to be a wide common frame of reference between Paul and his hearers. New to them is the Christological-soteriological approach by Paul, with a strong accent on the resurrection of Jesus.

The communicative approach, in applying the model of F. A. Schulz von Thun (Chapter 1), shows that Paul pays much attention to the relational aspect of his message. In the last part of his speech this compelling aspect is strongly present. He is an emphatic messenger who wants to convince them of the importance of the message and calls to repentance.

As hearers in Acts 17 Luke mentions Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. In Athens there is a limited common frame of reference between Paul and the Stoics, as well as the Epicureans. From a communicative point of view Paul focuses strongly on the relational level. He addresses the hearers with ‘you are very religious’ which in their point of view is a positive indication. During the speech he clearly appeals to this relational level. The whole speech has a compelling accent, which is very strong at the end. By mentioning the resurrection from the dead, he distances himself from the world of thought of the Stoics and the Epicureans. With his mention of a divine governance and judgment Paul goes totally against the view of the Epicureans. After all, in their vision the gods keep themselves totally aloof from the world stage.

In Chapter 1, I described communication as a process in which an attempt is made to create ‘the common’ world of living and thought of the transmitter and the receiver. When Paul begins this process with his hearers in Acts 13 and 17, can we truly consider this ‘creating common’ ground? This question is addressed at the end of this chapter 5.

Chapter 6 LUKE: HIS WORD AND HIS READERS

This chapter is about Luke’s communication with the intended reader in the speeches in Acts 13 and 17. In chapter 2, I have sketched a picture of these readers. It is that of Jesus’ followers who are familiar with Judaism and the Scriptures of Israel. Perhaps they are of Jewish origin themselves or belong to those who are God-fearers. Through the communication with these
implied readers, Luke communicates with the first generation of readers of Acts who live in the second half of the first century. He directs, with the mention of the speech in Act 13, attention to a gathering of Jews in a setting of synagogue in the diaspora, including the presence of God-fearers. Through the speech Luke outlines the identity of the Jesus’ followers community, by focusing on the relationship of Jews, and non-Jews who feel connected to Judaism. I discuss in this chapter some aspects which capture this identity.

In Acts 17 Luke addresses the intellectuals amongst the non-Jews. The speech is situated in Athens, a city with a centuries’ long rich philosophical and cultural reputation. In the first century of our era, she still has fame as a cultural center. In this environment Paul holds a speech to an audience which includes Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

For the historical reader the world of thinking of these philosophers would be recognizable. This is an essential confrontation of the Jesus’ followers community with the surrounding culture which is strongly influenced by Epicureanism and Stoicism. Those who come from the Jewish tradition are familiar with, and formed by the controversy against the idol worship, which is described here. The members of the Jesus’ followers communities originating from the Greeks have previously worshipped the gods to which these images refer. They are confirmed in their choice to abandon idol worship and follow the way of the Gospel.

It is obvious that Luke writes to be read. The analysis of both speeches, through the models of F. Heider and T.M. Newcomb, confirms this, and shows the willingness of Luke to present a message which is accessible from a communicative point of view. Through the analysis via the model of F. Schulz von Thun it shows that Luke strongly expresses that there is a factual intention in both speeches. He knows how to pass on his message in an expressive manner. Thus he shows his involvement with his reader. At the end of each speech he appeals to the reader. By ending each speech this way, the appeal gets great emphasis from a communicative point of view.

In Act 13 the language of the Septuagint resonates strongly. Quotes and words from the Septuagint underline this. He uses the language of the Septuagint with which the reader is familiar. It shows again his close involvement with the reader. This confirms the outcome of the analysis through the model of F. Schulz von Thun.

With Paul appearing as a philosopher, in particular modeled after Socrates, the words of Paul in Acts 17 are characterized as a message of wisdom. For the reader this reflects the intellectual strength of the community of Jesus’ followers. The faith of Jesus’ followers concerns the true God, Who is the Creator of the Cosmos. He even surpasses the gods of Athens.
In Acts 17 Luke uses words which have an ambiguous meaning. These can be interpreted positively and negatively. The hearers in Athens will give these a positive or a neutral interpretation. From a communicative point of view Luke meets them by using this language. The reader who already is familiar with the Gospel message will either follow the critical or the negative approach.

Chapter 7 FINDINGS: WITH LUKE LISTENING TO PAUL

After an overview of the approach followed in this study, now the relationship is summed up by discussing ‘Paul: his word, his Jewish and Greek hearing’. His message appears to have, besides a common content, also differences, based on the different hearing. The core theme is equal in both speeches. It aims at serving the true God. In both speeches there is a call to repentance. To the Jewish hearing Paul speaks about Jesus as the Savior. To the Greek hearing he does not mention that. The application of the communication models shows a contextual approach of Paul as speaker. At the end of both speeches, there are those who heed the message of Paul. There is a big difference in number. It turns out that the message especially lands when there is a broad common frame of reference between Paul and his hearing.

The described communication models provide an opportunity for an analysis of speeches in the Bible. These models are also useful for an analysis of the relationship ‘Luke: his word and his intended readers’. This analysis is being described in a summarizing manner.

Through the speeches in Acts 13 and 17, Luke puts, for the historical readers, the identity of the faith of the community of Jesus’ followers to which they belong, into words. He describes this in relation to Judaism and the pagan world in which the community lives.

The chapter is concluded with the representation of a design of a hermeneutical model which is developed on the basis of this research. Besides, relevant elements of the hermeneutics of Gadamer are used.