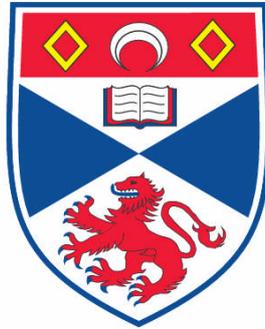


**THE SPIRIT AND THE 'OTHER' : SOCIAL IDENTITY,
ETHNICITY AND INTERGROUP RECONCILIATION IN LUKE-
ACTS**

Aaron J. Kuecker

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

ST MARY'S COLLEGE



The Spirit and the 'Other':

**Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup
Reconciliation in Luke-Acts**

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

Aaron J. Kuecker

**TO THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ST ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

June 2008

DECLARATIONS

I, Aaron Kuecker, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the relationship between the Holy Spirit, ethnic identity and the 'other' in Luke-Acts. I argue that the Spirit is the central figure in the formation of a new social identity that affirms, yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity. The investigation is informed methodologically by social identity theory (discussed in chapter 2), a branch of social psychology that examines the effects of group membership upon human identity and intergroup relations.

Chapters 3 and 4 investigate the relationship between privileged social identity, the influence of the Spirit and the allocation of group resources to the 'other' in Luke 1-4. I conclude that there is an identifiable relationship between the presence of the Spirit and the extension of in-group benefits to the 'other'.

Chapters 5 through 8 enquire into the role of the Spirit in Acts 1-15. In chapters 5 and 6 I identify the Pentecost narrative as the initial clue to the place of ethnic identity within the Jesus movement and the role of the early community in the formation of an allocentrically oriented social identity. In chapters 7 and 8 attention is directed to the role of the Spirit in both the orchestration of intergroup contact and the identification of those rightly related to God. Luke's use of 'ethnic language' alerts us to the precision with which he approaches this topic. I conclude that Luke is convinced of an inseparable relationship between the Spirit and human identity that robustly affirms ethnicity nested within one's identity as a member of the Jesus group. The existence of this Spirit-formed identity allows for profound expressions of interethnic reconciliation in Luke-Acts. This conclusion grants a broader role to the Spirit in Luke-Acts than the current scholarly consensus which suggests that Luke views the Spirit as the Old Testament/Second Temple 'Spirit of prophecy'.

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1

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LUKE-ACTS TRACING THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Of the many phenomena that develop as a result of human social interaction, group identity is among the most ambiguous. Life *without* social groups would scarcely be human. Groups provide a sense of belonging, identity and often a social safety net. Yet history has shown that life *with* social groups also can be scarcely human. Groups provide a ready base from which to create stereotypes, manipulate resources and all too often to cultivate social barriers that negatively impact the ‘other’. All group identities are open to these types of mutations, but ethnic identity has proved capable of creating some of the most vexing and intractable cleavages in human society. The ambiguous potential of groups to foster both human community and intergroup strife is not new. The New Testament itself gives ample evidence of the positive and pernicious effects of membership in social groups – perhaps especially for groups best classified as ‘ethnic’ – and nowhere is this more evident than in Luke-Acts.

Luke-Acts is marked by a concern for the way that group identities impinge upon social interaction, and it contains some of the most blatant expressions of intergroup hatred as well as some of the most poignant expressions of intergroup reconciliation in the entire New Testament. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, scholarly interest in ‘Jew’ and ‘Gentile’ issues in Luke-Acts has not yet led to a detailed examination either of intergroup relationships or of the mechanics of intergroup (especially inter-ethnic) reconciliation. The few studies that have focused upon

social groups in the text have yet to examine the intersection between this aspect of Luke's vision and another central Lukan concern, the Holy Spirit. In this thesis I will bring together these two prominent features of Luke-Acts in order better to understand Luke's interpretation of the relationship between the Holy Spirit, group identities (especially ethnic identities) and intergroup reconciliation. In so doing I hope to come to a clearer grasp of both the role of the Spirit and the place of ethnic identity among the earliest followers of Jesus, Luke's distinctively Israelite Messiah and unambiguously cosmic Lord.

History of Research: pre-1900-1950

There are many profitable avenues to explore in the history of research on Luke-Acts, but I will restrict myself to literature that deals specifically with Luke's view of the Spirit. It will become quickly apparent that the relationship between the Spirit and ethnic identity has largely been neglected.¹

The past century of research on the Spirit in Luke-Acts can be divided into roughly two phases: (1) determining the provenance Luke's concept of πνεῦμα and (2) the ramifications of the provenance for understanding πνεῦμα in Luke-Acts, often especially with regard to the role of the Spirit in individual salvation.

Hermann Gunkel

Hermann Gunkel's 1888 work *Die Wirkungen des Heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus* featured a form-critical approach situated within a history of religions schema. These commitments led Gunkel to examine the 'concept' πνεῦμα, especially in light of its development in the Old Testament and the Second Temple Period. Gunkel observed that in the Old Testament the Spirit was thought to be the source of the extraordinary – everything 'mysterious and mighty in Israel', but not the source of ordinary conduct, piety or morality for the individual Israelite.² Gunkel saw

¹ Works that emphasize 'Jew' and 'Gentile' issues have largely focused upon the relationship between 'Judaism' and 'Gentiles', and thus have not specifically worked from an intergroup, inter-ethnic perspective. See Esler 1987 for an early treatment of intergroup dynamics in Luke-Acts. Cf. Wilson 1973; Brawley 1987; Sanders 1987; Tyson 1988; 1992; 1999; Slee 2003; Parsons 2006 (whose treatment of physiognomy deals with the 'other' but is not intergroup in nature). Hays 2003 surveys the biblical theology of 'race', but this is predicated on physiognomic and not group identities.

² Gunkel 1979:19, 48.

continuity between the Old Testament 'concept' and the 'concept' in both 'Hellenistic' and 'Palestinian' 'Judaism', all tending toward an emphasis on the prophetic.³ Luke, he thought, emphasized the Spirit's prophetic function through inspired speech and glossolalia (though Gunkel did not exclude entirely other 'miraculous' effects of the Spirit in the life of the individual).⁴

For Gunkel the Spirit was given *to* faith instead of *for* faith and thus not all Christians possessed the Spirit.⁵ Importantly, Gunkel did not think that Luke's Spirit had strong influence on the life of the community.⁶ He claimed that no Old Testament or Second Temple evidence indicated an association between the eventual *effect* of the Spirit upon the community and the work of the Spirit itself.⁷ Thus, only the inspired speech of the prophet (the immediate effect of the Spirit) was attributable to the Spirit, not communal formation brought about through prophecy. This is a difficult way to read biblical texts, especially narrative and, I think, does not do justice to a Lukan conception of the Spirit. Ultimately, for Gunkel, Luke retained the 'conservative' Israelite phenomenological concept of the Spirit while Paul innovatively understood the Spirit as the source of all Christian living.⁸ Gunkel's two enduring contributions were a demonstration that Luke was reliant upon Israelite tradition for his conception of the Spirit and a differentiation between 'Lukan' and 'Pauline' conceptions of the Spirit. The first has been (nearly) universally accepted. The second has gained broad, yet not unanimous, consensus.

Hans Leisengang

The opposite pole of the provenance debate was taken up in Hans Leisengang's two monographs: *Der Heilige Geist: Das Wesen und Werden der Mystisch-Intuitiven Erkenntnis in der Philosophie und Religion der Griechen* (1919) and *Pneuma Hagion: Der Ursprung des Geistesbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der griechischen Mystik* (1922). In his first monograph, Leisengang attempted to demonstrate that Philo adopted 'Greek' conceptions of πνεῦμα and then used these concepts to speak

³ Gunkel 1979:48.

⁴ Gunkel 1979:18.

⁵ Gunkel 1978:42-43.

⁶ 'Der gerechte Wandel hat mit dem Geiste nichts zu tun'. Gunkel: 1899, p. 10.

⁷ Gunkel 1899:22, 26, 30, 33.

⁸ Gunkel 1899:75: 'Die Gemeinde also hält für pneumatisch das Ausserordentliche im Christenleben, Paulus das Gewöhnliche; jene das einzelnen Eigentümliche, Paulus das allen Gemeinsame; jene das abrupt-Auftretende, er das Stetige; jene einzelnes in Christenleben, er das Christenleben selbst'.

about the Israelite 'spirit of prophecy'. In the second monograph, Leisengang argued that New Testament spirit-material in the life of Jesus was of late Hellenistic mystical origin.⁹ While Leisengang's theories about discrete Hellenistic influence were often eccentric, his challenge to Gunkel generated responses that would ultimately solidify the scholarly consensus that the Spirit in Luke-Acts is primarily to be understood via its portrayal in Second Temple Judean literature.¹⁰

Friedrich Büchsel

Friedrich Büchsel's 1926 *Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* and Hans von Baer's nearly simultaneous 1926 *Der Heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* effectively ended the debate regarding the provenance of Luke's 'concept' of πνεῦμα. Büchsel was motivated to demonstrate the coherence that existed between the Spirit as experienced by Jesus, by the early church, and by Pauline churches. Büchsel remained firmly within an Israelite context, suggesting that Luke's Spirit was chiefly the 'Spirit of sonship' and that the generative power of Jesus' life originated and proceeded from this sense of sonship.¹¹ The link between the Spirit experience of Jesus and that of the early church was possession of the Spirit of sonship.¹² Charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit were merely symptoms of this deeper, filial relationship.¹³ Not only did he allow a broad spectrum of the activities of the early church to be attributed to the Spirit, including tongues, prophetic speech, moral and religious effects, and the life of the community, he also astutely noted that the Spirit was no respecter of the common social divisions in the first century Mediterranean.¹⁴ His case is weakened by his inability to more precisely note the genesis of the 'sonship' of the apostles, an event he placed before the reception of the Spirit at Pentecost. However, Büchsel is the first to demonstrate a keen eye for the socio-cultural effects of the Spirit in Luke-Acts.

⁹ Leisengang 1922:23. Discussion in Tuner 1996:26-29.

¹⁰ Leisengang argued the virgin conception was an echo of the Delphic prophetess sitting over a cleft and awaiting the rise of the 'impregnating' πνεῦμα.

¹¹ Büchsel 1926:165, 'Jesu Geistbesitz ist Gottessohnschaft' (cf. 170-171, 177-178).

¹² Büchsel 1926:264.

¹³ Büchsel 1926:262.

¹⁴ Büchsel 1926:254-255.

Hans von Baer's legacy in Lukan scholarship endures thanks mostly to his introduction of the three-epoch scheme for the Lukan *Heilsgeschichte* and his emphasis on Luke's interest in the 'Spirit of prophecy'.¹⁵ For Baer, the Spirit moved salvation history forward in three distinct epochs.

(1) Luke 1-2 described the epoch which preceded Jesus' birth. In this epoch the Spirit endowed certain individuals with the Spirit of prophecy in order to accomplish specific tasks.

(2) The second epoch was inaugurated at Jesus' baptism and stretched to the ascension (leaving the period between the ascension and Pentecost as a Spirit-less inter-regnum). This epoch was the beginning of the new covenant, symbolized by the Noachic dove.¹⁶

(3) The third epoch began with Pentecost. In this epoch all believers have access to Jesus through the Spirit.¹⁷

Baer was less interested in inner or communal experiences of the Spirit than with the Spirit's role in initiating each new epoch of *Heilsgeschichte*.¹⁸ This initiation is done largely by the Old Testament 'Spirit of prophecy'. The resulting parallel between Jesus and the early church is not Spirit-generated sonship, but Spirit-empowered proclamation. Baer's epochal approach has largely been discredited as a foreign imposition upon the text.¹⁹ His 'Spirit of prophecy' construct, however, has an enduring effect.

The works of Baer and Büchsel secured a scholarly consensus regarding the Old Testament/Second Temple context both from which and against which Luke's view of the Spirit should be understood. This is the enduring contribution from this period of research. Büchsel's emphasis on the Spirit and sonship placed Luke in continuity with Paul's view of the Spirit. Baer's emphasis on Luke's Spirit as the Old Testament/Second Temple 'Spirit of prophecy' emphasized distinction between

¹⁵ Cf. Conzelmann's scheme: (1) The period of Israel; (2) the period of Jesus; (3) the period of the church (1960:16-17).

¹⁶ Baer 1926:65ff.

¹⁷ Baer 1926:93.

¹⁸ Baer infrequently acknowledges 'non-prophetic' Spirit activities, such as peace with God for both Jesus and the community of believers (1926:167).

¹⁹ For critique of the epochal scheme, see Menzies 1991:133; Bovon 2006:14-31.

Luke and Paul. The (potential) Lukan/Pauline dichotomy remains a feature of contemporary Treatments of Lukan pneumatology.

History of Research: 1950-present

A number of studies on the Spirit in Luke-Acts appeared in the middle portion of the 20th century which moved scholarship toward an emerging ‘Spirit of prophecy’ consensus.²⁰ Because of both word limit and the availability of several recent reviews of mid-20th century research, I will review more contemporary scholarship.²¹ The developing ‘Spirit of prophecy’ consensus has pressed interpreters toward Old Testament and Second Temple texts in order to discern what, precisely, were the acknowledged activities of the ‘Spirit of prophecy’. These readings of Old Testament and Second Temple texts have then formed the conceptual context against which Luke’s conception of the Spirit has been read, with the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts usually not permitted to proceed beyond the frameworks created by readings of the older texts.²² These works largely share three common foci: (1) the scope of activities attributable to the Israelite conception of the ‘Spirit of prophecy’; (2) the role of the Spirit in individual salvation, including the normative sequence for repentance, baptism and Spirit-reception; and (3) the ethical role (or lack thereof) of the Spirit in the early community and in individual community members.²³

James D.G. Dunn: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Dunn, responding to both Pentecostal ‘second blessing’ positions and Confirmationist positions, contended that the Spirit was essential to the process of conversion and that one could not be considered a Christian apart from the Spirit.²⁴ Dunn takes up Conzelmann’s epochal view of the Spirit and considers Jesus’ experience at the Jordan the initiation of both the messianic age (as distinct from

²⁰ Lampe 1951; 1977; Schweizer 1956; Haya-Prats 1975; Stronstad 1984; Mainville 1991; Shelton 1991; Kim 1992.

²¹ Most extensive is Turner 1996:20-81. See also Menzies 1991:18-46; Wenk 2004:13-43.

²² This approach is prone to a methodological error that will be discussed later in this chapter.

²³ A fourth interest of some works (Dunn 1970; Menzies 1992; Cho 2005) is the relationship between Lukan and Pauline conceptions of the Spirit.

²⁴ Dunn 1970:4.

the age of Israel) and the initiation of Jesus into the messianic age.²⁵ For Dunn the Spirit is largely the Spirit of sonship – though this is in no way adoptionistic. ‘It is not so much that Jesus became what he was not before, but that history became what it was not before; and Jesus as the one who effects these changes of history from within history, is himself affected by them.’²⁶ The age of the Spirit, post-Pentecost, extends Jesus’ experience, initiation into the new covenant, to all believers. Dunn is heavily reliant on Ezekiel 36.27 and Jeremiah 31.33 to suggest that the ‘promise of the Father’ (Acts 1.5) includes the implicit idea that the Spirit is the agent of the new covenant. Dunn is able to avoid sharp distinction between Büchsel’s Spirit of sonship and Baer’s Spirit of prophecy by noting that the Spirit always functions primarily *to initiate* new believers into the covenant but also *to equip* them for life and service in this new age.²⁷

Dunn’s work allows for a broader conception of the Spirit – and one that seems more at home in Luke-Acts than other ‘Spirit of prophecy’ approaches detailed below. Yet the work, while enduring, leaves us with several problems. First, Dunn’s heavy reliance upon the widely discredited epochal scheme should be called into question.²⁸ Second, while it is possible that the ‘new covenant’ passages from Jeremiah and Ezekiel are part of Luke’s conceptual framework, heavy reliance upon two passages that do not appear in Luke’s work is problematic and has rightly opened Dunn to the charge of importing Pauline conceptions of the Spirit into Luke. Third, Dunn’s insistence that the Spirit is normative for salvation (while undoubtedly correct) presses him into expecting from Luke a systematic order of salvation throughout the narrative. This prompts difficult exegetical arguments in which Dunn is forced to portray those who appear to have legitimate faith in Jesus as ‘non-believers’ until the Spirit arrives.²⁹ In a 1993 article Dunn softened his position somewhat, admitting that Luke primarily thinks with an Old Testament ‘Spirit of prophecy’ framework, but also maintaining that the Spirit is indeed part and parcel of Christian salvation and is thus primarily the gift of sonship and

²⁵ Dunn 1970:25; Conzelmann 1961.

²⁶ Dunn 1970:29.

²⁷ Dunn 1970:32.

²⁸ See critiques in Bovon 2006:14-31.

²⁹ See especially his treatment of the Samaritans in Acts 8. Dunn 1970:55-72.

initiation into God's covenant.³⁰ Likewise, Dunn held less vigorously to his epochal view, but insisted that the Spirit is intimately associated with entrance into the kingdom of God.³¹

Robert P. Menzies: The development of early Christian pneumatology with special reference to Luke-Acts

Menzies' 1991 monograph has been the major impetus for the subsequent works discussed below. Based upon his review of Second Temple texts, Menzies concluded that the Spirit in the Second Temple was conceived strictly as the 'Spirit of prophecy'. Luke takes up this view and restricts the role of the Spirit only to incorporation into the active mission of God through the empowerment of special insight and inspired speech.³² Menzies sees no hint of 'soteriological' effects of the Spirit in Second Temple texts or Luke-Acts (with the exception of the Wisdom tradition and 1QH, the former of which he thinks is the grist for Paul's mill).³³ Paul is thus the first to attribute 'soteriological' functions to the Spirit, an idea absorbed from the same Hellenistic milieu that produced the sapiential writings.³⁴

Menzies proceeds to read Luke-Acts through a 'Spirit of prophecy' lens. The approach is redaction critical and Menzies' source criticism allows him to sidestep cases in Luke-Acts that do not fit his paradigm.³⁵ Menzies makes a significant distinction between πνεῦμα and δύναμις. To the former he ascribes only inspired speech. The latter, he thinks, is a reflection of the 'hellenistic' conception of divine power and is the effective agent of the miraculous.³⁶ Thus, in the instances when πνεῦμα and δύναμις appear in parallel (Luke 1.17, 35; 4.14; 24.49 [conceptually]; Acts

³⁰ Dunn 1993.

³¹ For other relevant works by Dunn, see the bibliography.

³² Menzies 1991:48.

³³ Menzies 1991:48.

³⁴ Menzies 1991:49.

³⁵ Menzies 1991:114-115. This is evident paradigmatically in his discussion of Luke 1.35 (pp 123-128). Menzies does not ascribe to the Spirit the creative power associated with Jesus' conception but instead classifies the Spirit-reference as a Lukan addition formulated to connect the Baptist and Jesus (123). But a few pages later he says, 'The connection between the promise of the Spirit's presence in v. 35 and Mary's utterance in vv. 46f can hardly be questioned' (127). Again, 'The tradition reflected in 1.35 indicates that the primitive church spoke of the activity of the Spirit in broader terms than Luke... While the pneumatology of the primitive church may be designated charismatic, that of Luke is more especially prophetic' (128). This confluence of positions is puzzling.

³⁶ Menzies 1991:128. Menzies emphasizes Luke's 'redaction' of 'Q' in Luke 11.20 (cf. Matthew 12.28) and the omission of Isaiah 61.1b LXX in Luke 4.18ff in order to claim that Luke removed the 'miraculous' from the realm of the Spirit.

1.8; 10.38), Menzies is able to distance the Spirit from the miraculous.³⁷ His ‘Spirit of prophecy’ approach leads him to claim that the Spirit (since it does nothing more than give insight and power for mission) can only be given to *faith* and thus is neither ‘soteriological’ nor does it have ethical impact. Jesus is paradigmatically given this Spirit of mission.

Menzies’ approach, based upon an in depth reading of Second Temple texts, is helpful for setting the context within which to understand Luke’s position. There are, however, several problems. First, Menzies pays scant attention to Old Testament texts in his investigation of the ‘concept’ πνεῦμα. In the Old Testament, it is widely agreed that the Spirit is

referred to in situations where Israel perceived God's active presence in this world, either in his creative, salvific or judging power.³⁸

The Old Testament paradigm includes prophetic speech and much more. It is ironic that Menzies critiques Dunn’s reliance upon Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 based upon the fact that Luke does not quote these passages directly, yet he himself places great weight upon Josephus, Philo, Sirach, 1 Enoch, etc., texts that Luke nowhere quotes. Since Luke clearly depends on the Old Testament throughout (and it can only be marginally demonstrated that he depends upon Second Temple texts), this is a major methodological problem.³⁹ It is much more likely that Luke (who was aware of Jesus’ Christological reinterpretation of the Old Testament) would be more reliant upon Old Testament texts than Second Temple texts.⁴⁰ To assume otherwise is to rely heavily on a potentially dubious history of religions approach. Second, Menzies’ readings of Second Temple texts can be called into question at many points. A few examples from across his paradigm will suffice.⁴¹

1. Menzies makes much of a few LXX examples in which πνεῦμα is inserted into texts where there was previously no mention of the Spirit (Numbers 23.7; Zechariah 1.6) and notes that these texts connect πνεῦμα with inspired speech. Yet he overlooks *many* examples in the LXX in which the Spirit

³⁷ Menzies 1991:125-126. Why the couplet ‘Spirit and power’ refers to two distinct acts while ‘signs and wonders’ (cf. Acts 2.18) are ‘a single series of divine acts’ (223) is not apparent.

³⁸ Wenk 2004:64.

³⁹ Luke may be aware of Sirach 48.10 in Luke 1.17, but it is more likely Luke is working with Malachi 4.5-6 (cf. Kurz 1994 who claims a Sirach 48.1-16 substructure for Luke’s entire project).

⁴⁰ See Luke 24.27, 44-49; Acts 8.30-35.

⁴¹ For extended critique, see Turner 1996:82-137; Wenk 2004:54-110.

clearly gives miraculous power (Judges 14.6, 19; 15.14; 1 Samuel 11.6; 1 Kings 18.12; 2 Kings 2.16; Ezekiel 2.2; 3.12, 14, 24; 8.3; 11.1, 5, 24; 37.1; 43.5).

2. Menzies cites a connection between the Spirit and inspired speech in 1 Enoch 49.3 and 62.2. Yet in 49.3 the Spirit bestows wisdom, understanding and *might* upon the anointed one and 62.2 is a reference to the 'spirit of righteousness' that allows the anointed one to speak judgment. Surely these categories press further than 'Spirit of prophecy'.
3. Menzies reads Sirach 39.1-6 as proof that wisdom, at a fundamental level, comes from study of the Law while understanding (the highest level of wisdom?) is from the Spirit. But Sirach 39.8 continues the line of argument and connects the Spirit and understanding to an experience of the new covenant.⁴²
4. Menzies reads *t.Sotah* 13.2 ('When the latter prophets died, that is, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, then the Holy Spirit came to an end in Israel. But even so, they made them hear [heavenly messages] through an echo.') to equate the cessation of prophecy with the cessation of the Spirit.⁴³ Yet this is not the only possible reading. Prophecy could be the *last* vestige of the Spirit, not the *only* vestige of the Spirit. Menzies himself notes that other texts connect the withdrawal of the Spirit with the destruction of the Temple.⁴⁴ These texts seem to equate the Spirit with the Israel's corporate life and worship.
5. Menzies makes much of the use of the actual phrase 'Spirit of prophecy' in Targum Onkelos, yet neglects the fact that Targum Neofiti and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 6.3 both depict God as counterbalancing evil by putting his Spirit in humans.⁴⁵ The Targum tradition is more diverse than he would allow.

Third, Menzies' conviction that the Spirit is always given subsequent to repentance and baptism causes serious problems in his reading of Acts, not least in Acts 10

⁴² So Wenk 2004:68.

⁴³ Menzies 1991:93.

⁴⁴ Lam.R.Proem. 12; Eccl.R. 12.7.1; Num.R. 15.10.

⁴⁵ Targum Onkelos Genesis 41.38; Exodus 31.3; 35.31; Numbers 11.25, 26, 29; 24.2; 27.18; cited in Menzies 1991:101 fn 1. Turner 1996:123 notes Menzies' disregard of the Genesis 6.3 tradition.

where the Spirit comes to Cornelius' household before any ostensible signs of belief. Fourth, Menzies' conception of 'salvation' is much narrower than Luke's. The former seems only to imply forgiveness of sins, a status conferred ('saved') and participation in missionary endeavors. But Luke had a broad conception of 'salvation' that included not only renewed relationship with God but transformed human relationships, life and even health in the present.⁴⁶ This (largely implicit) 'soteriological' reduction allows Menzies to keep the Spirit from meddling in anything 'soteriological'.

Max Turner: Power from on high: The Spirit in Israel's restoration and witness in Luke-Acts

Max Turner's work on the Spirit in Luke-Acts spans the course of the past quarter century, beginning with his PhD thesis in 1980.⁴⁷ Turner's 1996 *Power from on High*, written in response to Menzies' narrowly conceptualized 'Spirit of prophecy', stakes out a mediating position between Menzies and Dunn. Turner contends that the Spirit is

neither the matrix of new covenant existence nor a donum superadditum. Rather the Spirit, as the Spirit of prophecy, is the means of communication between God and man: essential for Christian existence yet not identical with it.⁴⁸

Turner arrives at this view by a thorough reading of Second Temple, rabbinic and Targumic texts.

Turner maintains that the 'Spirit of prophecy' is the dominant paradigm with which Israelites in the Second Temple period conceived of the Spirit, yet his reading results in a concept more broadly conceived.

Despite the rarity of the phrase 'the Spirit of prophecy' in what are provably pre-Lukan Jewish writings, we may be relatively assured that Jews of Luke's time did indeed think of the Spirit in this way: that is, chiefly as the source of charismatic revelation, wisdom, invasive prophetic speech and invasive charismatic praise.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See Witherington 1998:143-147 and cf. Luke 4.16-18.

⁴⁷ Turner's 1980 PhD thesis ('Luke and the Spirit: Studies in the significance of receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts') remains unpublished.

⁴⁸ Turner 1996:47.

⁴⁹ Turner 1996:104.

As part of his expansion of the concept, Turner claims that the LXX depicts the Spirit to be the source of deeds that must be understood as miraculous acts of power, the likes of which Menzies attributes only to δύναιμις.⁵⁰ Finally, because Israel's hoped-for salvation in the period was thoroughly nationalistic (in Turner's view), the interplay between a Spirit-anointed deliverer/Messiah and the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy would have been conceptualized to be 'salvation' in the nationalistic sense: deliverance from Rome, safety in the Land and the restoration of the Temple.⁵¹

We may thus safely claim he [Luke] thought the Spirit was the principal divine power maintaining, developing and extending Israel's salvation/transformation, and that without the gift of the charismatic Spirit of prophecy the sort of 'salvation' he had in mind would simply evaporate from Israel like the departure of the cloud of God's glory and presence.⁵²

Turner places great weight on Isaiah 11.1-4 and 32.15-20 and argues that the 'Spirit of prophecy' in Luke-Acts is the 'charismatic power of Israel's restoration'.⁵³ This restoration is begun by the Spirit-anointed Messiah (a fusion of a Davidic ruler and a 'prophet like Moses') and is carried forward by Jesus' Spirit-empowered followers.⁵⁴ Turner's entire treatment of the Spirit as the executive power of Israel's exalted Messiah is set within a New Exodus paradigm that equates forgiveness of sins with New Exodus themes like restoration, cleansing, etc.

Turner's work is broad in scope and provides a helpfully nuanced approach to the Spirit in Second Temple literature as well as a balanced treatment of the role of the Spirit in 'salvation' within Luke-Acts. I contend, for reasons that I will detail below, that Turner's retention of the category 'Spirit of prophecy' is misleading in his treatment of the text and reflects a possible methodological mistake. Further, Turner's concentration on Menzies' project often draws him into a position that forces him to make difficult arguments about the 'order of salvation' in Luke's text.

⁵⁰ Turner 1996:107-108. See esp. Judges 14.6; 19; 15.14 but also Judges. 3.10, 6.34, 11.29, 13.25; 1 Samuel 11.6, Isaiah 11.4. Turner also highlights 4Q521; 2 Baruch 21.4; 23.5 [which may be too late]; 4 Ezra 6.39-41. 2 Baruch 75.3-4 and 4 Ezra 14.22 are significant for Turner because they reference 'the Spirit of prophecy', thus demonstrating that the prophetic and the powerful/creative are not at loggerheads in Second Temple concepts of the Spirit.

⁵¹ Turner 1996:135 (citing Wright 1992:300), 137.

⁵² Turner 1996:427.

⁵³ Turner 1998:343.

⁵⁴ Turner 1998:343-347.

Wenk published his PhD thesis under Turner in 2000 with a second edition published in 2004. Wenk closely follows Turner's reading of the Spirit in Luke-Acts but argues more vigorously that the Spirit has an 'ethical' effect upon the community. Wenk accomplishes this in three stages, each of which are concerned with not just the immediate action of the Spirit but also the intended *effect* of the Spirit's action.⁵⁵ First, he returns to the Second Temple and Old Testament sources to ascertain whether either expected the rise of Spirit-empowered prophets whose ministry would have 'a positive influence on Israel's ethical and religious life'.⁵⁶ He finds evidence mainly in texts reliant upon Isaiah 11.1-4. Following this tradition, John and especially Jesus are personally influenced by the Spirit towards the 'ethical qualities he... is to restore among God's people'.⁵⁷ Second, Wenk applies speech-act theory to maintain that the illocutionary force of Spirit-inspired speech cannot be separated from the perlocutionary effect of that speech.⁵⁸ Finally, Wenk is convinced that the early community (Israel restored through a New Exodus) is the 'this-worldly dimension of salvation, which is expressed in the affirmation of a universal people of God and the "good news to the poor"'.⁵⁹ Essential to this reading is Wenk's astute observation that Joel 3.1-5a LXX is not simply about the restoration of prophecy but is, in its context, about the renewal of the community.⁶⁰ This move sets the classic 'Spirit of prophecy' passage in context with other 'Spirit' passages in the Old Testament that are closely connected to community renewal (Isaiah 61.1-2; Ezekiel 36.34-37; Zechariah 3.1-10).

Wenk includes an excellent discussion of the reorientation of the church's 'symbolic universe' as a result of the coming of the Spirit.⁶¹ Here Wenk examines the 'reconciliation' passages in Acts (Acts 8.1-25; 10.1-41; 15.1-31) and the way in which the Spirit is essential to redefining the 'self-understanding' of the 'church'.⁶² He successfully resists 'individualistic' models of salvation in favor of a high view of

⁵⁵ Cf. Gunkel 1980:21-30 who argued that only initial action (usually prophetic speech) should be attributed to the Spirit.

⁵⁶ Wenk 2004:54-55.

⁵⁷ Wenk 2004:309.

⁵⁸ Wenk 2004:47.

⁵⁹ Wenk 2004:47, 259-273.

⁶⁰ Wenk 2004:58-59.

⁶¹ Wenk 2004:274-308.

⁶² Wenk 2004:308, 315.

the role of the early community, even going so far at one point as to identify the Spirit as the ‘identity marker’ of the community.⁶³

Wenk’s project is by far the most sensitive to the role of the Spirit both within the early community and in group reconciliation. He does not, however, discuss explicitly the place of the Spirit with regard to ethnicity nor does he indicate what, exactly, happens to one’s ethnic identity after one’s ‘symbolic universe’ is reoriented. This is largely a result of the fact that Wenk continually works from an intra-church perspective rather than an intergroup perspective. The former focuses on the changes that the Spirit brings to the church. The latter, which is the perspective of this thesis, focuses on the function of the Spirit with regard to multiple layers of group identity – both old identities (linguistic, ethnic, etc.) and new identities (membership in the Jesus group). Finally, Wenk’s reliance on speech-act theory runs into difficulty when one considers that the stereotypical failure of the prophetic ministry in the Old Testament (a view shared by Luke) must then mean that the perlocutionary force of the prophetic Spirit in the Old Testament was ineffective.⁶⁴

Youngmo Cho: Spirit and kingdom in the writings of Luke and Paul: An attempt to reconcile these concepts

Cho’s PhD thesis (published 2005) was supervised by R. Menzies. Cho follows Menzies’ narrow conceptual reading of the ‘Spirit of prophecy’, agreeing that Paul is an innovator with regard to the Spirit, agreeing that the Spirit is given to faith (Jesus receives the Spirit *because of* his faithful resistance of temptation, a statement only affirmed by an awkward attempt to distance Jesus from the apparent ongoing wilderness presence of the Spirit described in Luke 4.1), and agreeing that the Spirit is primarily given to inspire speech for the sake of mission.⁶⁵

While Cho adds little new argumentation to Menzies’ work on the Spirit in Luke-Acts (Cho returns again to Second Temple and Rabbinic literature to attempt to demonstrate that the Spirit is understood only as the source of prophetic inspiration while acknowledging that in the ‘minor strand’ of the Wisdom tradition

⁶³ Wenk 2004:294.

⁶⁴ For rejected prophets, see Luke 6.23, 26; 11.47, 49, 50; 13.33, 34; 16.31; 24.25.

⁶⁵ Cho 2005:15; 123-125; 141-142.

the Spirit has ‘soteriological’ effect), Cho’s innovation is his treatment of the relationship between the Spirit and the kingdom of God.⁶⁶ Cho concludes that for Luke the Spirit merely ‘inspires the proclamation of the kingdom of God[,] and in this way, the Spirit makes it possible for people to enter the kingdom of God’.⁶⁷

Cho’s thesis suffers at several points. First, he makes no effort to account for Old Testament conceptions of the Spirit. Second, he is remarkably vague regarding what, exactly, the ‘kingdom of God’ is. He seems to overlook the basic fact that, for Luke, the Spirit is the agent of the reign of the exalted Jesus. This oversight causes him to import modern meanings of ‘salvation’ (implicitly, salvation as life after death) rather than Luke’s view that ‘salvation’ is renewed life in the kingdom of God in both the present and future. Cho’s insistence that the Spirit only inspires prophetic speech leads him to minimize the importance of activities that Luke both values and connects closely to the Spirit. This is most evident in his treatment of the Spirit-empowered Seven in Acts 6.1-7.⁶⁸ Finally, Cho shows little sensitivity to the intergroup dynamics that drive Luke’s account at nearly every turn.

Narrative-critical approaches to the Spirit in Luke-Acts

Two narrative-critical approaches to the Spirit in Luke-Acts have appeared in the past 20 years.⁶⁹ William Shepherd’s *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (1994) accepts the Old Testament ‘Spirit of prophecy’ paradigm, but is concerned more directly with the Spirit and issues of characterization.⁷⁰ Shepherd argues that Luke’s lack of clarity regarding the role of the Spirit stems from the fact that his narrative interest lies in describing the spread of the gospel and not with the Spirit’s role in ‘conversion’.⁷¹ Shepherd reduces the Spirit’s role in the text to ‘narrative reliability’. ‘The Spirit functions onstage to prove the reliability of the offstage God.’⁷² While the Spirit has effect in Luke’s

⁶⁶ Cho 2005:51.

⁶⁷ Cho 2005:15.

⁶⁸ Cho 2005:132. Cho calls the ‘table service’ of the Seven ‘human organization’ and suggests the reference to the Spirit in their selection only prepares us for the speeches of Stephen and Philip, which he calls ‘Spirit-working’. See chapter 7 for discussion of this position.

⁶⁹ The narrative treatment of Bonnah 2007 appeared too late for consideration in this thesis.

⁷⁰ Shepherd 1994:2.

⁷¹ Shepherd 1994:135.

⁷² Shepherd 1994:246. Shepherd develops earlier views of Darr 1992 to include Luke’s rhetorical concern to provide ‘certainty’ for his readers (cf. Luke 1.4).

narrative world, it is unclear what Shepherd thinks about the actual role of the Spirit in the early community.

Ju Hur, in his *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (2004), distinguishes himself from Shepherd through a more complex methodological approach, a greater emphasis on the overall plot structure of Luke-Acts, the theological implications of the Spirit, and the effect of the Spirit upon the reader. The Spirit is the representative of 'divine frame of reference' which serves to give narrative reliability within the plot of Luke-Acts.⁷³ Important speeches are 'Spirit-inspired', certain conversions are marked by the Spirit's presence, and Jesus himself is legitimated by the Spirit.⁷⁴ This is set within the wider plot of Luke-Acts which he takes to be 'the way of witness, in seeking and saving God's people, engendered by Jesus (in the Gospel) and his witnesses (in Acts) through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the plan of God'.⁷⁵ The Spirit-verification of community membership is a sub-theme in his work, though he does not account for the means by which the Spirit overcomes intergroup tensions. Hur's close reading of the text produces insightful observations, though his greatest contribution is his nuanced demonstration that the Lukan Spirit exhibits both continuity and discontinuity with traditional Israelite conceptions of the Spirit.⁷⁶

Scholarly Consensus in the Study of the Spirit in Luke-Acts

The history of research on the Spirit in Luke-Acts has resulted in five general points of consensus.⁷⁷

1. The contextual background for Luke's view of the Spirit is the Old Testament/Second Temple period.
2. The Spirit is 'the uniting motif and driving force within the Lucan salvation history, and provided the legitimation of the mission to which it leads'.⁷⁸
3. Luke's Spirit is primarily the 'Spirit of prophecy' and mainly empowers for witness.⁷⁹

⁷³ Hur 2001: 278.

⁷⁴ Hur 2001:100, citing Darr 1992:esp. 52-53.

⁷⁵ Hur 2001:185-186.

⁷⁶ Hur 2001:180.

⁷⁷ Turner 1998:328-333.

⁷⁸ Turner 1998:329.

4. Luke is less interested (especially compared to Paul) in the Spirit's role in the 'spiritual, ethical and religious renewal of the individual'.⁸⁰
5. Luke's major innovation is the attribution of 'Christocentric' functions; the Spirit is poured out by Jesus and bears witness to Jesus.

Deficits in the Study of the Spirit in Luke-Acts

The preceding discussion has demonstrated many advances in our understanding of the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. However, several critical issues remain.

1. While Luke is undoubtedly interested in the role of the Spirit in the inspiration of both ecstatic and proclamatory speech, using 'Spirit of prophecy' as a category to describe Luke's appropriation of Old Testament and Second Temple concepts of the Spirit proves ultimately too restrictive for Luke's text. 'Spirit of prophecy' is an etic category constructed by modern exegetes to organize ancient data.⁸¹ This in itself is not problematic, but it becomes so when one begins to imagine that first century Israelites were thinking in neat categorical conceptualities with regard to the Spirit even when Turner himself admits that the phrase 'Spirit of prophecy' is almost non-existent before the rabbinic period.⁸² This has resulted in a tendency to sequester Wisdom literature into a discrete category with regard to its social and conceptual influence in order to preserve the conceptual purity of the 'Spirit of prophecy', a move that reflects modern generic classifications more than ancient sensibilities.

⁷⁹ Wenk 2004 is furthest removed from this position, though he expands the concept 'Spirit of prophecy' rather than abandoning it.

⁸⁰ Turner 1998:331.

⁸¹ 'Etic' refers to 'insider or indigenous points of view', the words and conceptualities used by groups to understand themselves and their worlds. 'Etic' refers to the 'systematic set of concepts used by one culture to understand others' (Esler 2003:8), the words and concepts used by social scientists or others who are removed from the social context in which they are interested. If there is not 'reasonable correspondence between the etic concept and the emic data' violence will be done to the emic data. Reducing the Spirit in pre-New Testament texts to only the 'Spirit of prophecy' faces the danger of imposing just such an overly rigid etic category on the Old Testament and Second Temple texts.

⁸² Turner 1996:104. Turner is hard to follow at this point. He critiques 'procrustean' formulations of 'Spirit of prophecy' but seems only to increase the diversity of what he includes in his foundational concept (see pp. 89-91).

2. Focus on 'Spirit of prophecy' has led to an over-emphasis on the act of inspired speech alone and has neglected important corollaries. For example, the early prototypical prophets in the Old Testament (especially Abraham and Moses, both of whom have special importance in Luke-Acts) are identified as prophets not because of inspired speech but because of their identity marked by a special relationship to God.⁸³ This is an early indicator that the gift of prophecy is fundamentally concerned with communion: communion between the prophet and God, communion between the people and God as urged by the Spirit through the prophet, and the proper function of the community itself. Emphasis on the act of prophecy overlooks the necessary implications for the identity of prophets.

3. Focus on the 'Spirit of prophecy' distorts Luke's text in two important ways. First, the approach does not respect Luke's narrative order and neglects the fact that Luke's hearers received the text in sequence. Hence, it is a mistake to center on the close connection between Spirit and prophecy in Acts 2.17-18 and to presume that it is the foundational passage for Luke. Luke gives us a great deal of information about the Spirit prior to Acts 2, all of which must be taken cumulatively and then further modified by Spirit material later in Acts.⁸⁴ In point of fact, Luke is more reliant upon Isaiah for his Spirit material than Joel.⁸⁵ Second, and devastating to the 'Spirit of prophecy' paradigm, is the fact that the density of Spirit references in Acts actually distances references to the Spirit from 'missionary proclamation'. There are exactly *zero* references to the Spirit in Paul's evangelistic speeches in Acts 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18 and there are exactly *zero* references to the Spirit in Paul's legal defense speeches in Acts 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27. In these sections, the Spirit gives divine guidance, miraculous power and joy, it incorporates outsiders into the community and it is credited with establishing the authority of the Ephesian elders, but it does not explicitly inspire speech in

⁸³ Abraham: Genesis 20.7; Moses: Exodus 33.11; Deuteronomy 34.10.

⁸⁴ Thompson 2006:11, 26-27 discusses the role that 'amplification' and 'accumulation' have for shaping meaning through narrative progression.

⁸⁵ Especially Isaiah 49; 58.6; 61.1-2.

the most thoroughly mission-oriented sections of Acts.⁸⁶ This is in stark contrast with the fact that sections where group and social identity are at stake contain the highest density of Spirit references in all of Acts.⁸⁷

4. The emphasis on the Second Temple provenance of the concept ‘Spirit of prophecy’ is prone to an avoidable methodological error that is demonstrated by several of the works in this field. There has been a tendency to slip into a history of religions approach to the development of the concept ‘Spirit’ that operates with the assumption that Luke must have a view of the Spirit that is in complete linear continuity with Old Testament and Second Temple conceptualities. Yet Luke is not bound to an evolutionary progression of concepts with regard to the common interpretations of the Spirit in his milieu.⁸⁸ Recent research in epistemology has indicated that new knowledge usually requires reconceptualization of fundamentals. This has long been recognized by Gospel scholars in the way that Jesus’ life and vocation recast the concept ‘Messiah’.⁸⁹ In the same way we must allow the Spirit in Luke-Acts to radically fill out and redefine Old Testament and Second Temple expectations concerning the Spirit.⁹⁰

In sum, the scholarly consensus that Luke’s Spirit is the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ does not allow the text to speak for itself but rather imposes *a priori* restrictions on what can, or cannot, be a legitimate function of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. It is not necessary to abandon the results of those who hold to the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ paradigm (especially the more expansive results from Wenk and Turner), but my reading of Luke-Acts will demonstrate that the concept itself is misleadingly restrictive. A new starting point in reflection on the Spirit in Luke-Acts may allow for fresh discussion and fruitful enquiry.

⁸⁶ Acts 13.2, 4, 9, 52; 16.6, 7; 19.2, 6, 21; 20.22, 23, 28; 21.4, 11.

⁸⁷ 6 times in Acts 8, 8 times in Acts 10-11.18.

⁸⁸ Hur 2001:180 rightly sees simultaneous continuity and discontinuity between Luke and Old Testament/Second Temple conceptions.

⁸⁹ On epistemic advances, the faulty reasoning in linear evolutionary epistemologies and the radical discontinuity of new knowledge, see Kuhn 1996:85; Rae 2005:110-122.

⁹⁰ The history of religions approach is more evident in some interpreters (especially Gunkel, Leisegang, Menzies and Cho) than others.

5. Investigation into the role of the Spirit in conversion has over-emphasized the effect of the Spirit on individuals and shown relatively less interest in the thoroughly personal yet *irreducibly corporate* focus of Luke's text and world. This approach has led to two problems. First, it has not yet grasped the full significance of community membership in completing a 'conversion'.⁹¹ Second, the focus on individual conversion has sought a systematic 'order of salvation' with regard to the temporal relationship between repentance, baptism and Spirit-reception. Yet Luke has written a historical narrative of God's providential creation of a new kind of community, not a systematic pneumatology. Luke's concern is less with a dogmatic 'order of salvation' and more with incorporation of Jesus followers into a Spirit-empowered community.

6. There has yet to appear a full enquiry into the relationship between the Spirit and ethnic identity in Luke-Acts. Given that these are two of Luke's most characteristic concerns, this is a surprising lacuna in the scholarship. As a result of this gap there has been a lack of investigation into the way that the newly formed community of faith functioned differently than other groups Luke describes. While ancient parallels are often noted (communities of goods, friendship ideals and utopian impulses), it has yet to be appreciated that the community described in Acts functions in a way that is very different than the identity processes that mark most social groups. There was something powerfully different about the way identity operated in Luke's early community of believers, and this difference comes out clearly in an investigation into the interplay of Spirit, ethnicity, and identity.

The Thesis of this Study

It is the thesis of this study that, for Luke, *the Holy Spirit is the central figure in the formation of a new social identity that affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity*. The formation of this new identity is the mechanism through which

⁹¹ Wenk 2004 is an exception, yet he does not present a full exegetical account of the role of the Spirit in community formation.

intergroup reconciliation occurs in Luke-Acts. Because Luke is writing narratively (as opposed to systematically) Luke's identity-forming program unfolds in step with the narrative and the full force of the program is only experienced cumulatively.⁹² The practical effect of this observation is that Luke does not unveil his entire program from the beginning of his work, or even from the beginning of Acts, but instead includes several key building blocks that bring his identity-forming program to a climax at Acts 15.

1. The Spirit has a transformative effect on individuals best described as the formation of an *allocentric identity* which results simultaneously in a turn away from pure self-interest or the interests of the in-group and a turn toward the 'other'.⁹³ This allocentric identity is evident early in Luke's Gospel and has important ramifications for the relationship between privileged identity, distribution of resources and the 'other'. Jesus is the exemplar of Spirit-formed allocentric identity.
2. The new social group described in Acts is the corporate expression of Spirit-formed allocentric identity and functions as an incubator of a *new social identity*. The group provides a base through which people come to know themselves in a new way in their intergroup context.⁹⁴
3. The social identity formed by participation in this group transcends ethnic identities by virtue of the Spirit's relentless effort, in two ways, to incorporate all manner of 'other' into the group: (1) by orchestrating intergroup encounters between the Jesus-group and various categories of 'other'; (2) by functioning as the marker of the common group identity shared by those loyal to Jesus. The addition of the 'other' to the group requires a 'dual identity transformation' in which the former 'other' receives

⁹² Reading Luke with respect to narrative order respects the author's use of the classical rhetorical devices of accumulation and amplification to gradually bring along the hearers (see Thompson 2006:11, 26-27). Cf. Alexander 1999:439, who suggests that Luke's prospective clues in the progress of the narrative are best interpreted retrospectively. Luke-Acts, like most works in this genre, was intended for re-readers (Alexander 1999:441).

⁹³ 'Allocentric' defines an identity characterized by or denoting interest centered in persons other than oneself. In this project, an 'allocentric identity' will be used to refer to an identity that can express in-group love and out-group love simultaneously, a very difficult feat within most social groups.

⁹⁴ I will describe in detail normal group boundary processes in chapter 2.

a new social identity and in which in-group members are compelled to reconceptualize their own social identity to reflect the reconfigured constitution of their in-group. This group, and the social identity it produces, is the locus of intergroup reconciliation in Luke-Acts.

4. This new social identity *does not* require the negation of ethnic identity. Ethnic hegemonies and ethnocentrisms must be abandoned, as must all identity markers that oppose the lordship of Jesus, but ethnic identification is unhindered and ethnic particularity is actually celebrated by the Spirit.

An emphasis on the identity-forming role of the Spirit helps to overcome the artificial dichotomy between daughtership/sonship and empowerment for mission that has arisen in scholarship on the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. That dichotomy itself is based upon faulty conceptions of both salvation and mission. It is based upon a conception of salvation that overlooks the fact that for Luke salvation is a present reality that is experienced in a renewed fully human existence before God. Salvation is more than a status conferred; it is a certain kind of life properly oriented toward God and 'other'. The dichotomy is based upon a reductionistic conception of 'mission' which includes only preaching and verbal proclamation rather than, as for Luke, the totality of renewed life of the community. In other words, for Luke, both 'salvation' and 'mission' are essentially the experience and expression of other-centered life lived before God in the Spirit-empowered community of Jesus, world without end.

Finally, it should be emphasized that this investigation of the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts takes seriously the intractable nature of inter-ethnic conflict. The Spirit is the power in Luke-Acts that allows for examples of intergroup reconciliation that were unprecedented within the ancient world. The ethnic reconciliation described by Luke, sadly, remains largely unprecedented in the contemporary world, both inside and outside of the Christian church. It is not too much to say that of all the deeds of power done by the Spirit in Luke-Acts, the reconciliation of diverse ethnic groups is the most astonishing miracle of all. This is borne out both by Luke's text and by the annals of history, ravaged as they are by the atrocities of inter-ethnic hatred.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of nine chapters. Chapter 2 will outline the methodology used in the project. In order to speak with precision about the complex concept of identity I will utilize resources from social identity theory and contemporary ethnicity theory. I will also undertake a brief survey of Old Testament and Second Temple texts that describe a wide spectrum of responses to the ethnic 'other' when Israelite identity was threatened.

In chapter 3 I will discuss the function of the Spirit in the birth hymns of Luke 1-2. Here I will demonstrate the connection between the presence of the Spirit and the broadening of the 'ethnic horizon' for Spirit-empowered individuals. This is initial evidence that the Spirit is constitutive of an allocentric identity that focuses not on the self to the exclusion of the 'other', but simultaneously on the self and the 'other'.

In chapter 4 I will demonstrate that the initial public appearances of John and Jesus – Luke's paradigmatically Spirit-empowered figures – concern proper (and improper) expressions of privileged ethnic social identity. This solidifies Luke's connection between the Spirit and allocentric identity and establishes Jesus as a Spirit-empowered exemplar of this identity.

In chapter 5, focusing on Acts 1-2, I will briefly discuss Luke's paradigmatic concern with the extension of in-group benefits to people groups that Luke's Gospel depicts as potentially hostile. I will go on to demonstrate the old paradigms of identity that exist before Pentecost, the subversion of those paradigms through Luke's description of the language miracle at Pentecost, and the reconfiguration of group identity markers in Peter's distinct version of Joel 3.1-5a LXX. In this section we begin to encounter Luke's view of the relationship between ethnic particularity and the universal availability of the gospel.

In chapter 6 I will examine the role of the early community in the formation of identity and the essential connection between community incorporation and 'salvation'. Ananias, Sapphira and Barnabas emerge in this section as exemplars of either defective or proper identification with the community and are used by Luke further to develop the relationship between the Spirit and the allocation of resources.

Chapter 7, examining Acts 6-9, will focus on the dual function of the Spirit in orchestrating intergroup encounters with the 'threatening other' as well as marking a common group identity. This chapter will highlight Luke's clear emphasis on the 'dual identity transformation' elicited by the work of the Spirit. Luke is convinced that the inclusion of the 'other' into the Jesus group always necessitates continuing transformation of the social identities of existing group members.

Chapter 8 will deal with the conversion of Cornelius' household and its effects. I will show Luke's clear distinction between the way group boundaries are maintained in the Jesus group and the way typical (often ethnic) groups in Luke's context functioned. Special attention will be given to Luke's use of 'ethnic language' in the description of social realities and the formation of identity. Here Luke definitively demonstrates that the Spirit marks a new identity that chastens and transcends ethnicity, while simultaneously affirming ethnic identity at a penultimate level.

Chapter 9 will conclude the study by constructively demonstrating the affirmation of my thesis as well as by suggesting several areas of relevance for both further research and contemporary application.

2

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND THE 'OTHER'

A METHODOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Who we are deeply influences *how* we are. Our sense of identity – who we understand ourselves to be – is intimately connected to the manner in which we live and interact in all of our relationships. In a reciprocal manner, the relationships that we cultivate are inseparably connected with our sense of identity. *Being* and *doing* are symbiotic in human identity. From this perspective, Luke-Acts has something to say about human identity. Of the several interrelated purposes of Luke-Acts, one of Luke's clear aims is to tell its hearers *who* they are, *whose* they are and *how* they are. In so doing, the text locates its hearers in relationships that redefine their identity, subverting prominent mechanisms for the maintenance of social boundaries and arriving at the surprising conclusion that its hearers should no longer understand themselves primarily in terms of their relationships with their ancestral kinfolk – their ethnic identity – but in terms of their relationship with the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and, by extension, in terms of their relationships with all those who find themselves now related to Jesus. Luke insists that his hearers are defined by an identity that simultaneously affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity.

Though 'identity' is a popular concept both within the broader culture and, increasingly, within biblical studies, the lack of precision with which the concept is deployed often renders it conceptually vacuous. Any thesis concerned with 'identity' must reckon with *how* identity works, especially within and between social groups. To achieve this necessary goal, the first section of this chapter will

assimilate theoretical insights from social identity theory to describe a model capable of providing etic descriptions of Luke's Spirit-laced depictions of identity formation.¹ Special attention will be given to ethnic identity. I will follow the methodological discussion with a brief survey of Second Temple texts that describe Israelite identity maintenance strategies with regard to the ethnic 'other'. This contextual work will guard against cheap caricatures of Israelite identity and demonstrate that it is *one specific expression* of Israelite ethnic identity that Luke critiques with verve.²

Social Identity Theory*³

Social identity theory (hereafter 'SIT') is a branch of social psychology that seeks to understand the effects of group membership on human identity.⁴ Identity is a complex phenomenon, affected by many variables and deployed in diverse expressions. The modern western obsession with identity is largely an interest in *personal identity*. Personal identity is that *part* of human identity derived from the traits that we normally think of as personality: sense of humor, compassion, short temper, etc. When we relate to another human being based upon our (and their) personal identity we relate as individuals.⁵

¹ There are benefits and dangers in social-scientific approaches to biblical interpretation. Social-scientific approaches offer helpful checks against tacitly proceeding under the myth of presuppositionless exegesis and its attendant anachronistic or ethnocentric interpretations (See Elliott 1995; Esler 1994; and Horrell 1999). The heuristic deployment of interpretational models also allows methodological transparency, a feature important for constructive discourse. One attendant danger in social-scientific interpretation is a tendency toward sociological determinism in which actors in the text (including divine agents) are not allowed to operate outside, or in opposition to, cultural norms. Yet it is often the *atypical* that allows biblical authors to make their point. Well-deployed social scientific approaches elucidate the *regular* in order to observe the *irregular*.

² Buell 2005:24 notes the propensity to contrast 'universalistic' 'Christianity' with 'particularistic' 'Judaism'. Cf. Barclay 1997; Dahl 1977.

³ A glossary of technical terms (marked in the text with an asterisk) is included at the end of this chapter.

⁴ Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel beginning in the early 1970s. For comprehensive introductions see Brown 2000; Hogg & Abrams 1999; Turner 1996. The genesis of Tajfel's reflection on group membership and identity occurred in a WWII German POW camp. Tajfel posed as a Frenchman to disguise his Polish identity in order to preserve his own life. He observed that different treatment from guards and prisoners was often based solely on the group to which he portrayed himself as belonging. The application of SIT to biblical studies was pioneered by Esler 1998; 2003; 2008 forthcoming. See also Duling 2005.

⁵ Most traits constitutive of personal identity are themselves influenced by the groups to which one belongs. Tajfel 1981:241 notes that purely interpersonal interaction is socially 'absurd' and does not occur in 'real life'. 'It is impossible to imagine a social encounter between two people which will not be affected, at least to some minimal degree, by their mutual assignments of one another to a variety of social categories about which some general expectations concerning their characteristics and

Yet the western obsession with the individual has obscured from plain view the importance of *social identity*, a phenomenon more salient in most of the world but with enduring impact in the western world as well. Social identity is that *part* of an individual's identity derived from 'their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership'.⁶ Social identity is a reflection *in the individual* of the group identity possessed collectively by members of a social group. When I say that I am a supporter of the Celtic football club, an Anglican, a member of a union of electrical workers or a Pakistani, I am speaking of social identities. Social identities have varying affective power correlate to the importance of the identity-forming group and commensurate with a society's location on a collectivism/individualism scale. In collectivist cultures (like those of the New Testament world), social identity can be especially powerful, serving sometimes 'nearly to the exclusion of personal identity' and creating a sense of identity 'based solely or primarily on our group memberships'.⁷

While social identity impinges upon almost all human interaction, social identity is most likely to be salient when the context is composed of distinct and non-overlapping social categories and when it is difficult (or impossible) to pass from one social group to another.⁸ Both of these conditions are especially true of ethnic groups, which are almost always highly distinct and which usually have both internal and external pressure against defection to another ethnic group.

The Ambiguity of Social Identity

Understanding the mechanisms that form social identity can alert us to the inherent ambiguity of all social groups: groups can be incubators of positive identity based upon communal solidarity or breeding grounds for intergroup conflict. The potentially pernicious effects of social identity for the 'other' are located within the inherently comparative mechanisms through which positive social identity is

behavior exist in the minds of the interactants. This will be true, for example, even of wives and husbands'.

⁶ Tajfel 1982:2.

⁷ Turner 1982:19.

⁸ Tajfel 1981:245; Brown 2000:746.

maintained. In this section I will describe the way SIT explains the following factors that either constitute or result from social identity.

1. The three stage process by which social identity is formed.
2. The effect of group status upon intergroup contact and conflict.
3. Strategies to reduce intergroup conflict.
4. The ramifications of group and subgroup identity for resource allocation.

The Process of Social Identity Formation

Social identity is formed in three basic stages: categorization, identification and comparison.

1. Categorization

Categorization is the division of the social world into assessable group entities. Categorization itself is a neutral phenomenon. But the necessary precondition for social categorization, as well as its eventual result, is depersonalization in which *personal* identity is subsumed by the characteristics of the *group* category in view. This action is essential as a 'reliable guide for judgment and action' in a world of social diversity.⁹ Categorization results in a perceived world composed of deindividuated groups about which large scale generalizations can be made: 'All Americans are loud', 'Cretans are always liars' (Titus 1.12), or 'From one [Greek] acquire knowledge of all'.¹⁰ SIT theorists know this phenomenon of deindividuation as *out-group homogeneity**.¹¹

2. Identification

In a context composed of many social groups, humans identify with the groups to which they perceive they belong. There is nothing magical about group formation or identification. The necessary precondition for group formation is nothing more than two or more individuals who perceive themselves to be

⁹ Brown 2000:751.

¹⁰ *Aeneid* II.65.

¹¹ Huddy 1995; Rothgerber 1997; Brown 2000:751.

members of a common social category.¹² *The self-definitions that arise from our membership in groups are our social identities.*¹³

The many reasons to join a social group can be broadly classified under two headings: (1) maintenance of positive self-esteem and (2) the reduction of subjective uncertainty.¹⁴ Both reasons reflect wholly positive aspects of group membership. The first arises when the positive evaluation of one's group is ascribed to the self, thus providing the basic needs of belonging, social support and a positive view of oneself and one's people. The second arises from the fact that groups can provide utilitarian advantages in an uncertain world. For example, people are more likely, all things being equal, to join a group with political resources than a marginalized group.

There is no limit to the number of groups a human can join, hence all humans possess multiple social identities. These 'dual' or 'nested' identities* become salient based upon social context and intergroup contact.¹⁵ When intergroup contact is with a fan of Rangers football club, I am likely to act based upon my social identity as a fan of Celtic. When intergroup contact is with an Englishman, I am likely to interact based upon my Scottish social identity.¹⁶ Nested identities such as these are no modern construct. Philo's well-known quote from Flaccus 45.b-46a gives evidence for this phenomenon in antiquity.

For no one country can contain the whole Jewish [Ἰουδαῖος] nation [ἔθνος], by reason of its populousness; on which account they frequent all the most prosperous and fertile countries of Europe and Asia, whether islands or continents, looking indeed upon the holy city as their metropolis [μητρόπολιν] in which is erected the sacred temple of the most high God, but accounting those regions which have been occupied by their fathers, and grandfathers, and great grandfathers, and still more remote ancestors, in which they have been born and brought up, as their country [πατρίδας].¹⁷

According to Philo, both the mother-city (Jerusalem) and the fatherland (Diaspora homeland) form aspects of the social identity of Diaspora Judeans.¹⁸

¹² Turner 1982:15.

¹³ Tajfel 1981:246; Turner 1982:19; Hogg & Abrams 1999:10.

¹⁴ Hogg & Mullins 1999.

¹⁵ Jenkins 1997; Brewer 1999:438. Jenkins describes nested identities with the example of the Russian matryoshka doll (1997:85).

¹⁶ Burdsey 2004. Cf. Saeed 1999:840-841.

¹⁷ Yonge 1993 translation used for all Josephus quotations.

¹⁸ See Jones & Pearce 1998 on local Israelite identities.

While nested identities can create a complex nexus of identity, an individual's most basic social identity is his or her *terminal identity*.¹⁹ This social identity orients other lower level identities and can be conceived as the answer to the question, 'Who are my people?'

Finally, it should be noted that one important part of identification with a group is the role of group exemplars*. An exemplar is an actual member of the group who best embodies the prototypical characteristics of the in-group.²⁰ The characteristics of an exemplar are extended to the group as a whole as well as to individual group members.²¹

To summarize the role of *identification* in social identity formation, individuals identify with the groups in their context to which they perceive they belong. Social identity arises when individuals begin to know themselves based upon their group membership. All people have multiple, nested social identities which are oriented by the terminal identity. Finally, the attributes of group exemplars both exemplify the group and are ascribed to individual members.

3. Comparison

Positive group identity, and hence positive social identity, is maintained through a process of comparison and evaluation in which the in-group favorably differentiates itself from out-groups.²² The positive evaluation of the in-group is known as *in-group bias**. Two things must be noted about this comparative process. First, comparative criteria are fluid. Groups can evaluate themselves on whatever criteria are comparatively advantageous.²³ Second, social identity is primarily about the ascription of *positive* characteristics to the self and not about a primal disdain for the 'other'; it is primarily an expression of in-group love rather than out-group hate. However, in-group bias is infrequently benign and often forms the seed bed for social tension.²⁴ The inherently evaluative process of social identity formation

¹⁹ Deaux, et. al. 1995:280; Cairns 1982:281.

²⁰ Smith & Zarate 1992; Medin, et. al. 1984.

²¹ Bodenhausen, et al, 1995:60. Out-group exemplars embody in their person the collective characteristics of the 'other'.

²² Bettencourt, et. al. 2001:521.

²³ Bettencourt, et. al. 2001:521.

²⁴ Brewer 1999:438: 'Many forms of discrimination and bias may develop not because out-groups are hated, but because positive emotions such as admiration, sympathy, and trust are reserved for the in-group and withheld from out-groups.'

has a pernicious tendency: 'social antagonism... is the result of ordinary, adaptive, and functional psychological processes'.²⁵ Because the 'we' that always stands behind the 'I' is formed by comparison with the 'they', the 'they' are regularly conceptualized as inferior.²⁶ This has several potential ramifications for intergroup relations and resource allocation. For now, it suffices to say that *the fine line between in-group love and out-group hate is the line where human community is distorted*. One of the major functions of the Spirit in Luke-Acts is the formation of an identity capable of simultaneous in-group love and out-group love.

The Effect of Group Status upon Intergroup Contact and Conflict

The evaluative aspect of social identity formation, while regularly fostering less favorable views of the other, does not necessarily lead to intergroup conflict. Several factors, however, increase the likelihood of conflict, and of these factors unequal group status is particularly potent.²⁷ Groups that rate unfavorably on an evaluative trait esteemed in the broader context are low-status groups.²⁸ Whether or not these status differences (often based upon wealth, power, honor, etc) are real is inconsequential. The *perception* of status inequality is what matters for group identities.²⁹ In situations of perceived status inequality, four contextual factors intensify in-group bias.³⁰

1. *High status stability*: The inability of social groups as a whole to improve their position. This is often the case where there is political domination of one group over another.
2. *Impermeable group boundaries*: The inability of individual members to defect from their in-group to join the high status group. Impermeability

²⁵ Turner 1999:19.

²⁶ Ashburn-Nardo, et al. 2001:797 note 'behavioral manifestations of such implicit biases undoubtedly have negative implications for out-group members, regardless of whether the biases are rooted in in-group favoritism or out-group derogation... Favoring an in-group member in the workplace, for example, necessarily results in an undesirable outcome for out-group members'.

²⁷ Dovidio, et. al. 1998:109.

²⁸ This refers to the collective status of the group. Within a low status social group there is a normal distribution of relative status for individuals.

²⁹ Dovidio, et. al. 1998:117.

³⁰ Bettencourt, et. al. 2001:521.

sometimes is due not only to barriers erected by high-status groups, but to social pressure from within the low status group itself. This is frequently the case for ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and political or ideological movements.³¹

3. *Status illegitimacy*: The perception that high-status groups hold their position illegitimately. This is often true where there is political occupation, subjugation or unequal access to resources.
4. *External threat*: The perception that group identity is threatened. This can be the case for high status groups convinced that low-status 'others' are threatening their group's 'purity' or for low status groups who feel pressured to abandon their distinct identity through assimilation.

Each of these factors prompts increased identification with the in-group, increased in-group bias, and deteriorating views of the out-group. Low status groups in these situations have three basic options to improve their negative group status (and hence the negative social identities of their members). I will list them in an order ranging from most conciliatory to most confrontational.

1. *Social mobility* is the movement of individuals from a low status group to a high status group. As noted above, societal constraints sometimes make this impossible. Tajfel claimed, 'The basic condition for the appearance of extreme forms of intergroup behaviour... is the belief that the relevant social boundaries between the groups are sharply drawn and immutable, in the sense that, for whatever reasons, it is impossible or at least very difficult for individuals to move from one group to the other'.³²
2. *Social creativity* is an intragroup mechanism that attempts to construct positive social identity by either: (1) redefining the criterion for intergroup comparison; or (2) selecting a different out-group against which to evaluate

³¹ Tajfel 1981:315.

³² Tajfel 1981:245.

the in-group.³³ For example, an oppressed ethnic group may not compare favorably to their oppressors regarding the trait 'power', and thus may decide 'power' is an irrelevant trait. Instead, the group may elevate the trait 'piety' in order to evaluate themselves positively in the light of the dominant group (which of course is perceived as 'impious'). Or, the oppressed group could compare itself only to an even less powerful group, again creating a sense of positive social identity. Social creativity strengthens group boundary markers and often occurs in diaspora settings where the importance of intragroup interdependence is amplified.³⁴

3. *Social competition* is the direct competition for status and resources and includes collective social action, protest and intergroup violence.

Intergroup Conflict Resolution Strategies

Given the potentially dangerous trajectory created by categorization, the creation of in-group bias through out-group comparison (and out-group derogation), and potentially confrontational identity maintenance strategies, what options are available for the reduction of identity-based conflict? This question has attracted an enormous amount of scholarly attention but has achieved limited results. SIT theorists have studied three options for conflict reduction.

1. *Cross-cutting evaluative criteria*. This strategy involves the creation of evaluative criteria that avoid contested identity boundaries. For example, one might try to raise the salience of 'industriousness' to include some members from both of the conflicting groups marked by the traits 'rich' and 'poor'. This has been successful in artificial laboratory settings, but not with 'real life' identities.³⁵
2. *Superordinate identity**. Moderate success has been achieved by attempts to create a new identity that incorporates two competing sub-identities. The

³³ Jetten, et al, 2005.

³⁴ Brewer 1999:438; Triandis 1995.

³⁵ Brown 2000.

recent call for a renewed sense of 'Britishness' among U.K. residents is an example of this strategy.³⁶ The insurmountable obstacle to this strategy is the fact that freshly united subgroups tend to experience conflict over which attributes are prototypical for the superordinate group.³⁷

3. *Superordinate identity with retention of subgroup salience.* The most promising avenue for the reduction of intergroup conflict has been the creation of new superordinate identities that do not invalidate, but rather affirm distinct subgroup identities.³⁸ Brown notes that this strategy can be even more effective if the new groups possess a common collaborative goal. This strategy can be seen in South Africa, where whites and blacks retained ethnic specificity under the 'Rainbow People' superordinate identity.³⁹ Similar efforts have achieved success in Northern Ireland.⁴⁰ However, Hewstone contends that construction of common identity may only be strong enough to overcome powerful ethnic categorizations on a temporary basis.⁴¹

Despite consistent efforts at conflict resolution by those committed to understanding the role of social identity in intergroup conflict, real world social identities continue to be fertile sources of intergroup conflict.⁴² This is especially true of ethnic identities and is heightened all the more when ethnic particularity is mutually reinforced by religious particularity.⁴³

Social Identity and Entitlement

The comparative aspect of identity formation can have significant ramifications not only for intergroup relations but also for the relationship between

³⁶ See Gordon Brown's speech to the Fabian Society, 14/01/2006, website accessed 31/05/2007. http://www.fabian-society.org.uk/press_office/news_latest_all.asp?pressid=520.

³⁷ Mummenday & Wenzel 1999.

³⁸ Dovidio, et al, 1998; Gaertner, et al, 1999; Brown 2000; Dovidio & Kafati 1999; Gonzalez & Brown 2000; VanOudenhoven, et al, 1996.

³⁹ Tutu 1996; Gibson 2006.

⁴⁰ Cairns 1994.

⁴¹ Hewstone 1996:351.

⁴² Mullen, et al, 1992:117.

⁴³ Wald 2005:10.

identity and resource allocation both inside and outside the in-group. Understanding the intimate relationship between identity and entitlement* will illuminate Luke-Acts at several points.⁴⁴

The first step in determining entitlement to a group's resources is the determination of who does or does not have access to a given resource or social benefit. According to Wenzel,

All social entities that are perceived to be potential recipients of a resource distribution belong to what is called the 'primary category'. The primary category specifies who might be considered as a potential recipient at all, as opposed to those who are outside the allocation situation.⁴⁵

The observation that members of the in-group have entitlement to group resources is unremarkable.

But this is not the end of the process. In-groups have a tendency to divide into subgroups based upon prototypical group characteristics.⁴⁶ Subcategories 'that are closer to the positively connotated end of the prototypical dimension, or that represent best the group value of this inclusive category, are valued more positively and perceived to be more deserving'.⁴⁷ In other words, subgroups that think they are the most 'normal' assume greater entitlement to the benefits of the group.⁴⁸

Subgroup claims to entitlement based upon prototypicality anticipate an acute problem: there are no purely objective measures of group prototypicality.⁴⁹ How do groups 'know' what dimensions of the primary category are most prototypical? The answer is that within a primary category prototypicality is defined by *in-group projection**, a phenomenon in which a subgroup projects its own characteristics as normative for the group.⁵⁰ For example, research reveals that Germans who identify strongly as 'German', project 'German' identity as prototypical within the primary category 'European.' One result of this projection is that high 'German' identifiers have proved more-likely to evaluate positively the

⁴⁴ To my knowledge, I am the first to use research on identity and entitlement for biblical interpretation.

⁴⁵ Wenzel 2001:317.

⁴⁶ Wenzel 2001:317-318.

⁴⁷ Wenzel 2001:317-318.

⁴⁸ By implication, less prototypical subgroups are not norm conforming and hence are viewed as deviant (Weber, et al, 2002:452; Waldzus, et al, 2003:32).

⁴⁹ Weber, et al, 2002:452; Wenzel 2001:319.

⁵⁰ Wenzel, et al, 2003: 261.

2001 decision to exclude Turkey from EU membership.⁵¹ The less benign aspect of in-group bias is seen in the fact that the projection of German prototypicality renders Turks aprototypical and thus 'justly' excludes them from the benefits of the primary category 'European'. This type of projection of subgroup prototypicality is elusively fluid and a subgroup's perceptions of precisely which of its features are 'prototypical' vary with changing contexts and changing evaluative targets.⁵²

Finally, individuals who have a strong sense of dual identity within the primary category are most likely to engage in projection of relative subgroup prototypicality.⁵³ To take an example from Luke's world, a person who identifies strongly as 'Israelite' and 'Nazarene' would be likely to assume that Nazarene identity is most reflective of normative Israelite identity. These strong dual identifiers are thus most likely to assert powerful entitlement claims to the resources of their in-group.⁵⁴

Social Identity Theory Summary

Social identity theory leaves us with a conclusion that is not surprising. Diverse group affiliations lead to a world of divergent social identities that simply are not easy to reconcile. Coleman and Collins say it succinctly, and well:

It is a social scientific truism that identity is constructed, at whatever level (individual, cultural, social, national, transnational), through expressions of 'difference'... Identity can never be created in a vacuum - it must always be produced in and through a set of relations with real or imagined others. Identifying the 'in-group' makes little sense from an analytical or lay point of view unless one also identifies the 'out-group(s)'... In this sense, the allocation of identity in relation to the self is both an inevitable outcome of human interaction and - at times - a more self-consciously adopted stance in relation to others.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Research review in Wenzel 2001.

⁵² Waldzus, et al, 2005.

⁵³ Waldzus, et al, 2003:33.

⁵⁴ This is negatively correlated with positive attitudes toward the out-group (Waldzus, et. al. 2003:33).

⁵⁵ Coleman & Collins 2004:2.

Ethnicity and Social Identity

Of the many group boundaries encountered in Luke-Acts, ethnic boundaries are the most intractable. For this reason, it is important briefly to discuss the essential similarities that ethnic identities bear with all other group identities, and then to note one important difference.

It is popularly assumed in the broader culture that ethnic identities are the result of cultural distinctives (differences in language, religion or biological descent). This theoretical position, primordialism, was ascendant in the first half of the twentieth century and hypothesized that ethnicity arose in *social isolation* and was caused by the distinct, reified cultural objects of a group.⁵⁶ Hence, anthropologists rushed to isolated islands to find ‘primitive’ peoples from whom they could observe the rise of ethnic identity in its ‘purest’ forms. Within the primordialist schema, ‘common descent’ was believed to be the most powerful identity forming agent.

The attachment [between people sharing common descent] was not merely to the other family member as a person, but as a possessor of certain especially ‘significant relational’ qualities, which could only be described as primordial... a certain ineffable significance is attributed to the tie of blood.⁵⁷

The primordialist ‘ethnicity-arises-in-isolation’ model was nuanced by Geertz who suggested that, *from the perspective of its actors* (an *emic* as opposed to an *etic* perspective), the ‘gross actualities’ of ‘blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves’.⁵⁸

Despite the popular perception that cultural distinctives create ethnic identity, the primordialist paradigm has a fatal flaw. Because primordialism expected ethnicity to arise in social isolation, it also predicted that increased globalization would lead to cultural assimilation and the chastening of ethnic identities. This has not proved true. Frederik Barth, drawing on the work of Max Weber and Everett Hughes (who both developed varying conceptions of ‘groupness’ and of the construction of identity through differentiation from the ‘other’),

⁵⁶ The intellectual genealogy of primordialism flows through Tönnies, Schmalenbach, Schils, and, indirectly, Geertz.

⁵⁷ Schils 1957:140.

⁵⁸ Schils 1957:258, 259.

developed a fundamental point of departure from primordialist schemas.⁵⁹ According to Barth, ethnicity is not created by reified ‘cultural stuff’; it is the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group.⁶⁰ An ethnic group is not formed because of a common language or culture, rather an ethnic group is defined by a sense ‘group-ness’ (defined only by ‘self-ascription and ascription by others’) that can exist only in reference to other groups.⁶¹ Because ethnicity is formed by a bounded sense of ‘group-ness’, the cultural objects of an ethnic group (language, religion, shared history, etc.) can change dramatically over time while the sense of ethnic identity is perpetuated.⁶² Cultural difference does not make ethnic identity; rather, ethnic identity creates a boundary in which cultural difference can develop.⁶³ ‘Ethnic identity is constituted by the ‘dynamic ebb and flow of social interaction, from which boundaries are constructed between “us” and “them”’.⁶⁴

Wallman’s distillation of Barthianism demonstrates the compatibility with SIT:

Ethnicity is the process by which ‘their’ difference is used to enhance the sense of ‘us’ for purposes of organisation or identification... Because it takes two, ethnicity can only happen at the boundary of ‘us’, in contact or confrontation by contrast with ‘them’. And as the sense of ‘us’ changes, so the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ shifts. Not only does the boundary shift, but the criteria which mark it change.⁶⁵

Ethnic identity, like all group identities, is formed based on an evaluative comparison with the out-group. Thus ethnic identity, even with its typical emphasis on myths of common descent, can be fruitfully analyzed through the lens of SIT.

⁵⁹ See Weber 1997:385-398; Huges 1994:91. Jenkins 1997:11 summarizes Hughes: ‘ethnic cultural differences are a function of “group-ness”, the existence of a group is not a reflection of cultural difference’.

⁶⁰ Barth 1967:15.

⁶¹ Barth 1967:13-14.

⁶² Barth 1967:58 claimed an identity is ‘ethnic’ when it ‘classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background’. There are no ethnic groups with pure biological descent. People who are clearly not biologically related can often gain membership to an ethnic group and in spite of myths of common ancestry that control access to the group.

⁶³ Hutchinson and Smith 1996:6-7 have six diagnostic factors for determining whether groups are properly classed as ‘ethnic’: (1) common proper name; (2) myth of common ancestry; (3) shared history; (4) common culture (i.e. customs, language, religion); (5) link with a homeland; (6) group solidarity.

⁶⁴ Johnson 2006:28.

⁶⁵ Wallman 1979:3.

One critical distinction remains: the socially constructed nature of ethnic identity is only apparent at an etic level of observation. To those embedded within social systems (an emic perspective), ethnic identity *feels* primordial. As Jenkins helpfully nuances, ‘ethnic identity may be imagined, but it is emphatically not imaginary; locally that imagining may be very powerful’.⁶⁶ To rob socially embedded actors of their powerful sense that ethnicity is a *primordial given* is to undermine our ability to understand the tremendous affective pressures that ethnic boundaries exert upon members of social systems.⁶⁷ Understanding the depth of ethnic commitments, their often exclusive loyalty claims, and the way ethnic boundaries create fertile ground for conflict only serves to heighten the formidable nature of the group boundaries so prominent in Luke-Acts.⁶⁸

Ethnicity in Antiquity

Little needs to be said about the well-known relevance of ethnicity in the ancient world. Ancients were keenly cognizant of the ‘people’ to which they belonged and the ‘peoples’ that surrounded them.⁶⁹ Pliny, for example, is aware of 112 ‘tribes’ in northern Italy, 49 *gentes* in a part of the Alps, 150 *populi* in Macedonia, and 30 ‘peoples’ in the Crimea.⁷⁰ Josephus identifies over forty ethnic groups in his *Contra Apionem*.⁷¹ Ancient ethnographers demonstrated an obsession with the ‘other’, often describing people with increasingly animalistic characteristics the further away they lived from the socio-geographic center of the ethnographer’s own in-group.⁷² These ‘ethnic’ identities were regularly the source of conflict in the ancient world.⁷³ The Maccabean revolt is a ready example of the tension created by

⁶⁶ Jenkins 1997:47. Cf. Banks 1995:185-187.

⁶⁷ Cairns 1982:277 cites Whyte 1978 on the identity-based conflict in N. Ireland, ‘Anyone who studies the Ulster conflict must be struck by the intensity of feelings. It seems to go beyond what is required by a rational defense of the divergent interests which undoubtedly exist. There is an irrational element here, a welling-up of deep unconscious forces’.

⁶⁸ See especially Luke 4.24-30; 9.51-56; Acts 6.1-6; 22.17-23.

⁶⁹ ‘One of the strongest modes of identification for individuals in the Roman world, one that was prior, logically and historically, to that of the city or state, was that of belonging to a “people”’ (Shaw 2000:380).

⁷⁰ *Natural History* V.4.29-30; II.15.116; IV.10-33; IV.12.85.

⁷¹ Esler 2008 forthcoming.

⁷² Tacitus (*Geography* 5.4.153-159) describes inhabitants of Ierne (Ireland) as incestuous man-eaters who are ‘more savage than the Britons’ and adds: ‘I am saying this only with the understanding that I have no trustworthy witnesses for it’ (!).

⁷³ Hewstone 1996:351 calls ethnicity the ‘final frontier’ in the mitigation of identity-based conflict.

the impingement of one 'people' upon another.⁷⁴ Luke's texts are written into a world filled with competing ethnic identities and ethnic hatred will rear its ugly head at various points in Luke-Acts.⁷⁵

Regarding Luke's own social categories, it is essential to note that Luke's use of ἔθνος/ἔθνη always connotes an *ethnic* category. In Luke's context ἔθνος was part of a vocabulary of group-differentiation. First appearing in Homeric literature to designate a 'group' of something (i.e. bees, birds, or Lycians), it came to be used in ancient Greece to categorise 'barbarians' living outside the administrative influence of the Greek city-states.⁷⁶ In the parlance, γένος was reserved for Greeks while ἔθνος was used for non-Greeks.⁷⁷ This was advanced by Rome, which produced an even greater caricature of the barbarous ἔθνη.⁷⁸ In Luke's usage, the ἔθνη comprise a social category only intelligible from an emic Israelite perspective. No one self-identified as an ἔθνη (save perhaps for non-Israelites attached to the synagogue). ἔθνη constituted the 'them' against which Israelite identity could be forged.⁷⁹ The fact that 36 of the 43 instances of ἔθνος in Luke-Acts occur after Acts 10 indicates that ethnicity is the salient boundary and point of differentiation when the gospel encounters non-Israelites.⁸⁰

Ethnic Language in this Thesis

Because ethnic identity is experienced at an emic level as a powerful, primordial given, and because self-identifications are the most accurate way to discuss the identities of a given group, in this thesis I will refer to the ethnic group with historic attachment to Judea as 'Israelites'. The scholarly debate over the proper nomenclature ('Jew' vs 'Judean') for this group has served to remind us that those commonly referred to as 'Jews' who practice 'Judaism' were not adherents to a

⁷⁴ 1 Macc 1.41-2.1; *Antiquities* 12.138-144.

⁷⁵ Especially Luke 4.24-30; 9.51-56; Acts 6.1-6; 11.1-18; 15.1-4; 16.19-24; 19.23-41; 22.17-23.

⁷⁶ Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 4.

⁷⁷ Tonkin, McDonald, & Chapman 1989: 11-17.

⁷⁸ Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 4.

⁷⁹ Elliott 2007:124 fn 13. See also Stanley 1996. Jenkins 1997:81 clarifies: 'While social groups define themselves, their name(s), their nature(s), and their boundary(ies), social categories are named, characterized and delineated by others'. Israel = in-group self-definition; ἔθνη = out-group categorization.

⁸⁰ Like the Synoptics, there are several instances in Acts when ἔθνος (sg.) denotes a people group that may be Israelite (Acts 24.2, 10) or when Paul calls the Judeans his own ἔθνος (24.17; 26.4; 28.19). Esler 2008 forthcoming argues that for Josephus ἔθνος can be used to refer to Israel but that ἔθνη (pl.) never includes Israel.

‘religion’ but considered themselves a people group with their own god (who happened to be the cosmic Creator), similar to most other people groups.⁸¹ In Luke-Acts, this group refers to itself as ‘Israel’/‘Israelites’ whenever engaged in discourse with a fellow member of the ethnic in-group.⁸² Because this autonym carries many identity-shaping ramifications I will retain it to reflect the social identity of the group in question.⁸³ Further, I will refer to those Luke categorizes as ἔθνη as ‘non-Israelites’, for the ἔθνη are only a coherent category over against Israelite identity.⁸⁴ Luke is well aware of the variation between particular ethnic groups who compose the ἔθνη (see, for example, his contrasting characterization of the rustic residents of Lystra and the cosmopolitan Athenians in Acts 14.8-18; 17.16-34). Yet Luke is aware enough of Israelite identity concerns to understand the relevance of the category ἔθνη for the description of the undifferentiated ethnic ‘they’ in distinction from the Israelite ‘we’.

Ethnic Identity and Israel

There were a range of options with which first-century Israelites could answer the question: What does being a faithful Israelite mean with respect to the ethnic ‘other’? Texts that describe Diaspora, exile, return from exile, or Israelite responses to subjugation in the land provide good test cases from which to survey the effect of threatened (thus intensified) Israelite identity on the ethnic ‘other’. This brief survey of Second Temple texts will reveal that there was no singular Israelite response to the ‘other’, but that responses could range from social creativity to, more infrequently, social competition. A certain ambiguity in (even apparently negative) Israelite responses to the ‘other’ arises from the fact that the strengthening of Israelite in-group boundaries was frequently done with a conscious awareness of Israel’s status as God’s elect people. Thus, in-group bias arising from increased in-group solidarity can be largely positive. However, as we saw earlier, in-group bias is closely constitutive of out-group antipathy. The variegated responses to the ‘other’ in these Second Temple texts provide a context

⁸¹ See especially Elliott 2007.

⁸² See the detailed discussion in chapter 8.

⁸³ Though the use of ‘Israel’/‘Israelite’ poses its own problems for other literature, for the sake of consistency I will use ‘Israel’/‘Israelites’ to refer to ‘Jews’/‘Judeans’ in other relevant texts.

⁸⁴ See, rightly, Stanley 1997:101-124.

that will highlight Luke's sharp critique of the way one particular expression of Israelite identity impinges upon the 'other'. Rather than organizing the texts chronologically, I will organize them according to their responses to the ethnic 'other', from the most conciliatory to the most conflict-marked.⁸⁵

Letter of Aristeas

Because it paints a context in which Israelites are honored guests and translators of their own sacred texts, there is little threat to Israelite identity depicted in the Letter of Aristeas (ca. 100 BCE, plus or minus 125 years, perhaps originating from Alexandria).⁸⁶ Aristeas famously describes the Law of Moses, as forming

unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent [Israelites]... from mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter, being thus kept pure in body and soul, preserved from false beliefs, and worshipping the only God omnipotent over all creation.⁸⁷

Yet even this tight boundary does not preclude interaction with others. The Israelite embassy to Egypt is commendable because

they rose above conceit and contempt of other people, and instead engaged in discourse and listening to and answering each and every one, as is meet and right.⁸⁸

The Letter of Aristeas demonstrates that when Israelite identity is not threatened strong in-group bias does not necessarily have detrimental effects on relationships with non-Israelites. It should, however, be noted that the shared meals between Israelites and Egyptians were meals in parallel and not meals in common, and thus can hardly be described as intimate intergroup contact.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Attempts to trace historical development of attitudes toward the 'other' are fraught with difficulty and are beyond the scope of this brief survey. Widely varied responses to the 'other' occur across temporal and geographical distance. Strong out-group antipathy occurs in Ezra-Nehemiah (ca. 400-300 BCE) and 1 and 2 Maccabees (ca. 150-63 BCE). More congenial attitudes toward the out-group appear in the Letter of Aristeas (Alexandria?) and Tobit (Palestine or eastern Diaspora). This variability underscores the plurality of responses to the 'other' and justifies my strategy of listing sources based upon their posture toward the out-group rather than temporally.

⁸⁶ Davila 2005:125.

⁸⁷ Letter 139.

⁸⁸ Letter 122.

⁸⁹ Letter 142. See Esler 1998:112-116.

Tobit

Tobit (Palestinian or eastern Diaspora provenance, ca. 250-175 BCE) sets up a tension between ‘homeland’ and ‘exile’ in its prologue.⁹⁰ For Tobit, increased identification as ‘Israelite’ is not to the detriment of the ‘nations’ who are included in the redemptive work of Israel’s God as a result of the faithful witness of Israel.⁹¹ In other words, here in-group love exists without out-group hate (though out-group love is hardly evident).

Ego notes that ‘the strengthening of Israelite identity attains special importance’ in Tobit’s diaspora framework.⁹² From the start, Tobit portrays his relatives as abstaining from idol worship and the food of the ἔθνη. Tobit’s investigation of the angel Raphael’s tribal ancestry suggests a worldview in which ethnic identity is a reliable predictor of ethical character.⁹³ Finally, Tobit counsels Tobias,

Love your brethren, and in your heart do not disdain your brethren and the sons and daughters of your people by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers of old, all took wives from among their brethren.⁹⁴

Exogamy for Tobit is an act of disloyalty to the people.⁹⁵ Pressure toward endogamy is a strategy for the preservation of group identity.⁹⁶ Yet Tobit remains an example of the possibility that in-group bias does not automatically lead to an overtly negative view of non-Israelites or to out-group antagonism.

Jubilees

Jubilees (ca. mid 2nd c. BCE, originally in Hebrew and likely of Palestinian provenance) provides an example of one specific form of social creativity: the

⁹⁰ Ego 2005:70. For background see DeSilva 2002:69.

⁹¹ Tobit 13.34; 14.5-8. Ego 2005:53-54 notes the transcendence of the border between Israel and the nations.

⁹² Ego 2005:46. Collins 2005:27 calls observance of the law *en toto* the key boundary marker for Tobit.

⁹³ Tobit 5.8ff.

⁹⁴ Tobit 4.13. Levine 1992:105-117 notes ‘In the diaspora, no immediately clear solid ground for self-definition exists’ but that genealogy helps produce identity.

⁹⁵ Yet the close connection between exogamy and *porneia* in 4.12 hints at the idolatrous nature of non-Israelites, a point made by Witherington 1998:462; 2001:248 regarding the connection between non-Israelites, idol worship and cultic sex. See also Heike 2005:113.

⁹⁶ Pitkanen 2006:115.

legitimizing retrojection of identity markers to a primeval past.⁹⁷ In rewriting Genesis, Jubilees sets Israelite covenantal distinctives, ranging from circumcision to Torah obedience, as features of the primeval history in Gen. 1-11.⁹⁸ Levitical laws regarding childbirth impurity, Sabbath laws, and circumcision (a mark possessed by the angels themselves) are narrated into the earliest chapters of Genesis.⁹⁹ This serves to legitimize Israelite boundary markers in a way that heightens a timeless *ontological* distinction between Israel and the nations. The command to Abraham in Jubilees 22.16 is an example of this strategy, ‘Separate yourself from the ἔθνη, and do not eat with them... because all of their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable’.

Jubilees retells the covenant history in a way that presents Sinai as a restoration of the Noachic covenant. The effect is that the particularity of the Sinai covenant subsumes the universality of the Noachic covenant. This strategy of identity justification through revisionist history solidifies ‘national and social boundaries’ in powerful ways.¹⁰⁰ The potentially pernicious effect of this extreme in-group bias is based upon a comparative evaluation in which non-Israelites are defined by negations. They are identified as:

not holy peoples, *not* God’s possession, ruled by angels/demons (cf. Jub. 10.8-11). By identifying the outside with what is negative and by defining its identity in opposition to Israel’s identity...a denigration of the outside world is expressed.¹⁰¹

4 Ezra

What Jubilees projects backward, 4 Ezra casts in the apocalyptic future. Written in the shadow of the disorienting force of the Temple destruction (Palestinian provenance, ca. 100 CE), the text describes ideal identity via an

⁹⁷ Hellerman 2003; Cf. Halpern-Amaru 1994:25. For a Roman example see *Aeneid* I.278-9, where Jupiter declares to Venus, ‘To the Roman race I set limits neither in space nor time: Unending sway have I bestowed on them’. For date and provenance, see van Ruiten 2000:2.

⁹⁸ For a full treatment of ‘rewritten history’ in Jubilees, see van Ruiten 2000.

⁹⁹ Jubilees 2; 3; 15.27-28. Christiansen 1995:102 notes that for Jubilees circumcision is the ‘decisive mark of identity...a symbol of affirmation of the covenant, a mark of both the internal and external boundary, of national, social and religious belonging, and of inclusion and exclusion and election’.

¹⁰⁰ Christiansen 1995:70. Cf. Endres 1987:250.

¹⁰¹ Christiansen 1995:89, emphasis original.

eschatological return of the ten 'lost' tribes who have cunningly kept themselves ready for re-gathering.¹⁰² After being taken into Assyrian exile,

The tribes formed this plan for themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the nations and go to a more distant region, where mankind had never lived, that there at least they might keep their statutes which they had not kept in their own land... Then they dwelt there until the last times; and now, when they are about to come again, the Most High will stop the channels of the river again, so that they may be able to pass over.¹⁰³

The necessary precondition for covenant faithfulness is detachment from all non-Israelite contact.¹⁰⁴ The return to the land comes after the nations have been destroyed by the *law*, a chief marker of Israelite identity in 4 Ezra.¹⁰⁵ 4 Ezra actually moves away from full-scale ethnocentric covenantalism toward a Torah-based remnant ideology.¹⁰⁶ The key factor, from an intergroup perspective, remains the fact that for the northern tribes, social isolation is apocalyptically depicted as the necessary precondition for faithful Israelite identity, even if not all ethnic Israelites achieve this ideal.

Ezra & Nehemiah

We now move to texts that begin to describe both *intragroup* and *intergroup* ramifications of Israelite in-group bias. In Ezra and Nehemiah ethnic purity is the *sine qua non* of Israelite identity.¹⁰⁷ Ezraite returnees who could not prove their ancestry or 'whether they belonged to Israel' were deemed temporarily unclean, and those who could not show their priestly lineage were deemed unfit for the priesthood.¹⁰⁸ Renewed fidelity to the law is highlighted as central to the protection of the identity of the returned people, and threat from the outside immediately strengthens ethnic in-group bias.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Fuller 2006:75-76. For date and provenance see Davila 2005:138-139, cf. deSilva 2002:323.

¹⁰³ 4 Ezra 13.37-47, *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ A similar impulse is expressed in the sequestering of the Qumran community described by 1QS8.12-16.

¹⁰⁵ 4 Ezra 13.38.

¹⁰⁶ Longenecker 1991:129.

¹⁰⁷ Dating Ezra-Nehemiah is difficult. A general date of 400 BCE for Ezra 7-Nehemiah 13 and 300 BCE for Ezra 1-6 has been posited by Williamson 1985:xxxvi.

¹⁰⁸ Ezra 2.59-62; Nehemiah 7.61-65.

¹⁰⁹ Nehemiah 4.14.

This intensified in-group bias had striking implications for relations with non-Israelites. Most obvious in Ezra is the rejection of exogamy and the imposition of divorce from foreign wives.¹¹⁰ The restriction against intermarriage is based upon a holy/unholy distinction between Israel and the nations.¹¹¹ Notably, the ban on exogamy goes beyond the Deuteronomic legislation which only explicitly prohibits intermarriage with women of the seven Canaanite nations.¹¹² This intensification of Israelite identity and fortification of intergroup boundaries must have left many women and their children in quite a vulnerable state.¹¹³

Even more telling with regard to conceptions of Israelite identity is the interaction with the ‘people of the land’ in Ezra 4.1-3.¹¹⁴ This group, whose identity is contested by scholars, offers to assist in the rebuilding of the Temple, claiming that ‘we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria who brought us here’.¹¹⁵ The offer is rejected immediately: ‘You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel’.¹¹⁶ The strong insider/outsider language (‘you’, ‘us’, ‘we’, ‘our’) sends a clear message; Israelite identity is based upon ethnic identity and not simply fidelity to the God of Israel.¹¹⁷ The summary of Nehemiah’s success highlights the attitude toward the ‘other’ in both Ezra and Nehemiah, ‘Thus I cleansed them [the returnees] from everything foreign... Remember me, O my God, for good’.¹¹⁸ Wright correctly observes that Nehemiah’s wall was both physical and social, ‘repairing the physical ramparts around Jerusalem and rebuilding the ethnic boundaries around Judah’.¹¹⁹

Again, we need to remind ourselves that Israel’s response to the ‘other’ is somewhat ambiguous. In-group fidelity is commanded by God, as is a certain level

¹¹⁰ Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 10.30. Nehemiah initiates a pledge not to take foreign wives in the future.

¹¹¹ Ezra 9.2.

¹¹² See Deuteronomy 7.1-4. Blenkinsopp 2006:67 observes that there is no law ‘mandating coercive divorce’. See also Esler 1987:85. Richard Bauckham has suggested to me in personal conversation that the Ezra ruling is a halakhic interpretation of Deuteronomy 7.1-4 based upon the people who are now in the land.

¹¹³ Heike 2005:103.

¹¹⁴ Ezra 1-6 may be a later addition to Ezra-Nehemiah (Williamson 1985:xxxiv-xxxv).

¹¹⁵ Ezra 4.2.

¹¹⁶ Ezra 4.3.

¹¹⁷ Nehemiah’s retelling of the Abrahamic covenant (Nehemiah 9.8) omits the blessing of the nations (Genesis 12.3), perhaps betraying an ideology that has little room for the ethnic ‘other’.

¹¹⁸ Nehemiah 13.30-31.

¹¹⁹ Wright 2004:339.

of separation from ethnic others. However, the call to faithfulness for Israel was always meant to serve as a witness to God *for the sake of the nations* (Genesis 12.3). The fact that Ezra and Nehemiah, though intensifying legal observance, do not appear to notice even the Levitical provisions for foreigners in the land is perhaps another indicator of the way community can be distorted and used to exclude. Luke will have much to say regarding these sorts of expressions of Israelite identity.

1 & 2 Maccabees

While social creativity (with both intergroup and intragroup ramifications) was the primary identity maintenance strategy employed in Second Temple texts, social competition was sometimes a viable alternative. 1 and 2 Maccabees are the primary examples of this strategy in the Second Temple period. Both texts interpreted the threat from Antiochus IV as a threat to Israelite identity.¹²⁰ 1 Maccabees (Palestinian provenance [?], mid-2nd to mid-1st c. BCE) blamed the threat almost entirely upon non-Israelite aggression, but 2 Maccabees (uncertain provenance, mid-2nd to mid-1st c. BCE) ascribed significant culpability to aprototypical Israelites, especially the apostate priests Jason and Menelaus.¹²¹ The response to identity threat in 1 Maccabees was two-fold. Most obviously, Israelites took up arms against their oppressors and military action was couched in symbols of Israelite ethnic identity: law observance and prototypical piety.¹²² Those who participated in the campaign against Antiochus were ‘zealous for the law’ and ‘support the covenant’.¹²³ They hoped to ‘avenge’ and pay back the ἔθνη in full.¹²⁴ Here, in-group bias is expressed through violent resistance. The rhetoric is laced with intertextual allusions, grounding this expression of identity in the stories of Israelite history, especially those of Phinehas and David.¹²⁵ The success of the Maccabean programme is described in eschatological terms: once the yoke of the ἔθνη is removed from Israel (13.41), old men sit in the streets (14.9), and each

¹²⁰ 1 Maccabees 1.41ff; 2 Maccabees 4.11ff.

¹²¹ Doran 1981. 1 Maccabees provenance: Metzger 1957:130; date: deSilva 2002:248. 2 Maccabees provenance: Judea: van Henten 1997:50; Alexandria: Metzger 1957:140; date: deSilva 2002:269.

¹²² 1 Maccabees 3.44-48.

¹²³ 1 Maccabees 2.27.

¹²⁴ 1 Maccabees 2.66b-67.

¹²⁵ deSilva 2002:257.

person sits under his own vine and fig trees with no one to make them afraid (14.12).¹²⁶

The second strategy in 1 Maccabees, extreme pressure toward in-group conformity, was manifest most blatantly in the forced circumcision of all males within the borders of Israel.¹²⁷ Immediately after the foreign threat was subdued, Jonathan turned to strengthening group boundaries by acting to ‘judge the people’ and ‘destroy the godless out of Israel’.¹²⁸ There is no doubt that when the author tells us that Simon ‘built the walls of Jerusalem higher’, he – like the author of Nehemiah – is referring to physical and social walls.¹²⁹

If 1 Maccabees emphasizes the role of exemplary Israelites in the destruction of enemies and the forced correction of aprototypical in-group members, 2 Maccabees highlights divine agency in response to Israelite piety. The author demonstrates a keen awareness of the dangers of exile as it impinges upon identity.¹³⁰ DeSilva argues that the goal of the text is the ‘promotion of continued or resumed commitment to Jewish cultural values as the path to national security and prosperity’.¹³¹ This seems correct; Israelite victories are portrayed as the result of God’s action in response to faithful expressions of Israelite identity.¹³² Further, the ill fate of some Israelites is attributed to their appropriation of non-Israelite customs.¹³³ The message of 2 Maccabees is clear: betrayal of in-group norms leads to the destruction of the in-group, and vice versa.

1 and 2 Maccabees demonstrate that identity can be marshaled in different ways in the face of threat. Both texts are expressions of social competition, one crediting exemplary Israelites and one crediting divine action for the success of the Maccabean campaign. What is unambiguous, and shared by both texts, is the sense that threats to Israelite identity must be destroyed – often violently – whether they come from within or without.¹³⁴

¹²⁶ Cf. 1 Kings 4.25; Isaiah 36.16; Hosea 2.18; Micah 4.4; Zechariah 3.10.

¹²⁷ 1 Maccabees 2.45-46.

¹²⁸ 1 Maccabees 9.73b.

¹²⁹ 1 Maccabees 14.37.

¹³⁰ 2 Maccabees 1.27-29; 2.1-3.

¹³¹ deSilva 2002:266.

¹³² 2 Maccabees 7; 11.38.

¹³³ 2 Maccabees 12.40.

¹³⁴ Though causal connections are impossible to map, one interesting datum regarding the influence of the Maccabean histories on Israelite identity is the fact that, in our period of interest, six of the nine most popular male names and the three most prominent female names are names of the

Summary of Israelite Responses to the 'Other'

This brief survey has demonstrated that a wide range of options for identity maintenance were available to Israelites experiencing perceived identity threat. Two caveats should here be noted. First, not all Israelites should be conceived as high ethnic identifiers. It is likely that texts were written by those with a strong sense of social identity (or at least those with interested patrons who had a strong sense of Israelite identity), and thus textual evidence may skew toward high ethnic identifiers. It is important, therefore, to resist totalizing generalizations. However, these texts (including Luke-Acts) give us license to speak, at a certain level of abstraction, in broad generalities. Indeed, Luke-Acts demonstrates clearly that the negotiation of Israelite identity vis-à-vis the ethnic 'other' was a contested issue. Second, we must not fall into the trap of imagining ethnocentrism as a particularly Israelite issue. Ethnocentrism was a pervasive feature of most every ἔθνος in the ancient Mediterranean. Rome's adaptation of the Greek construction of the 'barbarian' is a fine case in point for the construction of (Roman) in-group identity in contradistinction from the foil provided by the ethnic 'other' (βάρβαρος).¹³⁵ At various points the Acts text will serve as a window on extreme expressions of ethnocentrism from non-Israelite ethnic groups as well.¹³⁶

Conclusion

The preceding discussion of SIT, complete with its ramifications for intergroup relations, as well as the evidence for a variety of normal identity strengthening strategies in Second Temple texts prepares us well for a reading of the interplay between the Spirit and social identity (especially ethnic identity) in Luke-Acts. Luke's text provides ample data that is helpfully interpreted through the lens of SIT, much of which demonstrates 'regular' intragroup and intergroup dynamics. Namely, positive social identity is maintained by negatively evaluating the 'other' – a move that often leads to the creation of barriers for intergroup contact. However, we will see that when Luke brings the Spirit into intergroup

Hasmonean family (Bauckham 2006:85, 89; cf, ilan 2002). When occupied peoples name their children after revolutionary heroes it may well be that the names themselves indicate a certain posture toward the 'other'.

¹³⁵ See Shaw 2000; E. Hall 1989; J. Hall 1999; Harrison 2002; Baldson 1979. For Roman attitudes toward Israelites, see Stern 1984.

¹³⁶ Acts 16.19-24; 19.23-41.

contexts typical identity maintenance strategies are frequently subverted. It is in the subversion of these 'normal' intergroup processes that the Holy Spirit emerges for Luke as *the central figure in the formation of a new social identity that affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity.*

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY GLOSSARY

Out-group homogeneity: The assumption by members of a group that out-group members are extremely similar to one another and that the group as a whole is more homogeneous than the in-group.¹³⁷ This results from the deindividuation of the out-group.

Nested (or dual) identity: The possession of multiple social identities based upon participation in multiple social groups.¹³⁸ These identities become salient based upon contextual factors such as the social identity of a person with whom one is interacting.

Terminal identity: The most significant social identity a person possesses, one which 'embraces and integrates a number of lesser identities'.¹³⁹ Usually the terminal identity is based upon the answer to the question, 'Who are my people?'

Exemplar: A member of a group who best reflects the prototypical characteristics of the group. These characteristics are 'automatically assigned, along with long-term criterial traits, to all members' of the group.¹⁴⁰

In-group bias: 'In-group bias follows from a sequence of social-categorization, social identification, and social-group comparison driven by a pressure to positively differentiate one's in-group from relevant out-groups' and is the positive evaluation of the in-group over against other social groups.¹⁴¹ High in-group bias often results in negative intergroup attitudes or relations.

Superordinate identity: A new identity that transcends existing group categories and incorporates diverse groups under a common identity.¹⁴²

Entitlement: 'What one should get on the basis of what one has done or who one is.'¹⁴³ Entitlement creates assumptions about access to group resources.

In-Group projection: The projection of the characteristics of one's own in-group or subgroup as normative or prototypical within the broader group context.¹⁴⁴ The in-group projection of relative prototypicality leads to entitlement claims from subgroups.

Allocentric Identity: An identity characterized or denoting interest centered in persons other than oneself. Allocentric identity entails the ability to overcome normal intergroup identity processes in which positive social identity is maintained through the negative evaluation of the 'other'. Allocentric identity is capable of expressing in-group love and out-group love simultaneously.

¹³⁷ Brown 2000:750.

¹³⁸ Esler 2003:73.

¹³⁹ Cairns 1982:281.

¹⁴⁰ Turner 1982:29.

¹⁴¹ Bettencourt, et. al. 2001:521.

¹⁴² Brown 2000:751.

¹⁴³ Wenzel 2001:315.

¹⁴⁴ Waldzus, et. al. 2003:32.

3

EXPANDING THE ETHNIC HORIZON THE SPIRIT AND ALLOCENTRIC IDENTITY IN LUKE 1-2

Luke's Gospel opens with an immediate and stark contrast of identities. As the polished Greek of the prologue gives way to the rougher, Septuagintal Greek of the narrative proper, images of Temple, priesthood and the deliverance of God's people move to the fore.¹ Yet these markers of Israelite identity are positioned within a context marked by foreign oppression: Luke describes Roman client rule in Luke 1.5a and Roman decretal power in Luke 2.1-2. These early chapters of Luke, marked by symbols of ethnic identity, are saturated by references to the Spirit.² This overlap between Spirit and identity is no coincidence. While Luke's correlation between the Spirit and identity builds cumulatively and shines most brightly later in Luke-Acts, the birth narratives are an essential foundation for Luke's understanding of the relationship between ethnic identity, the Spirit and the 'other'. Two closely related features of Luke 1-2 will be examined in this chapter. First, Luke uses allusions to Israel's patriarchal and covenantal history to demonstrate the privileged status of Israelite identity even in light of Roman domination. Second, the 'birth hymns' of Luke 1-2 reveal a nascent relationship between the overt influence of the Spirit upon an individual and a certain posture toward the 'other'.³ I categorize this influence as the formation of an *allocentric*

¹ See Hutchinson & Smith 1994:6-7 for markers of ethnic identity. On the Greek of the prologue versus the LXX-style Greek of the narrative, see Nolland 1989:17; Ravens 1995:28.

² Luke 1-4 has a greater density of Spirit references (14 references; 3.5 per chapter) than Acts (56 references; 2 per chapter). There are only 4 references to the Spirit in Luke 5-24.

³ I will use 'birth hymns' to describe the words spoken by Mary, Zechariah, the angels, Simeon and (indirectly) Anna.

identity, an identity marked by the ability to maintain positive social identity without the negatively evaluating the out-group.⁴

Zechariah and Elizabeth: Awakening Israelite Ethnic Identity

As we noted in chapter 2, the perception that in-group identity is threatened is one of the primary factors that increases identification with the in-group and intensifies in-group bias.⁵ The introduction of Herod the Great at the head of Luke's narrative (Luke 1.5) brings just such a threat to bear upon Luke's (Israelite) hearers.⁶ Herod himself was anything but an exemplary Israelite. Pharisaic criticism of his ethnic lineage prompted Herod to commission the composition of a false genealogy.⁷ Herod built three temples to Caesar Augustus within the boundaries of Judea and was panned by Josephus for his introduction of the quinquennial games in Caesar's honor, the promulgation of image-like trophies and the throwing of men to wild beasts, all of which negatively impacted Israelite identity.⁸

We became guilty of great wickedness afterward, while those religious observances which used to lead the multitude to piety were now neglected.⁹

In the background of the Herodian threat to identity stood the threatening Roman 'other', a pervasive reminder of Israel's low-status ethnic position. The activation of Roman domination and its implied threat is a consistent Lukan strategy and appears again at Luke 2.1-2 and 3.1-2, each time as the backdrop against which Luke narrates an important act of Israelite deliverance. With regard to Israelite ethnic identity, this strategy can be conceptualized at an etic level as 'social creativity', the selection of different evaluative criteria upon which to make intergroup comparisons with higher status out-groups. When Israel's covenantal status was the evaluative

⁴ SIT demonstrates that in-group love typically has (perhaps unintended) negative consequences for out-groups. The Spirit in Luke-Acts subverts these identity-forming processes.

⁵ Grant 1993:43; Verkuyten 2005:122; Gibson 2006:697.

⁶ Tannehill 1996:40: 'What the narrator presents first, when the reading is seeking basic orientation, will stand out and affect the reading of the rest of the story'. Rowe 2006:42-43, referencing Harvey 1965:52: 'Literarily speaking, it would be hard to over-stress the importance of a character's first introduction into what Harvey called "the web of human relationships"'. I am convinced that Luke's emphasis on intergroup relationships makes best sense if we conceptualize an ethnically mixed audience for Luke-Acts (Esler 1987:24-26).

⁷ Cohen 1999:24.

⁸ Caesarea Maritima (*War* 1.414; *Antiquities* 15.339); Sebaste (*War* 1.403; *Antiquities* 15.298); Baniyas (*War* 1.404; *Antiquities* 15.363-64). See McLaren 2005:259.

⁹ *Antiquities* 15.267; Cf. *Antiquities* 267-276; 17.255; *War* 2.44.

criteria for comparison with Rome, Israel was able to maintain positive group identity and portray its own ethnic identity as high status.

Set in counterpoint to the brief but weighted notation of Herod's client rule are Zechariah and Elizabeth, two exemplary Israelites who themselves are flanked by a multitude of faithful Israelites. Luke emphasizes the importance of this couple in several ways. First, the narrative introduction to the pair contains a degree of detail largely without parallel in his text; we learn their age, ancestral lineage, occupational status, reproductive status and ethical status.¹⁰

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.¹¹

These identifying features highlight the chief markers of ethnic identity: common ancestry, shared history, common culture, and a sense of communal solidarity.¹² Second, Zechariah's priestly ministration establishes him as a mediating representative for 'the whole multitude of the people' (Luke 1.12). Third, Zechariah and Elizabeth (and their son John) are the first in the Gospel who act under the influence of the Spirit.¹³ Finally, in a powerfully allusive way Luke awakens Israelite identity styled after Abraham and Sarah, the recipients of God's promise to bless all the peoples of the earth through a single family.

While Zechariah and Elizabeth stand in the biblical tradition of other barren couples, it is Sarah and Abraham who are for Luke 'everywhere present and nowhere mentioned' and it is the overwhelming number of allusions to Abraham

¹⁰ My emphasis on the couple's significance runs counter to Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:225 who claim Zechariah 'is mentioned at all only because of what Luke has to say about the birth of John and Jesus'.

¹¹ Luke 1.5-6. Unless specified, all biblical quotations are RSV.

¹² Hutchinson & Smith 1996:5-6. This information is comparable to the core elements essential to defining the essence of a human in Greco-Roman encomium: origin, training, deeds of soul, deeds of fortune (children). See Neyrey 1994:177-206, esp. 177-180.

¹³ Luke 1.41-42, 67. It is more appropriate to say Mary is 'acted upon' by the Spirit since her experience with the Spirit in 1.35 is passive compared to active expressions by Elizabeth and Zechariah. Commentators generally do not recognize this distinction. Nolland 1989:54-56 makes no comparison, but suggests Elizabeth's active role results from her 'inspired interpretation of the movement of the unborn child' (66). Green 1997:90 notes 'divine agency' in Mary's case, but does not differentiate between her experience and that of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Ravens 1995:26 observes the Spirit-influence upon all three, but nothing more. Danker 1988:38, 40 appears to differentiate between the 'filling' of the Spirit that leads to the actions of John and Elizabeth and the 'unique demonstration of God's power' that results not in Mary's action but in the birth of Jesus.

and Sarah that highlight Zechariah and Elizabeth's status as exemplary Israelites.¹⁴ Allusive techniques are powerful tools for activating identity, serving to bring contemporary events into a 'hermeneutical relationship' with older texts.¹⁵ Perhaps this is especially true for allusions to Abraham, a key figure for Israelite identity.¹⁶ There are no less than fourteen possible allusions to Abraham and Sarah in Luke's Zechariah and Elizabeth material.¹⁷

Luke's reading of Abraham and Sarah appears to center upon Genesis 15-18, which Westermann has identified as a conspicuous story unit composed of promises recorded in narratives.¹⁸ Eleven of Luke's fourteen allusions are situated within this unit, which includes the only two explicit occurrences of 'covenant' within the Abraham and Sarah narrative.¹⁹ If Luke is drawing our attention to Abraham and Sarah, he is drawing our attention to them because of their importance as the recipients of God's covenantal promises.²⁰ It is not insignificant, then, that Luke chooses ἄμεμπτος, the very word God uses to describe the covenantal faithfulness required of Abraham in Genesis 17.1, to describe the faithfulness expressed by Zechariah and Elizabeth. ἄμεμπτος, which stands at the emphatic position at the end of Luke 1.6, appears only here in Luke-Acts and only one time (Genesis 17.1) in the Pentateuch.²¹

¹⁴ Rowe 2006:33-34. Rowe is speaking about the patriarchs in general. For barren couples see Genesis 15.2; 1 Samuel 1.1-2; Judges 13.2. See Bock 1994:78; Fitzmyer 1979:317, 323; Nolland 1989:25-27.

¹⁵ Fishbane: 1985:351.

¹⁶ Hendel 2005:31: 'The memory of Abraham serves in varying measures to articulate Israelite identity, to motivate the remembering agent to take appropriate actions, to give solace, and to activate social, religious or political ideals.' Cf. Dahl 1980:139-140.

¹⁷ For a list of many (but not all) of these parallels, see Green 1997:53-55. I note the following: *Barrenness*: Genesis 11.30, **15.1**//Luke 1.7; *Annunciation to husband*: Genesis 12.2; **15.1**; **17.1**//Luke 1.15; *Promises to Abraham (remembered by God)*: Genesis 12.3; **15.5**, **13-14**, **18-21**; **17.2**, **4-8**//Luke 1.73; *Chronological and geopolitical markers*: Genesis 14.1//Luke 1.5; 'Do not be afraid': Genesis **15.1**//Luke 1.13; *Righteousness*: **15.6**; **17.1**; **18.19**; 26.5//Luke 1.6; *Old age*: Genesis **17.1**//Luke 1.7, 11; *Everlasting covenant*: Genesis **17.4-8**, **16**//**1.72-73**; *Divine naming of child*: Genesis **17.19**//Luke 1.13; *Protests regarding advanced age*: Genesis **17.17**; **18.11-12**//Luke 1.18; *Conceived and bore a son*: Genesis 21.2//Luke 1.24, 57; *Removal of the shame of barrenness*: Genesis 21.6//Luke 1.58; *Circumcision of the sons*: Genesis **17.23**; 21.4//Luke 1.59. ἄμεμπτος *righteousness*: Genesis **17.1**//Luke 1.6. The bold citations indicate references in the Genesis 15-18 narrative unit.

¹⁸ Westermann 1975:57-59.

¹⁹ Brueggemann 1982: 154. Genesis 15.18; 17.2-7.

²⁰ See the Magnificat (Luke 1.55), the Benedictus (Luke 1.73) and Acts 3.21. Cf. Dahl 1966, Bock 1994:160. Abraham is mentioned 22 times in Luke-Acts and the covenant promises are a central Lukan concern.

²¹ ἄμεμπτος meets six of the seven criteria for allusion and echo in Hays 1989:20-32: availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility and satisfaction, but not history of interpretation. Esler 2003:231-233 suggests ἄμεμπτος often carries a comparative sense. If this is the

ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεός σου εὐαρέσκει ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ καὶ γίνου ἄμεμπτος.²²

ἦσαν δὲ δίκαιοι ἀμώτεροι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιομασίαις τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι.²³

Given the density of allusions to the Genesis 15-18 Abraham and Sarah material, this heretofore overlooked allusion hardly seems incidental. Zechariah and Elizabeth are not just pious, they express the covenantal faithfulness required of the patriarch of the Israelite ἔθνος.²⁴ When this is combined with the fact that Luke depicts Zechariah explicitly in a role of priestly mediation within the Temple (a location charged with implications for Israelite identity), this is all the more consequential.²⁵

The exemplary identities of Zechariah and Elizabeth are augmented by Luke's depiction of a multitude who express exemplary Israelite identity. During Zechariah's Temple service 'the whole assembly of the people (λαός) was praying outside'.²⁶ For Luke, prior to Acts 15 λαός (singular) always represents Israel as

case in Luke it would mean that Zechariah and Elizabeth are comparatively righteous (and thus exemplary). This sense is not, however, a smooth fit for Genesis 17.1 LXX.

²² Genesis 17.1 LXX.

²³ Luke 1.6. Both constructions imply faithfulness before (ἐναντίον) the Lord. πορευόμενοι, a Lukan favorite for 'walking' (Luke has 69 of the 117 New Testament occurrences), parallels εὐαρεστω ἐναντίον, a common LXX rendering of 'to walk before' (הלך לפני: Genesis 5.22, 24; 6.9; 24.10; Psalm 55.14; 114.9).

²⁴ Bock 1994:78 overlooks connections with Genesis. Nolland 1989:27 references Genesis 17.1 but marks no significance. Schweizer 1984:20 notes the use of the word to describe Paul and Job, but not Abraham. Danker 1988 sees the word as reminiscent of Old Testament piety, but overlooks Genesis 17.1. Carter 1988:241 fn 14 notes that ἄμεμπτος is a *hapax legomenon* in Luke, but nothing further. Green 1997:54 puts italicized emphasis on *walking* rather than ἄμεμπτος. ἄμεμπτος translates תמיים, which here according to VonRad (1972:198-199) connotes 'wholeness' or 'perfection' in the sense of one's relation to God. תמיים regularly describes the perfection of a sacrificial offering, but occurs only twice in the Pentateuch in relation to humans (Genesis 6.9 for Noah: LXX = δίκαιος; Deuteronomy 18.13 for the nation: LXX = τέλειος). ἄμεμπτος occurs eleven times in Job, either as God's description of Job's piety or as Job's self-description, two times in Esther, as a part of the propaganda of the Persian empire (3.12 LXX; 8.13 LXX) and three times in Wisdom (10.5, 5; 18.21), the first two occurrences provocatively differentiating blameless Israel/Israelites from the nations (ἔθνῶν). There are 5 New Testament occurrences: Paul's status before the Torah (Philippians 3.6); the wholeness/blamelessness available through Christ (Philippians 2.15; 1 Thessalonians 2.10; 3.13; 5.23).

²⁵ Leviticus 4.3 reflects the representative nature of the priesthood. Sirach 50 relates a faithful priest (Simon Ben Onias) to benefit for Israel. Hamm 2003:220 suggests Simon's Temple ministry embodied for Israel 'the fullness of life with God'. In ANE cosmologies Temples were the nexus between heaven and earth (Eliade 1959; Balzer 1965:256-267; Green 1997:61; Brawley 1999:119; Taylor 1999:711; cf. *Antiquities* 3.123, 180-187; less certainly, 1 Enoch 26-27 and Jubilees 8.12). Brawley 1999:127 argues 'virtually any reader from antiquity would have recognized in the centrality of Jerusalem Luke's tacit assumption that it is the axis mundi'. See Bauckham 1995:417-427 on the centrality of Jerusalem for Acts.

²⁶ Luke 1.10; cf. 1.21. Luke is probably describing the latter of the twice daily Tamid services, which Hamm 2003 argues forms the cultic context for key scenes in Luke-Acts. See Luke 1.10, 17, 21, 68, 77; 2.32; 7.16; 20.1; 23.2, 13; 24.19.

God's chosen people.²⁷ The construction, *πλήθος ἦν τοῦ λαοῦ*, occurs frequently in the Old Testament to give a sense of all the people gathered before God.²⁸ The gathering of the praying people of God suits Jesus' vision for the Temple's primary purpose based on Isaiah 56.7.²⁹ This is a part of a broader Lukan tendency to associate 'prayer with the movement of God's redemptive drama... and with preparation for participation in that same drama'.³⁰ While it is impossible to know with certainty the content of the prayers of the people, Acts 26.6-7 indicates that daily Temple worship was oriented around petition for the fulfillment of God's promises to the ancestors of Israel. Surely this included the promises to Abraham.

The contrast between the introduction of Herod, who represents both a prototypical Israelite identity and the pervasive threat from Rome, and the introduction of Zechariah and Elizabeth (paired with the faithfully praying *λάος*) is a potent cocktail for the activation of Israelite ethnic identity. Though from a political perspective Israel was a low status ethnic group, Luke uses allusions to Israel's covenantal history and ethnic lineage to present Israelite identity as a privileged identity. This sense of Israel's privileged ethnic identity is an essential foundation for Luke's treatment of identity, and it is in this charged setting that God hears, remembers (Zechariah's name suggestively means 'the LORD has remembered') and acts.³¹ How will this privileged ethnic identity impinge upon the ethnic 'other', especially with regard to resource allocation?

The Spirit, John and Jesus: The Nexus of Identity and Activity

There is much to be said about the birth announcements to Zechariah and Mary but two initial observations, to be developed in the following chapter, will suffice at this point. First, the announced births of John and Jesus contain Luke's initial Spirit references.³² John is expected to be 'filled' (*πίμπλημι*) with the Holy

²⁷ Green 1997:71.

²⁸ LXX: Exodus 12.6; 2 Kings 7.13; 1 Chronicles 29.16; 2 Chronicles 31.18; 1 Esdras 9.6, 38, 41, 47; 1 Maccabees 9.63; 3 Maccabees 7.13; Ezekiel 32.32; 39.11.

²⁹ Luke 19.46: 'My house shall be a house of prayer.'

³⁰ Bartholomew & Holt 2005:357.

³¹ Fitzmyer 1981:322; Green 1997:73.

³² Turner 1996:165 claims 'Luke 1-2 does not attempt an analysis of human experience of the Spirit across the ages, nor does it provide the raw materials for one. It is concerned rather to celebrate the arrival of Zion's Davidic restorer... The pneumatological motifs all bend toward these ends'. Yet while Luke may not be speaking of universal human experience, his first descriptions of the Spirit are foundational to the *Lukan* view of the Spirit, full stop.

Spirit ‘even from his mother’s womb’ and Jesus will be born because the Holy Spirit will ‘come upon’ (ἐπέρχομαι) Mary.³³ For Luke’s Gospel, John and (especially) Jesus are the paradigmatically Spirit-endowed figures, though for Jesus this is only made explicit at 3.22. Their missions are linked by the fact that their Spirit-empowered initial public appearances feature critiques of a certain kind of (ethnic) in-group bias.³⁴ Second, it must be noted that Elizabeth’s exemplary role extends to the fact that she is the second person in the text who is filled (πίμπλημι) with the Holy Spirit. Significantly, the Spirit allows both Elizabeth and her fetal son John properly to *identify* the fetal Jesus.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, *the babe leaped in her womb*; and *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit* and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of *my Lord* should come to me?’³⁵

This is a precursor to a theme that Luke will develop in Acts: *the Spirit enables people properly to identify those who belong to the God of Israel.*³⁶

The Spirit and the Birth Hymns: Expanding the Field of Ethnic Vision

The early contrast between Herodian and/or Roman identity and privileged Israelite identity is amplified by the rhetoric of the birth announcements. Luke tells his audience that God is moving to ‘make ready for the Lord a people prepared’ (1.17) and to restore an everlasting Davidic dynasty to Israel (1.32-33). This rhetoric of status reversal is a powerful stimulus for increased in-group identification. As we have seen, in-group identification, especially in situations where identity is threatened, typically leads to increased in-group bias and out-group differentiation.

³³ Luke 1.15, 35. These passages are problematic for a narrow conception of ‘Spirit of prophecy’. Does a ‘prophetic’ Spirit function in a fetus? (Perhaps John’s in utero leap is a form of testimony)? Further, the Spirit’s effect on Mary involves creation. It should also be noted that John’s ministry – to ‘turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God’ (Luke 1.16) – is an indication that Luke assumes that ethnic identity is no guarantor of right relationship with God.

³⁴ The missions of John and Jesus will be discussed in chapter 4.

³⁵ Luke 1.41-43. See Rowe 2006:42-49 for evidence that ‘Lord’ in 1.43 should be taken in its full sense.

³⁶ Barnabas is one good example (Acts 11.24). Most commentators overlook this Lukan Spirit-motif and take an approach similar to Bock 1994:138 who suggests that the leap is a divine sign, but who does not connect John’s leap to the unique promise that John will be filled with the Spirit *from his mother’s womb* (cf. Nolland 1989:66). Johnson 1991:40 connects the leap to John’s status as a prophet, but makes no explicit connection to the Spirit. Similarly, Fitzmyer 1981:363. One exception is Green 1997:95 who notes that the Spirit ‘prompts his [John’s] recognition’ of Jesus, but Green does not take ‘identification’ as a fundamental role of the Spirit.

As a correlate, increased in-group bias typically results in the limitation of resource allocation to the in-group alone.³⁷ As we turn to the catena of praise hymns in Luke 1-2, I will trace the relationship between ‘in-group love’, the presence of the Spirit and the ‘other’, especially as it impinges upon issues of resource allocation.³⁸ The contrast that emerges in this section demonstrates that the presence of the Spirit creates openness to sharing the benefits of the in-group with the ethnic other. This ‘broadening of the ethnic horizon’ is initial evidence for the Spirit’s transformative effect and results in the formation of an allocentric identity.

Mary’s Song

Mary’s song emphasizes the ethnic in-group in a manner not uncommon among the matrix of hopes for Israel’s national salvation.³⁹ The hymn is frequently cited as evidence of Luke’s concern for the poor and is often a centerpiece for liberationist readings of the text.⁴⁰ But it is essential to understand the *collective* ramifications of Mary’s rhetoric of status reversal.⁴¹ Farris has demonstrated that the structure of the song sets the ‘destitute’ (ταπεινός) of 1.52 in *contrast* to the ‘proud’ (1.51), the ‘mighty’ (1.52a) and the ‘rich’ (1.53a), yet in *parallel* with ‘those who fear God’ (1.50), the ‘hungry’ (1.53b) and finally ‘Israel’ (1.54).⁴² *Mary’s own status reversal (1.46-49) is indicative of the expected status reversal for all Israel.*⁴³ Mary grounds this reversal in language of ethnic identity, recognizing God’s faithfulness to Israel’s ethnic fathers (πατέρες), to Abraham and his seed (σπέρμα).⁴⁴

³⁷ Wenzel 2001:318.

³⁸ Those taking a ‘Spirit of prophecy’ approach find easy fodder for the view in the birth hymns (Cho 2005:137-139; Turner 1996:143), yet advocates of this position often fail to examine the *content* and *purpose* of the revelation of the Spirit. Luke 1.35 is generally admitted as an exception to the narrow prophetic function (Cho 2005:139). For his part, Dunn 1970 only discusses Luke 1.35. When I speak about ‘resource allocation’ in this section I am referring to all benefits of in-group membership as ‘resources’ of the group.

³⁹ Farris 1985:125; Bock 1996:142, 159; Turner 1996:133-136; Wright 1996:ch. 10.

⁴⁰ E.g. Hamel 1979:55-84; Ruether 1980:17-21; Zorilla 1983; O’Day 1985:203-210; Gallo 1988:465-485; Mezzacasa 1988:133-150; McVerry 2003:39-48; Williamson 2006:167-176.

⁴¹ Bailey 1979:32: ‘It is clear that what happens to Mary is an illustration of the past and future history of the community.’ Language of collective or corporate deliverance never precludes individual concern. Luke expects that poor individuals really will be filled as a result of God’s action (and he demonstrates as much in the economic ethic of the Acts community). Collectivism does not preclude individuals, only individualism.

⁴² Farris 1985:122.

⁴³ This motif appears with regard to Israel in several Psalms, and even David even describes himself, as ‘poor’ and ‘needy’. See Psalm. 9.11-12, 17-20; 10.1-4, 17-18; 12.1-5; 18.25-29; 40.17; 70.5; 72.2; 86.1; 109.22 149.4; also Ps. Sol. 5.8-11). See Bock 1996:156-157 and Farris 1985:122.

⁴⁴ Luke 1.55.

The Magnificat's entitlement claims are restricted solely to the ethnic in-group. This is not surprising given what we have already discussed regarding the close relationship between entitlement and social identity. Yet what SIT describes as normal intergroup identity-forming processes, for Luke, have the potential to become deeply problematic. This essential point is not without nuance. Luke everywhere *affirms* powerful expressions of in-group love (in-group bias), and the Magnificat is one such expression. Indeed, in-group love is a core value for the early community in Acts. However, Luke 3 and 4 will demonstrate that in-group love is open to mutation, and that Luke understands in-group bias that only exists as an end in itself to be a *distortion* of privileged identity. The full force of Luke's position will come into focus as we progress, but for now it is essential to note two factors. First, Luke in no way explicitly critiques Mary's extravagant expression of in-group love for its absence of concern for non-Israelites. Mary speaks without direct Spirit-influence and it will become increasingly clear that Luke understands certain expressions of out-group love only to be possible through the influence of the Spirit.⁴⁵ Second, the Magnificat gives initial indications of an emerging motif: the *absence of Spirit-influence* in Mary's song appears to be correlated to the restriction of the benefits of group membership to the ethnic in-group alone.⁴⁶ This is clear when contrasted with Zechariah's hymn.

⁴⁵ Luke's awareness that Mary, by virtue of the absence of the Spirit, does not grasp the full implications of God's saving action is similar to the argument I make concerning the selection of Matthias, an event I take to be a description of an old paradigm of social homogeneity that is also normative apart from the Spirit. In neither case does Luke offer explicit critique. In both cases, subsequent material in the text indicates that the paradigms in question, whether Mary's in Luke 1 or Peter's in Acts 1, are open to distortion even if they are not distortions in and of themselves.

⁴⁶ Proponents of the narrow 'Spirit of prophecy' motif argue that Mary speaks the Magnificat under the Spirit's influence based upon Luke 1.35 (Menziez 1991:127; Shepherd 1994:121-122; Turner 1996:143; Cho 2005:139). Four factors make this unlikely. (1) The Spirit's work in Mary is explicitly the work of conception. (2) The Magnificat is separated from 1.35 both temporally (by a significant period of time) and textually (by the visit to Elizabeth). (3) A Latin variant reading of Luke 1.46 has 'Elizabeth' as the speaker of the Magnificat, indicating that the most natural connection between the Spirit and the speaker (by virtue of 1.41) implicated Elizabeth (a, b, l, Irenaeus, Origen). (4) Luke's later usage will demonstrate that his deployment of the Spirit is explicit and precise. Only the assumption that the Spirit is the 'Spirit of prophecy' presses interpreters to assume the Spirit is behind Mary's song.

Zechariah's Spirit-empowered Song

There are many similarities between Zechariah's song and Mary's song. Zechariah uses language of national salvation (1.68-75).⁴⁷ There are multiple references to the enemies of ethnic Israel (ἐχθρῶν; χειρὸς τῶν μισούντων ἡμᾶς; χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν).⁴⁸ Covenantal language abounds. In 1.69, Zechariah praises God for raising a horn of salvation in the οἶκῳ Δαυὶδ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ.⁴⁹ The Abrahamic covenant is couched in ethnic language.⁵⁰ God will 'perform the mercy promised to our fathers' (πατέρες) by fulfilling the covenant with 'Abraham our father' (πατέρ).⁵¹ Zechariah operates fully in the realm of ethnic identity.

But there is one great difference between the Benedictus and the Magnificat; Zechariah explicitly is filled (πίμπλημι) with the Spirit (Luke 1.67). His speech must be read in the light of this essential fact and, as I will develop, the presence of the Spirit corresponds to a turn toward the ethnic 'other'. This is a surprise given the treatment of the 'other' in 1.68-75 where fulfillment of the oath to Abraham (1.73) results in Israel's deliverance from her enemies in order that Israel might serve God without fear (1.74), in holiness and righteousness before God (1.75). Given the anti-enemy rhetoric, the possibility of 'fearless' (ἀφόβως) service of God can at this point only be conceived to result from God's overthrow or destruction of Israel's threatening 'other'. This should not be a surprise to Luke's hearers, or to contemporary readers: in-group love often produces out-group derogation.

But a different possibility emerges in 1.76-79 that results in the tantalizing possibility that Israelites and their enemies will walk together in the 'way of peace' (1.79). While many interpreters have suggested that the Benedictus describes national deliverance in 1.65-75 and switches to a more 'internal' salvation in 1.76-79, I contend that the 'way of peace' (1.79) available through the work of the Messiah also entails literal intergroup reconciliation with ethnic non-Israelites who Luke

⁴⁷ Farris 1985:136. Cf. Tannehill 1996:62: 'Zechariah's interpretation of the promise to Abraham is not a narrow nationalism but a hope for religious freedom so that Israel can shape its own identity as the worshiping people of God'. Yet Tannehill offers no comment on how the text makes this clear.

⁴⁸ Luke 1.71a & b; Luke 1.74.

⁴⁹ Brawley 1999:114 notes that the Davidic covenant is portrayed as 'a particular way God also fulfills the Abrahamic covenant'.

⁵⁰ John's naming indicates the pressure of the ethnic in-group toward the perpetuation of family identity: 'None of your kindred (συγγενεία) is called by this name' (Luke 1.61). Divine naming indicates that John is set apart to God. This takes precedence over in-group concerns (see Miller 1993:197, 199).

⁵¹ Luke 1.72a and 1.73, respectively.

includes among those ‘sitting in darkness and the shadow of death’ (1.79a).⁵² The logic of Luke 1.77-79 works as follows: knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins is given to Israelites (ἡμῶν in 1.78a) as a result of the ἐπισκέψεται of the ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους to ethnic Israelites (ἡμᾶς in 1.78).⁵³ Two events result from the visitation of the ἀνατολή. First, the ἀνατολή will shine on τοῖς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένοις (Luke 1.79a). Second, the ἀνατολή will guide the feet of Israelites (the clear referent of ἡμῶν in 1.79) in the way of peace.⁵⁴ Commentators largely assume Israelites are visited by the ἀνατολή, Israelites are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death and Israelites will be guided into the way of peace.⁵⁵ I argue, however, that at the very least Luke thinks *both* Israelites and non-Israelites (if not non-Israelites alone) sit in darkness and the shadow of death. The day that dawns upon Israel also gives light to the ἔθνη, the result of which is *peace*. As we will see, the implied presence of the ἔθνη in 1.79a is important for understanding the relationship between the Spirit, ethnic identity and the ‘other’.

Two factors support my claim: (1) the LXX provides material that describes non-Israelites as either sitting in darkness or bondage and (2) Luke’s own usage of light/darkness imagery *always* includes non-Israelites as part of its referent. Commentators suggest four main intertextual options as source material for Luke 1.79a: Psalm 106.10; Isaiah 9.1; 42.7; 49.9-10.⁵⁶ I will here only demonstrate that non-Israelites feature in several of these passages and in light of the non-consensus on Old Testament source texts I will argue that Luke’s own usage must be given greater weight.

⁵² Klein 2006:121 is characteristic of the national/spiritual salvation division: ‘V.68-75 thematisiert mehr die politische Befreiung von den Feinden durch einen König, V.76-79 versteht Befreiung eher spirituell als Heil, wobei mit ‚Sündenvergebung‘ (V.77) ein Stickwort aus der Täuferüberlieferung aufgenommen wird.’

⁵³ ἡμεῖς always refers to Israelites in the Benedictus, with the first of twelve occurrences of ἡμεῖς appearing in Luke 1.69. ἐπισκέψεται in 1.78 suggestively parallels God’s visitation (ἐπεσκέψατο) of his people in 1.68, and is a possible example of Luke’s high christology.

⁵⁴ Farris 1985:141 argues that the parallel appearances of ἡμεῖς bracketing Luke 1.79a indicate ‘Those who sit in darkness are doubtless the people of Israel’, yet he neglects the fact that references God’s deliverance of non-Israelites and Israelites are intermingled in just such a way in Luke 2.10-14, 30-32.

⁵⁵ See Bock 1994:193-194; Farris 1985:141; Talbert 1982:28, implicitly, Nolland 1989:90-92; Fitzmyer 1981:388; Johnson 1991:47. Green 1997:119 suggests that ‘many’ (though he gives no references) have seen the Abrahamic imagery as well as possible Isaiah 42.7 allusions to imply God’s ‘universal embrace’, but he does not specifically mention non-Israelites, only those in the ‘arena of existence ruled by cosmic forces in opposition to God’.

⁵⁶ See Bock 1996:193; Nolland 1989:90; Danker 1988:50-51; Lieu 1997:13. Lieu includes Isaiah 60.1-3 as possible background.

Neither Psalm 106.10 LXX nor Isaiah 9.2 LXX provide conceptual links between non-Israelites and those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1.79a). Psalm 106.10 LXX refers to God's deliverance of Israelites who have 'rebelled against the words of God' (106.11) and as a result need deliverance from 'darkness', 'gloom' and 'bonds' (106.14). Likewise, Isaiah 9.2 LXX refers to God's deliverance of Israelites who have turned to mediums rather than Torah for guidance: ὁ λαὸς ὁ πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει ἴδετε φῶς οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου φῶς λάμπει ἐφ' ὑμᾶς. This allusion is favored by several interpreters, likely because of its proximity to the 'messianic' prophecy in Isaiah 9.6-7.⁵⁷

Isaiah 49.6-10 LXX clearly includes non-Israelites. The servant of the Lord has a mission that involves regathering of the tribes of Jacob *and* shining light on the ἔθνη in order to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49.6).⁵⁸ The servant is given as a covenant to the ἔθνη, 'saying to the ones that are in chains "Come out!" and to the ones that are in darkness "Reveal yourselves" (Isaiah 49.8-9). While the language in Isaiah 49.6-10 does not mention 'the shadow of death' (cf Luke 1.79), the light/darkness imagery depicts non-Israelites in need of light and the passage features the two step human deliverance (to Jacob and the ἔθνη) described at various key points in Luke-Acts (e.g. Luke 2.32, Acts 3.12-26).

In Isaiah 42 the servant of the Lord brings justice to the ἔθνη (Isaiah 42.1) who hope in the servant's name (Isaiah 42.4). The Lord tells the servant that he has been given as 'a covenant to the people (γένους), a light to the ἔθνη, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness' (Isaiah 42.6-7). γένους (42.6) is differentiated from the λαῶν of v. 5 (which refers to universal humanity) and must be read as Israel.⁵⁹ The LXX thus reinterprets the servant's calling 'into a two-fold task, in relation to the people and the nations'.⁶⁰ Thus the 'context suggests that the captives are the nations, and the worldwide concern of the talk of creation in v. 5 supports this'.⁶¹

⁵⁷ E.g. Schneider 1977:62: 'Vielleicht steht Jes 9.2, 6f im Hintergrund (Messias also Licht und Friedensbringer)'.
⁵⁸ Luke's 'end of the earth' imagery (Acts 1.8; cf. Acts 13.47) draws on Isaiah 49.6, making this one of the more likely sources of the allusion in Luke 1.79a.

⁵⁹ Goldingay & Payne 2005:227. Isaiah 42.6 LXX has the variant reading γένους μου (⌘) which clearly marks the group as ethnic Israel.
⁶⁰ Goldingay & Payne 2005: 227.
⁶¹ Goldingay & Payne 2005: 230.

Adding to the plausibility that Luke has Isaiah 42 in view is the fact that in Isaiah 42.9 the work of God is ‘dawning’ or ‘rising up’ (ἀνατέλλω). The ‘rising up’ of ‘new things’ results in the extension of covenantal benefits beyond ethnic Israel (Isaiah 42.10). Similarly, in Luke 1.78, the ἀνατολή (the substantized cognate of ἀνατέλλω) from on high will dawn upon both the Israelites (ἡμῶν in Luke 1.78) and those (ἔθνη) sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, resulting in the extension of benefits beyond ethnic Israel.⁶²

It can at this point be safely assumed that the LXX provided Luke a repertoire of light/darkness imagery that could describe non-Israelites as those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Against this background of possibilities, Luke’s own usage of light/darkness imagery makes it clear that he thinks non-Israelites sit in darkness.

‘I have set you to be a *light for the non-Israelites* [ἔθνη], that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.’⁶³

...delivering you from *the people* [λαός] and from *the non-Israelites* [ἔθνη] - to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.⁶⁴

...the Christ must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to *the people* [λαός] and to *the non-Israelites* [ἔθνη].⁶⁵

The first passage envisions solely non-Israelites sitting in darkness, while the other two passages depict deliverance of both Israelites and non-Israelites who sit in darkness. None of Luke’s twenty-three deployments of variations of the noun φῶς, the adjective φωτεινός or the verb φωτίζω refer exclusively to Israelites as a *group*.⁶⁶

⁶² See Liddell & Scott 1996:123. Nolland 1989:90 sees a similar density of Isaianic references in Luke 1.78-79, but he locates them in Isaiah 9.1; 58.8, 10; 60.1-3. Collectively, these passages do contain several of the units contained in Luke 1.78-79. However, Isaiah 42.1-9 contains each of these elements in one unit. Luke also alludes to Isaiah 42.1 (with Psalm 2.7) in Luke 3.22 (Nolland 1989:163). Isaiah 42.1 and Isaiah 61.1 (cf. Luke 4.18) both focus on a Spirit-anointed servant of God.

⁶³ Acts 13.47, quoting Isaiah 49.6, emphasis mine.

⁶⁴ Acts 26.16-18, emphasis mine.

⁶⁵ Acts 26.22-23, emphasis mine.

⁶⁶ Luke 2.32; 8.16; 11.33, 34, 35, 36 (x3); 12.3; 16.8; 22.56; Acts 9.3; 12.7; 13.47; 16.29; 22.6, 9, 11; 26.13, 18, 23. The exception is Saul’s conversion, but there the ‘light’ is given only to an individual and is yet very much for the sake of non-Israelites.

Likewise, ἐπιφαίνω never refers to Israelites to the exclusion of non-Israelites.⁶⁷ Whenever the light shines in Luke-Acts, it shines also on the ἔθνη.

The mounting case for the inclusion of the ἔθνη in Luke 1.79a is all but clinched by the words of Simeon in Luke 2.32. According to Simeon the salvation of God is

φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ.

Here is a two step deliverance of Israel and non-Israelites couched (for non-Israelites) in terms of light and darkness. The proximity of this passage to Luke 1.79a makes it highly likely that Luke envisions non-Israelites at the end of Zechariah's Spirit-empowered hymn.

This argument reveals a possible structural feature that supports my view that Zechariah's song implies light to non-Israelites. The interplay between the Spirit, Israel and the ethnic 'other' in Luke 1-2 forms a chiasmic structure that proceeds as follows:

- A: Mary's song (1.46-55)
- B: Zechariah's [*Spirit-empowered*] song (1.68-79)
- C: Angelic announcement (2.14)
- B₁: Simeon's [*Spirit-empowered*] speech (2.29-32, 34-35)
- A₁: Anna's hope (2.38)

Fig. 3.1

In A/A₁, Mary and Anna – who are not inspired by the Spirit – are associated with a message of deliverance restricted to ethnic Israel. In B/B₁, Zechariah and Simeon – who explicitly are inspired by the Spirit – proclaim a message of deliverance that extends to non-Israelites. At the centre of the chiasmus (Luke 2.14) is a message of *peace* (cf. Luke 1.79) to ethnically undifferentiated ἄνθρωποι.⁶⁸ This inclusive angelic vision of peace, in parallel with the 'way of peace' of Luke 1.79, suggests that the Benedictus at least proleptically anticipates the blessing of non-Israelites.

Finally, the inclusion of non-Israelites in 1.79a makes clear sense in parallel with 1.79b. Given the emphasis on national salvation and deliverance from enemies in both the Magnificat and the Benedictus, we cannot understand 'the way of peace'

⁶⁷ Luke 1.79; Acts 2.20; 27.20.

⁶⁸ Lieu 1997:13 claims the Benedictus anticipates the angelic announcement on the basis of 'peace'.

(1.79a) to be an intrapersonal peace.⁶⁹ Of Luke's 21 references to peace, the word is always used either as a greeting/salutation (e.g. 'Go in peace') or to describe the interpersonal or intergroup peace that results from reconciliation.⁷⁰ Further, the closest LXX reference to the 'way of peace' (ὁδὸς εἰρήνης), Psalm 13.3, is clearly about the absence of literal conflict.⁷¹ The obstacles to peace in Zechariah's song are the non-Israelites, the enemies of ethnic Israel (Luke 1.71, 74) – those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.⁷² For peace to exist there must either be reconciliation with enemies or the destruction or removal of enemies.⁷³ Luke does not here indicate whether destruction or reconciliation will be the means to 'peace', but he will go on to demonstrate that the enemies of God are defeated through intergroup reconciliation and the formation of common identity, not through destruction.⁷⁴ Peace, as Luke understands it, requires a partner, and the ἔθνη will be that partner.

Zechariah's hymn is the first of Luke's many connections between the presence of the Spirit and the 'broadening of the ethnic horizon'. This stands in relief against Mary's song, which emphasizes deliverance only for the ethnic in-group. Zechariah, inspired by the Spirit, concedes that non-Israelites (the ethnic 'other') have access to certain benefits of God.⁷⁵ From an SIT perspective, Zechariah's extension of the benefits of in-group membership to non-Israelites is a subversion of typical identity-based entitlement claims. Zechariah is able to express in-group love and out-group love simultaneously and hence to extend in-group

⁶⁹ Contra Bock 1996:190; Schweizer 1984:44 thinks 'peace' is for those who have 'lost the way'. Johnson 1991:48 calls the vision of deliverance here 'religious'. Many here press for a holistic vision of 'shalom' (so Green 1997:119), which is undoubtedly correct (Fitzmyer 1981:224-225 sees both Hebrew 'shalom' and the *pax Augusta* in the frame of reference). But Luke has a special emphasis on intergroup reconciliation in many of his 'peace' passages (see Acts 9.31; 10.36).

⁷⁰ Greeting/Salutation: Luke 2.14, 29 (see LaGrand 1998 on possible reconciliation in 2.29); 7.50; 8.48; 10.5; 10.6 (x2 – this is a difficult case); 24.36; Acts 15.33; 16.36. Peace as reconciliation/absence of conflict: Luke 1.79; 11.21; 12.51; 14.32; 19.38(?), 42; Acts 7.26; 9.31; 10.36; 12.20; 24.2.

⁷¹ Cf. Isaiah 59.7-8 and possibly Isaiah 41.3.

⁷² My view counters Ravens 2005:45 suggestion that Simeon's words are the first hint that non-Israelites are implicated in God's deliverance.

⁷³ Borgman 2006 suggests that 'peace' is a unifying element for the birth narratives (53) and Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (78ff). He sees peace as 'a shalom-justice that is all-inclusive, of outsiders, diseased, oppressed, prisoners, and enemies' (53).

⁷⁴ See especially Saul's conversion (Acts 9.1-31).

⁷⁵ Suggestions that Luke is here being patriarchal are forestalled by the fact that (1) Mary outperforms Zechariah when it comes to the exercise of faith in response to angelic annunciation and (2) Luke's high esteem for women is well known. In Luke's view it is not necessary to say that Zechariah inherently is more open to the 'other', but that the Spirit in this instance enables Zechariah to become something he naturally is not.

benefits beyond the boundaries of his in-group. It will become increasingly evident that for Luke only the Holy Spirit can create this kind of openness to the 'other'. Conversely, Luke will show that expressions of privileged ethnic identity that take their own ethnic privilege to be an end in itself are dangerously open to distortion and are breeding grounds for out-group derogation.

Angelic Annunciation

It needs only to be mentioned briefly that the angelic annunciation in Luke 2, the centre of the chiasmus discussed above, extends the peace of God to generically conceptualized humankind (ἄθρωπος).⁷⁶

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men (ἄθρωποι)
with whom he is pleased!⁷⁷

Peace for humankind is the outworking of a message of good news specific to the λαός of Israel (Luke 2.10). Note again the two step deliverance of Israel and the nations. Luke's typical usage of ἄνθρωπος (Luke 2.14) refers to generic 'humanity' and is differentiated from his use of λαός, which prior to Acts 15 only ever refers to Israelites.⁷⁸ Luke 20.6 demonstrates this nuance clearly.

But if we say, “From humans [ἄνθρωποι – referring to generic humanity],” all the people [ὁ λαός – referring to Israelites gathered at the Jerusalem Temple] will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet”.

In the angelic announcement at the center of the birth narratives Luke uses authoritative heavenly messengers to clarify that the benefits of God – manifest in ‘peace’ which must be read in tandem with the ‘way of peace’ in Luke 1.79 – will transcend ethnic boundaries.

⁷⁶ Menzies 1991; Turner 1996; Wenk 2004; Cho 2005 give no treatment of 2.10-14.

⁷⁷ Luke 2.14.

⁷⁸ In Luke, ἄνθρωπος is contrasted with the angelic (Luke 12.9), describes sinful humankind (Luke 24.7) and every ‘nation of humans’ (ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων, Acts 17.26). The only time λαός in the plural refers to Israel is Acts 4.27. This is likely because of Luke’s effort to retain verbal parallelism with the plural usage from Psalm 2.1 cited in Acts 4.25 (Metzger 1975:323). Brown 1978:120 notes Luke's careful use of singular forms of λαός to refer to Israel (Cf. DuPont 1985:321-335). In chapter 8 I will discuss the paradigm shift after Acts 15. My position opposes Fitzmyer 1979:422, who assumes 2.10-14 relates only to Israel, though he gives no justification.

Simeon's Spirit-empowered Speech

Luke's introduction of Simeon is remarkable. In 2.26-27 we learn that the 'Holy Spirit was upon' Simeon, the Spirit revealed special knowledge to Simeon concerning God's plan to let him see the Messiah and the Spirit inspired Simeon to come into the Temple.⁷⁹ If there is any ambiguity regarding what Simeon will say or do, Luke completely erases it by drawing attention to the Spirit *three times*.⁸⁰ Simeon's song makes it explicit that the salvation of God is prepared in the presence of all the λαοὶ, which, according to Luke's distinctive plural usage, include ethnically undifferentiated humanity.⁸¹ Simeon describes God's two step deliverance on as a 'light for revelation' to the ἔθνη and 'glory to your people (λαός) Israel' (Luke 2.32).⁸² Once again we see that for Luke the presence of the Spirit appears to have a transformative affect that broadens the ethnic horizon, turns one outward toward the 'other' and allows for the extension of in-group benefits/resources to the out-group. Simeon's speech in particular is a fine example of the simultaneous expression of Spirit-empowered in-group love and Spirit-empowered out-group love. Where the Spirit is present, Israelite identity does not exclude non-Israelites from the work of God.

Simeon's claim (Luke 2.34-45) that Jesus will cause distinction in Israel recalls Gabriel's annunciation of John's task: there are sons of Israel whose hearts need to be turned to the Lord (Luke 1.16).

Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your [Mary] own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

Simeon knows that ethnic identity does not, *de facto*, give access to God. Second, Mary is in the same boat with Israel (just as she was in the Magnificat) and a

⁷⁹ See LaGrand 1998 for an interesting, yet difficult to verify, reading of Simeon as a violent zealot turned peaceful after his encounter with Jesus (cf. Fitzmyer 1981:422).

⁸⁰ Farris 1985:144 wrongly claims, 'The hymn could be omitted without disruption of the narrative'. Fitzmyer 1981:422 notes the uniqueness of Simeon's relationship with the Spirit. Radl 1999:299 notes Simeon's proleptic importance, but makes no connection to the Spirit: 'Die Sichtweise dieses Gebets unterscheidet sich nicht nur von der Konzentration auf Israel im rest der Erzählung, sie deckt sich auch mit der weltweiten Perspektive im Korpus des Evangeliums und in der Apostelgeschichte.'

⁸¹ Brown 1978:120. Acts 4.27 is the exception.

⁸² Menzies 1991 and Cho 2005 make no reference to Simeon's speech beyond their connection with the 'Spirit of prophecy'. Turner 1996:301 and Wenk 2004:316 see Simeon as an important paradigm for the mission that stretches to the nations, but neither makes the connection between the trans-ethnic scope and the presence of the Spirit.

discerning process must go on in her own response to Jesus.⁸³ The fact that Luke uses Mary later in the text to emphasize that kinship ties are less important than hearing and doing the word of God serves further to suggest that Luke understands Mary as a figure in need of the same Spirit-empowered, Jesus-centered transformation as most other Israelites.⁸⁴ Luke's composite portrait of Mary reveals that even such an honored a person as Jesus' mother, without the identity-forming work of the Spirit, cannot rightly conceive of either the scope of God's work or of the proper function of the privileged identity of ethnic Israelites.

Anna and the Hope of a Nation

The introduction of Anna, whom we provocatively learn is of the 'lost' northern tribe of Asher, closes off the catena of 'hymns' that I have identified as a chiasmus formed also by Mary, Zechariah, angels and Simeon. Anna does not herself speak in the passage, but the people gathered to hear her are 'looking for the redemption of Jerusalem' (Luke 2.38). Here again the text suggests a hope restricted to ethnic Israel and here again there is *no mention of the Spirit*. The hope of Anna's audience is another expression of unmitigated in-group bias/love, a point emphasized if Bauckham is correct that Luke's inclusion of Anna (the Asherite) implies the regathering and reconstitution of the twelve tribes of Israel.⁸⁵ Simeon, too, expresses in-group love (he hopes for 'the consolation of Israel': Luke 2.25) but the Spirit's transformative work upon Simeon has broadened his ethnic horizon with regard to the extension of the benefits of the people of God.⁸⁶ Once again,

⁸³ Perhaps this discernment is at issue when Mary 'kept all these things in her heart' (Luke 2.51). Mary's incomplete knowledge of Jesus' identity is evident in Luke 2.49. Fitzmyer 1979:429, argues the 'sword' referred to is the Old Testament 'sword of discrimination', which has connotations of judgment and decision. Reicke 1978:105, thinks the sword is Mary's 'own division over Jesus, evidenced in her sometimes resistance of him', though Luke presents uncertainty more than 'resistance', which is a feature of Mark 3.21.

⁸⁴ Luke 8.21; 11.27-28. Mary's still incomplete knowledge of the significance of Jesus' identity is evident in Luke 2.49-51. It cannot be questioned that Mary is highly honored by Luke, but it should at least be noted that she is not the most highly exalted human in the eyes of Luke's Jesus according to Luke 7.28.

⁸⁵ Bauckham 2001:458.

⁸⁶ Bauckham 2001:458 suggests Simeon and Anna are complements of two different poles of Israelite salvation. Luke certainly sees them as options available to his contemporaries, but not as complementary. For Luke, deliverance of Israel is intimately connected to God's action for the nations. Zechariah sings of deliverance of the people and light to non-Israelites, the angels sing of

where the Spirit is present, there is a discernable turn to the ‘other’, where the Spirit is absent expressions of in-group love privilege only the ‘us’.⁸⁷

Conclusion

Luke’s strategy in the birth narratives is extremely subtle, and in some ways is more evident retrospectively after reading his entire narrative.⁸⁸ He begins by activating Israelite identity through the figures of Zechariah and Elizabeth who are set in contrast with Herod and references to Roman rule. The focus on Israelite in-group identity continues through the birth hymns, all of which are powerful expressions of in-group love that position Israelite ethnic identity as a privileged identity on the basis of Israel’s covenantal history. Delicately, however, Luke here begins to elevate the role of the Spirit in the formation of an allocentric identity that can love both self or group and ‘other’. For the explicitly Spirit-inspired figures Zechariah and Simeon (and for the angels, who have a decidedly heavenly perspective), strong expressions of Israelite in-group love do not preclude the extension of the benefits of Israelite in-group membership to non-Israelites. Two ramifications should be noted. First, the persistence with which Luke connects the Spirit and the sort of ‘turn to the other’ that carries transformed assumptions about entitlement is characteristic of Luke-Acts and will crescendo toward a climax in Acts 15. For Luke, positive or negative views of the ‘other’ are an inherently Spirit-effected matter and that it is the Spirit alone that can foster an allocentric identity within an individual. Second, Luke in no way denigrates the in-group love expressed by Mary or Anna. Israelite in-group bias always has positive connotations for Luke, *so long as it is accompanied by the extension of group benefits beyond the ethnic boundary*. Luke’s text repeatedly reveals data suggesting that the subversion of the normally agonistic and comparative processes of social identity can only happen through the power of the Spirit. This will be clarified in succeeding chapters as

great joy to the people (λαός) and peace to all humans (ἄνθρωπος), Simeon connects Israel’s glory and light to the nations (ἔθνη).

⁸⁷ We would expect that Anna, as a prophet, had prior experience with the Spirit. Yet Luke does not tell us the words of Anna, he reflects the hope of the people.

⁸⁸ I am not the first to notice Luke’s subtlety in narrative construction. Darr 1992:52-53 notes the importance of overt reference to the Spirit in Luke: ‘Every speech that purports to represent the divinity (especially prophetic or predictive words) must bear the Spirit’s stamp of approval, or else it remains subject to suspicion.’

Luke uses his paradigmatically Spirit-empowered figures John the Baptizer and (especially) Jesus to chasten mutated expressions of ethnic identity.

4

CRITIQUING DEFECTIVE IDENTITIES SPIRIT-EMPOWERED FIGURES AND IN-GROUP BIAS IN LUKE 3-4

In Luke 3-4, Luke gives narrative expression to his initial indication that the presence of the Spirit is essential to the formation of an allocentric identity capable of a broad ethnic horizon that extends in-group benefits to the 'other'. For Luke, the ability to love both the in-group and the out-group is a Spirit-created possibility. This is emphasized in Luke 3-4 by the neglected fact that the initial public appearances of John and Jesus, Luke's paradigmatically Spirit-empowered figures, both feature critiques of defective expressions of privileged social identities. I will demonstrate three points in this chapter: (1) John's preaching contrasts a defective expression of Israelite ethnic identity with an identity marked by a concern for the 'other'; (2) Jesus' baptism, genealogy and temptation combine to demonstrate that apart from the Spirit Jesus' true identity can be neither accurately discerned nor adequately expressed; and (3) Jesus' encounter in Nazareth stands both as a critique of faulty assumptions about in-group identity and entitlement as well as an initial paradigm for the expression of Spirit-formed allocentric identity.

The Spirit and the Baptizer: Critiquing a Distortion of Ethnic Social Identity

Against the backdrop of identity threat inherent in the Roman oppression highlighted in Luke 3.1-2, Luke's quote of Isaiah 40.3-5 (Luke 3.4-6) again activates Israel's privileged status as God's elect.¹ Yet John's preaching indicates that any

¹ Isaiah 40 was often associated with end-time salvation. See 1QS 9.19-20; 8.14-15; Baruch. 5.7, T. Moses 10.3-4, Pesikta Rabbati 29/30A, 29/30B, 30, 33; and Leviticus Rabbah. 1.14 on 1.1. See Bock

attempt to understand privileged Israelite identity as an end in itself, void of any benefit for the ‘other’, constitutes a mutation of that identity. It is difficult to overstate the significance of the fact that John – thus far the Spirit-empowered figure par excellence (cf. Luke 1.15) – begins his public ministry with a *critique of a particular expression of ethnic social identity*. By overlooking the fundamental position of John’s critique in Luke 3.8, scholars have failed to notice that John’s answers to the triple ‘What shall we do?’ (Luke 3.10, 12, 14) are inseparably connected to, and function as correctives against, the assumptions associated with the anticipated claims to privileged ethnic identity.² The logic of the passage runs in this way:

- (1) John urges his hearers to live lives that show evidence of proper relationship to God via repentance.

Bear fruits that befit repentance (3.8a).

- (2) John warns that ethnic descent does not guarantee proper relationship to God.³

Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham (3.8b).

- (3) John’s answers to the ‘What should we do?’ questions (3.10, 12, 14) exemplify proper repentance *and* properly expressed identity as a ‘son of Abraham’. If inappropriate claims to Abrahamic descent and appropriate repentance are antitheses, it logically follows that proper repentance and properly expressed Israelite ethnic identity are two sides of the same coin. John’s answers, unique to Luke’s Gospel, tell us both what repentance looks like and what Israelite identity looks like in both general and specific cases.⁴

1994:291; Snodgrass 1980. Marshall 1978:137 suggests in Luke’s view $\pi\alpha\sigma\alpha\ \sigma\alpha\rho\chi$ (Isaiah 40.6; Luke 3.6) implies non-Israelites (cf. Acts 28.28).

² Schweizer 1984:74-76 says Abrahamic descent is ‘not enough’ but he does not connect this with John’s commands. John’s instructions are commonly interpreted as ‘ethical commands’ detached from the ethnic identity activated in 3.8. Böhlemann 1997:178-197 thinks the instructions are for solidarity with the ‘Randgruppen’, but misses the fact that Luke is not only calling for solidarity with, but also a certain social posture *from* all classes of Israelites. Sahlin 1948:57 strangely suggests that John’s commands ‚derartig bleibt die Grund anschauung der rabbinischen Ethik’.

³ Fitzmyer 1981:469 suggests a first-century tradition that assumed Abrahamic descent provided protection from divine wrath. See Psalms of Solomon 18.4; Str-B 116-121; Luke 16.24; John 8.33-39; Acts 7.2; Romans 4.1.

⁴ Fitzmyer 1981:470 argues tax collectors and soldiers were Israelites.

To all people: 'He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.' (Luke 3.11)

To tax collectors: 'Collect no more than is appointed you.' (Luke 3.13)

To soldiers: 'Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.' (Luke 3.14)

John's examples of lives befitting repentance, and hence of proper Israelite identity, are bound by two threads: the *refusal to abuse privileged identity* to the detriment of others (Luke 3.12-14) and the *willingness to use privilege* to bless others (Luke 3.10-11). These threads imply a broadly conceived turn beyond the self to the 'other' and reflect precisely the Spirit-empowered ministry anticipated for John by Gabriel in Luke 1.16-17:

He [John] will *turn* many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God... *turn* the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

In other words, preparation for the coming of the Lord involves what can be conceptualized as a two-step turning away from the self and toward (1) God and (2) the 'other'. This anticipates the Great Commandment in Luke 10.27, a fact made more significant by Luke's illustration in that passage that neighbor-love is best exemplified when it crosses social boundaries.⁵ For John, Israelite identity and concern for the 'other' appear to be inseparable.⁶ Therefore, expressions of ethnic identity that exhaust themselves in in-group bias but have no concern for the 'other' are improper. SIT is helpful here to understand that, because groups are highly constitutive of individual social identity, the turn beyond the self and the turn beyond the group are two closely related phenomena in the formation of an allocentric identity. Just as Zechariah and Simeon, filled by the Spirit, envisioned the benefits of God extending beyond the in-group, so here the Spirit-filled John urges a turn beyond the self toward God and other.

Several conclusions rest upon this reading of John's preaching. First, though ethnic identity is not equated with proper relationship to God, Israelite identity has

⁵ Bovon 2002:37 links Luke 1.16-17 and 10.25-28, but not Luke's explanatory parable in 10.29-37. Esler 2000:325-357 discusses the social boundary issues in the 'Good Samaritan'.

⁶ Robertson 1982:406 connects 'radical vocational fidelity and integrity' but does not appreciate the significance of the ethnic identity critiqued in Luke 3.8.

not lost its significance for Luke.⁷ To the contrary, Israel's identity – privileged as God's elect *ἔθνος* – remains fundamental.⁸ Second, the critique that John levels indicates that Luke is convinced that the proper expression of Israel's privileged identity is demonstrated by a refusal to take privileged identity as an end in itself. Israel's privilege is to be leveraged for the 'other'. The anticipation of this theme in John's preaching will become increasingly clear in Luke-Acts with regard to the expression of all manifestations of identity. Third, the scholarly tendency to refer to John's teaching as 'timeless ethical instruction' or 'ein anständiges Leben' marked by 'Solidarität mit dem Volk' is far too weak.⁹ John is here pressing his hearers toward not simply a sense of moral decency, but toward a fundamentally different posture toward the 'other' in fulfillment of Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1.16-17. John, *who must be interpreted as a bearer of the Spirit*, presses his hearers toward what I have categorized as an allocentric identity.

The Spirit and Jesus: Identifying the Son of God

The baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of Luke's definitive answer to John's critique of defective expressions of Israelite ethnic identity.¹⁰ There is no doubt that the baptism of Jesus is a paradigmatic moment in Luke's Gospel. The search for the appropriate parallel between Jesus' baptismal experience and Spirit-reception and the experience of the early church has proved to be a decisive dividing point in understanding Luke's conception of the Spirit.¹¹ In this section I will argue that the Spirit serves a crucial identity-marking function in relation to Jesus that sets off a concentrated reflection on Jesus' *identity* as 'Son of God'. This is

⁷ For Luke 3.8 as a repudiation of the value of Abrahamic descent, see Kazmierski 1987:30-31: 'For the prophet, Israel's historic prerogative [as children of Abraham] now counts for nothing'. Marshall 1978:140 less stringently, 'Abrahamic descent does not count for anything; all are required to repent'. Dennison 1982:16 suggests the family of Abraham at this point is conceived 'universally', but this races ahead of Luke's text.

⁸ See Acts 3.25, but note (with Bock 1994:301) that Luke 3.8 opens the door for 'surprising' children of Abraham.

⁹ Bovon 2002:123; Klein 2006:166.

¹⁰ There is not space to discuss John's proclamation that Jesus will baptize 'with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Luke 3.16). Interpretive options are set forth in Nolland 1989:142. Dunn 1970:43 suggests the disappearance of 'and with fire' in Acts 1.5; 11.16 is because Jesus exhausted the fiery tribulation in his own 'baptism with fire' (cf. Luke 12.49-50). I suggest that Luke builds toward a definitive interpretation of Spirit-baptism in Acts 11.16 when Peter connects Spirit-baptism with the mark of a common in-group identity that crosses ethnic boundaries.

¹¹ I am referring to the quest either to make Jesus' experience the paradigmatic experience of divine sonship [Büchsel 1929; Dunn 1970] or the paradigmatic experience of missionary (messianic) empowerment [Menzius 1991; Cho 2005].

highlighted by the overtly public nature of the Spirit manifestation at Jesus' baptism.

Jesus' baptism is the first in a series of four identifications of Jesus as 'Son of God' in short span.¹²

Lukas legt durch seine Komposition von Taufe (Lk 3.21-22), Genealogie (3.23-38) und Versuchung Jesu (4.1-13) einen besonderen Akzent auf die verbindende Sohnesthematik.¹³

Because Luke's readers are already aware of Jesus' 'Son of God' identity (1.35; 2.49), it is essential to pay close attention to the context of the baptismal affirmation of Jesus' sonship in order to understand how it fits into Luke's program.¹⁴

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased'.¹⁵

Three observations are relevant. First, Luke's Jesus is already aware of his divine sonship (Luke 2.49), so the proclamation is not for Jesus' benefit. Second, Jesus' identity as 'Son of God', among other things, positions Jesus as a (the?) prototypical Israelite. The title is a distinct allusion to Psalm 2.7 LXX, in which context the king of Israel (himself the paradigmatic son of Abraham) is designated God's son.¹⁶ The title itself, when understood to be a title for the king of Israel, or indeed for Israel itself (cf. Exodus 4.22; Deuteronomy 14.1; Hosea 11.1), stands in counterpoint to the entitlement claim John anticipates in Luke 3.8. Third, the unique Lukan material in the passage demonstrates that Luke envisions this to be Jesus' *public identification* by the heavenly voice and the Spirit.

¹² Luke 3.22, 38; 4.3, 9.

¹³ Hasitschka 2002:75.

¹⁴ The reference to Jesus as 'Son of God' in Luke 1.35 and 2.49 defeats adoptionist readings of Luke 3.22 (Miller 1986:54).

¹⁵ Luke 3.21-22.

¹⁶ The designation of Jesus as the well-pleasing son of God is a likely allusion to Psalm 2.7 and Isaiah 42.1 (see Nolland 1989:163). Bock 1994:341-343 lists other options (Psalm 2.7 alone; Isaiah 42.1 alone, Exodus 4.22-23; for the source of 'beloved' see possibly Genesis 22.12; Isaiah 41.8 and/or 44.2). It is significant that Isaiah 42.1 depicts a Spirit-anointed servant extending justice (42.1) and light (42.6) to the ἔθνη.

Luke's intention that his hearers assume the public nature of Jesus' identification by the Spirit is evident in two ways.¹⁷ First, Luke alone sets Jesus' baptism in the context of 'all the people' (Luke 3.21: ἅπαντα τὸν λαόν). The overtly public scene in Luke's view is not emphasized in the other three Gospels.¹⁸ Second, Mark, Matthew and John restrict the visible experience of the Spirit manifestation only to Jesus or to the Baptizer (Mark 1.10: 'he saw [εἶδεν]... the Spirit descending'; Matthew 3.16: 'he saw [εἶδεν]... the Spirit of God descending'; John 1.32, the Baptizer speaking: 'I saw [τεθέαμαι]... the Spirit descend). The use of the third person pronoun in Matthew 3.17 ('This is my beloved son') may indicate that others heard the voice, though they did not see the Spirit. Luke, who alone sets Jesus in the midst of 'all the people', does not restrict the experience to Jesus, but narrates a *publicly visible* manifestation of the Spirit and the heavenly voice:

The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven.¹⁹

This is the first of many instances for Luke in which the Spirit, especially when manifest publicly with either visible or audible effect, is integral to *properly discerning a person's identity, especially as it regards that person's relationship to God*.²⁰ It is no coincidence that these public identifications regularly occur when social identity boundaries are in question.

Jesus' Genealogy: Eliminating Ethnic Out-groups

The focus on Jesus' identity is immediately drawn in another way in Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3.23-28, which, like all genealogies, functions socially to determine who has access to an in-group.²¹

¹⁷ Bock 1994:340-341 contends, 'Jesus had a private experience of the Spirit, but it was not an entirely private or internal vision, for John the Baptist also could testify to that event'. See also Nolland 1989:161; Keck 1971. But cf. Lieu 1997:26; Dennison 1982:19. Fitzmyer 1981:480 suggests the second person singular 'you' implies only Jesus heard the voice but that the visible manifestations were seen by all. Johnson 1991:69 emphasizes the 'physical reality' of the event.

¹⁸ Parallels: Mark 1.9-11; Matthew 3.13-17; John 1.29-34.

¹⁹ Luke 3.22.

²⁰ Cf. Acts 2.1-4; 8.17 (ostensibly); 10.44-46; 19.6. Klein 2006:171 notes the public significance, but does not connect Jesus' 'identification' with the Spirit: 'Die Himmelsstimme spricht die öffentliche Proklamation Jesu zum Gottessohn aus.'

²¹ Hanson and Oakman 1998:28-29. In Greco-Roman literature, see Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Plato* 3.1-2; Plutarch *Parallel Lives* 2.1.

One's place in the genealogy is a sign of cultural self-definition more than it is a sign of biological descent.²²

Luke's genealogy traces Jesus' 'Son of God' lineage through *Adam* in order to situate Jesus not simply within the Israelite ἔθνος, but within universal humankind. This point is well known.²³

Als 'sogenannter' Sohn des Joseph und als Kind der Maria ist Jesus allerdings auch noch in anderer Weise Gottessohn und damit unmittelbarer zu Gott als alle anderen Menschen.²⁴

Matthew's genealogy includes some non-Israelites (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Uriah's ex-wife - all women!), but, by only tracing ancestry to Abraham, creates an out-group composed of people not 'related' to Jesus though Abrahamic descent.²⁵ But Luke, while presenting Jesus as fully Israelite, allows Jesus to be situated within an in-group that, even by the most formal reasoning, has no *a priori* outsiders.²⁶

The baptism and genealogy demonstrate that Jesus is 'Son of God' in two ways: (1) uniquely, by virtue of his Spirit-creation and special relationship to the Father and (2) in a way analogous to all humankind by virtue of common Adamic descent.²⁷

Jesus and Satan: Testing Privileged Identity

Luke gives narrative description of a practical expression of 'Son of God' identity in Jesus' wilderness temptation (Luke 4.1-14). While commentators regularly note the focus on the faithful expression of Jesus' identity in this pericope, the passage is not usually read in light of the Baptizer's preaching in Luke 3.8.²⁸ But the logic of the narrative to this point, with its concentrated emphasis on Jesus as 'Son of God' in his baptism, his genealogy (though in an admittedly different way) and now the temptation, strongly suggests that Luke is contrasting Jesus' identity as

²² Hendel 2006:10. See Cohen 1999:24 on Herod's fabricated genealogy.

²³ Danker 1988:98; Johnson 1991:72, among others.

²⁴ Klein 2006:174.

²⁵ Keener 1999:79.

²⁶ Recognition that Luke's genealogy creates no social 'other' is slightly different than the more common attestation reflected by Green 1997:189 who claims the genealogy marks 'Jesus' solidarity with all humanity'.

²⁷ Green 1997:190 is wrong to call the genealogy a 'narrative pause'; it follows perfectly in Luke's emphasis on Jesus' identity.

²⁸ Wenk 2004:195; Fitzmyer 1981:509; Green 1997:194, among others.

‘Son of God’ (and hence, representative of Israel) with John’s anticipation of the crowd’s defective claim to be sons of Abraham.²⁹ Luke’s distinct interest in the relationship between the Spirit and identity leads him to magnify the role of the Spirit in relation to the Synoptic treatments of Jesus’ temptation: (1) Jesus enters the wilderness ‘full (πλήρης) of the Spirit’ (4.1); (2) the Spirit remains with Jesus during the trial (4.1: ἤγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ); and (3) Jesus emerges from the wilderness ‘in the power of the Spirit’ (4.14: ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος).³⁰

The narrative features a sort of double frame formed by reference to the influence of the Spirit upon Jesus (4.1, 14) and the ‘If you are the Son of God’ temptations (4.3, 9). Luke’s order is here different than Matthew who places the ‘If you are the Son of God’ temptations as the first two tests (Matthew 4.3, 6). The effect for Luke is that Jesus’ ‘Son of God’ identity is closely connected to the Spirit. The ‘If you are the Son of God’ tests tempt Jesus to use his privileged identity to accrue self-benefit either by (a) providing food for himself (4.3-4) or (b) taking advantage of the likelihood of God’s miraculous rescue (4.9-12 in Luke’s context can perhaps be seen as a temptation to gain honor through the miraculous). Luke’s unique focus on the temptation to *self*-benefit is evident in his use of the singular λίθος (stone) in 4.3 (cf. Matthew 4.3: λίθοι) which indicates that the temptation was not to be a miraculous provider for his people but simply to use his privileged identity to satisfy himself.³¹ Surely it is significant that Jesus never renders a miracle on his own behalf.³²

Framed by the ‘Son of God’ temptations is the devil’s offer of world dominion. Green is correct to note given that Luke’s use of Psalm 2 LXX in Luke 3.22 – a Psalm which indicates that God will give his ‘son’ all the nations – the temptation

²⁹ For ‘Son of God’ = representative of Israel, see Green 1997:193; Fitzmyer 1981:510-511; Wright 1996:457-463. Jesus’ deployments of Deuteronomy 8.3; 6.13, 16, Exodus events in which Israel was tested and found wanting, further suggest that Luke envisions Jesus as representative of Israel.

³⁰ Neither Matthew nor Mark explicitly refers to Jesus’ pre-temptation fullness of the Spirit, post-temptation Spirit-empowerment or the role of the Spirit *during* the temptation. Jesus is only ‘driven into’ (Mark 1.12: ἐκβάλλει εἰς) or ‘led into’ (Matthew 4.1: ἀνήχθη εἰς) the wilderness by the Spirit (cf. Luke 4.1: ἤγετο ἐν). Fitzmyer 1981:514 suggests the present participle of πειράζω in 4.2 indicates the simultaneity of the temptations and the Spirit’s leading.

³¹ Johnson 1991:74 is off the mark when he suggests this is a temptation to ‘give “bread in the wilderness” to the people’. Fitzmyer 1981:515 overlooks Luke’s point when he suggests Luke changed ‘Q’ in the interest of ‘plausibility’. Bock 1994:372; Marshall 1978:179-171; Green 1997:193-194 understand the personal nature of this test.

³² Cf. Johnson 1991:76.

is 'an invitation for Jesus to deny his identity as God's Son, substituting in its place an analogous relationship to the devil'.³³

Two features of this story are notable. First, the presence of the Spirit is connected to Jesus' refusal to leverage his privileged identity solely for self-benefit. Jesus' special relationship with the Father confers many legitimate benefits, but his identity does not exhaust itself in those personal benefits alone. This Spirit-empowered expression of privileged identity is a counterpoint to the anticipated entitlement claim reflected in Luke 3.8.

The second point anticipates a key Lukan theme that emerges fully in Acts. Luke expresses a distinct contrast between the influence of the Spirit and the influence of Satan as it impinges upon relationships with the 'other'. I will demonstrate exegetically in my treatment of Acts what I will here only mention: for Luke, Satan turns people away from the other and inward towards themselves. Conversely, the Spirit turns people away from the self (or from a restrictive focus on the in-group) and outward toward the other.³⁴ Jesus refuses the devil's temptation to turn inward in pure self interest. This expression of allocentric identity – the ability to love self/in-group and the 'other' – will become a consistent theme in Jesus' ministry.

Jesus and His Townsfolk: Ethnic Identity, Resource Allocation and the 'Other'

Jesus emerges from his temptation as a figure who has, by virtue of the Spirit, resisted the temptation to turn inward and to leverage privileged identity only for the sake of the self. In subsequent passages in Luke, beginning particularly in Nazareth (Luke 4.16-30), Jesus will give a positive demonstration of the Spirit-empowered allocentric identity that will become a central feature of Luke's identity-forming program. It is precisely this allocentric identity – with a horizon beyond the in-group – that interacts disastrously with the identity-based assumptions of Jesus' townsfolk in Nazareth. SIT is a useful heuristic tool with which to interpret Luke 4.14-30, and here I call attention to the relationship between subgroup identity, relative prototypicality and entitlement discussed in

³³ Green 1997:194.

³⁴ See, for example, Peter: Luke 22.31-32; Judas: Luke 22.3-4; Acts 1.24-25; Ananias and Sapphira: Acts 5.1-11; Simon the Samaritan: Acts 8.18-24.

chapter 2. There we learned that subgroups tend to project their defining characteristics as prototypical for their in-group. The resulting assumption of subgroup prototypicality prompts entitlement claims that implicate group resource allocation. *I will argue that the Nazareth incident can be interpreted compellingly as Jesus' refusal to be bound by the entitlement claims of his own Nazareth subgroup.*³⁵ The ability to look beyond one's own group (which, in a collectivistic culture, is highly constitutive of social identity and hence of the self) will become paradigmatic for Luke's treatment of identity in the Gospel.³⁶

While there is little question about the programmatic nature of Luke 4.16-30 (Luke moves the passage to an extremely prominent narrative position, especially in relation to its placement in Mark 6.1-6), the passage itself has proved difficult.³⁷ If the passage is programmatic, we would expect it to reverberate throughout Luke. Thus, proper interpretation is imperative. In particular, it must be asked, what is it about the shared social script in Nazareth that prompts Jesus to reject the apparently positive response of his townsfolk? The interpretive options align in four positions.

1. There is nothing in the response of the crowd that would elicit a negative response from Jesus.³⁸ This position cannot account for Jesus' seemingly confrontational reply.

³⁵ Closest to my position is Tannehill 1972:62: 'It is not so much that Jesus goes elsewhere because he is rejected as that he is rejected because he announces that it is God's will and his mission to go elsewhere.'

³⁶ The major pneumatological treatments of Luke-Acts pay little attention to this pericope as a whole. Menzies and Turner dispute Luke's redaction of the Isaiah passages in order to determine whether Luke's Spirit does more than empower speech. Menzies 1991:168: 'The passage as it stands undeniably emphasizes preaching as the most prominent dimension of Jesus' mission.' Turner 1996:266 thinks Luke portrays Jesus as the 'Isaianic soteriological prophet', the 'Mosaic prophet' and the 'Davidic king' in service of Luke's 'New Exodus' scheme, thus the Spirit is connected to the inauguration of the New Exodus. Neither Menzies nor Turner deal with the logic of the passage or with the impact of the Spirit-anointed proclamation upon the crowd. Wenk 2004:220 does not treat the entire passage, but attempts to link prophetic speech in 4.17-18 with perlocutionary effect: 'The Spirit serves to authorize the prophet in proclaiming a message, guarantees the God-spoken character of it, and it the agent by which the salvation is accomplished.' Cho 2005 and Dunn 1970 do not address the passage.

³⁷ For Luke 4.16-30 as programmatic, see Fitzmyer 1979:529; Nolland 1989, 195, etc. Because 4.14-15 forms indispensable context for 4.16-30, I will treat 4.14-30 as a unit.

³⁸ Fitzmyer 1979:528-535; Schürmann 1969:234; Kerr 2006:139; Green 1997:214-215. Green's alternative explanation, that Jesus is 'one of us' (215-217), bears some similarity to my position, but does not appreciate the relationship between Jesus' identity and the Spirit.

2. ἐμαρτύρουν and ἐθαύμαζον (4.22) have positive connotations, but the question regarding Jesus' parentage shares the animosity clearly evident in the Matthean and Markan presentations where Jesus' rhetorical skill is appreciated but his claims are understood to overstep his humble origins.³⁹ It is difficult to account for the sudden change of the crowd's heart – mid-sentence, no less – in this reading.⁴⁰ I suspect this position is colored by Matthean and Markan concerns more than Lukan concerns.⁴¹

3. All three verbs in 4.22 carry negative connotations, suggesting the translation, 'And they all testified against him and were aghast at the words of grace which proceeded from his mouth'.⁴² Jesus then simply responds in kind.⁴³ This solution assumes that Jesus' omission in his reading of Isaiah 61.2, "the day of vengeance of our God" (presumably applied to non-Israelites), prompts the crowd to be angry about the words of grace *only*. Nolland and Hill have defeated this position.⁴⁴

4. Luke is a clumsy editor who has conflated two sources or events.⁴⁵

³⁹ See especially Rohrbaugh 1995. Cf. Ellis 1974:97; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:243; Bock 1994:415; Nolland 1989:I,198; Turner 1996:218 fn 14.

⁴⁰ Luke's typical use of ἔλεγον (which introduces the question of patrilineage) is neutral in tone, with context determining whether the words spoken are adversarial (e.g. Luke 22.65) or appreciative (e.g. Luke 9.31). This form appears 12 times in Luke-Acts (Luke 4.22; 9.31; 22.65; 24.10; Acts 2.13; 9.21; 12.15; 17.18; 21.4; 25.20; 28.4; 28.6). Contextual factors in Luke 4 do not call for a clearly negative reading.

⁴¹ Hill 1971:163.

⁴² Jeremias 1958:45.

⁴³ Jeremias 1958:45; Marshall 1978:185-186.

⁴⁴ Hill 1971:164-165 gives 6 counterarguments. (1) Because the Semitic character of Luke's language is questionable, arguing that ἐμαρτύρουν is an Aramaic dative of disadvantage is problematic. (2) If Luke intended unmitigated rage to be conveyed by the audience he could have been clearer. (3) Luke does not use μαρτυρεῖν in a negative sense. (4) 'Is not this Joseph's son?' does not require disbelief and criticism. (5) The final clause of 4.20 - ἀτενίζω - is used often by Luke and always means a 'gaze of expectant faith or trust' (See Acts 1.10; 6.15; also 3.4; 7.55; 11.6; 13.9; Luke 22.56). (6) Heavily weighting the omission of 'vengeance of God' is difficult given Luke's use of a composite Isaianic quotation. Cf. Nolland 1979:220.

⁴⁵ Luce 1933:121. For source suggestions see Fitzmyer 1981:I.526-527, who claims 'The story in its present form is obviously conflated. The sequence of sentences is not smooth' (527). Danker 1988:108 surrenders: 'Any attempt to analyze the thinking of the crowd at Nazareth is bound to fail.'

Jesus as Social Exegete:

The interpretive crux of the passage is the hinge between the crowd's positive reception in 4.22 and Jesus' response in 4.23.

And all spoke well (μαρτυρέω) of him, and wondered (θαυμάζω) at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said (λέγω) 'Is this not Joseph's son?'

And he said to them, 'Doubtless (πάντως) you will quote to me the proverb, "Physician heal thyself; what we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here also in your own hometown (πατρίς)"'.⁴⁶

Jesus' ability to anticipate the forthcoming request to do Capernaum-like acts of power ('Doubtless you will quote to me...') is first of all indicative of Jesus' acuity as an interpreter of his own social context.⁴⁷ I suggest that Jesus' pointed response is a rejection not of the Nazarene acceptance full stop, but rather of a social assumption that Jesus' townsfolk share. Jesus' townsfolk assume that their privileged status as members of Jesus' subgroup grants them special entitlement to benefits conferred by Jesus.

Before turning to the narrative itself, it is essential here to map the potentially available nested identities within this pericope.⁴⁸ Luke's Gospel has made it clear that the terminal identity in view to this point is Israelite ethnic identity and John's warning to those claiming Abrahamic descent in Luke 3.8 indicates that the benefits of the in-group were broadly anticipated to be available to ethnic Israelites writ large. Nested within Israelite identity is Galilean regional identity, a fact of which Luke, among all the Gospel writers, is most keenly cognizant.⁴⁹ Yet in this pericope Luke appears to be drawing our attention particularly to Nazareth as the locus of identity for Jesus and his townsfolk.⁵⁰ From an etic perspective we can conceptualize these identities as follows:

⁴⁶ My translation.

⁴⁷ The issue is not Jesus' 'omniscience', pace Green 1997:216. See Kerr 2006:139; Tannehill 1986:70 for Jesus as an astute social interpreter.

⁴⁸ See chapter 2 for a discussion of nested identity. Nested identities become salient based upon intergroup contact. In inter-ethnic situations, ethnicity is salient, while in inter-regional situations, regional identity can be salient, and so on.

⁴⁹ See discussion in following section.

⁵⁰ Esler 2003:40-76 argues that city membership forms a viable subgroup identity. Paul reflects this when claiming to be a citizen of 'no mean city' (Tarsus) in Acts 21.39 as do the Ephesian devotees to Artemis in Acts 19.24-35. Cf. Philo *Flaccus* 46.

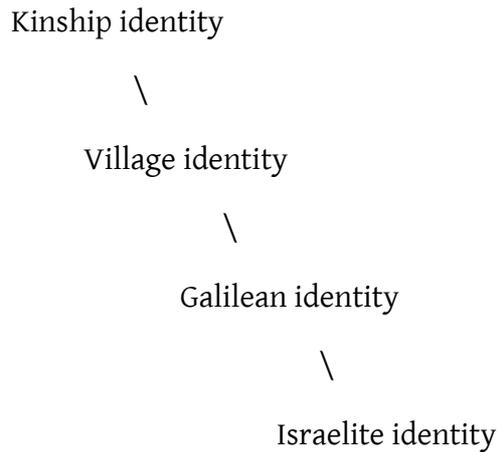


Fig. 4.1: Potentially salient social identities in Luke 4.14-30.⁵¹

While Jesus is broadly interpreted by Galileans as ‘one of us’, in Nazareth Jesus both operates with and is interpreted more particularly through the shared frame of Nazarene social identity.⁵²

According to the model described above, we would expect that members of the Nazareth subgroup would project their village identity as prototypical Galilean (and probably even Israelite) identity, and would therefore make entitlement claims to the benefits of Jesus’ ministry based upon their shared membership in Jesus’ subgroup. I suggest that Jesus’ response to his townsfolk indicates his awareness of this implicit claim and subverts the assumption by pressing his hearers toward a allocentric understanding of the proper deployment of privileged identity. I will demonstrate this claim in a close reading that focuses upon five features of the text and its context: (1) Jesus’ overwhelmingly positive reception in Galilee; (2) Luke’s emphasis on Jesus’ village identity as opposed to kinship identity (especially vis-à-vis Matthew and Mark), as well as the social assumptions inherent in common village identity; (3) the intelligibility of Jesus’ enigmatic response as a rejection of these entitlement assumptions; (4) the role of the Elijah and Elisha stories in reorienting social assumptions; and (5) the resulting disenfranchisement of Jesus from his own subgroup.

⁵¹ Cf. nested identities in Wales described in Jenkins 1997:41.

⁵² Ganger 2002:242 claims ‘Multiple and complex identities may have been almost the rule, rather than the exception [in ancient Galilee]’.

The Positive Reception of Jesus throughout Galilee

The Nazareth pericope is situated within an inclusio of Galilean approval framed by Luke 4.14-15 where Jesus' synagogue teaching brings him 'glorification by all' and Luke 4.31ff where Jesus' work in 'Capernaum, a city of Galilee' causes the people to be 'astonished'. Luke, emphatically in comparison to the other Gospels, sees Galilean identity as essential to the initial Jesus-movement and understands Galilee to be largely 'safe' territory.⁵³ With the exception of the Nazareth incident (which Luke clearly takes as a special case), Galilean opposition to Jesus is expressed most intensely in Luke by the Pharisaic deliberation regarding 'what they might do to Jesus' (Luke 6.11).⁵⁴ This is in contrast with the deadly opposition expressed in the Synoptic parallels which depict Pharisees *in Galilee* plotting 'how to destroy him'.⁵⁵ Luke's Jesus does not experience deadly opposition until he enters Judea and Jerusalem.⁵⁶ The relative safety of Galilee is highlighted by the emphatic turn toward Jerusalem in 9.51 which leads immediately to extreme anti-Samaritan ethnocentric polemic expressed by James and John promptly upon leaving their 'home turf'.⁵⁷ For Luke, 'Galilean' is an in-group identity shared by Jesus and most other residents of Galilee. There is nothing in Luke 4 to suggest that Jesus' message is inherently offensive to members of the Galilean in-group.⁵⁸

The Positive Reception of Jesus in Nazareth

Jesus' reading of the composite passage from Isaiah is much commented upon and is significant for Luke's portrait of Jesus for reasons that stretch beyond the compass of this thesis. I will mention just two significant factors. First, Jesus identifies himself as a Spirit-anointed figure by claiming 'The Spirit of the Lord is

⁵³ Luke distinguishes Galilean identity within broader Israelite identity (Luke 13.1-2; 22.59; 23.6). The disciples are categorized as Galileans before Pentecost both in social isolation (Acts 1.11) and in the context of other regional identities (Acts 2.7). Cf. Acts 5.37, 10.37. Josephus categorizes Galileans as an ἔθνος on two occasions (War 2.520; 4.105). Marquis 2007:64 describes ongoing ambiguity in the relationship between Galilee and Jerusalem in the first century.

⁵⁴ Vermes 1973:57 argues Pharisaic opposition in Luke 6.11 was 'mostly foreign and not local'. Jesus encounters resistance in Luke 5.17-26, 29-39; 6.1-5; 6-11, but never mortal violence outside Judea.

⁵⁵ Mark 3.6 // Matthew 12.14.

⁵⁶ Luke 11.53-4 (in Judea); 19.47 (in Jerusalem); 20.19-20. Mark 3.6 sets murderous opposition to Jesus (from Pharisees and Herodians, the latter of which are clearly at least from Galilee) in Galilee. Matthew 12.14 omits the Pharisees, but places the same incident in Galilee prior to Jesus' entrance into Judea.

⁵⁷ Luke 9.54. 'Lord, do you want us to bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?'

⁵⁸ The Baptizer's arrest was based on Herod's personal vendetta (Luke 3.19-20).

upon me' (Luke 4.18). It should not be overlooked that Jesus' Spirit-anointed initial public appearance (like John's Spirit-empowered inaugural appearance) features a critique of an identity-based assumption. Second, the conflated Isaiah passage (Isaiah 61.1-2a; 58.6), perhaps an expression of Israel's Jubilee, suggests the conferral of unabashedly positive benefits, a factor that whets the appetite of Jesus' audience.⁵⁹ At stake in the response of the crowd and in Jesus' counter-response is who, precisely, has access to the benefits conferred by Jesus. The interplay between identity and entitlement is clearly in play.

The crowd response to Jesus' claim to have 'fulfilled' the Isaianic quotation (4.21) is fully positive, a fact reflected by Luke's characteristic use of the verbs in question. The crowd gazes expectantly at Jesus: 'the eyes of all in the synagogue were staring toward him' (4.20: ἦσαν ἀτενίζοντες αὐτῷ). Luke uses a nearly identical phrase to describe the disciples' post-Ascension 'staring toward heaven' (Acts 1.10: ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν).⁶⁰ The word expresses pensive wonder or the quest for perception. The crowd speaks well (ἐμαρτύρουν) of Jesus (4.22). Luke regularly uses μαρτυρέω to describe a community's positive reception of an individual based on that person's prior role within the community (Acts 6.3; 10.22; 16.2; 22.12).⁶¹ Jesus' townsfolk speak positively of him based upon his persuasive words and, perhaps, based upon his prior role in Nazareth (Luke tells us that entering the synagogue there was his 'custom' – εἶωθα [4.16]). Finally, the crowd expresses amazement (θαυμάζω) about the words of grace that pour from Jesus' mouth. θαυμάζω is a close cognate of the *positive* reaction expressed by the crowd in Capernaum in Luke 4.36 (θάμβος).⁶² 'Words of grace' appear to be, for Luke, an idiom for the message of Jesus (cf. Acts 14.3). Thus far, this is not 'Jesus' rejection in Nazareth' but rather the reception of a hometown boy made good.⁶³

⁵⁹ See Hultgren 2002:164-165; Kyo-Seon Shin 1989; Strobel 1972 for the likely Jubilee theme. Cf. the use of Isaiah 61.1-2 in 11QMelch 2.7-16. Turner 1996:266 suggests this is 'New Exodus' imagery.

⁶⁰ ἀτενίζω: Luke 22.56; Acts 3.4, 12; 6.15; 7.55; 10.4; 11.6; 13.9; 14.9; 23.1. Only Acts 13.9 carries a potentially negative sense, though the context implies a gaze of perception rather than a malicious stare.

⁶¹ There are no overtly negative occurrences of μαρτυρέω in Luke-Acts (Luke 4.22; Acts 6.3; 10.22, 43; 13.22; 14.3; 15.8; 16.2; 22.5, 12; 23.11; 26.5).

⁶² Of the 18 appearances of θαυμάζω in Luke-Acts (Luke 1.21, 63; 2.18, 33; 4.22; 7.9; 8.25; 9.43; 11.14, 38; 20.26; 24.12, 41; Acts 2.7; 3.12; 4.13; 7.31; 13.41) only three have possible negative connotations (Luke 1.63; 11.38; Acts 13.41), though the first two (at least) may connote surprise rather than animosity.

⁶³ Talbert 1982:56 appreciates that the pressure on Jesus is because he is a 'hometown boy', yet he does not develop the identity concerns in Luke's treatment of the incident.

The catena of goodwill evident in 4.22 climaxes with the collectively asked question, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’ The question is not, as I will demonstrate below, a denigration of Jesus based upon the low honor-status of his family.⁶⁴ Rather, the question celebrates the fact that Jesus is a member of their own subgroup; Nazareth is Jesus’ πατρίς. Jesus’ harsh reaction to the initial crowd approval must be taken as his rejection of a social assumption (namely, an entitlement claim) based upon common Nazarene subgroup identity. To support this point I will first present data that demonstrates that Luke is not (as is the case with the Synoptic parallels) interested in Jesus’ kinship-based honor status, but rather is concerned with dynamics arising from common village identity.

Nazareth as Jesus’ πατρίς

Both Matthew and Mark, who make much less of this incident than Luke, have a clear interest in Jesus’ violation of his kinship-based honor status.⁶⁵ Readings that understand the Lukan treatment as an attack on Jesus kinship-based honor are, I suggest, colored by the Synoptic parallels (Mark 6.1-6; Matthew 13.54-58) more than by Luke’s unique treatment. Luke’s positioning of the pericope (the initial scene in Jesus’ public ministry) and his extended treatment should be enough to alert us to the fact that Luke sees special significance in this event. A comparison with the Synoptic parallels underscores in three ways the fact that Luke does not think the crowd critiques Jesus for overstepping his kinship-based honor status. First, both Matthew and Mark emphatically situate Jesus within his kinship group by referring to his father, mother, sisters and brothers. Matthew especially suggests that Jesus’ claims are incommensurate with his lineage (‘Is this not the carpenter’s son... Where then did this man get all this?’ [Matthew 13.55, 56]). Second, Jesus’ response in Matthew and Mark indicates that honor (τίμη) is at stake (οὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης ἄτιμος... Mark 6.4; Matthew 13.57).⁶⁶ Third, the locus of the dishonor in Matthew and Mark is not only within the prophet’s πατρίς but also within his οἰκία (Mark 6.4; Matthew 13.57) and among his συγγενής (Mark 6.4). Jesus’ transgression

⁶⁴ Contra Rohrbaugh 1995:193-195.

⁶⁵ Contra Fitzmyer 1981:357, the proverbs do not have essentially the same force in Matthew and Mark as they do in Luke’s unique rendering. Nolland 1989:199 has a similar reading.

⁶⁶ The parallel in John 4.43-44 is concerned with honor (τιμή), though the Johannine context and concerns are very different.

of his honor status in Matthew and Mark causes great offense to the crowd (Mark 6.3; 13.57: σκανδαλίζω). Contrast this with Luke’s presentation. Luke has no extended mention of Jesus’ kinship group, only his father. Luke’s Jesus does not sense that he is ‘dishonored’ (ἄτιμος), but he is not ‘acceptable’ (Luke 4.24: δεκτός). δεκτός appears in Luke 4.19 and is clearly *not* an honor word (cf. Acts 10.35!). Finally, Luke’s Jesus is aware that the locus of his unacceptability is his πατρίς (Luke 4.24), not his οἰκία or συγγενής. In short, Luke portrayal of the Nazareth incident must be situated within Jesus’ πατρίς and the local village identity arising from that affiliation, not within the confines of his family’s honor-status. Luke emphasizes the significance of the πατρίς setting in other ways as well.

Luke introduces ‘Nazareth’ in 4.16 with the relative clause οὗ ἦν τεθραμμένος: where he had been ‘reared’, or more literally, ‘provided with food’.⁶⁷ This is the only instance of τρέφω as a perfect participle with passive voice in the New Testament.⁶⁸ Josephus uses the verb in this form, always with overtones of intimate familiarity.⁶⁹ Jesus was raised in Nazareth and these are, presumably, the people who know him best.⁷⁰ In localized village settings, individuals are highly visible and pressure toward norm conformity is high.⁷¹ Moreover, rural settings tend to be more collectivistic than urban communities, a factor that leads to higher levels of group identity.⁷²

Jesus’ familiarity in the village is underscored by Luke’s attestation that it was customary for Jesus to attend the *Nazareth* synagogue, likely also implying that Jesus customarily read in the *Nazareth* synagogue.

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ναζαρά, οὗ ἦν τεθραμμένος, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ σαββάτων εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν καὶ ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι.⁷³

⁶⁷ τρέφω occurs in passive voice only in Acts 12.20 and Revelation 12.14 and indicates the dependence of the receiving party on the one making provision. See Liddell & Scott: τρέφω.

⁶⁸ Paul uses ἀνατεθραμμένος to establish common identity with Jerusalemites in Acts 22.3.

⁶⁹ *Antiquities* 1.253; 10.226; 17.324; *Contra Apionem* 1.141 (the latter, especially, gives a sense of the familiarity one has in and with the place where they were ‘reared’).

⁷⁰ Jesus is known throughout Luke-Acts via his village identity: ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ (Luke 4.34; 18.37; 24.19; Acts 2.22; 6.14; 10.38; 22.8; 26.9). In Acts 22.8 ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ is Jesus’ self-identification.

⁷¹ Cairns 1982:282.

⁷² Colic-Peisker & Walker 2003:356-57.

⁷³ Luke 4.16.

While commentators usually assume that the clause κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτῷ refers to Jesus' custom simply to attend synagogue in whatever locale he found himself on the Sabbath (and indeed we can likely infer that fact as well), Luke's placement of the clause may indicate that Jesus regularly participated in the synagogue worship of his own village.⁷⁴ The synagogue itself should be understood as a primary locus of village life and identity.⁷⁵ Jesus is, as it were, a hometown boy made good who has not left his hometown behind.

Honor/shame readings of Luke 4.22 overlook the fact that in collectivistic societies, the success of one member of the group is a feather in the collective cap of the group as a whole.⁷⁶ This is evident in Israelite literature that ascribes great honor to local figures who have achieved success. These figures are eagerly claimed by townsfolk in both life and death. The latter is evident in the customary desire to bury local heroes in their own πατρίς and so to honor them. This is the case in 1 Maccabees 2.70; 9.19-21; 13.25-30. A similar phenomenon is evident in the honor ascribed to successful athletes in a Greco-Roman context. Athletic victories were construed as a gift to the πατρίς and success 'had a social importance that went well beyond the interest of the individuals concerned'.⁷⁷ Honor for athletic success was accrued by mainly elites who had time and resources for training in the *gymnasion* but low status local 'heroes' were also honored.⁷⁸ An inscription from Asia Minor is

⁷⁴ Nolland 1989:195 suggests the 'custom' was teaching in synagogues and 'not to his earlier practice in Nazareth, nor generally to his practice of attending synagogue'. This would render 4.16 superfluous. We already know from 4.15 that Jesus was spending a lot of time in Galilean synagogues. We no longer need to be told that synagogue attendance was customary. In 4.16 Luke is referring to what Jesus did when he was in his home village. Green 1997:209 suggests reading the Scriptures in the synagogue was Jesus' 'custom', but he does not locate this especially in Nazareth.

⁷⁵ So Levine 2002:158, 'The synagogue incorporated Jewish communal life within its walls: the political and liturgical, the social and educational, the judicial and spiritual.' See *Antiquities* 14.235, 256-261 for a description of the importance of the synagogue to the broad spectrum of local community identity. Levine lists these functions of the pre-70 synagogue: political deliberation (*Life* 271-298, 331); meeting place for subgroups within the community; professional guilds; worship; communal meals (*Ant* 14.214-16; cf. *m.Zavim* 3.2); the place for the administration of justice - which in Judea was for the most part exercised on the local level (see Matthew 10.17-8, 23.24; Mark 13.9; Luke 12.11; 21.12; Acts 22.19); perhaps hospitality for visitors - see Theodotus inscription, though this might be unique to the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Most other evidence is post-70. See *y.Megillah* 3,1,73d; *y.Ketubot* 13,35c; *b.Ketubot* 105a - for the claim that there were 480 synagogues in pre-70 Jerusalem, each with two schools.

⁷⁶ Chen, et al 1998:1490-1502 demonstrate that the success of an individual in a collectivistic society increases in-group bias in the group. Triandis 1990:1007-1008: 'The self is defined as an appendage of the in-group in collectivist cultures and as a separate and distinct entity in individualist cultures'. In a collectivist culture what happens to the individual happens to the in-group, for good or for ill.

⁷⁷ Van Nijf 2001:306.

⁷⁸ Van Nijf 2001:325.

indicative and tells of L. Septimus Flavianus Flavillianus who won a wrestling title (in 212 CE) and received an honorary inscription from his πατρίς proclaiming that ‘the πατρίς honored [him] propitiously’.⁷⁹ Contrary to readings of the Nazareth incident that assume that Jesus would be looked down upon because his lofty claims overstep his honor status, there is a sense of hometown pride in successful members of the πατρίς.

It appears that there were clear social expectations placed upon successful members of a πατρίς. Josephus gives data that suggests it was normative for those who had achieved power or influence quickly to leverage their position to benefit their πατρίς.

When Antipater had made this speech, Caesar appointed Hyrcanus to be high priest... He also gave Hyrcanus permission to raise up the walls of his own city (πατρίς), upon his asking that favour of him, for they had been demolished by Pompey.⁸⁰

John's lack of money had hereto restrained him in his ambition after command and in his attempts to advance himself; but when he saw that Josephus was highly pleased with the activity of his temperament, he persuaded him, *in the first place*, to entrust him with the repairing of the walls of his native city (πατρίς) [Gischala].⁸¹

If Josephus is reflecting the cultural (and perhaps even distinctly Galilean!) assumptions regarding the expectation that successful individuals will first turn their benefaction to their πατρίς, then we have a clear expression of the possible assumptions behind the eager rhetorical question, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’ Jesus’ fellow Nazarenes expect, by virtue of their common subgroup identity, that Jesus will extend them privileged access to the benefits he confers. This phenomenon has been regularly observed by SIT theorists and can, as I will now demonstrate, account for all the salient features of the pericope.

Jesus’ Awareness of Nazareth-Specific Entitlement Claims

To this point, Jesus has experienced nothing other than eager acceptance from his townsfolk. Jesus, however, appears to discern something unacceptable

⁷⁹ *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* xlv, 1194.

⁸⁰ *Antiquities*. 14.143-144.

⁸¹ *War* 2.590.

behind the adoring response of the Nazareth synagogue crowd. He is well-enough versed in the shared social script of his village that with confidence he can say,

Doubtless (πάντως) you will say to me the parable, 'Physician, heal yourself! That which we heard you did in Capernaum, do also here in your own hometown!'⁸²

The introductory clause 'Doubtless you will say' indicates that Jesus is well aware of the way a community could respond to a prominent village member who has the capability to bestow social benefits.⁸³ The enigmatic physician parable that follows reveals Jesus' interpretation of the assumptions of the crowd.

Jesus makes a connection between the crowd's ability to locate him as 'one of their own' (the son of Joseph) and their expectation that he will confer upon his own πατρις the benefit of the same kinds of deeds that he has done elsewhere.⁸⁴ This position is clarified by a proper understanding of the proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself'. The interpretation of this pithy saying is contested. Nolland has surveyed classical parallels, identifying a trajectory of development from Euripides (485-406 BCE. 'Doctor of others, himself full of sores.') to the first century CE based upon the methodological premise that the best way to search for a parallel is not to look for verbal parallelism, but to search for common contexts and cousin-type phrases.⁸⁵ He concludes that the proverb is concerned with the irony of a sick physician; a physician who heals others but is himself unwell. Nolland paraphrases the proverb: 'Who do you think you are to offer to us what you do not have for yourself?'⁸⁶ This interpretation may fit the Matthean and Markan parallels in which Jesus is rejected because of his low social status, but it does not reflect Luke's concern. Noorda counters Nolland by emphasizing more properly the most closely contemporary and most closely parallel proverb, found in the *Discourse* of Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40-120 CE).⁸⁷

⁸² Luke 4.23.

⁸³ 'Doubtless' (πάντως) appears in Acts 21.22 and 28.4 to reflect the certainty of a speaker based upon local knowledge regarding social assumptions and probabilities.

⁸⁴ Contra Nolland 1989:200, these words do not express 'skepticism' about the reports from Capernaum, but eagerness to receive the benefits themselves.

⁸⁵ Nolland 1979. Euripides' proverb says ἄλλων ἰατρὸς αὐτὸς ἔλχεσιν βρύων. Nolland favors this proverb because it highlights the incongruity of a sick doctor.

⁸⁶ Nolland 1989: I.199.

⁸⁷ Noorda 1982.

The function of the real philosopher is nothing else than to rule over human beings. But if a man, alleging he is not competent, is reluctant to administer his own city when it wishes him to do so and calls upon him, it is as if someone should refuse to treat his own body, though professing to be a physician, and yet should readily treat other men in return for money or honours, just as if his health were a smaller recompense than another kind...⁸⁸

In this proverb the entire hometown is viewed as if it were the body of the physician himself, hence neglecting the πατρίς is akin to neglecting one's own body. It is dishonorable to treat others before or without treating your own πατρίς. This is precisely the thrust of Jesus' proverb.⁸⁹

Physician,	heal <i>yourself</i>
ιατρέ,	θεράπευσον σεαυτόν·
What we have heard you did at Capernaum	do in <i>your own πατρίς</i>
ὅσα ἠκούσαμεν γινόμενα εἰς τὴν Καφαρναοὺμ	ποίησον καὶ ὧδε ἐν τῇ πατρίδι σου.

The σεαυτόν in verse 23 parallels πατρίδι and is deployed collectivistically. The second phrase functions epexegetically, clarifying the fact that doing good to your πατρίς is like doing good to your own body. In other words, Jesus understands his townsfolk to respond to his claim to have fulfilled the Isaianic passage by exclaiming, 'Yes! You have done it in Capernaum and, because we are your people, you are bound to do it here as well!'⁹⁰ Jesus does not appear to think the crowd has, at this point, 'rejected' him.⁹¹

But Jesus explicitly *rejects* the implicit assumptions of the crowd and the shared social script upon which they are based:

⁸⁸ Discourses XLIX 13-14. Translation from Crosby 1946, *LCL*: Dio Chrysostom IV.

⁸⁹ Contra Nolland 1989:199, 202, the proverb does not reflect the crowd's suggestion that Jesus should 'look to his own needs!' My reading is also against Bock 1994:416 who says a collective interpretation gives 'a corporate force the proverb that is unlikely', yet gives no reason for discounting the corporate force. A handful of interpreters in the past century have rightly interpreted the σεαυτόν of 4.23 as referring to Jesus' hometown rather than to Jesus himself. See Zahn 1920:240; Creed 1930:687; Hill 1971:169; Schürman 1969:236-7; Schneider 1977:109; Hendrickson 1978:257.

⁹⁰ A similar reading of the force of the proverb is generated by Hill 1971:169.

⁹¹ I disagree with Johnson 1991:82 who thinks that Capernaum here represents 'Gentiles'. The chief provocation is not the mission to non-Israelites (if this were true Jesus' message would ostensibly have been offensive in all of Galilee) but the refusal to privilege his own village. The pressure toward village-specific interests is highlighted in Luke 4.42-43 where Jesus resists the will of local village members who want to prevent him from leaving.

Truly, I say to you that no prophet is acceptable (δεκτός) in his hometown (πατρίς).⁹²

The introductory formula ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν is used characteristically by Luke to indicate teaching ‘considered to be of special importance’ or conveying definitive clarification.⁹³ While the villagers might assume they have privileged access to the Isaianic benefits announced by Jesus by virtue of their shared subgroup identity, Jesus’ ‘Truly, I say to you...’ alerts us to the fact that their paradigm is about to be shifted. Moreover, despite interpretations that assume Jesus is unacceptable because he has made over-zealous ‘honor claims’ in his community or that they are ‘cutting him down to size’, this parable has little explicitly to do with Jesus’ honor.⁹⁴ It is rather that Jesus will not be ‘accepted’ (δεκτός) because he is a prophet.⁹⁵ Why is it that prophets are unlikely to be accepted in a social setting where subgroups express resource entitlement based upon shared social identity?

Prophets and the Out-group

Jesus clarifies his perplexing ‘prophet’ proverb with two accounts of prophetic intervention in the lives of non-Israelites. Two factors are in play here. First, Luke has a characteristic view of the unwillingness of prophets’ own people to hear the prophetic word. The Gospel refers to the overwhelmingly negative response to prophets throughout Israelite history.⁹⁶ It may be the case that this is based upon the fact that prophets, by nature of their vocation, are not respecters of in-group identity. Just the opposite is true. Israel's strongest prophetic critiques were usually directed against the ethnic in-group. This, of course, is precisely what led to the death of the prophets. Luke, like Jesus, is painfully aware of this fact.⁹⁷

But this first factor only takes us so far. What, precisely, leads to the rejection of the prophets in their hometowns according to Luke? Nolland rightly notes that it is *not* the case that rejection of Elijah and Elisha leads to prophetic

⁹² Luke 4.24.

⁹³ O’Neill 1959:1-9. Cf. Luke 4.24; 12.37; 18.17, 29; 21.32.

⁹⁴ Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:243.

⁹⁵ Cf. Acts 10.35, which also reflects ‘acceptability’ rather than ‘honor’.

⁹⁶ See Luke 6.23, 26; 11.47, 49, 50; 13.33, 34; 16.31; 24.25. Denova 1997:132: ‘Typologically, the main characters in Luke-Acts are presented in the scriptural tradition of “rejected prophet”’.

⁹⁷ Contra Kodell 1983:16-18, we cannot imagine that the primary offense is initially the extension of the benefits of God to non-Israelites. Other intervening factors are in play. Denova 1997:141 properly notes that it seems unlikely that Jesus would have had success in subsequent villages if the primary problem in Nazareth is only ‘Gentile triumphalism’.

ministration among other peoples. ‘Rejection is hardly prominent in these [Lukan] verses nor in their OT sources (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 5)’.⁹⁸ Elijah and Elisha do not encounter either the widow or Naaman because they have been rejected by Israel; they encounter these people because of divine sending (Elijah to the widow and Naaman to Elijah). Likewise, to this point in the pericope Jesus has not been rejected by his people. Instead, the Elijah and Elisha stories demonstrate that prophets are unbound by typical identity boundaries.⁹⁹ At God’s impetus, Elijah and Elisha granted non-Israelites precisely the benefits to which Israelites expected exclusive entitlement. Reading this interpretation into the Nazareth pericope, this means that shared subgroup identity is *not* the basis of special claims of entitlement. Jesus presses home his subversion of the Nazarene assumption that privileged identity leads to privileged entitlement by implying that the benefits of God are available *beyond the primary category altogether*. The Elijah and Elisha stories indicate that, in the final analysis, ethnic identities are important yet irrelevant in the work of God which crosses group boundaries with impunity.¹⁰⁰ This emphatically does not mean that Israelites are rejected. Rather, Jesus’ proclamation makes the circle of identities with access to God – the primary category – larger. Yet it is for this very reason, the unwillingness to privilege one’s own people, that prophets are often unacceptable.

The Ramifications of Jesus’ Rejection of the Social Script

Jesus’ rejection of the social script of his πατρίς has swift and terrible consequences.

And they were all filled with rage hearing these things *in the synagogue*
(καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες θυμοῦ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ ἀκούοντες ταῦτα)...
And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of

⁹⁸ Nolland 1989:201.

⁹⁹ Nolland does not follow his logic to its obvious ends. He notes that the problem is *unbelief* of the people of Israel (and by parallel, Nazareth). This misreads the eager anticipation of the people of Nazareth in Luke’s telling. They are not, as Nolland would have it, ‘determined not to be drawn in’ to Jesus’ programme’ (1989:202).

¹⁰⁰ Mathey 2000:6 comes close when he notes ‘Jesus proclaims that God’s liberating power and solidarity is not exclusively meant for the benefit of the physical descendants of the patriarchs, of the people of the exodus and the great prophets’.

the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.¹⁰¹

It is precisely ‘in the synagogue’ (the dative clause is in the emphatic position at the head of the participial clause), the locus of village identity, that Jesus’ words are so offensive. The murderous rage elicited by Jesus’ subversion of identity norms nearly costs him his life and, more subtly, costs him his place in his own πατρίς.¹⁰² Though Luke has been careful to place Jesus in his own πατρίς and presents several πατρίς-specific concerns, Jesus’ refusal to act in accord with the shared social script results in a subtle narrational shift from Nazareth as πατρίς to Nazareth as πόλις. In the crowd’s rage Jesus is expelled from *the* πόλις (τῆς πόλεως) and nearly thrown off the cliff upon which is built *their* city (ἡ πόλις αὐτῶν).¹⁰³ By virtue of his refusal to grant exceptional resources to his Nazareth in-group Jesus is no longer an acceptable member of his πατρίς.

Luke 4.14-30: Summary

Attention to the proper layer of nested identity in Luke 4.14-30, Nazareth subgroup identity nested within broader Galilean and then Israelite identity, has helped us to locate the social assumption that prompts Jesus’ knowing response, ‘Doubtless you will say to me...’ Namely, Jesus – who has been repeatedly placed under the influence of the Spirit (Luke 3.22; 4.1, 14, 18) – is reacting against claims to entitlement based upon the projection of Nazareth subgroup prototypicality. The resistance of Jesus’ townsfolk is resistance to Jesus’ refusal to restrict conferral of his benefits only to the in-group. This programmatic theme, the unwillingness to use privileged identity only for self benefit, is prominent throughout Luke.

Conclusion

In Luke 3-4 we see that individuals empowered by the Spirit have a special ability to look beyond the (privileged) identity of self or in-group and so to extend

¹⁰¹ Luke 4.28, 29.

¹⁰² BDAG, 788 gives among possible definitions ‘a relatively restricted area as locale of one’s immediate family and ancestry’. Some English translations render the word ‘homeland’, but this ignores both the contextual clues in 4.16 and the fact that Luke uses χώρα for something like ‘home-country’ or ‘fatherland’.

¹⁰³ Luke 4.29. Schweizer 1984:86 misunderstands the connection between in-group status and the presumption of privilege, leading him to claim that the shift from ‘hometown’ in 4.23-24 to ‘homeland’ in 4.27-29 is a ‘scribal Christian argument for the mission to the Gentiles’.

in-group benefits to all manner of 'other'. For John, this takes the form of prophetic exhortation leveled against those who would potentially claim privileged ethnic identity as an end in itself. Privileged identity is only rightly expressed when it bears a concern for the 'other'. For Jesus, the presence of the Spirit is linked with his personal resistance to the temptation to leverage his privileged 'Son of God' identity solely for self-benefit. This allocentric posture stands in great relief against the entitlement claims of his πατρίς, claims based upon the projection of relative prototypicality and an inappropriate understanding of privileged identity. *Both John and Jesus, Luke's paradigmatically Spirit-empowered figures, thus begin their public ministries with critiques of defective expressions of privileged identity.*

While the Spirit largely disappears from Luke after chapter four (making brief appearances in Luke 10.21, 11.13 and 12.10, 12), the motifs awakened by Luke in these early chapters reverberate throughout the Gospel. Specifically, Jesus' life regularly reflects the allocentric impulse generated by the transformative work of the Spirit. Jesus teaches his disciples that privileged identity is demonstrated by placing others ahead of the self.¹⁰⁴ Jesus rebukes John for wanting to limit Jesus-centered ministry only to the disciples' in-group.¹⁰⁵ Jesus rebukes his disciples for an expression of ethnocentric hatred leveled at Samaritan 'enemies'. Jesus teaches that much is expected from the one to whom much has been given.¹⁰⁶ Jesus reveals that the proper expression of his Messianic identity is to suffer on behalf of others.¹⁰⁷ The Spirit-formed allocentric identity of Jesus is expressed by, and presses others toward, a turn away from self/group and toward the 'other'.

Two things are clear from this reading of Luke's Gospel. First, ethnic identity is not the identity that determines access to the benefits of God. Second, the influence of the Spirit upon individuals appears to bring a transformational openness to the 'other' – an allocentric identity. What we see in the lives of individuals under the influence of the Spirit – namely, the Spirit-empowered ability to look beyond self and group (and hence to resist restrictive identity-based entitlement claims) – will become essential for the formation of the *type* of community described in Acts as the incubator of a new social identity capable of

¹⁰⁴ Luke 9.46-48.

¹⁰⁵ Luke 9.49-50.

¹⁰⁶ Luke 12.32-35.

¹⁰⁷ Luke 24.25-27.

affirming, yet chastening and transcending competing (especially ethnic) social identities.

5**INITIATING A SCANDAL OF UNIVERSAL
PARTICULARITY
THE SPIRIT IN ACTS 1-2**

The chain-link transition at the seam between Luke and Acts suggests that the concerns Luke develops in his Gospel – including the identity concerns – will serve as a reliable foundation for the relationship between the Spirit and identity that will be developed in Acts.¹ Indeed, the relationship between the Spirit and the creation of (allocentric) identity is taken up and clarified immediately in Acts. One of Luke’s concerns in his second volume is to present the early community of Jesus-followers as a collective expression of the Spirit-formed allocentric identity apparent in the Gospel. It is participation in this community that incubates a superordinate social identity that affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identities *en route* to profound inter-ethnic reconciliation. As we will come to see, the Spirit is active at every level of the formation of this new trans-ethnic social identity.

This chapter will examine four major facets of Luke’s identity-forming program in Acts 1-2. First, I will discuss the social identities implicated in the Acts 1.8 programmatic passage in order to identify the categorization of the disciples as *Galilean* Israelites commissioned to enact a Spirit-empowered mission across various

¹ Longenecker 2005:166-7. Best 1984:3; Dunn 1996; Marshall 1980, *inter alia* demonstrate the close relationship between Luke 24 and Acts 1. Borgman 2006:31, 245, 253, 330 suggests Luke uses ‘signal words’ in Acts that direct hearers back to concepts developed in the Gospel. Thus Luke can move his narrative forward without reintroducing significant themes. For the prologue see Alexander 1993, but note the critique in Witherington 1998:14-15; Moessner 1999. For comparable two-volume prologues see Josephus *Contra Apionem*; Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica*; Dioscorides Pedanius *De materia medica* and Hippocrates *De prisca medicina*.

(dangerous) social boundaries. Second, I will discuss the suggestive data in Luke's account of the selection of Matthias in order to demonstrate that, prior to the coming of the Spirit, Luke understands human identity processes to function on a (now obsolete) criterion of social homogeneity. Third, turning to the Pentecost account, I will discuss the scandal of universal ethno-linguistic particularity implied by Luke's portrayal of what, in its context, should be considered a wholly 'unnecessary' language miracle.² This gives the first real glimpse into the proper place of ethnic identity within a new Spirit-formed identity. Finally, I will examine Peter's unique use of Joel 3.1-5 LXX in his Pentecost speech in order to understand Luke's foundational conviction that the Spirit is the primary marker of human identity.

The Spirit and Social Categories in Acts 1.1-11: Initiating an Allocentric Identity

Acts 1.1-11 marks the third major introduction in Luke-Acts (with Luke 3.1-14 and 4.14-30) that draws attention to the relationship between the Spirit and social identities. This facet of the Acts prologue has been overlooked due to a tendency to posit a wholly geographical interpretation to Acts 1.8.³

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria
and to the end of the earth (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς).

Geographical interpretations have led to an effort to define a precise referent for 'end of the earth': predominantly Rome, but also Ethiopia, Spain or the boundaries of the land of Israel.⁴ None of these suggestions is wholly satisfactory: the Gospel precedes Paul to Rome and renders his appearance there an anticlimactic climax; Spain is nowhere in view in the text; Ethiopia is reached by Acts 8 and then disappears; the idiosyncratic idea that the 'end of the earth' refers to Israel's

² Ethno-linguistic refers to a language of a particular ethnic group. Other ethnic groups (especially in Diaspora settings) often acquire these languages, but they are primarily identity markers for the group with which they are associated. Language does not constitute ethnicity, but is one component of shared identity.

³ This includes Wall 2003:43; Tannehill 1990:17; Wall & Robinson 2006:34; VanUnnik 1973; Fitzmyer 1998:201; Dunn 1996:11; Bruce 1951:71; Conzelmann 1987:7; Thornton 1978; Schwartz:1986; Ellis 1991; Hengel 1980; Johnson 1992.

⁴ *Rome*: Fitzmyer 1998:201; van Unnik 1973; Marshall 1980:61 (Marshall sees Rome as the 'completion of the first phase'.); Dunn 1996:11 (Dunn sees Rome as significant in the progression, but not 'the goal itself'.); *Ethiopia*: Cadbury 1955; Thornton 1978; Hengel 1980; *Spain*: Best 1984; Ellis 1991:132; *the boundaries of the land of Israel*: Schwartz 1986.

boundaries creates radical dissonance with Luke's emphasis on the spread of the gospel to non-Israelites. The major flaw in understanding Acts 1.8 geographically is the fact that the tensions created and resolved by the narrative do not arise when geographic boundaries are crossed. Narrative drama arises in the text when *social* (and particularly ethnic) boundaries are crossed. Luke's primary concern both in Acts 1.8 and in the text as a whole is with *people* and not *places*. Place names such as Samaria, Judea and Galilee 'are social products that reflect and configure ways of being in the world'.⁵ Geography, for Luke, is a signifier of a *primarily* ethnic referent.⁶

Because so much of the narrative tension in Acts is created by social boundaries, it is essential to be clear on the social identities in view in this programmatic passage. In this section I will investigate Luke's understanding of the disciples' *Galilean* identity, an identity that distinguishes them from the other groups in Acts 1.8. Finally, I will demonstrate that Luke portrays the Spirit as the causative agent for a specific sort of *allocentric identity*.

In-group Bias and a Truncated Expression of Israelite Identity

In Acts 1.1-11, Jesus' disciples operate with two layers of social identity: Galilean and Israelite.⁷ The disciples' Israelite identity is clearly expressed in response to Jesus' post-resurrection teaching concerning the kingdom of God and the coming of the Spirit: 'Lord, will you at this time restore (ἀποκαθίστημι) the kingdom to Israel?'⁸ Luke's use of ἀποκαθίστημι, commonly deployed by the LXX and Josephus to describe historic or hoped-for national restoration, makes it probable that Luke (aware as he is of Roman domination of Judea) is depicting the

⁵ Green 1998:85 fn5.

⁶ Brawley 1987:32-3. Witherington 1998:34-35 describes Greco-Roman 'historiography κατά γένος', exemplified by Ephorus, that describes events in relation to people groups rather than chronology. A people-centered hermeneutic does not obscure Luke's vision for the global reign of the exalted Jesus. It simply recognizes that Luke constantly invokes the Spirit as his text deals with *social* boundaries.

⁷ I will refer to Galilean identity as a 'regional' identity, though according to Barthian ethnic theory it could be legitimately called an ethnic identity. Pliny knows hundreds of locally defined people groups who possessed what we would call ethnic identity (*Natural History* II.15.116; IV 10.33, 12.85; V.4.29-30).

⁸ Acts 1.6.

disciples' hoped for national political liberation.⁹ The question reflects a hope 'fully in continuity with the hope of Israel's prophets', but it also indicates the ready salience of Israelite group identity.¹⁰ The assumption appears to be that 'kingdom of God' (Acts 1.3) and 'kingdom of Israel' (Acts 1.6) are co-terminus. We know from our discussion of SIT that groups are likely to ascribe access to desired outcomes only to themselves, and this question is another example of the phenomena noted in Luke 3.8 and 4.22. This (ultimately unsatisfactory) expression of the relationship between Israelite identity and resource allocation, even among followers of Jesus, provides a baseline against which Luke will develop a prominent motif: *the ongoing identity transformation of the in-group*. Neither the early community nor its individual members have immediate and full awareness of the proper expression of their ethnic identity. Luke appears to *expect* exclusivistic expressions of in-group bias apart from the Spirit.

The Salience of Nested Galilean Identity

When a person has multiple nested social identities, the identity of the out-group in view determines the salient social identity in operation.¹¹ This, I suggest, is the case in Luke's sub-categorization of identities in Acts 1.1-11. Because Jesus' commission (Acts 1.8) includes both Israelites and non-Israelites, the most logical immediate level of social distinction (the mechanism through which group identity is maintained) is at the level of regional Israelite identity. While the disciples express fully Israelite ethnic identity in Acts 1.6, they cannot be categorized as Jerusalemites or (regionally) as Judeans.¹² It should not surprise that Luke emphasizes the disciples' *Galilean* identity nested within their Israelite ethnic identity. This view is overlooked by some scholars who puzzle over the apparent

⁹ See e.g. Exodus 4.7; 14.27; Jeremiah 15.19; 16.15; 23.8; 24.6; 50.19; Hosea 11.11; 1 Esdras 6.26; 2 Maccabees 11.25. *Antiquities* 11.2, 14, 58, 63, 92, 88, 144; 12.228; 13.261; 14.313. Peter uses ἀποκατάστασις with a broader scope in Acts 3.19-21. Cho 2005:182 wrongly claims nothing in the context suggests nationalistic implications.

¹⁰ Tiede 1986:280; Cf. Dunn 1996:4.

¹¹ Jenkins 1997:85.

¹² When I use the term 'Judean' I am referring only to residents of the region of Judea proper, not all Ἰουδαῖοι.

absence of Galilee in Jesus' commission, though evidence for the role of Galilean identity is close to hand.¹³

Acts 1.11: Men of Galilee (Ἄνδρες Γαλιλαῖοι), why do you stand looking into heaven?

Acts 2.7: Are not all these who are speaking Galileans (Γαλιλαῖοι)?

The categorization of Jesus' disciples as 'Galileans' establishes that, for Luke, regional subgroup differentiation was a feature of Israelite ethnic identity. At the level of Galilean regional identity fellow Israelites could be categorized as 'other'.¹⁴ The reality of the category 'Galilean Israelite' may have been reinforced by distinct administrative structures, regional and class distinctions.¹⁵ I have already discussed Josephus' awareness of distinct Galilean identity and Philo's evidence for dual identities in antiquity. Additionally, there is ample (though later) Rabbinic evidence indicative of differentiation between Galilean and Judean identity that is often marked by an air of Judean superiority.¹⁶

Luke's Gospel and Jesus' Commission: Encountering Perilous Identity Boundaries

Overt reference to Galilean identity indicates that regional identities are salient in Acts 1.1-11. With respect to Galilean identity, each group implicated in the Acts 1.8 commission – Jerusalemites, Judeans, Samaritans and inhabitants of 'the end of the earth' – possess distinct identities at least at a subgroup level and therefore reflect real social boundaries. Luke's Gospel provides the context for understanding that those implicated in Jesus' commission can be 'threatening others'.

¹³ Witherington 1998:111 suggests Luke's unawareness of the details of Galilean evangelization. Fitzmyer 1998:206 says 'Nothing should be made of the omission of "Galilee" here; Luke is simply using a stock phrase in mentioning the two [Judea and Samaria]' (cf. Conzelmann 1987:7). Pao 2003:95 suggests that Acts 1.8 collapses Judea and Samaria (and Galilee?) into a 'theo-political' unity.

¹⁴ See ch. 4 for Luke's Galilean emphasis.

¹⁵ Reed 2000:55; Vermes 1973:43-44; Horsley 1996:176-177. For an extended treatment of Galilean identity, see Cromhout 2007:209-235; Zangenberg 2007.

¹⁶ *b. Erubin* 53b. 'The children of Judea who paid strict attention to the words of their masters and propounded many questions retained all they learned. The Galileans, however, who did not pay strict attention to the language of their masters, and did not question them, did not retain anything. The Judeans learned from one master, hence they remembered what they learned; but the Galileans had many teachers and in consequence they did not retain anything'. Cf. *y. Shabbat* 15b; *b. Megillah* 24b. Freyne 1987:600; Vermes 1973:42-57; Neubauer 1885:51.

(1) *'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem...'* Subgroup identity differences are often amplified because subgroups have to work hard to achieve intragroup distinction from other subgroups who, by virtue of their participation in a common in-group, share similar identity characteristics.¹⁷ This may be reflected in Luke's interest in Jerusalem (64 of the 77 NT references to the city by its proper name appear in Luke-Acts). For Luke, Jerusalem is the center of Israelite ethnic identity and those who have positions of power in Jerusalem have a great stake in maintaining the prototypicality of their subgroup identity. This is a factor in the resistance to the (Galilean) Jesus movement both from high profile Jerusalemite leaders (Acts 4.1-21; 5.17-41) and from rank and file members of the Jerusalem subgroup (Acts 21.27-32; 22.22-23).¹⁸ From a Jerusalem-centric viewpoint, Galileans were likely considered to possess less prototypical subgroup identity when compared to Jerusalemites.¹⁹ Explicit intragroup conflict between Jerusalemites and Galileans appears in Josephus' account of Judean and Jerusalemite betrayal of Galilean interests by allowing their fear of Roman intervention to take precedence over intra-Israelite loyalty in the wake of a Samaritan attack on Galileans ca. 50 CE.²⁰ The group categorization that Josephus reflects indicates a clear subgroup distinction between Galileans and Jerusalemites (especially Jerusalemite leaders). For followers of Jesus, just weeks after their leader was crucified at the hands of Judean and Roman leaders in Jerusalem, the call to Jerusalem was the call to cross a frightful boundary indeed.²¹ This is reflected in Chrysostom's awareness that Jerusalem was the place in which the disciples were most 'afraid'.²²

¹⁷ Grant 1993:31; Huddy 1995:98 claims subgroup differentiation is strongest when there are objective status differences between subgroups.

¹⁸ In Acts 21, Israelites from Asia stir up the Jerusalem crowds, but they stir them up precisely by claiming that Paul has transgressed central markers of Israelite identity (the law and the Temple).

¹⁹ Alon 1967:317 suggests Jerusalemites looked down on 'rustic' Galileans; cf. the recognition of Peter's Galilean accent (Matthew 26.73; cf. Luke 22.59).

²⁰ *War* 2.232ff, esp. 237. Jerusalem leaders urge the people to 'not bring the utmost dangers of destruction upon them, in order to avenge themselves upon one Galilean only'.

²¹ Luke only holds Jerusalem Israelites accountable for Jesus' death (Acts 2.36; 3.13-5). Diaspora Israelites are not accused of complicity in Jesus' death (see Acts 13.27-28). See Tannehill 1990:28.

²² *Homilies on Acts of the Disciples* [NPNF 1.11.13]. Marshall 1998:58 notes danger in 'Jerusalem'. Bauckham 2006:ch 8 suggests that Jerusalem was dangerous enough for Jesus' followers that the pre-Markan source of Mark 11, 14-16 (which he takes to have Jerusalem provenance) reflects a strategy 'protective anonymity'.

(2) *...and in all Judea.* Luke's differentiation between Galilean and Judean identity is most evident in Luke's decision to forestall accounts of mortal opposition to Jesus until Jesus has departed from Galilee and entered Judea.²³

(3) *... and Samaria.* The commission to Samaria is an invitation to intergroup contact. Luke's interest in Samaritans is reflected in the parable of the merciful Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37) and the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17.11-19), accounts that only have rhetorical force if there are significant social boundary issues between Israelites and Samaritans. This is supported by Josephus' multiple reports of Samaritan/Israelite (and even specifically Samaritan/Galilean) antipathy.²⁴ The social conflict that simmered just beneath the surface of Israelite/Samaritan relations is evident in possibly the ugliest passage in the Gospel tradition, James' and John's request to destroy a Samaritan village with heavenly fire (Luke 9.51-56). It is no coincidence that this extreme expression of ethnocentrism is the first social interaction *outside the boundaries of Galilee* in Luke's Gospel.

(4) *The end of the earth.* Two factors at this point require elaboration to support my argument that Acts 1.8 primarily concerns peoples and not places: (1) the phrase 'end of the earth' at the very least implies the ἔθνη and (2) the ἔθνη constitute an often dangerous social boundary.²⁵

The first point is clarified by the relationship between Luke 24.47-53 and Acts 1.1-11. Longenecker has demonstrated the thematic continuity rhetorically signified in the chain-link transition between these passages.²⁶ The parallels are clear: identification of disciples as μάρτυρες, allusion to 'the promise of the Father', and commissions with a common origin (Jerusalem) and broad scope. Johnson's view that Acts 1.1-11 is an 'elaborate variant' of Luke 24.47-53 has ample warrant.²⁷ In this parallel structure, 'end of the earth' in Acts 1.8 is set in tandem with 'all the non-Israelites (ἔθνη)' in Luke 24.47. The passages both appear to draw on Isaiah 49.6

²³ See chapter 4 for Luke's differentiation between Galilee and Judea.

²⁴ *Antiquities* 18.30; *War* 2.232ff.

²⁵ Cf. Wall 2002:134 fn 324 who explicitly claims that 'Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1.8 concerns the geography (not the biography) of mission'.

²⁶ Longenecker 2005:166-7.

²⁷ Johnson 1992:28.

LXX where ‘end of the earth’ stands in poetic parallel with ἔθνη.²⁸ Paul’s use of Isaiah 49.6 LXX to legitimate the broad ethnic scope of his mission (Acts 13.47) is evidence that Luke is aware that ‘end of the earth’ implies the ἔθνη.

Luke perceives intergroup tension in Israel’s relationship with the ἔθνη that is bi-directional and widespread.²⁹

- An Israelite mob is roused to a murderous fervor at the suggestion of the extension of in-group benefits to the ethnic ‘other’ (Luke 4.24-26)
- Two Galilean Israelite disciples seek to annihilate a village of ethnic Samaritans. (Luke 9.51)
- Israelites refuse to share table fellowship with non-Israelites. (Acts 11.1-3)
- Romans defend their own ethnic *ethos* against ethnic pollution. (Acts 16.19ff)
- Ephesian townsfolk take vigilante action in defense of their ethnic customs and worship (Acts 19.25ff)

It is precisely this interethnic boundary that is most nettlesome in Luke’s text and its navigation requires nothing less than the development of a *new social identity*.

Identified by/Identifying with Jesus

The intergroup context envisioned in Acts 1.8 underscores the fact that Jesus’ commission moves the disciples away from an identity centered primarily on one’s ethnic (sub-)group and toward a new identity centered on Jesus and empowered by the Spirit.

So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses (ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες) in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.’³⁰

²⁸ Haenchen 1971:143 fn 9; Pesch 1986:I.70; Moore 1998; Pao 2003:91-6. See e.g. Deuteronomy 28.49; Psalm 134.6-7; Isaiah 8.9, 14.21.22; 48.20; 49.6; 62.11; Jerermiah 10.12; 16.19; 1 Maccabees 3.9.

²⁹ See chapter 2 for ἔθνη as an ethnic category.

³⁰ Acts 1.6-8.

Jesus' followers initially identify themselves primarily via their ethnic identity (Israel), but Jesus expects his disciples to function not primarily as Israelites or Galileans in the fulfillment of their task; they are to function primarily as *witnesses of Jesus* - μου μάρτυρες. 'Spirit of prophecy' advocates regularly ignore the possessive force of the μου in Acts 1.8. This leads to a one-sided emphasis on 'witness' as an *activity to be undertaken* by the disciples and an emphasis on verbal proclamation as the fundamental expression of the commission.³¹ However, the fact that Jesus *identifies* the disciples as μάρτυρες rather than commanding them to engage in the activity of witness (μαρτυρέω) has important implications. μου μάρτυρες implies both witnesses *to* and witnesses *belonging to* Jesus.³²

Two factors strongly support my suggestion that ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες implies *identity* as well as an activity.

(1) Luke's only other use of εἰμί + μου + a noun in the genitive (cf. Acts 1.8) is εἶναι μου μαθητής (Luke 14.26, 27, 33).³³

If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple (εἶναί μου μαθητής). Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple (εἶναί μου μαθητής)... Whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple (εἶναί μου μαθητής).

'Be my disciple' implies both identity (in this context, membership within a group sharing a relationship to Jesus) and activity (discipleship).³⁴ As is the case with ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες, identity and activity are inseparable and mutually constitutive.³⁵ The Jesus-centered identity μαθητής in Luke 14 transcends kinship identities just as the Jesus-centered identity μαρτύρης identity in Acts 1.8 transcends ethnic identities.

(2) Luke's use of Isaiah 49.6 in Acts 1.8 is a part of a wider tendency of Luke to utilize Isaiah 40-55 for much of his imagery of 'witness'.³⁶ Isaiah 40-55 provides an

³¹ So Menzies 1991:244; Cho 2005:185.

³² Johnson 1992:30 suggests μου μάρτυρες implies witness *to* Jesus and witnesses *belonging to* Jesus.

³³ Luke has 139 deployments of μου + a noun in the genitive.

³⁴ Cf. the identity marker in 1 Corinthians 1.12: ἐγώ ... εἰμι Παύλου, ἐγώ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, etc.

³⁵ The identity/activity relationship is put to the test in Jesus' temptation. See chapter 4.

³⁶ See esp. Pao 2003:70-110.

especially rich context from which to understand the connection between a theocentric identity marked by both Spirit and ‘witness’.³⁷ In Isaiah 44.1-8 LXX God promises to *place his Spirit* upon the seed and children of Jacob/Israel (44.3) causing them to spring up (44.4) and *identify themselves*:

This one will say, ‘I am the Lord’s’, another one will call himself by the name of Jacob, and a different one will write ‘I am the Lord’s because of the name of Israel’ (Isaiah 44.5).

Subsequently, those who proclaim their God-centered identity are *witnesses* (μάρτυρες; Isaiah 44.8) of God’s sovereignty. A similar link appears in Isaiah 43.4-13 LXX.³⁸

‘Everyone who is called by my name (*identity*), whom I created for my glory (*activity associated with identity*), whom I formed and made... You are my witnesses (ὕμεις ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες)’.³⁹

In Deutero-Isaiah, ‘witness’ implies both identity and activity.⁴⁰

The relationship between identity as a ‘witness’ and ethnic identity in this passage is important. Jesus’ early followers are not told to engage the ‘other’ primarily on the basis of their own ethnic identities, but as ‘witnesses’ of/belonging to Jesus. ‘Witness’ is the first of several categories (notably ‘slave’/‘servant’ and ‘disciple’) that express the identity of a person/group based upon relationship with Jesus. The activities implied by these identities will emerge as the norms of the Jesus-group, behaviors that faithfully express the prototypical characteristics of the group’s identity.⁴¹ ‘Witness’ is an appropriate metaphor for an allocentric identity because it always involves ‘speaking and doing on behalf of, and in service to, something or someone beyond the self’.⁴² In Acts 1.8 the disciples’ identity is reoriented around the person of Jesus and directed toward the ‘other’.

The immediate ramification of this de-centered identity is the de-sacralization of ethnic identity, which is reinforced by the surprising outward

³⁷ Bauckham 1998:47 suggests Isaiah 40-55 was among the most important textual units for NT authors. For Luke’s use of Isaiah, see Pao 2003.

³⁸ Wright 2006:66 claims ‘It is almost certain that Luke intends us to hear in this [Acts 1.8] an echo of... Isaiah 43.10-12’.

³⁹ Isaiah 43.7, 12.

⁴⁰ ‘Servant’ and ‘witness’ are used to express similar concepts in Isaiah 44.21; 45.4-6; 48.10-11; 49.1-6; 54.5; 55.4-5, a factor important for Peter’s Pentecost speech.

⁴¹ Waldzus, et al, 2003:32. For group norms in collectivistic cultures, see Triandis 1990.

⁴² Weissenbeuhler 1992:64.

trajectory of the commission. While Jerusalem remains a central point throughout the Acts narrative, the movement Jesus suggests is centrifugal – *outward from Jerusalem, the ethnic heart of Israel, and towards the ‘other’*.⁴³ ‘The Spirit drives outward and seeks to gather in, even in the midst of conflict and opposition’.⁴⁴ This stands in contrast to centripetal expectations of the Old Testament, where the nations stream toward Israel.⁴⁵ If Jesus implicitly affirms (or at least does not deny) that the restoration of Israel is somehow at hand, what is being restored in Acts 1.8 is in large part Israel’s identity as witness to the nations.⁴⁶

Finally, it must be emphasized that the allocentric activity/identity ‘witness’ is only available through the power of the Spirit.⁴⁷ The close relationship between Spirit and ‘witness’ will allow Luke to draw either explicitly on a visible/audible Spirit manifestation (Acts 10.44ff; cf. Luke 3.22) or upon a manifestation of ‘witness’ (Acts 9.27) in order to demonstrate a common identity capable of transcending social barriers.

Acts 1.1-11: Summary

Acts 1.1-11, set within a context of entitlement expectations leveled by ethnic Israelites (Acts 1.6), features a group of *Galileans* commissioned to exercise a new Jesus-centered identity toward all manner of ‘other’. It is the Spirit that will enable them faithfully to express their new identity in these difficult social contexts. This passage continues Luke’s penchant for connecting the Spirit and ethnic (or regional/local) identity in key introductory passages.⁴⁸ From this perspective, Acts 1.8 indeed serves as an organizational pattern for the book. Acts will describe, in order, interaction with Jerusalemites, (regional) Judean Israelites, Samaritans, and finally the ἔθνη. A peoples-centered hermeneutic resolves the

⁴³ Scott 2002:57 notes ‘The geographical movement in Acts is centrifugal – away from Jerusalem’, yet he does not develop the ethnic significance of this reorientation. Bauckham 1996:480 notes this movement does not imply ‘corresponding centripetal movement’ in which ‘the eschatological people of God must constantly look back’.

⁴⁴ Weissenbeuhler 1992:64.

⁴⁵ Isaiah 2.2-3; 60.18-20; Jeremiah 3.17; Micah 4.1-2; Zechariah 8.22; 14.16; Tobit 13.11; 14.6.

⁴⁶ Wenk 2004:251: ‘The contrast expressed by vv. 7-8 presents a change of emphasis from Israel’s kingship to her task as servant bringing the light of God’s salvation to the nations’ (cf. Isaiah 43.10-12; 49.6).

⁴⁷ The use of ἐπέρχομαι in Acts 1.8 to describe the Spirit’s coming is paralleled only by Luke 1.35 where the Spirit’s role is clearly creative. Perhaps this anticipates the Spirit’s ‘creation’ of the new community.

⁴⁸ Cf. Luke 3.8ff; 4.16ff.

problem exegetes create by attempting to locate a specific geographic referent for the 'end of the earth'.

Old Identity Paradigms before Pentecost: Choosing One Like Us

The selection of Matthias stands in somewhat jarring contrast to the outward press of the Acts 1.8 commission. While this episode is often taken as an example of the prayerful obedience of the church, I suggest that Luke subtly develops a parallel with an inappropriate expression of in-group identity from Luke 9.49-50 in order to establish Matthias' selection as an example of the (now defunct) paradigm of in-group homogeneity that exists apart from the Spirit and that determines entitlement on the basis of subgroup prototypicality.⁴⁹

Peter appears to ignore Jesus' command (Acts 1.4: παραγγέλω) simply to *wait* (Acts 1.4: περιμένω, cf. Luke 24.49) for the coming of the Spirit and may implicitly be understood to act *without* the Spirit.⁵⁰ Correlate to this fact, Peter's criteria for a 'witness' appear to be more socially exclusive than those of Jesus'. According to Peter, Judas' replacement must be:

One of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us -- one of these men must become with us a witness (μάρτυς) to his resurrection.⁵¹

Jesus' criterion for witnesses only includes a post-resurrection encounter with Jesus and *not* participation in Jesus' entire public ministry, thus more people are eligible to be 'witnesses' under Jesus' criterion than under Peter's.⁵² Jesus gives his Lukan 'witness-commission' to 'the eleven gathered together and those who were with them' (Luke 24.33). The narrative flow of chapter 24 makes it highly plausible that

⁴⁹ Bock 2007:90; Johnson 1992:39; Barrett 1994:94. Hentschel 2007:300 is characteristic: 'Durch den positiven Ausgang der Rede wird einerseits die Autorität des Petrus als Schriftausleger und Gemeindeleiter bestätigt, andererseits wird die Rechtmässigkeit der Auswahl und Beauftragung des zwölften Apostels - und damit auch der zwölf Apostel insgesamt - durch Gott selbst beglaubigt.'

⁵⁰ Roberts Gaventa 2004 notes the negative function of human initiative in Acts. Dunn 1996:4 notes the strangeness of Peter's attempt to replace Judas. Conversely, it could be that the command to 'wait' did not imply inactivity.

⁵¹ Acts 1.21-22.

⁵² In Acts 'witness' only refers to those who have seen the risen Jesus. This extends to Paul by virtue of his experience on the Damascus road. See Acts 1.22; 2.32; 3.15; 4.33; 5.32; 10.39; 13.31; 22.18; 23.11; 26.16; 26.22. Fitzmyer 1998:466 notes that more than 12 are 'witnesses' in Acts because the criterion is simply a resurrection appearance. Luke will yet develop broader categories: servant, disciple and brother.

Jesus designates as ‘witnesses’ (Luke 24.48) ‘Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them’ (Luke 24.10). Yet these women do not appear in the Gospel until Luke 8.1-3, well after the selection of the apostles in Luke 6.13. Thus, the women have not been present from ‘the baptism of John’ (Acts 1.22). Moreover, it is likely that there were others among the 120 who, like the women, had seen Jesus after the resurrection but had joined the movement after John’s baptism. But for Peter, the criterion for the twelfth witness is social homogeneity; he/she must be as much like the Eleven as possible.

Though it is difficult to say with certainty that Luke is unimpressed with Peter’s action, a provocative parallel between Acts 1.21-22ff and a defective expression of in-group membership in Luke 9.49-50ff raises eyebrows. The following points suggest that Luke considers Matthias’ selection to have been based upon a now obsolete paradigm of social homogeneity:

1. Peter’s criteria are suggestively similar to John’s statement in Luke 9.49.

Master, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, *because he does not follow with us.*

For John, ability to participate in ‘apostolic’ ministry (only the apostles had received authority over demons and disease in Luke 9.1) is contingent upon membership in the apostolic in-group. Jesus rebukes John and establishes sympathy with Jesus’ mission as the sole criterion for ministry in Jesus’ name.

But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you.’⁵³

Likewise Peter wants to choose a replacement for Judas from a pool of those who are *most similar* to the Eleven:

...One of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.⁵⁴

2. John’s expression of in-group bias comes just prior to the Jesus-group’s departure from Galilee. Peter’s expression of in-group bias comes just before

⁵³ Luke 9.50.

⁵⁴ Acts 1.21.

the Jesus-group's departure from Galilean regional homogeneity. In both Luke and Acts the turn beyond 'Galilee' is preceded by the assumption that participation in Jesus' mission is determined by one's prototypicality relative to the apostolic in-group.

3. Departure from Galilee (Luke 9.51) and departure from Galilean homogeneity (Acts 2.1) are initiated with the phrase ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν.⁵⁵ These are the only appearances of this construction in the New Testament or LXX.⁵⁶
4. In Luke, following an expression of in-group bias, the turn from Galilee and the distinctive phrase τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν, *non-apostles* participate in Jesus' mission at Jesus behest. In Luke 10.1 Jesus sends out another (ἕτερος) seventy in order to do ministry in his name. Sandiyagu has demonstrated that Luke consistently uses ἕτερος to mean 'another of a different kind' and ἄλλος to mean 'another of the same kind'.⁵⁷ In social contexts ἕτερος is a member of an out-group while ἄλλος refers to an in-group member.⁵⁸ Jesus' response to the in-group bias demonstrated by John in Luke 9.49 and the ethnocentric hatred expressed by John and James in Luke 9.54 is to send out 70 of *another kind*. In Acts 2.1-4 the Spirit empowers *all 120* (some of whom, like Mary and the women [cf. Acts 1.14], do not meet Peter's criteria) to participate in the mission of Jesus as 'witnesses' and to extend the benefits of Jesus to those that Acts 1.8 has categorized as 'other' – in this case, non-Galileans.⁵⁹ The mission is accomplished by the Spirit's empowerment to speak in 'other' (ἕτερος; Acts 2.4) languages. This decisive action of the Spirit is necessary *precisely when the disciples have to leave the social boundaries that mark their Galilean identity*.
5. Peter is one of the most dynamic characters in Acts and he experiences unmistakable transformation through the work of the Spirit. Peter is among the disciples who have difficulty discerning the implications of Jesus' teaching (Luke 9.44-45; 18.31-34). Peter experiences a Spirit-influenced

⁵⁵ Luke 9.51: 'the days' = plural; Acts 2.1: 'the day' = singular.

⁵⁶ The parallel is noted by Tannehill 1990:26 who suggests only that both constructions prepare for the fulfillment of prophecy (Luke 9.22, 31, 44; Acts 1.4-8).

⁵⁷ Sandiyagu 2006:108, 117.

⁵⁸ ἕτερος; Luke 8.3; 10.1; Acts 15.35, *passim*. ἄλλος; Luke 7.19-20; 7.32; 9.8; 9.19; 20.16; Acts 15.2, *passim*.

⁵⁹ Cf. Acts 2.8.

change of heart regarding ministry in Samaria (Acts 8.1-25) and again in Cornelius' household (Acts 10.1ff) after initially not understanding a divine revelation. Peter is not alone; without the Spirit no human character in Luke has impeccable behavior or understanding. Given the gradual metamorphosis of Peter's character, it would be unsurprising if Luke was here using Peter to demonstrate that the Spirit allows for a different means, method and criterion for determining who can participate in the mission of Jesus.⁶⁰

6. Casting lots, the method of selection for Judas' replacement, was last used in Luke's Gospel by *Roman soldiers* dividing Jesus' garment.⁶¹
7. Luke implies elsewhere that only Jesus or the Spirit have the authority to designate someone an 'apostle'.⁶²

The parallel movements in Luke 9-10 and Acts 1-2 suggest that the selection of Matthias is an example of a now obsolete criterion of social homogeneity.⁶³ The absence of overt critique by Luke indicates that this is perhaps the best that can be expected apart from the Spirit. Luke likely intends his description to function as an example of the difference in selection criteria pre- and post-Pentecost. After Pentecost the *Spirit* itself will be the chief criterion for the selection of commissioned agents of Jesus and regularly will commission *aprototypical* group members like Greek-speaking Israelites, former enemies of the church, and non-apostles to minister in the name of Jesus.⁶⁴

Pentecost and the Scandal of Universal (Ethno-linguistic) Particularity

Pentecost stands in answer to Peter's criterion of social homogeneity and brings Galilean Jesus-followers into contact with other Israelite regional subgroups.

⁶⁰ Darr 1992:53 notes that the appearance of the Scriptures does not ensure 'narrative reliability'. 'The scriptures alone are not sufficient to legitimate anything; they too must be "accredited" in each case by the Spirit, or by a figure who has the Spirit's sanction'.

⁶¹ Acts 1.26=ἔδωκαν κλήρους; Luke 23.34=ἔβαλον κλήρους. Cf. Zechariah's selection (Luke 1.9)=λαγχάνω; Judas' selection by Jesus in Acts 1.17=λαγχάνω.

⁶² See Luke 6.13; Acts 9.1-31; 13.2-4; 14.14.

⁶³ Matthias' absence from the narrative highlights the questionable nature of his 'Spirit-free' selection, as does the fact that after the coming of the Spirit, there is no impulse to replace James (Acts 12.1-2).

⁶⁴ See Acts 6.3; 13.2.

In this section I will demonstrate that, at Pentecost, the Spirit preserves universal ethno-linguistic particularity in ways that stood in contrast with a discernable first century Israelite expectation. I will also discuss how Peter's distinct modification of Joel 3.1-5a LXX reveals Luke's conviction concerning the inseparable connection between the Spirit and identity. This section will prepare Luke's hearers for the introduction of the early community, the social group that will become the incubator of primary social identity for its members.

The Pentecost account is littered with Israelite subgroup identities, each of which presumably bring a set of subgroup norms and project the prototypicality of their own identity for the larger ethnic in-group. We must reckon with Luke's emphasis on these distinct groups, beginning with a brief description of the identities formed by the social groups in view in Acts 2.

(1) *Galilean Israelite identity.* The initial group of Jesus-followers are identified by the crowd as 'Galileans', implying both the salience of Galilean identity and differentiation between Galileans and the group identities of the crowd members (Acts 2.7; cf. 2.9-11). Evidence from the period indicates that Galileans had a distinctive accent of which Judeans made sport.⁶⁵ If Luke's hearers are aware of this point of subgroup differentiation, it would be especially relevant to emphasize Galilean identity in the midst of a linguistic miracle.

(2) *Diaspora Israelite subgroup identity.* The list of national identities in Acts 2.9-11 has generated much scholarly attention, especially with concern for the provenance of the list and the appearance of Ἰουδαία in 2.9.⁶⁶

And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, 'Are not all

⁶⁵ Rabbinic sources make sport of Galilean accents due to their indistinct pronunciation of gutturals (See Neubauer 1885:51; Vermes 1973:42-57; *b.Erubim* 53; *b.Megillah* 24b). My emphasis on Galilean identity directly contrasts Fitzmyer 1998:240 and Conzelmann 1987:14 who both suggest speculation about Galilean identity is 'idle' (Fitzmyer's term). Dunn 1996:27 is more sensitive, suggesting that the linguistic differentiation heightens the 'antithesis between the small regional beginnings' and the 'universal potential' of the call of Jesus.

⁶⁶ Commentators have engineered many readings for Ἰουδαίαν: Armenia (Tertullian, Augustine), Syria (Jerome), India (Chrysostom), 'Greater Syria' (Hengel 2000), and variously Idumea, Ionia, Bithynia, Cilicia, Lydia and Adiabene.

these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, *Judea* and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.’⁶⁷

While discussions of the list’s provenance have led to widely divergent suggestions, the list is most intelligible in the context of other lists of Diaspora regions with large Israelite populations.⁶⁸ Attempts to explain Ἰουδαία in 2.9 have produced diverging results.⁶⁹ Finally, some interpret the list as indicative of either the regathering of Israel or an anticipation of the advance of the gospel to non-Israelites.⁷⁰

Luke’s list is broadly representative of Diaspora identities possessed by devout (εὐλαβεῖς) Israelites residing (κατοικοῦντες) in Jerusalem (Acts 2.5).⁷¹ Luke’s characteristic use of κατοικοῦντες implies if not permanent re-settlers in Jerusalem, at least some level of long term residency.⁷² Luke thus identifies ethnic Israelites (Ἰουδαῖοι: 2.5) and then lists their countries of origin, creating a scenario of nested local and regional identities (e.g. Cappadocian Israelites, Parthian Israelites, Judean Israelites, etc). Taken this way, the presence in the list of Ἰουδαία is unproblematic.⁷³ Luke simply tells us that there are ethnic Israelites from Parthia, Libya, and Egypt and from Judea proper as well. Josephus demonstrates a similar usage in a description of the crowds gathered for a Pentecost festival,

⁶⁷ Acts 2.8-11.

⁶⁸ See Philo *Embassy* 281-2; *Flaccus* 45-6; Pseudo-Philo *Bib Ant* 4.3-17; *Syb Or* 3.160-72, 205-9.

⁶⁹ Notable attempts have been made by Kilpatrick 1975; Bauckham 1995:419, 425; 2001:143 and Scott 1993; 2002:58-72; Hengel 2000.

⁷⁰ The inclusion of non-Israelites is supported by Brinkman 1963. The regathering motif is advanced by Bauckham 1995; 2001; and Pao 2003:esp 130-131. Pao’s suggestion that the Jerusalem crowd represents the in-gathered exiles in the restoration of must contend with the fact that if the people dwelling in Jerusalem have come of their own accord they have not been ‘regathered’ by the work either of Jesus or of the Spirit.

⁷¹ Witherington 1998:135 notes that εὐλαβεῖς is only used by Luke for ethnic Israelites, never God-fearers or proselytes.

⁷² So Johnson 1992:43; Witherington 1998:135. But see Bauckham 2001:471-2 for the alternate view. See Luke 11.26; 13.4; Acts 1.19, 20; 2.5, 9, 14; 4.16; 7.2, 4, 48; 9.22, 32, 35; 13.27; 17.24, 26; 19.10; 22.12. In each case, permanent or at least long-term residence is implied. Contrast this with Luke’s use of καταμένω (Acts 1.13) for temporary residents. The main argument for the ‘pilgrim’ view is the presence of κατοικοῦντες in Acts 2.9. We know with certainty, however, that there were many Diaspora Israelites returning to settle permanently in Jerusalem in the first century CE; cf. Acts 6.9. See Levine 2005:ch. 3; Rahmani 1994:17.

⁷³ Bruce 1951:85 notes that the ‘analogy of the accompanying place names is sufficient to explain the anarthrous *Ioudaia*’. The puzzlement elicited by Luke’s inclusion of Ἰουδαία suggests insensitivity to the realities of ethnicity in Luke’s world.

differentiating between those from Galilee, Idumea, Perea, and Jericho (all of whom are ethnic Israelites) and people ‘actually from Judea’ (ὁ γνήσιος ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἰουδαίας λαός).⁷⁴ Because nested identities become salient based upon the out-group in view, the presence of other Israelite subgroups moves Galilean identity to the fore. The early stages of Acts 1.8 imply intra-Israelite interaction and the Pentecost account gives us just that.

There is some textual and physical evidence that Diaspora identities remained salient for those who had returned to Jerusalem. Some Jerusalem ossuaries include the diaspora homeland of the occupant.⁷⁵ Luke, at least, envisions ongoing salience of Diaspora identities among re-settlers when describing Jerusalem synagogues oriented around Diaspora identities.⁷⁶ Rabbinic evidence points to a similar phenomenon.⁷⁷ We cannot know for certain whether the existence of homeland-specific synagogues would have created intra-Israelite tension, but the conflict among the Hebrew-speaking and Greek-speaking widows in Acts 6 suggests that Luke thought these types of identities did clash. For our purposes, the important point is that Luke is aware that the dually-identified Israelites in Jerusalem were *not* Galileans. They were ‘other’.⁷⁸

(3) *The Spirit and the 120*. The scene with which Luke has left us is marked by Israelite subgroup identities. Yet in this context of diverse identities, the *allocentric identity* best described as ‘witness’ is activated by the coming of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus’ promises in Acts 1.5-8. The transformative effect of the Spirit on all those gathered is exemplified by the boldness of Peter who just weeks prior trembled before a lowly servant girl (Luke 23.54-62).⁷⁹ Peter representatively claims

⁷⁴ War 2.42-43. See Esler 2003:71-73 for the translation.

⁷⁵ Rahmani 1994:17.

⁷⁶ Acts 6.9.

⁷⁷ See discussion in Levine 2005:ch 2.

⁷⁸ There is not space to discuss the relevance of the ‘proselytes’ in Acts 2.11. Proselytes, though technically having fulfilled criteria for full social conversion to ethnic Israelite identity, continued to be viewed as less than prototypical. The distinction in the later material is not religious, but thoroughly ethnic and the restrictions leveled against proselytes were centered on marriage/procreation. See Exodus 23.4; Leviticus 16.29; Numbers 9.14; Deuteronomy 1.16. For Qumran, see Peshier II Sam 7 (1-13); CD 14.4-6. For rabbinic evidence, see *b.Kiddushin* 75b; *b.Baba Qamma* 38b; *b. Hullin* 3b; *m. Kiddushin* 4.1; *m. Bikkurim*. For secondary literature, see Baumgarten 1982a; 1982b; Cohen 1999:168; Fitzmyer 1998:243; Johnson 1992:44.

⁷⁹ Luke is emphatic in 2.1-4 that the 120 were *all* together, the sound filled the *whole* house; tongues of fire rested upon *each* of them; they were *all* filled with the Spirit (Dunn 1996:25; Menzies 1991:208 fn 4; Wall 2002:55).

his witness identity in both word and deed, and the first impulse of the Spirit-empowered witnesses is *outward toward the crowd of 'others'*.⁸⁰

Language and Identity at Pentecost

While Pentecost creates a wake that cuts through the entire text of Acts, I will confine myself to a discussion of two facets of the text that reveal Luke's distinct understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and identity: the role of the Spirit in the maintenance of universal ethno-linguistic particularity and the role of Peter's modification of Joel 3.1-5a LXX in designating the Spirit as the primary marker of human identity.

The value of an approach to the text that is conscious of the social psychological realities of identity formation is especially evident in examining the Babel imagery in Acts 2, the clearest Old Testament allusion in the Pentecost account.⁸¹ Babel and Pentecost share a concern with the way languages divide and unite by either solidifying existing identities or creating new identities. Contemporary social situations show the enduring power of language difference to solidify competing group identities. Current conflicts between Tamil and Sinhalese speakers in Sri Lanka, the political impasse between French and Dutch speakers in Belgium and the ongoing political issues between French and English speakers in Quebec are ready evidence of the identity shaping power of language and the tension manifest in language difference. The language miracle Luke describes at Pentecost thus involves a significant identity marker.

Commentators have interpreted Luke's presentation of the Pentecost miracle as a myth, a hearing miracle or a speaking miracle, and if the latter, as a diglossia, glossolalia or xenoglossy.⁸² The fact that the Spirit falls on the disciples

⁸⁰ So Witherington 1998:147; cf Acts 2.32.

⁸¹ See *inter alia* Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lecture* 17.16-7; Arator *On the Acts of the Apostles* 29; Dunn 1996:24; Bruce 1951:86. But cf. Marshall 1980:68; Wedderburn 1994; Witherington 1998:131. For other Old Testament imagery in the Pentecost account, including a possible Sinai motif, see Philo *De decalogo* 33; *De specialibus legibus* 2.189; *Jubilees* 1.1, 5; 6.17-22; 14.20; 15.1, 4, 19; 22.1, 15; 29.7; 1.1-2.19; 4Q2 66.17-18; CD 6.19; 8.21; 19.33; 20.12; 1QH^pHab 2.3. Especially tantalizing is the tradition reflected attributed to R. Jochanan that at Sinai 'each word which proceeded from the mouth of the Almighty divided into seventy tongues' (*b. Shabbat* 88b). For Pentecost as an echo of Sinai, see VanderKam 2002; Dunn 1996 (tentatively); Fitzmyer 1998, Turner 1996:285-289; Wenk 2004:246-251 and Johnson 1992. For dissenting views, see Menzies 1992 and Cho 2005.

⁸² Diglossia: Zerheusen 1995; xenolalia: Fitzmyer 1998:236; Conzelmann 1987; Esler 1994:37-51 thinks Luke was not familiar with glossolalia and interpreted the event as xenoglossy.

suggests Luke understood the miracle to involve *their* speaking, and the confusion of the crowd (expressed with the verb συγχέω; cf Gen 11.7-9) indicates that different languages were in play.⁸³ Luke clearly intends the reader to understand that extraordinary speech was made possible. The usual interpretation is that the Spirit at Pentecost overcame linguistic difference in order for the gospel to be heard.⁸⁴ But to the contrary, Luke expects that the Spirit actually *heightened* linguistic difference at Pentecost. It is this essential fact that underscores Luke's unique use of Babel imagery to highlight his understanding of the relationship between ethnic particularity and the gospel.

Luke describes a language miracle that was *unnecessary*. Whether those present in the crowd had dwelled in Jerusalem for some time or were temporary pilgrims, the entire list of Diaspora identities falls into either Aramaic-speaking (eastern Diaspora) or Greek-speaking (western Diaspora) locales.⁸⁵ Increasing evidence of bilingualism in antiquity alerts us to the fact that communication among the crowd in Jerusalem would likely have been unproblematic.⁸⁶ No one hearing Luke's story would have expected the crowd to have been unable to communicate with one another, especially if many of these people had been dwelling (κατοικοῦντες) in Jerusalem for some time. Luke himself gives evidence of the intelligibility of both Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic in Jerusalem.⁸⁷ Schwartz contends that Hebrew, Aramaic and 'biblical' Greek could all serve as markers of Israelite ethnic identity and could reasonably have been expected to serve as the *lingua franca* of the emerging group of Jesus-followers.⁸⁸ But Luke does not portray the Spirit as inspiring speech in Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek. The phrase 'each in their own language in which they were born' (ἐκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ἧ ἔγεννήθημεν) refers to the languages of the hearers' places of origin – their Diaspora homelands.⁸⁹ This is emphasized again in Acts 2.11: 'We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.'

⁸³ Polhill 1992:100.

⁸⁴ E.g. Arrington 1988:24.

⁸⁵ Zerheusen 1995.

⁸⁶ Wedderburn 1994:49; Kee 1990:44. Cf John 12.21-22.

⁸⁷ Acts 21.37, 40, 22.2. Cf. Bauckham 2006:239.

⁸⁸ Schwartz 1993:45.

⁸⁹ Hengel 2000:166.

Luke suggests that the *Spirit* creates what can best be described not as a miracle of impossible communication made possible but rather *a miracle of universal particularity*. Rather than eliminating the cultural particularity marked by language, the Spirit explicitly *affirmed* ethno-linguistic diversity by allowing the crowd to hear the address in the diverse languages of their respective births: ἤρχαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγησθαι αὐτοῖς (Acts 2.4).⁹⁰ This observation implies that something other than common language will serve as a primary identity marker for the emerging group of Jesus-followers. And, because language is inseparable from wider thought forms of a culture (indeed, Diaspora languages would largely have been constituted by and constitutive of *non-Israelite cultures* and the identities within which those cultures arose) it appears that common culture is also ruled out as a unifying factor in the early movement.

The particularity of the language miracle at Pentecost appears to be unexpected in Israelite tradition. Zephaniah 3.9 ('Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord') generated the idea that the day of the Lord would bring a return to the universal use of Hebrew, the presumed language of pre-Babel humankind. This tradition occurs in two pre-Lukan texts, 4Q464 and *Jubilees*. 4Q464 is reconstructed as follows:

line 5] confused
line 6]m to Abrah {r} am ⁹¹
line 7	for ever, since he/it
line 8	r]ead the holy tongue
line 9	I will make] the people pure of speech ⁹²

Stone and Eshel read the fragment as a prediction of the reversal of Babel and return to the universal use of Hebrew based upon Zephaniah 3.9. *Jubilees* 12.25-27 is more explicit, suggesting that Abraham was given angelic assistance in learning Hebrew, a language lost since the flood and a language that gives privileged access to the books of the 'fathers'. The *Jubilees* passage underscores the role language

⁹⁰ ἕτερος always means 'another of a *different* kind' for Luke. See Sandiyagu 2006:107.

⁹¹ 4Q464.5-9. Stone & Eshel 1992 are puzzled over the *resh* in the spelling of 'Abraham'.

⁹² Stone & Eshel 1993-94:169-77.

plays in identity, in this case granting entrance to ‘a divinely selected group with access to esoteric knowledge inherited from the age before Babel’.⁹³

This tradition of anticipated ethno-linguistic homogeneity appears to expand post-70, a period in which Schwartz suggests that Hebrew ‘became a *commodity*, consciously manipulated by the leaders of the Jews to evoke the Jews’ distinctness from their neighbors’.⁹⁴ The effect of Paul’s use of Hebrew/Aramaic in Acts 21.40ff (cf. 26.14) gives evidence of Luke’s awareness of this reality. Given the expectations of the Israelite ἔθνος, we might have expected the language miracle at Pentecost to be a *purification* of language and a return to Hebrew. It was, rather, an affirmation of the *pluralization* of language.

This has important ramifications for identity formation. Language is an essential marker of identity and contemporary research continues to demonstrate the role of language in the formation of identity and, at times, intergroup conflict.⁹⁵ In light of the potential for language to create a basis of group conflict (see Acts 6.1-6) it is striking that Luke’s Spirit does not unite via unified language. Instead, the Spirit gives voice to the Gospel in the lesser-known languages of Diaspora homelands. In Genesis, human speech, confused by God, divides. In Acts 2, human speech, facilitated and empowered by the Spirit, unites. Yet it unites in a way that *preserves* ethno-linguistic particularity.⁹⁶ Perhaps this should not be surprising, given the fact that Babel was not concerned chiefly with language, but with the problem generated by mutated human community. Pentecost, in its nuanced reversal of Babel, reveals that appropriate expressions of human community do not require linguistic homogeneity precisely because humans are being united around the person of Jesus. The affirmation of ethno-linguistic particularity is wrought by the Spirit.

⁹³ Weitzman 1999:41.

⁹⁴ Schwartz 1993:4. See *y.Meggilah* 71a; *Midrash Tan huma* 28; *Testament of Judah* 25.1-3. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Targum Neophyti I* on Gen 11.1 insert ‘holy tongue’ and ‘language of the sanctuary’. 3 *Enoch* 1.11-13 implies Hebrew is the angelic language. Cf. the possibility of ‘angelic language’ as a status symbol in 1 Cor 12.-14.

⁹⁵ On language and identity, see Giles 1977:308. On the linguistic root of some inter-ethnic conflict see Schiffman 1993.

⁹⁶ The only interpreter I have discovered alert to the importance of linguistic particularity at Pentecost is Volf, who suggests ‘It would... be reductionist to understand... Pentecost simply as Babel in reverse’ (1998:268). Volf sees catholicity through many languages. Bauckham 2003 adroitly treats the biblical tension between the particular and the universal, but does not specifically treat this passage.

The celebration of linguistic diversity at Pentecost affirms particularity, but also subsumes it under a new identity. Never again are the first disciples collectively categorized as ‘Galileans’. Regional origins remain important aspects of the identity of *individuals* in Acts, yet within the properly functioning in-group of believers Israelite subgroup identities are no longer *collectively* used to create subgroup differentiations.⁹⁷

Peter’s Pentecost Discourse

While the Pentecost language miracle rules out both ethno-linguistic and regional identities as the unifying factors for the Jesus-movement, Peter’s speech makes it clear that it is the *Spirit* who replaces these old identity markers as the new marker that definitively identifies those who are rightly related to God. The speech must be seen in a context of identity legitimation, with Peter acting as a representative of his group.⁹⁸

‘Peter, *standing with the eleven*, lifted up his voice and addressed them.’⁹⁹

Peter’s identity legitimation is based upon several factors: (1) Peter claims that the Spirit is evidence both of God’s in-breaking action and of the believers’ identification with God through Jesus (2.17-19); (2) Peter makes claims about the identity of Jesus and the identity of his in-group in relation to Jesus (2.20-32) and (3) Peter claims that Jesus is the one who pours out the Spirit (2.33). I will discuss only the factors in the text relevant to Peter’s defense of the group’s identity – which he connects with the Spirit and works empowered by the Spirit.

Neither Peter’s speech nor the crowd’s response reveal a fundamental conflict between Israelite identity and the identity experienced by the Spirit-filled disciples.¹⁰⁰ Peter’s progression of vocative nouns used to address the crowd demonstrates his continuing sense of Israelite identity: ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες

⁹⁷ See Acts 4.36; 6.6; 13.1. It is hard not to envision the event as a proleptic experience akin to Revelation 7 where those gathered around the throne of God and the Lamb can still be identified as people from ‘every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues’.

⁹⁸ Litwak 2005:159 rightly notes that the use of ‘Joel 3 in Acts 2 provides an explanation of the events which have just occurred’. In other words, Acts 2 legitimates the disciples’ behavior by appeal to the Spirit, but does not implicitly restrict the Spirit *only to the inspiration of prophetic speech*.

⁹⁹ Acts 2.14.

¹⁰⁰ Peter’s references to David (2.25, 29) demonstrate the movement’s coherence with Israelite identity.

Ἰσραηλιῖται and ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί.¹⁰¹ The crowd’s response in Acts 2.37 (‘Brothers [ἀδελφοί], what should we do?’) further underscores ethnic continuity.

Yet as Peter interprets the Spirit-manifestation to his ethnic kin, he makes an essential distinction concerning the relationship between Israelite ethnic identity, the Spirit and identification with the God of Israel. The validity of ethnic identity, especially in relation to one’s standing with God, is rendered secondary by Peter’s ‘modification’ of Joel 3.1-5a LXX.¹⁰² There are five significant changes (bold text) to Joel 3.1-5a LXX as well as three minor changes (underlined text).¹⁰³ Though all five major modifications are important in Luke’s wider program, two in particular concern Luke’s identity-forming program and will be treated in the order they appear.¹⁰⁴

Peter’s Modification of Joel 3.1-5a LXX

(Joel 3.1//Acts 2.17) καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα [**ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις**]
[λέγεις ὁ θεός] καὶ ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν
καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν
ἐνύπνια ἐνυπνιασθήσονται, καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν
ὄρασεις ὄψονται [transpose clauses]

¹⁰¹ Acts 2.14, 22, 29. See chapter 8 for detail on Luke’s use of ἀδελφοί.

¹⁰² I enclose ‘modification’ in quotes only to indicate that it is difficult to speak about New Testament ‘modification’ of LXX texts since we are not privy to the Old Greek. In its context Joel 3.1-5 is a fulfillment of the hope reflected in Moses’ plea in Numbers 11 for assistance in managing the contentious life of the community. God responds by giving the Spirit to seventy elders of Israel (Numbers 11.17), thus establishing a close relationship between the Spirit and the welfare of the community. In Joel the Spirit is also poured out for the creation of a renewed community (Joel 2.21-27 LXX; see Wenk 2004:254). This anticipates the link between Spirit-reception and community-formation in Acts 2.

¹⁰³ Minor alterations: (1) transposition of ‘young men’ and ‘old men’ in 3.1; (2) addition of γε in 3.2; (3) addition of ἄνω and κάτω in 3.3.

¹⁰⁴ ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις in Isaiah 2.2 LXX marks the final exaltation of Zion that prompts the nations to stream toward Jerusalem. Cf. Jeremiah 23.20; 30.24; 48.47; 49.39; Ezekiel 38.16; Hosea 3.5; Malachi 4.1. λέγει ὁ θεός in Acts 2.17 (cf. Joel 3.1 LXX) alerts the hearer that Peter is quoting divine speech contained in Joel’s text (cf. Acts 7.6, 49; Romans 12.19; 1 Corinthians 14.21; 2 Corinthians 6.17). καὶ προφητεύσουσιν [omitted by D and Vg] reemphasizes the Spirit-inspiration of the speakers (Fitzmyer 1998:253). Menzies 1992:221 (see also Cho 2005:145) suggests this emphasizes that the Spirit is the ‘Spirit of prophecy’. But in Acts 2 Peter is legitimating the identity of his group and its divine sanction and is simply explaining *this particular instance* with the Joel text, not limiting the Spirit only to the Joel application.

- (3.2//2.18) καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους [μου] καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας [μου] ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου.
- (3.3//2.19) καὶ δώσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ [ἄνω] καὶ [σημεῖα] ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς [κάτω], αἶμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ·
- (3.4//2.20) ὁ ἥλιος μεταστραφήσεται εἰς σκότος καὶ ἡ σελήνη εἰς αἶμα πρὶν ἔλθεῖν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ.
- (3.5a//2.21) καὶ ἔσται πᾶς, ὅς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου, σωθήσεται·

(1) Luke adds the possessive pronoun μου (2x) to the δοῦλοι and δοῦλαι in 2.18, thus no longer rendering Joel’s male and female slaves as slaves in the socio-economic sense (as in the MT and LXX), but rather as *slaves belonging to God*.¹⁰⁵ This is similar to the reorientation of identity initiated by Jesus in Acts 1.8 (μου μάρτυρες) and, like Isaiah, sets both δοῦλος and μαρτύς as key metaphors for those properly related to God.¹⁰⁶ This modification establishes the Spirit as the *definitive identity* marker for those who rightly can be called the possession (μου) of God or Jesus.

The identity ramifications of this modification are significant. First, the modification legitimizes the identity of the disciples, marking them not as babblers/druniards but as God’s slaves. Second, Peter’s in-group had assumed in Acts 1.6 that the benefits bestowed by God were limited to the ethnic in-group. Just as Jesus reoriented those expectations by defining the disciples in relationship to

¹⁰⁵ Menzies 1992:219 (cf Cho 2005:144) suggests this demonstrates that the Spirit is a second blessing for those who are saved, but Peter shows no concern here for a systematic order of salvation. Others see this as part of Luke’s ‘reversal’ theme in which those who were previously ‘household slaves are transformed into “my servants”’ (Wall 2002:64; cf. Witherington 1998:142). But Peter is not concerned in this speech with a justice ethic. He is legitimating the identity of his in-group. The heavy emphasis on the proclamatory aspect of prophecy by scholars who emphasizing the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ construct neglects the fact that prophecy is indicative of a certain *identity* marked by access to God (1 Samuel 9.9). Moses, the paradigmatic prophet in Israelite tradition and for Luke’s Peter (Acts 3.22-23; cf Dt 18.18-19) is set apart because of his *relationship* with God: ‘And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, *whom the Lord knew face to face*’ (Deuteronomy 34.10; cf. Numbers 12.6-8). The causal factor in making someone a prophet is not simply the action of prophecy, but a relationship with God that gives the prophet access to God.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Servant’ and ‘witness’ are also used to express similar concepts in Isaiah 44.21; 45.4-6; 48.10-11; 49.1-6; 54.5; 55.4-5.

himself in Act 1.8 ('You will be my witnesses...'), so here Luke makes us aware that relationship to God will be marked now by the presence of the Spirit. This modification shifts a key identity boundary. Because social groups are formed by the boundaries established in relationship with other groups, shifting the boundary of the group to 'relationship with God as identified by the Spirit' creates an entirely different dynamic for intergroup – and particularly interethnic – interaction. Subsequently in Luke's narrative, whenever social identity boundaries are in view, the appearance of the Spirit (on the basis of Peter's modification) identifies those who are rightly related to Jesus. This forms the basis for the recognition of a common social identity between those who were formerly 'other'. This will become increasingly important for Luke, but we must wait for the narration of the full force of this new reality.

(2) The final significant alteration of the Joel passage is the addition of σημεῖον in Acts 2.19 to render the passage 'wonders (τέρατα) in the heavens above and signs (σημεῖα) in the earth below'. The phrase 'wonders and signs' (τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα) draws on an Old Testament tradition emphasizing God's use of the miraculous on behalf of his people.¹⁰⁷ Wenk argues that Old Testament wonders and signs are not only 'attestation of a truth but the realization of salvation'.¹⁰⁸ Luke follows this tradition, using the phrase to describe action of God that breaks into human affairs to bring deliverance, healing or salvation.¹⁰⁹ Peter's addition of σημεῖα in 2.19 creates an organic connection between (1) 'wonders and signs' in the Joel passage, (2) God's witness to Jesus through 'wonders and signs' (2.22) and (3) the 'wonders and signs' performed by the disciples (2.43).¹¹⁰ Those who do 'wonders and signs' are empowered by the Spirit and, thus, are δοῦλοι or δοῦλαι of God. This will serve as an auxiliary identity maker later in Acts. We will come to see that common social identity can be established either by direct manifestation of the Spirit or by the performance of actions attributable to the Spirit.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Exodus 7.3, 11.9-10; Deuteronomy 4.34; 6.22; 7.19; 11.3; 26.8; 29.3; 34.11; Isaiah 8.18; Daniel 4.34; 6.37.

¹⁰⁸ Wenk 2004:251.

¹⁰⁹ Acts 2.19, 22, 43; 4.30; 5.12; 6.8; 7.36; 14.3; 15.12.

¹¹⁰ Wenk 2004:250.

¹¹¹ See esp. Acts 9.26-31. This is true of 'wonders and signs' and of 'witness'.

Conclusion

Working backward, we have seen in this section that Peter's modification of Joel 3.1-5 LXX establishes a paradigm whereby the Spirit, and not ethnic identity, becomes the marker of all those who are rightly related to God through Jesus (either as 'servants' or 'witnesses'). This identity-marking role of the Spirit helps mitigate the difficulty in discerning a Lukan 'order of salvation'.¹¹² We will come to see that *the Spirit typically appears in the narrative precisely at the moment that human identity is in question*. Yet the work of the Spirit in both facilitating, marking and empowering this identity comes in a way that does not eliminate, but rather affirms (through an 'unnecessary miracle') the *particularity* of ethno-linguistic identities present at Pentecost. *This is an initial indication that ethnic identity, while it must be chastened, is not inherently incompatible with the emerging allocentric identity formed by the Spirit*. The extension of Spirit-empowered ministry to all 120 (Acts 2.1-4) and the affirmation of ethno-linguistic difference (Acts 2.5-11) stand in contrast to a final vestige of the Jesus-community's Spirit-less behavior, Peter's reliance upon in-group homogeneity in the effort to replace Judas. This is all set within the broader context of Jesus' commission to a group with Galilean identity to cross threatening social boundaries while operating with a Spirit-formed allocentric identity classified as 'witness' whose trajectory is expressed *outward toward the 'other'*.¹¹³

SIT has given us three interpretive advantages in this section. First, it underscores the reality that the presence of groups implies the presence of social boundaries. Second, it alerts us to the fact that Peter's criteria for Judas' replacement are very much 'normal' intragroup processes. Third, and most significantly, an understanding of nested identity is helpful to understand the layers of identity manifest in the linguistic miracle at Pentecost. The theory will provide additional heuristic benefit in sections to come.

The preaching at Pentecost affirms Jesus as the source of the Spirit (Acts 2.33), thus tightening the link between identification with Jesus and by the Spirit. The message is met by Luke's ideal response, 'Brothers, what shall we do?', a

¹¹² Luke's order of salvation in Acts 2.38-39, while 'normal' (Turner 1996:384), is not 'normative' (Witherington 1998:154-155; contra Dunn 1996:32). The connection between Spirit and identity will dissolve problems created by Luke's (seemingly) inconsistent chronologies.

¹¹³ Joel 3.5b: 'Because on the mountain of Zion and in Jerusalem it will be a remnant, says the Lord, and they will proclaim the good news, those whom the Lord summons'. In Joel the Spirit creates a community of witness. The echo in Acts 2 is unmistakable.

response that itself indicates continuity (*'brothers'*) with Israelite ethnic identity. Peter proclaims that those who repent and are baptized will 'receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2.38). In Luke's view, we now know that those who receive this gift will undergo a transformation resulting in an allocentric identity. It is a new social group composed of these Spirit-transformed allocentrically-oriented individuals that will form the incubator for a new social identity capable of loving both self/group and 'other' and able to transcend intractable intergroup (and especially interethnic) identity conflicts.

6

CONSUMMATING A NEW IDENTITY THE COMMUNITY SUMMARIES AND THE IDENTITY- FORMING POWER OF A GROUP

The Pentecost account, with its affirmation of universal ethno-linguistic particularity and emphasis on the Spirit as the definitive identity marker for the δούλοι of God, serves to destabilize the primacy of the regional and ethnic identities in view in Acts 1.1-11 and 2.1-11. Luke follows this destabilization of identity with his initial account of a new social group composed of Spirit-filled members. Bearing in mind Luke's understanding of the Spirit's allocentric influence upon individuals, the community described by Luke appears as both the *natural product* and *corporate expression* of an allocentric identity.¹ By Acts 5 this new social group will emerge as the incubator of a new *social* identity.

In this chapter I will discuss the following aspects regarding the role of the community summaries in Luke's identity-forming project:²

- (1) Luke's use of narrative techniques and speech material to emphasize the primary importance of the community and its relationship to the Spirit;
- (2) Luke's portrayal of the community's collective relationship to the 'other' as a subversion of typical identity-forming processes;

¹ Zechariah and Simeon (Luke 1-2); John (Luke 3); Jesus (Luke 4), Peter and the 120 (Acts 2).

² 'Community summaries' is shorthand for Acts 2.42-47 (Summary 1); 4.32-5.11 (Summary 2); 5.12-16 (Summary 3).

(3) Luke's unique view of the relationship between the Spirit, possessions and the 'other' (and, conversely, Satan, possessions and the 'other') at it finds expression in the accounts of Ananias, Sapphira and Barnabas.

In broad brush strokes, the community summaries unveil Luke's definitive corporate expression of Spirit-formed allocentric identity as well as the definitive identification of the Spirit with the community.

Understanding the Baseline Significance of the New Community

Luke's description of the new social group that comprises the early church is remarkable for the intensity of the self-ascription, the comprehensive nature of the communal life, the posture of the group toward the 'other' and the relationship between the group and the Spirit. Contrary to interpreters who suggest that the community summaries only depict 'the primordial beginning of the community', Luke's early establishment of the community forms a baseline assumption for the normative function of Jesus-following social groups.

Three factors in Acts 1-5 highlight Luke's emphasis on the community. First, Luke uses functional redundancy, especially in triplets, to highlight material of special importance. This is as true with the community summaries as it is with the conversions of Saul and of Cornelius' household.³ Introductions give essential information about characters and fix them in the 'web of human relationships' in ways that endure throughout a narrative.⁴ In just this way the triple-introduction of the community grounds the communal norms in the mind of the hearer.⁵

Second, Luke places the community summaries in conspicuous proximity to the first three major Spirit-events in Acts.⁶

And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you *shall receive*

³ Witherup 1992; 1993 for 'functional redundancy'. Saul: Acts 9.1-19; 22.3-16; 26.12-17; Cornelius: Acts 10.1-48; 11.1-18; 15.6-11. Tannehill calls the summaries a 'minor theme' (1992:43). The failure to deal meaningfully with the summaries is a significant weakness of the studies of Borgman 2006, Pao 2003, Menzies 1992, and to a lesser extent, Cho 2005.

⁴ Rowe 2006:42-43. 'Web of human relationships' is from Harvey 1965:22.

⁵ See Thompson 2006 for a detailed argument for the important role of the church throughout Acts.

⁶ Acts 2.1-41; 4.31; 5.1-11. The pattern endures less explicitly in 6.1-7. Despite protests from Cho and Menzies, the scholarly consensus continues to connect closely the Spirit and the community summaries. Tannehill 1990:44; Wall & Robinson 2006:27; Turner 1996:415; Johnson 1977:184; Harrington 1988:33; Penney 1997:90; Dunn 1970:51.

the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2.38)... So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2.41-42).

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* and spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common (Acts 4.31-32).

But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to *the Holy Spirit* and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?' (Acts 5.3)... Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico (Acts 5.12).

The first two summaries follow incidents that imply that *all the legitimate members of the group are influenced by the Spirit*. The third summary follows Luke's equation of a lie to the community with a lie to the Spirit, hence his definitive identification of the Spirit and the community (Acts 5.3).⁷ Proponents of narrow interpretations of the 'Spirit of prophecy' who insist that there is 'not one syllable' in the summaries themselves to indicate that the life of the community results from the work of the Spirit are forced to read with a minimalist lens in order to avoid the natural progression from the appearances of the Spirit to the descriptions of the community.⁸

Third, though often overlooked when discussing the summaries, Luke uses Peter's speech in Acts 3.12-26 to highlight the essential and life-giving connection between Jesus, the Spirit, the community and 'salvation'.⁹ Peter's speech in Acts 3.12-26 addresses Israel's ignorance-based denial (ἀρνέομαι: 3.13, 14) of the Messiah and emphasizes the high stakes of membership in the new community.¹⁰ Peter

⁷ While scholars often note the connection between lying to the community and lying to the Spirit (e.g. Bock 2007:222; Fitzmyer 1998:523) they do not note the significance for the group's *identity* in its broader narrative and social context.

⁸ Quote from Gunkel 1899:10. Cf. Menzies 2000:96-7. Cho 2005:133 sees at best an indirect influence of the Spirit only through the communal response to Spirit-inspired prophetic speech.

⁹ Thompson 2006:61-62 only notes that Peter's speech is an 'explanation' of the miracle and a 'call for repentance'.

¹⁰ Peter's use of ἀρνέομαι evokes his own denial of Jesus (ἀπαρνέομαι: Lk 22.34; 22.61; ἀρνέομαι: Lk 22.57). The post-denial grace extended to Peter plausibly explains the gracious attitude Peter takes toward the Jerusalem crowd, Ananias and Sapphira, and even Simon the Samaritan.

indicates that repentance and turning toward the ‘prophet like Moses’ has several parallel effects:

1. ‘Times of refreshing’ (3.20)
2. The return of Messiah and consequent ‘restoration of all things’ (3.20-21)
3. Participation in the people (λαός; this conclusion is the logical obverse deduction from 3.23: ‘Every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people’).
4. Blessing of the families of the earth (3.25)
5. Blessing for Israel manifest in a turn from ‘wickedness’ (3.26)

The tightly woven connections that emerge from Peter’s speech, set in its narrative context, are essential for understanding Luke’s high view of the early community. The ultimate stake in response to Jesus is participation or non-participation in a people that exists within a larger teleological goal of ἀποκατάστασις πάντων (3.21).¹¹ Participation in this people is equated with καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως (3.20) and turning from πονηρία (3.26). If we align the logic of this speech with Peter’s Pentecost speech (esp. 2.38) we can see an interesting parallel between the community and the Spirit.

- Proper response to Jesus results in the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2.38), ‘times of refreshing’ (3.21), a turn from wickedness (3.26), and *participation in a people* (3.23, by obverse).
- Refusal to identify with Jesus results in no gift of the Spirit (2.38, by obverse) and *exclusion or destruction from the people* (3.23).

There is an implicit connection between the gift of the Spirit, the experience of times of refreshing and *participation in a people*. The link between community membership and ‘times of refreshing’ is indeed what Wenk calls in another context

¹¹ Cf. ‘restoration’ in Acts 1.6.

the 'this-worldly dimension of salvation'.¹² 'Conversion', for Luke, is incomplete without full community incorporation.

It is through this people gathered around Jesus, the prophet like Moses, that God will bless all the πατριάί of the earth (3.25). Luke's use of the Abrahamic covenant indicates his awareness that God's covenant with (ethnic) father Abraham was not for the creation of an ethnically exclusive people, but rather for the blessing of both Israel and 'all the families of the earth'.¹³ Yet Peter's use of 'families (πατριάί) is closer to Genesis 12.3 (φυλαί) than Genesis 18.18; 22.18; 26.4, which use ἔθνη, an unambiguous reference to non-Israelites. Given the dramatic nature of Peter's new understanding of God's relationship to non-Israelites expressed at Cornelius' household conversion, it is quite plausible that Luke's Peter here retains an ethnically exclusive vision of God's work through Jesus in which the ἔθνη can only participate after undergoing full social conversion to Israelite ethnic identity. Yet what is emerging is the fact that the 'people' within which one may or may not participate is not simply ethnic Israel, it is Luke's new community. The Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira episode, discussed below, will give dramatic expression to Luke's high view of the new group as the Spirit-empowered community of life.

A Community of Intense Self-ascription

Having established the importance of the community in Luke's structure and interpretation of Israel's 'prophet-like-Moses', it is important now to turn toward the role of this group in the formation of social identity. Social identity cannot exist apart from a recognizable social group, which itself is only defined by the twin criteria of self-ascription and categorization by others.¹⁴ The identity-forming power of groups is particularly potent in collectivistic cultures like the ancient Mediterranean.¹⁵ Moreover, research has demonstrated that highly relational groups in which members know one another and have regular and meaningful social interaction are more potent identity-forming entities than larger social categories.¹⁶ In other words, in a collectivistic society, a relatively small and

¹² Wenk 2004:271.

¹³ See Esler 2006:23-34 on Abraham and Israel's 'ethnic' identity.

¹⁴ Turner 1982.

¹⁵ Brown 2000:753; Brown & Aharpour 1999 (Unpublished).

¹⁶ Rabbie & Horowitz 1988:117-123.

interconnected social group can have powerful effects upon the social identities of its members. This is precisely the sort of social entity Luke describes in the community summaries.

Evidence for self-ascription to the emerging community in Acts is pervasive and intense, a simple fact whose force is often lost in the quest for contextual parallels to the community in Acts.¹⁷ Consider the following features of the three summaries:

1. Commitment to teaching of the leaders (2.42; 4.33)
2. Commitment to intragroup relationships (2.42; 4.32; 5.12)
3. Commitment to common meals (2.42, 46)
4. Commitment to common worship (2.42, 46-47)
5. Commitment to care for needy members (2.45; 4.34-35)
6. Commitment to property sharing (2.44; 4.32, 34-35)

This level of self-ascription and intimacy in Luke's group has features usually only expected in kinship groups.¹⁸ It is well-known that kinship formed an important social category in first century Palestine through which people could understand their relationship to their social world.¹⁹ Kinship groups were characterized by 'loyalty and trust, truth telling, homes open to all in the group, obligation to be certain that the needs of everyone in the group are met... and a sense of shared destiny'.²⁰ The descriptions in Acts resonate strongly with this definition. They depict a community of loyal commitment (ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες [2.41]; ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία [4.32]). The Ananias and Sapphira narrative demonstrates the centrality of truth-telling. The locus of the community's life revolves around both Temple and home, the latter of which is an innovation for social groups that are not

¹⁷ Much has been written about the parallels between the community summaries and groups within Luke's historical context. Essene/Qumran parallels: Capper 1983, 1995; Greco-Roman friendship parallels: Mitchell 1992; Greco-Roman utopian parallels: Sterling 1994; kinship parallels: Bartchy 1991; parallels with Greco-Roman associations: Harland 2003; Kloppenborg 1993; Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996. Jeremias 1966:118-21 suggested the components formed a liturgical order for the community. Turner 1996:413 is correct, the 'total picture' and not the individual components is the key to the summaries.

¹⁸ Jesus critiques exclusivistic kinship structures in Luke (see Moxnes 2003:ch 8, esp. 157; Borgman 2006 suggests Luke subverts traditional 'clan loyalty') and insists loyalty to Jesus was more important than kinship affiliation (Luke 8.19-21; 14.26; 18.29-30; 21.12-17).

¹⁹ Kinship identities are essentially 'micro-ethnicities'. Networks of kinship groups that share a sense of 'groupness' form the basis of many ethnic groups.

²⁰ Bartchy 1991:313.

based on kinship markers (2.46).²¹ Physical needs are met by the group itself (2.45; 4.32b-35). The prayer of the believers in 4.24-30 is evidence of a sense of shared destiny. The element of the shared meal, coupled with communal provision for the needy, suggests that the summaries must be interpreted to describe more than just the 'religious' or 'moral' aspects of the early church.²² All told, the intense self-ascription Luke describes points toward the group as an important source for members' social identities.

Identity Forged in the Midst of Conflict

The level of in-group identification evident in the summaries themselves is heightened by the fact that Luke places the summaries in a context of social conflict, some of which is anticipated by the social boundary crossings implicated in Acts 1.8. Intergroup conflict, especially the perception of external threat directed toward the in-group, intensifies identification with the in-group in three related ways: it causes group members to develop a heightened sense of similarity to their own group (in-group homogeneity), it creates greater differentiation from out-groups (in-group bias), and it cultivates a stronger sense that out-groups have very little social differentiation (out-group homogeneity).²³ Stated simply, intergroup conflict tends to magnify the notions of 'we' and 'they'.

Consider Luke's arrangement of material.

- *Summary #1* (Acts 2.1-47). This summary is preceded by the initial out-pouring of the Spirit.
- *Intergroup conflict #1* (Acts 4.1-22). Peter and John are accosted by the Jerusalemite authorities.

²¹ See Elliott 1991, though note that at least in Acts 2.42-7 there is not yet a sense of conflict between temple and household (pace Elliott 1991:193-4).

²² Esler 1987:76 describes the shared meal as 'an action expressing the warmest intimacy and respect' Regarding 'moral' or 'religious' characterizations of the community, my position is against Wall 2002:71-2 and Cho 2005:130. Wall thinks the summaries describe a renewed 'religious life'. However, isolating the community description as 'religious' (if such a particularized category even has coherence in the ancient Mediterranean, which is doubtful) neglects the fact that the overtly cultic aspects of the summaries are integrated into a more comprehensive overall description. Neither is it the case (contra Cho) that Luke is (at any point in Acts) concerned simply with a description of normative 'morality'. The category 'morality' disregards the integral relationship between identity and activity assumed by Acts. *Who* we are profoundly affects *how* we are, and both are affected by the Spirit.

²³ Dietz-Uhler 1998; Rothgerber 1997:1209-10.

- *Increased in-group solidarity* (Acts 4.23-30). The community prays, asking for the *intensification* of the expression of the group norm that elicited the intergroup conflict.
- *Summary #2* (Acts 4.32-36). This summary is preceded by the second outpouring of the Spirit and describes the community with greater relational intensity: 'Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul' (Acts 4.31-36).
- *Intragroup conflict #1* (Acts 5.1-11). Ananias and Sapphira betray the community from within. The community is identified closely with the Spirit and named ἐκκλησία.
- *Summary #3* (Acts 5.12-16).
- *Intergroup conflict #2* (Acts 5.17-42). Second confrontation with Jerusalemite authorities.
- *Intragroup conflict #2* (Acts 6.1-6). Nested identities become salient and cause intragroup division.
- *'Summary' #4* (Acts 6.7). The group endures through conflict and continues to flourish.
- *Intergroup conflict #3* (Acts 6.8-8.3). Stephen is martyred and the church is systematically persecuted. This results finally in the group expressing the identity and mission given to it by Jesus by crossing the ethnic boundaries between Israelite believers, the Samaritans and the ἔθνη.

The identity of the community is forged in an atmosphere of intergroup and intragroup conflict. The intermingling of scenes of conflict and scenes of group life and interdependence is a powerful identity-forming strategy by Luke. Those who oppose the group will now begin to form the 'them' against which the Jesus-group's identity can be forged, yet the 'them' will receive surprising treatment at the hands of the Jesus-group.²⁴

Community and the Other: The Possibility of Out-group Love

The 'other' comes into view in two ways in the community summaries. First, the early community is recognized as a viable social group by outsiders.

²⁴ See esp. Acts 9.1-31; 26.29.

None of the rest dared join them, but *the people held them in high honor*. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.²⁵

Categorization by outsiders is the second criterion (along with self-ascription) for the creation of a group capable of forming social identity, and this is a signal that Luke is aware of real intergroup contact between the Jesus group and out-groups in the context. A group that knows itself as ‘we’ and is known by others as ‘they’ is an entitative social group capable of forming social identity.²⁶

The presence of an in-group and out-groups provides grounds for the intergroup differentiation essential for the maintenance of positive social identity in the three-step identity-forming process of categorization, identification and differentiation. We have seen that this sort of intergroup differentiation is rarely benign but is usually associated with at least ambivalence, if not hostility toward the (typically) negatively evaluated ‘other’. The Jesus group, however, is described as expressing intense in-group love and out-group concern simultaneously. This is implied at a broad level by the metaphor ‘witness’. Yet Luke makes it clearer in Acts 2.47:

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and *having favor toward all the people* (ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν).

While the final clause quoted above is often rendered ‘having favor with all the people’ (RSV), Luke’s other references conveying ‘having favor *with*’ use either παρά or ἐνώπιον, not πρὸς.²⁷ Andersen’s survey of Greco-Roman literature with χάρις πρὸς turns up 6 occurrences in Josephus and 3 in Philo, all of which refer to goodwill toward the object designated by πρὸς.²⁸ Further, πρὸς + accusative, according to Liddell and Scott, indicates at least ‘intercourse or reciprocal action’ when ‘with’ is the preposition, thus indicating that if the sense is ‘favor with’ the people, the favor is reciprocal. Thompson further argues that the Jesus-followers are portrayed as *actors* in every other part of the summary, apart from the divine multiplication of

²⁵ Acts 5.13-14.

²⁶ A group is ‘entitative’ if it is a factor in the social operations of other groups in the context.

²⁷ Thompson 2006:58 fn 131. See e.g. Luke 1.30; 2.52; Acts 7.46.

²⁸ Andersen 1988:604-610. Josephus *Life* 252, 339; *Ant* 6.86; 12.124; 14.146, 148; Philo *Confusion of Tongues* 116; *On Abraham* 118; *Embassy to Gaius* 296.

the group in Acts 2.47.²⁹ This allows for parallelism in 2.47 between αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν and ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν. Both accusative nouns in the construction are the objects of their verbs. On balance, it is plausible that Luke intended to communicate that the group had an outward focus that extended goodwill ‘toward’ all the people of Israel.³⁰

This would be a significant conclusion. In the early stages of group identity formation, the community of Spirit-empowered individuals is able to express strong in-group bias without the typical correlate out-group antipathy. This, I suggest, is a corporate expression of allocentric identity in which in-group love and out-group love can go hand in hand. This remains a feature of the in-group throughout Acts as clear outsiders – even dangerous outsiders like the Philippian jailer (Acts 16.24-34) and King Agrippa (Acts 26.27-29) – are the object of concern from community members. While there is clear intergroup differentiation, it is not to this point expressed in a way that negatively impacts upon the ‘other’. The openness to the ‘other’ expressed by the early community stands in stark contrast to the intergroup behavior of the Jerusalem authorities (and non-Israelites later in Acts 17.5-9; 19.23-34), whose in-group bias leads to out-group antagonism (e.g. Acts 4.1-22; 5.17-42; 6.9ff). Seen through the lens of SIT, the simultaneous in-group love and out-group love expressed by the early group is a subversion of normal intergroup identity processes and is nothing less than a *different way of being human in community*.³¹ Yet this posture toward the ‘other’ is difficult to maintain. In the following chapters one of the primary roles of the Spirit, through both its identity-marking and identity-forming functions, will be to reshape continually the in-group’s posture toward the ‘other’, removing barriers to intergroup reconciliation.

The corporate life of the allocentric community has both the internal effects discussed in the previous section as well as a dramatic external effect. Acts 2.47 concludes with ‘and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were

²⁹ Thompson 2006:57-58.

³⁰ This position is also taken by Cheetham 1963; Gamba 1981 and is reflected in the Vulgate: ‘et habentes gratiam ad omnem plebem’. The Syriac renders the preposition ‘before’ (qūḏām).

³¹ The traditional reading, ‘favor with all the people’ still implies at least a reciprocal goodwill. Fitzmyer 1998:273 acknowledges the ‘favor toward’ reading, argues it is ‘unlikely in the context’, and points to a similar use of πρὸς in Romans 5.1; 1 Thessalonians 1.8; 2 Corinthians 6.14; John 1.1. Barrett 1994:171-172; Bruce 1951:102; Dunn 1996:36-37; Conzelmann 1987:34; Johnson 1992:59-60 make no mention of the issue. Bock 2007:154 does not address the translation, but affirms that those ‘having favor with all the people’ suggests the community extends itself toward God and neighbor.

being saved'. The community description in 5.12 concludes with 'more than ever believers were added to their number, multitudes of both men and women'. The same pattern, though less explicitly, is evident in the 'mini-summaries' of Acts 6.7 and 9.31. *The proper function of the intra-communal life is itself an expression of witness.* Luke's emphasis on the life of the *community* as 'witness' must be reckoned with by those who emphasize either the internal or external aspect of the communal life. Cho says 'the outer life of witness evidently dominates the summaries: witness by works of power; witness by words of power'.³² Wall emphasizes the opposite facet, 'While evangelism is certainly one effect of their life together, the primary purpose of their common life is to nurture Christian community'.³³ This distinction is false. Allocentric identity moves one away from self-center to a focus on the 'other', both inside and outside one's own group; Luke presents an identity that extends toward the 'other' in intragroup love and intergroup witness.

Summary

The community summaries describe group norms which, in their economic practice, fellowship, personal devotion and concern for the out-group, are collective expressions of the allocentric identity characteristic of those influenced by the Spirit in Luke's text.³⁴ The identity-forming potential of a group like this is high, especially when set in the context of pervasive intra- and intergroup conflict, but it should be noted that Luke continues to see no radical disjunction between this new identity and Israelite ethnic identity. The summaries embrace the Temple (2.46; 5.12, 42) and Israelite cultic praxis (esp. daily prayer: 2.42; 3.1).³⁵ Peter uses language of ethnic self-identification even after the introduction of the new community (2.42ff), addressing the crowd as ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται (3.12) and ἀδελφοί (3.17) and speaking of 'the God of *our* fathers' (3.13; 5.30). Yet there are signs that ethnic identity continues to be chastened at least as a primary identity. The quotation of Deuteronomy 18.16 in Acts 3.22 ('The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from

³² Cho 2005:128.

³³ Wall 2002:71. He later contradicts this claim, more accurately suggesting that both internal and external activities (i.e., proclamation) 'attract favorable attention from the people' (95).

³⁴ In SIT, norms are behaviors prototypical to the in-group.

³⁵ Dunn 1996:36 notes continuity with Israelite identity evident in the location of the first community in Jerusalem and, specifically, in the Temple. See Hamm 2003 for the importance of the twice daily *Tamid* service in Luke-Acts.

your brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.')

assumes shared ethnic lineage, but is a part of Peter's warning that response to Jesus, *not ethnic affiliation*, is the criterion for membership in the new group. The social identity emerging from membership in the post-Pentecost community is not *de facto* at odds with Israelite ethnic identity, but the *inexorable issue this allocentric identity anticipates is an unavoidable collision with the ethnic 'other'*.

The Spirit and the 'Other', Satan and the Self: Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira as Exemplars of Identity

Luke's interest in the use of possessions by the early community is unquestionable. Acts 4.32 in particular ('No one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own [ἴδιος], but they had everything in common'), has generated great scholarly attention.³⁶ Lost, however, in the search for parallel social phenomena in Luke's context is the fact that a deeper logic undergirds Luke's understanding of the proper function of possessions within human community.³⁷

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own (οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι), but they had everything in common... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need.³⁸

The key to Luke's view of the relationship between Spirit, identity and possessions is found in his subtle yet consistent use of the adjective ἴδιος. Set in its socio-economic context, the claim οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι (4.32) stands in direct counterpoint to what was likely the most common usage of ἴδιος in public space within the Roman Empire: honorary inscriptions. The Packard Humanities Institute inscription database includes 1,654 occurrences of the

³⁶ Johnson 1977; Seccombe 1983 ; Capper 1983, 1995; Gillmand 1991; Moxnes 1998.

³⁷ Four positions are noteworthy. Capper 1995 draws parallels with Essene/Qumran communities of goods. Mitchell 1992 sees a parallel and critique of the Greek philosophic friendship ideals. VanderKam 2002 sees a parallel with Israelite 'ideal community' as expressed in national unity at Sinai. Bartchy 1991 argues for the historicity of the community of goods based on the presence of contextual precedents, while allowing the Acts community to be socially unique.

³⁸ Acts 4.32, 34-35.

phrase ἐκ τῶν ἰδιῶν.³⁹ The phrase is extant in 54 inscriptions from Greater Syria and usually indicates that the object commemorated by the inscription was provided by a named donor.⁴⁰ The inscription functioned to ensure that the donor received the honor due from benefaction.⁴¹ Contrary to this practice, within the Acts community the placing of resources ‘at the feet of the apostles’ separated the giver from benefaction claims.⁴² Instead of affixing a donor’s name to the good given ἐκ τῶν ἰδιῶν, the Acts community subverted reciprocity obligations by distributing goods through someone other than the giver. This is not because Luke is unaware of normal patron-client reciprocity or benefaction (Luke 7.1-5; Acts 10.22; 12.12). The truly remarkable thing about the generosity of the early community is that it appears to have been giving *without* expected reciprocity.⁴³

Reluctance to claim possessions as one’s ἴδιος (4.32) is a practical expression of a social orientation expressed in Acts 4.23. There, after their first exposure to intergroup conflict, John and Peter return ‘to their own’ (πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους). Initially, ἴδιος in 4.23 creates differentiation between the new community and the Jerusalem leaders. But the occurrence in quick succession of ἴδιος in 4.32 indicates that members of the community do not claim possessions as ‘their own’, but they do claim that other community members are ‘their own’.⁴⁴ This is an initial indication that the conceptualization or use of one’s ἴδιος is a fundamental clue to one’s orientation toward the community, the ‘other’ and God.

This observation is borne out by the use of ἴδιος in Luke (6 times) and Acts (17 times) with two primary senses: (1) to describe personal possession (a mule as ἴδιος in relation to a Samaritan) or (2) to describe sequestered privacy (Jesus

³⁹ <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/> accessed 04/25/2008.

⁴⁰ Theissen 1982:148. See Frey *CIJ* nos 548, 746.

⁴¹ See Winter 1988:87-103 on the promise of public recognition for benefactors. Winter suggests some New Testament documents encourage public benefaction as a means to secure approval of local authorities (e.g. Romans 13.3-4; 1 Peter 2.14-15). This would set Peter and Paul at odds with Luke on this issue.

⁴² Pace Johnson 1992:91 who interprets this as submission to apostolic authority. Chrysostom (*Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* 11 [PNF 1 14.455]) was aware that apostolic distribution of goods eliminated the reciprocity ethic: ‘To them [the apostles] they left it to be the dispensers, and made them the owners that thenceforth all should be defrayed as from common, not from private, property. This was also a help to them against vainglory’. For Greco-Roman reciprocity, see Moxnes 1992.

⁴³ See Mitchell 1992:266.

⁴⁴ Johnson 1977:193; 1992:83 thinks ἴδιος in 4.23 refers only to the apostles, not the whole community. The narrative suggests otherwise. There is no indication that the activities described in 4.24ff are restricted to a segment of the community. 4.31 states that they were *all* filled with the Spirit and leads directly into a summary of the life of the entire community, not just the apostles.

explains a parable to his disciples *in private* [ἴδιος]).⁴⁵ If something is ἴδιος in relation to a person or group, it cannot belong to someone else. An ἴδιος-designation is a boundary claim demarcating inclusion (for the owner[s]) and exclusion (for the non-owner[s]).

More specifically, stubborn retention of one's ἴδιος appears to be a significant barrier both to discipleship and human community. For Peter, the fact that the disciples have relinquished any claim to hold something as ἴδιος is proof of whole-hearted identification with Jesus: ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφέντες τὰ ἴδια ἠκολουθήσαμέν σοι.⁴⁶ Judas' decision to 'go to his own place' (Acts 1.25; εἰς τὸν τόπον ἴδιον) led to his betrayal of, and self-imposed expulsion from, the community. The Spirit-enabled speech in Acts 2 allows Jerusalem residents to hear the wonders of God in their own language (Acts 2.8: τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ; cf. 2.6). In an ironic way this prevents Galilean regional identity from being leveraged exclusivistically and orients the early community around the person of Jesus, not ethno-linguistic identity. Luke's definitive example of the proper use of one's ἴδιος is in Paul's speech in Miletus in Acts 20.28.

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου).

Regardless of the syntactical object of the construction, the point is clear. The possessions and position of God – his ἴδιος – have not been leveraged only to God's advantage, but instead have been poured out *for the sake of the 'other'*. It is this expression of possession and position – of the things a person can claim as their ἴδιος – that marks the Acts community in 4.32ff.⁴⁷ Yet for Luke this is no mere human effort, the proper use of one's ἴδιος is a 'Spirit-ual' matter and is definitively depicted in the exemplary figure Barnabas, and in the anti-exemplars Ananias and Sapphira.

⁴⁵ Luke 6.41, 44; 9.10; 10.23, 34; 18.28; Acts 1.7, 19, 25; 2.6, 8; 3.12; 4.23, 32; 13.36; 20.28; 21.6; 23.19; 24.23; 25.19; 28.30.

⁴⁶ Luke 18.28.

⁴⁷ Herodotus *Histories* 4.18, 22 refers to the Scythians as an ἔθνος ἕν ἴδιον and an ἔθνος πολλὸν καὶ ἴδιον. Ethnic identity, when held tightly as ἴδιος, functions as a social boundary that can limit human community.

Barnabas: Exemplar of a New Identity

As discussed in chapter 2, exemplars are individuals who best embody the prototypical criteria of a social group.⁴⁸ The prototypical aspects of the group are ascribed to the exemplar, and the characteristics of the exemplar are both desirable for and ascribed to the other members of the community.⁴⁹ Luke establishes Barnabas' exemplary status by portraying him as the embodiment of one of the primary group norms; Barnabas shares his possessions. As an exemplar, Barnabas represents the ideal expression of group identity.

Luke gives abundant identity-related information about Joseph Barnabas, who, not insignificantly, is the first newly introduced character in Acts who is neither an apostle nor a family member of Jesus.⁵⁰ He is a native of Cyprus and a Levite, thus a Cypriot Israelite with an important ethnic heritage.⁵¹ His Cypriot identity indicates that Greek was likely the language of his birth, a tantalizing possibility given the linguistic tensions that arise in Acts 6. Luke's introduction tells hearers that Joseph Barnabas has several honorable nested social identities from which to draw.⁵² But after giving us this biographical information (which must not in any case be considered extraneous to Luke's purposes), Luke introduces Joseph with his new name – Barnabas.

Two factors must be kept in tension at this point: (1) nicknames were common among Israelites in the Greco-Roman world and (2) naming is extremely significant to the formation of identity. Bauckham's research on Israelite naming practices has demonstrated the prevalence of nicknames in ancient Judea.⁵³ There appears to have been a relatively small cohort of common names in use from 330 BCE – 200CE. 15.6% of named males from the period possess one of the two most

⁴⁸ See Medin, et al 1984; Smith & Zarate 1992.

⁴⁹ Bodenhausen, et al 1995:60. Turner 1982:29 'Common category characteristics are inferred from the available exemplars of the category [social group], including oneself, and then automatically assigned, along with long-term criterial traits, to all members, again including oneself'.

⁵⁰ Joseph Barsabbas is also named in Acts 1.23, but only in the context of his consideration for apostleship. Dunn 1996:59-60 notes that Barnabas is 'an absolutely crucial figure in the early expansion of Christianity beyond Israel and out to the Gentiles'.

⁵¹ Levites were not permitted to own property (Joshua 14.4), but the practice must have either fallen out of use by this time or must not have been practiced in Barnabas' native Cyprus.

⁵² Saeed, et al 2004:824-5 states, 'Ethnic self-identification has usually been conceptualized in the literature as an option between two identities; in other words, an either/or phenomenon, tending not to accommodate the possibility of bi-cultural identification... This dichotomous model is simplistic. People may consider themselves to be members of two or more groups, in which case a single identity label would be insufficient'. Cf. Burdsey 1999.

⁵³ Bauckham 2006:67-92. Cf. Ilan 2002.

popular names, Simon or Joseph.⁵⁴ The large number of men with common names required strategies for differentiation, one of which was the adoption of a nickname.⁵⁵ At this level it is unsurprising that a Joseph (one of several in the early community, cf. Acts 1.23) would adopt a nickname.

The commonality of nicknames does not, however, preclude the importance of Luke's decision to introduce Barnabas by the name indicative of his identity as a member of the community. According to Philo, Old Testament name changes were often a reflection of the true identity or virtue of the person receiving the new name.⁵⁶ Proselytes often changed their name to reflect their new 'Israelite' identity, a phenomenon marked on ossuary inscriptions in Judea.⁵⁷ New Roman citizens and freedmen received either the name of their former master or the benefactor through whom they received their citizenship and the *tria nomina* was a sure sign of Roman identity.⁵⁸ In short, new names locate people within a reconfigured social context. This is the case for Barnabas, whose name was given to him by the apostles for his identification *within the community of believers*.⁵⁹ Moreover, though interpreters express unanimous bewilderment at the lexical meaning of 'Barnabas', the name as defined by Luke clearly marks Barnabas' function in the community.⁶⁰ At several key points in Acts Barnabas' encouragement serves the life of the community, often helping to abrogate social boundaries.⁶¹ In other words, Barnabas' new name describes his allocentric identity within the context of his social group.⁶² He is a Levite and a Cypriot, but primarily he is Barnabas, a member of the emerging Jesus group.

⁵⁴ Bauckham 2006:71.

⁵⁵ Bauckham 2006:81. Cf. Joseph Barsabas (Acts 1.23) and Simon Peter (Luke 6.14).

⁵⁶ *De mutatione nominum* 70-71, 121.

⁵⁷ Keener 1997:64. See also Cohen 1999:ch 5.

⁵⁸ Huskinson 2000:131-132.

⁵⁹ Similarly, Simon's nickname (Peter) reflects his emerging role in the community, a fact made most explicit in Matthew 16.18. See Bauckham 2006:103-104.

⁶⁰ See Barrett 1994:259. Possibilities include 'son of a prophet (from Hebrew: נְבִיא); 'son of comfort' (from Syriac: *br + nby*); 'son of consolation' (from Hebrew: נִרְחָם). But Luke's main concern is not etymology, but Barnabas' role in the community. Bede finds an interesting connection between the Spirit as 'Paraclete'/*paraclesis* (cf John 14.16) and Barnabas' name (*Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 4.36b; CS 117.53).

⁶¹ Acts 9.27; 11.22; 13.2; 15.12; 37. In the last instance, Barnabas' encouraging nature causes sharp dispute with Paul. Johnson 1992:87 attributes to Barnabas a 'mediatorial' role in the community.

⁶² Wall 2002:97 notes that names often change with 'vocational changes'.

What is indicated by Barnabas' new name is expressed by his voluntary handling of possessions.⁶³ His behaviour is a practical expression of the refusal to name *anything* as one's ἴδιος. Barnabas sells a field and delivers the proceeds to the apostles for distribution with no hint of either reciprocity or complete divestiture.⁶⁴ Rather, Barnabas' goods are *unconditionally available* for the mitigation of poverty in the community.⁶⁵ Barnabas, a Spirit-filled member of the group (Acts 4.31; 11.24), uses possessions in a manner indicative of his disposition toward – or full identification with – the new group. He values his people as his ἴδιος but holds his possessions loosely and makes them available to others. This is one prominent expression of Spirit-influenced allocentric identity. Barnabas turns his whole self toward the community, embodies the community in his person and is a pattern to be imitated.⁶⁶

Ananias and Sapphira: Intragroup Threat and the Community of the Spirit

If Barnabas exemplifies the emerging social identity formed by Luke's new group, Ananias and Sapphira are anti-exemplars, or villains.⁶⁷ Fitzmyer distills six approaches that modern scholars have taken toward the difficult story of Ananias and Sapphira.⁶⁸

1. An etiological reading based upon 1 Thessalonians 4.13-17: divine judgment explains the death of Christians before the parousia.⁶⁹
2. A Qumran reading comparing the couple's punishment with that of the Qumran initiate who deceives by concealing property.⁷⁰
3. A typological interpretation based on Achan in Joshua 7.⁷¹

⁶³ On the voluntary nature of Barnabas' act, see Witherington 1998:207-8; Marshall 1980:84; Harrington 1988:35. Pace Capper 1995 (who claims to favor 'voluntary donation' but whose proto-monastic scheme leaves little room for choice beyond a certain point); Wall 2002:73.

⁶⁴ See 1QS 6.19-20 for a practice implying full divestiture.

⁶⁵ Kollmann 2003:12.

⁶⁶ Barnabas' significance for early Christian identity is evident in other ancient writings. See *Epistle of Barnabas*; *Gospel of Barnabas*; *Acts of Barnabas by John Mark*; *Acta Bartholomaei et Barnabae*; and *Laudatio Barnabae*. Tertullian attributed Hebrews to Barnabas (*De Pudicitia* 20). Öhler 2003 studies the 'historical Barnabas'.

⁶⁷ Allen 1997:124.

⁶⁸ Fitzmyer 1998:318-9. Fitzmyer (317) thinks the narrative casts doubt on the historicity of Acts, but asserts this less emphatically than Conzelmann 1987:37.

⁶⁹ Barrett 1994:263-4.

⁷⁰ Capper 1983:1995.

4. An institutional reading which interprets the episode as an excommunication from the church.
5. A history of salvation reading which views the incident as an obstacle to the Acts 1.8 commission.
6. An 'original sin' reading that reads the episode as an example of sin at the beginning of the community's existence and hence in relationship to other accounts of sin at 'beginnings' (e.g. Adam and Eve, sons of God and daughters of men [Gen 6], the golden calf, David and Uriah).⁷²

While these approaches contain valuable insights, each of them neglects the intricate connections between Spirit, identity and possessions as well as the relationship between this couple and Barnabas.⁷³

Anti-exemplars – villains – have an important role in the formation of social identity, helping to establish boundaries for communities.⁷⁴ The memories of villains help a society to define itself, largely by serving as both a 'model of and a model for behavior' to be avoided.⁷⁵ For Luke, Ananias and Sapphira's attitude toward possessions arises as a result of their decision to self-sequester into a sort of *anti-group*.⁷⁶ This is established already in their introduction: '*Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property*' and '*with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds*'.⁷⁷ Similarly, Peter asks Sapphira, 'How is it that you have agreed *together* to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'⁷⁸ The furtive actions of the couple imply the emergence of a subgroup that takes precedence over the group of believers.

⁷¹ Johnson 1992; Cho 2005.

⁷² Marguerat 1993.

⁷³ Marguerat's reading, in which the sin of the couple is a retreat from the Edenic character of the community toward the individualism implicated in the 'fall', is attractive because it understands that the identity of the community and community members is in play.

⁷⁴ Fine 2001:8.

⁷⁵ Fine 2001:11.

⁷⁶ Seccombe 1983:211 agrees that it is not as a 'negative aspect of the sharing of goods' that the couple has importance. He suggests they function to illustrate the fear surrounding the community and its holiness. These factors are important but subsidiary and subsequent to the role of Ananias and Sapphira in the narration of the community's identification with the Spirit.

⁷⁷ Acts 5.1, 2.

⁷⁸ Acts 5.9.

They are, as it were, counterfeit community members.⁷⁹ Unlike Barnabas, they have retained possessions, but not community members, as their ἴδιος. Though the Spirit turns people toward community, Ananias and Sapphira have turned away.⁸⁰

We must be emphatic that their misuse of possessions is not the *cause* but the *symptom* of a more fundamental disposition which reveals Luke's uniquely spirit-focused understanding of identity, the 'other' and possessions.⁸¹

Ananias, why has *Satan filled your heart* to lie to the Holy Spirit... How is it that *you have contrived this deed in your heart*? You have not lied to men but to God... How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord.⁸²

Ananias and Sapphira, in their deception, have (1) 'lied to'/'falsified' (ψεύδομαι) the Holy Spirit [5.3]; (2) lied to God [5.4]; and (3) tempted the Spirit of the Lord [5.9].⁸³ It is best to take Peter's accusations not as differentiated infractions, but as a series set in parallel. Hence, the lies are the result both of Satan's filling of Ananias' heart (5.3) and of Ananias' and Sapphira's (5.9) own contrivance.⁸⁴

Ananias is not the first person in Luke's narrative to be 'filled' by Satan. Judas, the narrative's most infamous villain, was filled by Satan (Luke 22.3: 'Then Satan entered Judas called Iscariot') *before betraying the Jesus group*. While there are several parallels between Judas and Ananias and Sapphira, most striking is the fact that in both narratives *the influence of Satan causes the creation of an anti-group through an act of self-sequestering which ultimately leads to community betrayal*.⁸⁵ This is emphasized by Peter in Acts 1.25, who notes that Judas self-sequestered by leaving the apostles to 'go to his own (ἴδιος) place'. The stories of these prominent villains

⁷⁹ Bartchy 1991:316: 'By lying in order to achieve an honor they had not earned, Ananias and Sapphira not only dishonored and shamed themselves as patrons *but also revealed themselves to be outsiders, non-kin*' (emphasis mine).

⁸⁰ This connection between the use of one's ἴδιος, the Spirit and the 'other' appears in the Epistle of Barnabas 19.7-8 and the Didache 4.8-10. In Barnabas, one should share everything with his neighbor and not claim anything to be his ἴδιος because the Spirit comes without regard for 'reputation'. The Didache teaches its hearers to share with brothers and sisters in need and not claim that anything is your ἴδιος (4.8). The basis for this sharing is the common identity produced by the Spirit, who overcomes status distinctions (4.11).

⁸¹ Suggestions for the actual 'sin' of the couple include misuse of possessions (Johnson 1977:206; cf. 1992:91); deception (Dunn 1996:63) and 'trifling' with the apostles (Barrett 1994:262).

⁸² Acts 5.3, 4, 9.

⁸³ The most proximate occurrence of 'Lord' refers to Jesus (Acts 4.33).

⁸⁴ Acts 5.3-4.

⁸⁵ Other parallels include the role of money and the role of property (Ananias sells a field, Judas buys one).

give heightened attention to the relationship between Satan and anti-groups, yet it is not only villains who are susceptible to satanic influence. Jesus warned Peter that Satan sought to ‘sift’ him (Luke 22.31), but that Peter, afterward, should instead *strengthen his brothers* (Luke 22.32). Even Jesus himself (Luke 4.1-13) was tempted by Satan to turn inward and away from his true identity and mission. Satan, opposing the community of God, seeks to divide and isolate, while God, through his Spirit, seeks to unite and build up Jesus-centered community.⁸⁶

The ramifications of the Satan/self and Spirit/other dynamic, expressed in Acts 4 and 5 by the way one handles possessions, are clarified by reading Ananias and Sapphira in light of Peter’s speech in Acts 3. There we learned that improper response to Jesus leads to separation from the community, which itself is the opposite of the times of ‘refreshing’ (Acts 3.19: ἀνάψυξις; vb = ἀναψύχω) given to those who repent and are included in the community. Ananias and Sapphira, filled by Satan, form an anti-group that tragically leads to their destruction from the people and is described with the verbal opposite of ἀναψύχω (Acts 3.19), ἐκψύχω (Acts 5.5, 10).⁸⁷ For Luke, the community – inhabited by Spirit-filled people – is the *place of life*. This is true both temporally (based upon the immediate fate of the couple) and eschatologically (based upon the cosmic dualism evoked by the Spirit/God vs. Satan imagery).⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Longenecker 1999:92-108 sees a similar relationship between spiritual influence, identity and behaviour in Galatians.

⁸⁷ Acts 5.5, 10. The unmediated nature of Ananias and Sapphira’s fate separates it from other ‘judgment miracles’ in a way that elevates the necessity of community membership. A certain divine agency must be assumed in Acts 5.1-11, though note that Peter does not call down punishment upon the couple nor does Luke narrate direct divine punishment. This is in clear contrast with explicit judgment miracles in Acts 12.20-23 (‘an angel of the Lord smote him [Herod]’) and 13.9-11: (‘The hand of the Lord is against you and you will be blind...’). By contrast, Peter’s words in Acts 5.1-11 are more ‘explanatory than condemnatory’ (O’Toole 1995:194) and, though they are often read as conveying stern rebuke or anger, they can as easily be read with a sense of disappointment, sadness, or regret over something gone horribly wrong. This accords with Peter’s frequent willingness to give second chances evident in Acts 3.17-26 and 8.22 and is likely the result of his own rehabilitation back into the community (see the discussion of Peter’s characterization in Bauckham 2006:174-179). It is not Peter’s decisive judgment (in fact, Peter gives Sapphira a chance to repent), but something that is apparently an inherently natural consequence of self-separation from the community. Allen 1997:202-205 suggests that divine retribution functions to ‘legitimate the story of...people who find themselves in a context somewhat different than that in which the story of their origins took place’ and that ‘nobody can destroy what God has intended’.

⁸⁸ Turner 1996:406 suggests this cosmic dualism.

Forging an Identification between the Spirit and the Community

Peter's initial question ('Why has Satan filled your heart to lie [ψεύδομαι] to the Holy Spirit?') can be taken in one of two ways either of which highlight the identity of the community. ψεύδομαι + accusative object can mean 'to lie to', but it can also mean 'to falsify'.⁸⁹ If 'lie to' is the intended sense, Peter's question equates a lie to the community with a lie to the Spirit. If 'falsify' is the intended sense (a judgment which can only tentatively be made) the implication is that by valuing possessions over people Ananias and Sapphira have 'falsified' the work of the Spirit in the community. The deceit of Ananias and Sapphira stands in contrast to the allocentric identity of which the community is a collective expression, and thus has shined an unfavorable light upon (falsified) what the Spirit has been doing. Hence, Peter notes that they are filled by Satan rather than the Spirit.⁹⁰ The dichotomy between Satan-influence and Spirit-influence gives us the definitive clue to the identity of the community. A lie to the community is a lie to the Spirit/God/Spirit of the Lord. The new community is *the community of the Spirit*, who comes to empower and mark those who are identified with Jesus.

It is at this auspicious moment that Luke introduces the name ἐκκλησία for the group. For Israelites, the name evokes the LXX designation of the 'Hebrews wandering in the desert, the assembly of returned exiles, or the cultic assembly of Israel'.⁹¹ In the broader Roman Empire, the name evokes Greco-Roman civic assemblies. Returning to the beginning of this section, we are reminded that a social group is defined by self-ascription and ascription by others.⁹² The naming of the community after this first incident of intragroup conflict highlights the fact that the community, in Luke's view, has a definite social status. The reality of this new identity is evident in the response to the incident from others in Jerusalem toward the community at large.⁹³

⁸⁹ Johnson 1992:88. Parsons & Culy 2003:86 note that when that context includes an actual lie, the emphasis could be 'on the consequences or implications of lying'.

⁹⁰ Dunn 1996:64.

⁹¹ Fitzmyer 1998:325. Cf. Bruce 1952:136.

⁹² Turner 1982:15-16.

⁹³ *Pace* Johnson 1992:95. Johnson thinks that only the apostles are intended in the final summary. To arrive at this, he must posit that 4.23 implies only the apostles to the exclusion of the broader community. I have demonstrated the difficulty of this position above.

None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.⁹⁴

The conflation of fear over the prospect of violating the community and eagerness to be assimilated into the community is a reflection of the numinous awe elicited by the community itself and demonstrates a perception of something dangerously generative about this group.

Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira: Summary

For Luke, a clear relationship exists between influence by the Spirit or by Satan, human identity as it impinges upon relationships with the 'other', and the use of earthly goods. Possession of/by the Holy Spirit explicitly turns people away from the self and *outward* toward the broader community and the 'other'. The outcome of this allocentric identity is that people, and not possessions, become valued as one's 'own' (ἴδιος). Spirit-influence thus leads to the use of possessions freely for the 'other', as is exemplified by Barnabas. In clear contrast, the influence of Satan turns people away from the broader community and the 'other' and *inward* toward the self. The outcome of this egocentric identity is that possessions, and not people, become valued as one's 'own' (ἴδιος). Satan-influence thus leads to the use of possessions solely for the self, as exemplified by Ananias and Sapphira. *Satan prompts a treacherous turn away from the community and leads to destruction* (ἐκψύχω: Acts 5.5, 10).⁹⁵ *The Spirit prompts a turn toward the community and leads to restored relationships and times of refreshing* (ἀναψύχω: Acts 3.19). The descriptions of Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira serve powerfully to solidify the social identity commensurate with membership in the community. Their portrayal highlights Luke's conviction that the influence of the Spirit forms an allocentric identity that turns outward toward the 'other' and that is often expressed by refusal to claim possessions as one's own.

⁹⁴ Acts 5.13.14.

⁹⁵ Cf.. Peter's rebuke of Simon the Samaritan's self-centered pneumatic interests in Acts 8.18-25 and Paul's rebuke of Elymas in Acts 13.8-11.

Conclusion

Luke's community summaries present the gathering of Spirit-filled allocentric individuals into a social group with definite identity-forming capacity. The community features high self-ascription, has entitative status in the view of out-groups and is forged in an atmosphere of conflict. Each of these factors should be expected to heighten in-group bias and a correspondingly negative view of the 'other', yet the community continues to express favor toward the 'other' (Acts 2.47). SIT is helpful to demonstrate the ways in which this community stands in contrast to normal (often agonistic) intergroup identity-forming processes.⁹⁶ The community itself is a collective expression of the Spirit-formed allocentric identity we have traced through Luke-Acts. This identity, the importance of the community as the place of life, and the proper use of possessions are all highlighted by Luke's treatment of Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira, whose influence either by Satan or the Spirit forges either egocentric or allocentric identity and has ramifications for identity and possessions.

It is the reality of membership in this new group that, in Luke's presentation, begins to form a new social identity for its members. This will emerge as the primary way in which Jesus-followers know themselves in their context – their terminal social identity. Ananias and Sapphira stand to show that whenever another (subgroup) identity takes precedence over the social identity formed by membership in the Jesus community, disaster strikes. The defective identity of Ananias and Sapphira anticipates the ethno-linguistic conflict in Acts 6.1-7 and the difficult social boundary crossings in Acts 8, 9, 10, 11 and 15. In these chapters the Spirit will unfailingly appear at just the moment human identity is in question and will mark the common identity of those who are divinely approved participants in the community of the Spirit.

⁹⁶ The effective history of corporately expressed allocentric group identity appears to have endured as a hallmark of some sections of the Jesus movement. See Lucian of Samosata's *Passing of Peregrinus* 13 (ca 125-180 CE) and Julian the Apostate's letter to the high priest of Galatia (362 CE).

7

INCORPORATING THE 'OTHER' **THE SPIRIT AND SUPERORDINATE IDENTITY IN** **ACTS 6-9**

The intergroup and intragroup encounters in Acts 6-9 serve as a testing ground, helping to determine the relationship between the social identity formed by participation in the Jesus group, old social identities and the 'other'. I will demonstrate that in this section the Spirit subverts normal (often exclusionary) identity processes in two ways. First, the Spirit *orchestrates* intergroup contact between the in-group and the 'other'. This is essential to maintain the allocentric character of the community in the face of a willingness to settle into old exclusionary models of intergroup behavior and identity formation. Second, the Spirit maintains control of intergroup boundaries by serving as the primary *identity marker* for this new social identity. During critical intergroup encounters, the Spirit arrives at precisely the moment human identity is in question. The Spirit is thus involved in far more than 'mission', the Spirit is involved in the full *incorporation* of the 'other' into the community. This regularly results in a dual identity transformation that requires both former out-group members *and in-group members* to reorient their own social identity to reflect changes in group composition, a primary input for social identity.¹

¹ Poole, et al. 2004:10.

Acts 6.1-7: Subgroup Salience and Community Dysfunction

By Acts 6, the community is clearly an entitative social group, functioning with its own authority figures (the Twelve instead of the Sanhedrin), meeting in home and Temple (Acts 5.42) and organizing a system of poverty relief. The latter is evidence for the ongoing corporate expression of Spirit-empowered allocentric identity.² It is thus surprising when full-blown intragroup conflict erupts in this community of solidarity. The primary cause of the conflict is the rise to primacy of ethno-linguistic subgroup identities.³ As with Ananias and Sapphira (and as will continue throughout Acts), when subgroup identities become primary the community inevitably malfunctions.

The growth of the community (reported in 6.1; cf. Acts 2.41; 4.44) results in a relatively large group that is socio-economically and linguistically inclusive, both factors with ramifications for identity formation. SIT demonstrates that large groups, in which relationships are less personal, are frequently less effective at fostering intragroup loyalty.⁴ Further, highly inclusive groups can prompt the reassertion of subgroup identity distinctions as an effort by group members to maintain positive identity.⁵ It is not implausible that the 'Hebrews' understood themselves, as native speakers of the 'language of Israel', to be the prototypical subgroup in the community, thus relegating the Hellenist widows to the wrong side of a Hebrew entitlement claim.⁶ Language is a particularly strong identity-forming agent in situations similar to that described in Acts.

Minorities who speak an international language of high status [Greek, in a Greco-Roman context] are advantaged compared to those who

² Secombe 1978 argues against the contention that pre-70 CE Jerusalem had a formal charity system (a position held by Jeremias 1968, cf. Barrett 1994:310; Dunn 1996:81), suggesting evidence for a formal system is too late (*m.Ketubbot* 13.1-2; *m.Pesahim* 10.1; *m.Shekalim* 5.6) or does not refer to general community charity (*m.Ketubbot* 13.1-2; *m.Shekalim* 5.6). The only general distributions of charity were crisis relief efforts (Herod's importation of grain for famine relief ca 25 BCE [*Antiquities* 15.299-316] and Queen Helena's disaster aid ca. 46 or 47 CE [*Antiquities* 20.51-53]).

³ The current consensus is that the Hellenist/Hebrew distinction should be conceived linguistically, with context determining the broader ethnic implications (Witherington 1998:242). This seems likely from an SIT perspective, which suggests that Diaspora identities often become more 'conservative' in the face of pressure to assimilate. For full discussions of the issue see Bock 2007:256ff; Esler 1987:139-142; Witherington 1998:240-247. For an effort to refute the Baur hypothesis see Hill 1992.

⁴ Rabbie & Horowitz 1988:117-123.

⁵ Hornsey & Hogg 1999:543-550.

⁶ Cf. Luke 4.14-30. See Wenzel 2000; 2001; Weber, et al 2002; Wenzel, et al 2003; Waldzus, et al 2003; Waldzus, et al 2005.

speak a language with less prestige value [e.g. Hebrew/Aramaic]. But within the boundaries of a certain territory – a commune, a country – the respective status of the languages used can be reversed.⁷

Diaspora Israelites gained advantage as fluent Greek-speakers. But the situation was the opposite in Jerusalem/Judea where Hebrew/Aramaic was the prototype. The Hebrew/Aramaic speaking widows were likely (though perhaps even subconsciously) favored by the Hebrew/Aramaic speaking leaders of the community based upon their common ethno-linguistic subgroup identity.⁸ Thus, Acts 6.1-7 reflects an intragroup conflict of subgroup social identities, not a conflict of ideological or ‘theological’ positions. It is the first of several instances in which Luke will deploy the Spirit to chasten otherwise valid social identities.

Luke’s narrative context makes it evident that he is not ‘papering over’ a more vigorous dispute, but that this is a critical dysfunction within the community.⁹ This incident, like that of Ananias and Sapphira, is a threat to the group’s shared identity, to its public reputation for sharing goods and to the neediest members of the group itself.¹⁰ Luke stands within the broad biblical tradition in expressing particular concern for the plight of widows.¹¹ When it comes to the neglect of the Hellenist widows, ‘the church finds itself in an unholy alliance with unjust judges (Luke 18.1-8), hypocritical scribes (Luke 20.45-47), and an exploitative temple system (Luke 21.1-6)’.¹² In light of Acts 4.32-5.11, it is likely that the apostles themselves bore responsibility for the injustice – perhaps an unsurprising factor given the apostles’ tendency to have difficulty with various categories of ‘other’.¹³

⁷ Giles, et al 1977:312.

⁸ The imperfect tense of *παρθεωρέω* indicates a chronic problem and the passive voice may indicate the powerlessness of the aprototypical Hellenists.

⁹ Many suggest Luke ‘papers over’ a more serious intragroup conflict here (Conzelmann 1987:44; Dunn 1996:80, *inter alia*s). Tannehill 1990:81 suggests that Luke is only ‘exaggerating the ease with which they were solved’.

¹⁰ Tannehill 1990:80; Wall 2002:114.

¹¹ Luke 2.36-38; 4.25-27; 7.11-17; 18.1-8; 20.45-47; 21.1-4. Exodus 22.21-24; Deuteronomy 10.17-19; 14.29; 24.17; 26.12; 1 Kings 17.8-24; 2 Kings 4.1-7; Isaiah 1.17, 23; 10.2; Jeremiah 5.28 LXX; 7.6; 22.3; 49.11; Malachi 3.5; Ezekiel 22.7; Psalm 68.5; 93.6; 146.9.

¹² Spencer 1994:729.

¹³ Luke 9.48-50, 51-56; Acts 8.14-17; 9.26; 11.1-3. Spencer 1994:729: The Twelve show ‘disturbing traces of trivializing widows concerns’. Fitzmyer 1998:344; Wall 2002:115; and to a lesser extent Johnson 1992:105 assign culpability to the Twelve.

The Spirit and the (Fractured) Life of the Community

Luke's narrative presentation is elegantly simple but at first glance disappointingly brief.¹⁴ The Hellenists 'complain' (6.1: γογγυσμός) against the Hebrews because of a malfunction of widow-care. The Twelve make a value judgment regarding time management, but then act decisively to delegate authority for redressing the grievance. There is no evidence that the apostles, once alerted to the issue, assumed that the service of the widows was of minor importance.¹⁵ To the contrary, the ministry of both the word and the table are called διακονία, thus ἀρεστός (6.2) is a 'priority choice about observing the call of God versus a moral choice of right, wrong, and sin'.¹⁶

The essential point is that Luke is not concerned with *how* the problem is addressed, or even *what* (in great detail) constituted the problem, but he is concerned with *who* is best equipped to manage the intragroup conflict.¹⁷ Luke showed himself capable of describing the mechanisms of intragroup poverty relief in Acts 4.32ff, but here Luke is concerned only with the selection criteria for the seven – criteria that are strikingly *different* than the criterion of social homogeneity employed by Peter in Acts 1.21-22 (cf. Luke 9.49-50). In this case, the mediators of the intragroup conflict are to be 'seven men of good repute (μαρτυρουμένους), full of the Spirit (πλήρεις πνεύματος) and of wisdom' (Acts 6.3).

Luke characteristically uses μαρτυρέω as a passive participle to demonstrate that someone is 'of good repute' within his or her community.¹⁸ Those of 'good

¹⁴ Spencer 1994:716 notes that scholarly interest has focused more on structural than pastoral concerns, especially with regard to hierarchy among community officials.

¹⁵ This opposes the common view that calls waiting on tables 'trivia' (Fitzmyer 1998:344); a 'humble task' (Penney 1997:65 fn 11); one of the 'lower tasks' in the community (Lienhard 1975:232); or that sees Stephen's subsequent preaching as the 'real' reason for Luke's narration of Spirit-influence in the 6.3 (Cho 2005:132).

¹⁶ Bock 2007:259; cf. Johnson 1992:106. ἀρεστός (cf. Acts 12.3) appears to carry the sense of 'pleasing' or 'satisfactory' for Luke. καταλείπω (Acts 6.2) carries the sense of 'leave behind' or 'forsake', and is used by Luke to speak about leaving one place or item behind in favor of another (Luke 5.28; 10.40; 15.4; 20.31; Acts 18.19; 21.13; 24.27; 25.17). The Twelve recognize that they cannot, given the size of the community, adequately perform both διακονία.

¹⁷ Acts 6.1-7 is difficult to understand within the 'Spirit of prophecy' paradigm. Cho 2005:132 wiggles free by claiming that being 'full of the Spirit and wisdom Stephen was initially appointed as an inner server (human organization), and then becomes a powerful missionary as a witness (Spirit working) which is a more dominant feature than the former'. This grossly misunderstands the high value that Luke places on 'menial' tasks like serving the marginalized (cf. Luke 4.18-20; 9.46-48; 22.24-27).

¹⁸ Cornelius is 'of good repute' because of his benefaction to the Israelite community (10.22). Ananias is 'of good repute' in the eyes of his local community (22.12). Cf. *Antiquities* 12.150.

repute' are clarified, exegetically, to be those most clearly marked by the *Spirit* and wisdom. Cho is wrong to claim that the apostles' mandate is evidence that 'not all the members of the community' have been 'filled and used by the Spirit'.¹⁹ Luke's use of totalizing adjectives with regard to the Spirit has prepared us to expect that all who submit to Jesus' lordship are given the Spirit.²⁰ In the case of Acts 6.3, πλήρης + defining genitive indicates that Spirit-fullness is the 'quality [that] clearly marks the person's life or comes to visible expression in his or her activity'.²¹

In Lukan terms, the criterion for judging whether it is appropriate to speak of someone as "full of the Spirit" is... whether the community of Christians *felt the impact of the Spirit* through that person's life and *saw the Spirit's graces and gifts regularly expressed* through him or her.²²

The requirement that those chosen be marked by the Spirit results in seven designees, all native Greek speakers and even one proselyte, who were *aprototypical* relative to Hebrew/Aramaic speaking Israelites, including the Twelve.²³

Those suited to handle a crisis of identity in the community are those who are most marked by the Spirit. Luke has already demonstrated that the influence of the Spirit results in an expanded ethnic horizon and an allocentric turn toward the 'other'.²⁴ Likewise, the Spirit-filled seven are capable of reaching across the ethno-linguistic subgroup boundary in a way similar to Barnabas (also πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου) in Antioch (Acts 11.24). Here again the presence of the Spirit resists (in this case, 'Hebrew') claims to entitlement based upon subgroup prototypicality, but instead extends the benefits of the group to the 'other'.

Acts 6.7 ('the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem') indicates that the community was restored by the Spirit-filled seven. Characteristic for Luke, based upon Acts 2.42-47 and 4.32-5.16, is the notion that proper community

¹⁹ Cho 2005:132 emphasis original. Cho concludes by suggesting, oddly, 'the conflict between the "Hellenists" and "Hebrews" in the church simply shows the different status of the spirituality of the members of the community'.

²⁰ Cf. multiple uses of 'all' in Acts 2.4; 4.31; cf. 2.38.

²¹ Turner 1996:167. Luke usually uses πίμπλημι for short-term episodic Spirit events and πλήρης/πληρώω for the gift of the Spirit received at conversion (Turner 1996:167-169).

²² Turner 1996:169, emphasis original.

²³ Israelites often had Greek names (Bauckham 2006:ch 4), but only Stephen and Philip were common Israelite names (Bock 2007:261).

²⁴ See chapters 3-4.

function inevitably results in group expansion.²⁵ Also characteristic is the emerging fact that Spirit-filled figures are best able to address group identity issues. The fact that ‘a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith’ (Acts 6.7), especially given the likelihood that priests were high identifiers with the Israelite ἔθνος, highlights the fact that despite the community’s developing distinctiveness, its identity was not *a priori* in conflict with Israelite ethnic identity.²⁶ Ethno-linguistic identity is chastened and shown to be inappropriate (and potentially destructive) as a primary identity. Yet Pentecost demonstrated that, properly nested within the superordinate identity arising from membership in the Jesus group, ethno-linguistic identity is robustly affirmed by the Spirit.

Acts 8: Incorporating those who Identify Themselves with the God of Israel

Acts 8 narrates the incorporation of the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch, both of whom constitute a liminal social category best conceptualized as ‘those who desired to be joined to Israel’s God, but who were not permitted’. The intelligibility of the category arises from an understanding of the unique intergroup relations in view in Acts 8, as well as from an appreciation of Luke’s allusions to Isaiah 56.3-7 LXX to frame these incorporation narratives. Both of the essential incorporative functions of the Spirit, *orchestration* and *identification* are displayed in Luke 8 in order to bring the ‘other’ into the group and thus to transform the social identities of both insiders and former outsiders.

Luke’s Socially Unique Samaritans

The intergroup relationship between Samaritans and Israelites is unique historically, in Luke’s narrative presentation and from an SIT perspective. Historically, from Israelite perspective, the Samaritans were syncretistic Assyrian re-settlers worshiping Israel’s God only to escape a problem with lion attacks.²⁷ Samaritans, however, viewed themselves as descendents of Jacob and defenders of

²⁵ Bock 2007:261 suggests different groups ‘working together in a world... divided along ethnic lines’ is a ‘powerful testimony’.

²⁶ The regular Qumran critique of the priesthood (‘the last priests of Jerusalem... amass money and wealth by plundering the people’ [1QpHab 9.4]) prompts fascinating speculation that potentially unscrupulous priests joined the community based upon the Spirit-empowered demonstration of economic self-sacrifice and concern for the ‘other’.

²⁷ See 2 Kings 17; Ezra 4.1-4. Josephus says that Samaritans claimed to be one with Israelites when politically expedient (*Antiquities* 14.291), but their origins were in exogamy (*Antiquities* 11.302-324).

Torah while understanding Israelites to be followers of Eli, a priest of defective lineage who established the Jerusalem cult as a rival to the legitimate national center in Shechem.²⁸ While there are reasons to doubt the accuracy of each of these conflicting accounts, the important point is that they are essentially *ethnic* in nature, both dealing with issues of physical descent.²⁹ This simple observation corrects approaches to the Samaritan/Israelite question hampered by only undertaking a comparison of ‘religions’.³⁰ Samaritan and Israelite origin narratives reflect conflicting identities based upon contested claims to *the same ethnic social identity*: ‘true Israel’.³¹ This contested identity led to episodic violence that sometimes attracted Roman attention.³²

The Samaritan/Israelite relationship is unique in Luke’s Gospel as well. Because I have discussed Luke’s special interest in Samaritans in chapter 5 (Luke 9.51-56; 10.25-37; 17.11-19), I will here only note that in Luke 17.18 Jesus calls the returning Samaritan leper a ‘foreigner’ (ἄλλογενής), the only deployment of this term in the New Testament.³³ The word appears in the LXX in three characteristic contexts: (1) in the prohibition against non-Israelite spouses; (2) in juxtaposition to things that are holy or that have access to the holy (e.g., the ἄλλογενής cannot eat food sacrificed in Israelite worship); and (3) the ἄλλογενής is not permitted to walk through the Temple courts.³⁴ For Luke, the Samaritans are not quite ἔθνη, but they clearly are not Israel – they are another form of ‘other’. The ambiguity provided by

²⁸ Purvis 1968:88 fn 1.

²⁹ Ethnic differentiation between Israelites and Samaritans existed well into the Rabbinic period. *m.Kuttim* 6 teaches that Samaritans cannot marry into Israel because of ‘their bastards’.

³⁰ Pummer 1992:42, for example, focuses on ‘samaritanischer Religion’. Macchi 1994:43; 1999:241 suggests Samaritans are best conceptualized as another branch of the worship of YHWH. Thornton 1996:130 calls the Samaritans a ‘religious community’. Luke does not focus on the cultic distinctives (Gerizim vs. Zion, Samkutty 2006:115). Schur 1995:289 properly understands the Samaritans as ‘a people, perhaps even a nation’.

³¹ Cf. John 4.12.

³² See *Samaritan Chronicle*, ch. 34, lines 648-658 (Stenhouse 1985). Samaritans rejected all Scriptures beyond their version of the Pentateuch and replaced Jerusalem with Gerizim in the Pentateuch (Hjelm 2000:91). Josephus derogatorily referred to Samaritans as Cutheans (*Antiquities* 9.288, 290; 10.184; 11.19-20, 88, 302; 13.256) or Shechemites (*Ant* 11.342, 344, 347) and modified his Torah retelling with anti-Samaritan polemic (Thornton 2006). For episodes of violent conflict, see *Antiquities* 18.29-30; 20.118-136; cf. Sirach 50.26; 2 Maccabees 6.2; Matthew 10.5. See Samkutty 2006:80-81 for Rabbinic depictions.

³³ ἄλλογενής was the boundary-marking term in the Temple court of the non-Israelites: μηδὲνα ἄλλογενῆ εἰσπορεύεσθαι.

³⁴ Genesis 17.27; Exodus 12.43; 29.33; 30.33; Leviticus 22.10, 12f, 25; Numbers 1.51; 3.10, 38; 17.5; 18.4, 7; 1 Esdras 8.66f, 80, 89f; 9.7, 9, 12, 17f, 36; Judith. 9.2; 1 Maccabees 3.36, 45; 10.12; Job 15.19; 19.15; Sirach 45.13; Ps. Sol. 17.28; Joel 4.17; Obadiah 1.11; Zechariah 9.6; Malachi 3.19; Isaiah 56.3, 6; 60.10; 61.5; Jeremiah 28.51; 49.17; Ezekiel 44.7, 9; Daniel 1.10.

the term ἀλλογενής reflects a sentiment akin to *m.Kuttim* 1, which highlights the simultaneous similarity and distinction. ‘The usages of the Samaritans are in part like those of the non-Israelites, in part like those of Israel, but mostly like Israel’.

Social Similarity and Intergroup Conflict Intensity

The contested identity between Israelites and Samaritans leads to a unique intergroup relationship from an SIT perspective as well. Because intergroup distinctiveness is essential to positive identity and can only be maintained through intergroup differentiation, *intergroup similarity* can, under certain conditions, be experienced as a threat to in-group identity.³⁵ This is less the case for unimportant or relatively trivial identities.³⁶ But for important (especially primary) social identities, intergroup similarity can lead to an increased drive for group distinctiveness, especially for high identifiers under conditions of intergroup competition.³⁷ The drive for distinctiveness is heightened when there is overall pressure toward social assimilation and where groups have close proximity and regular interaction.³⁸

This proves to be a helpful frame for understanding the tension between Israelites and Samaritans, both of whom experienced identity threat from the assimilationist pressures of Hellenization, who had close geographical and social proximity and who made mutually exclusive claims to the *same identity*.³⁹ Such a fundamental clash of primary identity narratives can be fertile soil for intractable intergroup conflict.⁴⁰ Commenting on the modern day Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Rouhana and Bar Tal note that

Each national narrative is in a way based on a fundamental negation of the other's. For the Israelis, to accept the central piece of the Palestinian narrative that Palestine was indeed populated by indigenous people who were gradually and systematically dispossessed and replaced by newcomers means that the Jewish state was born in sin. Thus, the Israeli narrative denies this Palestinian account. For the Palestinians, to accept the central part of the Zionist

³⁵ Jetten, et al 2004:862.

³⁶ Moghaddam 1988:112.

³⁷ Moghaddam 1988:113; Tajfel & Turner 1981:41; Jetten, et al 2001:622.

³⁸ Grant 1993:43; Jetten, et al. 2004:846.

³⁹ Hjelm 2000:11.

⁴⁰ Rouhand & Bar Tal 1998:763.

narrative that the Jews are not to be seen as newcomers but a people returning to their own homeland – albeit after 2,000 years – means that Palestinians were aliens in their own land, a view that they by definition reject... Conflict and identity support each other in a mutual fortification process.⁴¹

This comment sheds valuable light on the nature of the Israelite/Samaritan relationship. The acknowledgement of the identity claim of the ‘other’, for each group, results in the negation of the in-group’s identity claim. From an etic perspective the socio-cultural differences between the groups appear insignificant, but from an emic perspective, ‘it is the perception of subjective differences rather than objective status that matters to groups’.⁴² Historically, for Samaritans and Israelites, these perceptions led to violent conflict that was episodic rather than chronic, but that (in Luke’s view) simmered just below the surface of normal social intercourse (Luke 9.51-56).

The Spirit and Social Tension in Acts 8.1-25: Dual Identity Transformation

The distinctiveness of the Israelite/Samaritan intergroup relationship is paralleled by the Samaritans’ apparently anomalous ‘conversion’ experience in light of Peter’s presumably normal order of salvation in Acts 2.38: repentance, baptism, Spirit reception, all in immediate succession. In Samaria, however, the Samaritans respond to Philip’s message (8.5) and signs (σημεῖα: 8.6) with faith (πιστεύω: 8.12) and baptism (8.12), but they do not receive the Spirit (8.17) until (days?) later. Six basic approaches have been set forth to describe the ‘late’ appearance of the Spirit.⁴³

1. The text reflects a source critical problem caused by Luke’s conflation of several independent sources.⁴⁴ This ‘cut and paste’ form critical approach is outdated.
2. The Samaritans did not have adequate faith prior to the visit from Peter and John.⁴⁵ This requires believing the *exact opposite* of what Luke says in Acts 8.12-13. Dunn’s suggestion that the dative

⁴¹ Rouhand & Bar Tal 1998:763, 767.

⁴² Dovidio, et al 1998:110; cf Hjelm 2000:12.

⁴³ Discussion in Turner 1996:361-373 and Wenk 2004:291-294.

⁴⁴ Bauernfeind 1939:124-124; Dibelius 1971:17.

⁴⁵ Dunn 1970:63-68. Dunn suggests Samaritan hope in the *Taheb* caused them confusion and that they were more interested in the signs and wonders (64). Dunn softens the certainty of these positions in his 1993:228; 1996.

construction with Philip as its object (ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) indicates ‘faith in Philip’ is defeated when one notes the similar constructions in Acts 13.12 and 16.14.⁴⁶ Likewise, Cornelius’ household and the Samaritans both are said to have received the ‘word of God’ (Acts 8.15; 11.1).

3. The Spirit-reception in Acts 8.17 is a second gift of charismatic empowerment.⁴⁷ Yet Luke appears emphatic that the Spirit had not yet fallen *at all*.

4. Acts 8 describes a ‘Hellenistic-Pauline conversion-initiation pattern’.⁴⁸ This depends on the Tübingen School’s Hebrew/Hellenist, Peter/Paul dichotomy.

5. Acts 8 describes a relationship between Philip and Peter that is patterned after John and Jesus. The former initiate while the latter culminate.⁴⁹ But there is no ‘culmination’ in other ‘conversions’, not even for Philip and the eunuch (Acts 8.26-40).

6. The Spirit is given in 8.17 specifically for empowerment for mission.⁵⁰ But there is no evidence of any missionizing by Samaritans.

More inviting is Wenk’s suggestion that the Spirit becomes the ‘identity marker for a community that had *ipso facto* come to comprise both Jews and Samaritans’.⁵¹ Yet he overlooks the powerful transformation that this new identity marker creates for the *apostles* who must themselves undergo identity transformation due to the incorporation of the Samaritans.⁵²

⁴⁶ See critique of Dunn in Turner 1996:362-367.

⁴⁷ Beasley-Murray 1962:118-119.

⁴⁸ Quesnel 1985:ch 7; quotation is from Wenk 2004:292.

⁴⁹ Spencer 1992:211-241.

⁵⁰ Menzies 1990:248-260.

⁵¹ Wenk 2004:294.

⁵² Wenk 2004:ch 13 describes this as reshaping of the church’s ‘symbolic universe’, which implies cognitive reconceptualization but not necessarily identity transformation. Further, Wenk overlooks the important connections between this episode and Acts 2.18.

I will demonstrate that Luke uses the Samaritan episode to underscore the identity-marking function of the Spirit to prompt the apostles to recognize that they and the Samaritans share a common group and a common social identity. Luke undergirds his treatment of Samaritan identity with a complex and powerful allusion to Isaiah 56.3a, 6-7 LXX in order to portray the Samaritans as a group that wished to attach itself to the God of Israel but that was historically forbidden. But now, Luke thinks, believing Samaritans are *identified* by the Spirit as δοῦλοι and δοῦλαι of God (cf. Acts 2.18).⁵³ This Spirit-identification results in the first of Luke's dual identity transformations.

Luke's Distinct Intergroup Focus in Acts 8.1-25

The text draws our focus to Samaritans *as a group* in several ways, thus alerting the hearer that this is an intergroup situation and that the Israelite/Samaritan intergroup relationship sits in the background. An anarthrous reading of the variant in 8.5 (Φίλιππος δὲ κατελθὼν εἰς [τὴν] πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας), favorable for internal textual considerations, highlights the fact that at issue is not location, but a people group – the Samaritans.⁵⁴ Luke specifically refers to the Samaritans as an ἔθνος in 8.7.⁵⁵ The Samaritan response to the gospel message is given with the adjective ὁμοθυμαδόν, a word typically reserved for the single-minded devotion of the Jesus group.⁵⁶ Finally, Luke's hearers know the Samaritans as not just any ἔθνος, they are ἀλλογενής – and are named so by Jesus himself (Luke 17.18).

The Delay (?) of the Spirit

The exegetical difficulty in the passage (most acute for those seeking a normative 'order of salvation', which Luke simply *does not present*) arises from the dissonance created by the apparently conflicting claims that the Samaritans

⁵³ For Luke's use of Isaiah see Seccombe 1981; Pao 2003. While many see Isaiah 56.3-7 behind Acts 8.26-40, no interpreters have appreciated the full significance of the passage for Acts 8.4-25.

⁵⁴ Barrett 1994:401-403 discusses textual issues. τὴν is likely a scribal insertion given for specificity. Internal considerations (the ambiguous 'that city' in 8.8) favor the anarthrous reading. External evidence favors the article (p74, 8, A, B, 69, 181, 460*, 1175, 1898).

⁵⁵ Samaria, like Israel, can apparently be called ἔθνος, while not being included in the ἔθνη (cf. Acts 10.22). Cf. Sirach 50.25-26. See Esler 2008 forthcoming on ἔθνος vs. ἔθνη in *Contra Apionem*.

⁵⁶ Acts 1.14; 2.46; 4.24; 5.12; 8.6; 15.25. For unanimous consensus among non-believers, see Acts 7.57; 12.20; 18.12; 19.29.

ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ
θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐβαπτίζοντο ἄνδρες τε καὶ
γυναῖκες⁵⁷

but that the Holy Spirit

οἶδέπω γὰρ ἦν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιπεπτωκός.⁵⁸

All signs point to an authentic work in Samaria: signs and wonders are performed (cf. Acts 2.19); Samaritans experience joy, a Spirit-produced trait in Acts; they respond with one accord (ὁμοθύμαδον), a trait of the community of the Spirit; the language of faith (ἐπίστευσαν) is similar to other 'valid' conversions; they are baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 8.12, 16).⁵⁹ There is, apparently, no logical or 'theological' reason the Samaritans should not have received the Spirit prior to the apostles' visit.

The news of Samaritan reception of the word of God, albeit without the Spirit, prompts an ambiguous visit from Peter and John. Because the apostles in Luke-Acts regularly have tended toward expressions of in-group bias that create reluctance to embrace the 'other', one is inclined to suggest that the apostles' trip to Samaria was based upon their skepticism that this 'other' had become 'one of them'. Examples of this apostolic reticence are plentiful: John's resistance to a non-apostle ministering in Jesus' name (Luke 9.49-50); James' and John's anti-Samaritan bias (Luke 9.51-56); the reluctance of the Jerusalem disciples to incorporate Saul (Acts 9.26); Peter's reluctance to obey a heavenly vision (Acts 10.14); the Jerusalem disciples' reluctance to incorporate Cornelius, whose household, like the Samaritans, had received the 'word of God' (Acts 11.1-3; cf. Acts 8.14); the Jerusalem disciples' apparent skepticism concerning non-Israelite Jesus-followers in Antioch (Acts 11.22-24). Luke demonstrates apostolic caution, if not outright reluctance, immediately to embrace non-Israelite Jesus-followers or various 'threatening others'. These incidents, the one in Samaria included, are intelligible as expressions of in-group love that result in out-group ambivalence, if not antipathy. This leads us to a key point: *the identities that are challenged in Acts are not just out-group identities;*

⁵⁷ Acts 8.12.

⁵⁸ Acts 8.16.

⁵⁹ Joy: Luke 10.21; Acts 8.39; 13.52; 15.31; 16.14; cf. Romans 14.17; Galatians 5.22. ὁμοθύμαδον: Acts 1.14; 2.46; 4.24; 5.12; 8.6. The lone exception is 7.57, the collective rage of Stephen's attackers. Similar language of faith: Acts 13.12; 16.14. Baptism in Jesus' name: Acts 2.38; 10.48.

the emerging identity of the Jesus group is challenged at many points, especially when various categories of 'other' join the in-group.

The 'delay' of the coming of the Spirit functions to challenge the in-group identity of the apostles. The Spirit does not fall on the Samaritans until Peter and John arrive on the scene in Acts 8.17. Given Peter's modification of Joel 3.1-5a LXX at Pentecost in which the addition of the double $\mu\upsilon\upsilon$ (Acts 2.18) made clear that the Spirit was the definitive mark of the servants/slaves of God, there is no question that the Samaritans are now members of Peter and John's group. This is Luke's first narrative demonstration that the Spirit *marks/identifies* former out-group members who now share a common identity with the Jesus group.⁶⁰ By identifying Samaritans as in-group members, the *Spirit* navigates the intergroup boundary in question.⁶¹ This in itself is a departure from typical intergroup identity formation processes. But this narrative is not only about Samaritan incorporation. Scholars frequently overlook the fact that the trip is less about apostolic verification, culmination, or authorization, and more about apostolic *identity transformation*.⁶² Whenever group composition changes, especially when a heretofore 'other' is incorporated, social identity is transformed to reflect the newly constituted group. 'Demographic characteristics... help to shape the meaning people attach to their identity group memberships'.⁶³

The textual evidence for Peter and John's identity transformation is apparent in the matter-of-fact statement that they 'returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of Samaritans', an option evidently unthinkable on their way to Samaria.⁶⁴ This is the first of several 'dual identity transformations' for Luke and reflects the fact that the Apostles now conceive of the possibility that Samaritans can become a part of their in-group. An approach that appreciates the importance of a common identity for intergroup reconciliation and community formation can detect the fact that the Spirit, in Acts 8.4-25, came neither too soon nor too late, but at just the moment identity was in question. This

⁶⁰ Seccombe 1997:49 notes the Spirit is important for the acknowledgement of Samaritans as 'fellow believers' but appears to leave the locus of the acknowledgement with the apostles, not the Spirit.

⁶¹ Squires 1998:614 is off the mark: 'Nothing in this section [Acts 8-12] takes place without being initiated or authorized by the community in Jerusalem'.

⁶² Contra Schneider 1980:492, the apostles are not the 'Aufsichtsbehörde' nor are they the 'unmittelbares Bindeglied zwischen Jesus und der Samariter gemeinde'.

⁶³ Ely 1994:206-207.

⁶⁴ Acts 8.25. The 'they' in the text likely includes Philip.

new Spirit-marked identity bridges an ancient ethnic rivalry and brings together two competing narratives around the person of Jesus.⁶⁵

Isaiah 56.3a, 6-7 as a Substructure for the Samaritan Incorporation

Luke's incorporative intention becomes all the more apparent when one examines the Isaiah 56.3-7 allusion lurking beneath Acts 8.4-40. The sections relevant to Acts 8.4-25 are Isaiah 56.3a, 6-7:

Let not the foreigner (ἄλλογενής) who attaches himself to the Lord say, 'Surely the Lord will separate me from his people (λαός)'. And let not the eunuch say, 'I am a dry tree'... And to the foreigners (ἄλλογενής) attaching themselves to the Lord to serve (δουλεύειν) him and to love the name of the Lord (τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) to be to him male servants (δούλους) and female servants (δούλας)... I will bring them to my holy mountain and I will make them glad in my house of prayer... For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations (ἔθνη).

The link between the passages is literary and historical. Historically, the Samaritans fit well the profile of 'foreigners' who had attached themselves to the God of Israel, but whose attachment was not permitted (in this case, by the people of Israel themselves). This is reflected (at an earlier date) in Ezra 4.1-4 and is likely evident to Luke's audience in the return of the Samaritan ἄλλογενής in Luke 17.11-19. The Samaritan would almost certainly have been expected to be unwelcome before the priests at the Jerusalem Temple. Literarily, ἄλλογενής serves as a linking word that connects Samaritans with Isaiah 56.3a.⁶⁶ Initially, then, I contest the majority interpretation that suggests the Ethiopian eunuch fulfills both categories of Isaiah 56.3 (ἄλλογενής and εὐνοῦχος).⁶⁷ The plausibility of Isaiah 56 in general being in Luke's mind is high. Along with the regular conclusion that Acts 8.26-40 draws on Isaiah 56, Luke uses Isaiah 56.7 as Temple critique in Luke 19.46. Luke's

⁶⁵ There is no space to discuss Simon's attempted manipulation of the Spirit for monetary gain, which stands in line with Luke's contrast between Satan, the self and use of possessions, and the Spirit, the other and use of possessions. Cf. Acts 4.36-5.11.

⁶⁶ Litwak 2005 does not treat this passage in his extensive treatment of intertextuality in Luke-Acts. Pao 2003 applies Isaiah 56.3-5 only to the eunuch (Acts 8.26-40) in his treatment of Luke's use of Isaiah. The only interpreter to notice this connection is Schneider 1980:498, cited by Rusam 2003:383, who hints ('vermuten') that the Samaritans and Eunuch together function 'als Erfüllung der messianischen Verheißung für den ἄλλογενής und den εὐνοῦχος Jes 56.3-5 LXX'. He does not develop the allusion, nor does he connect the 'Erfüllung' of Isaiah 56.3-7 to the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁷ Wenk 2006:297; Tannehill 1990:109; Robinson & Wall 2006:118; Pao 2003:142; Martin 1989:109. Barrett 1994:426 sees no Isaiah 56 background in all of Acts 8. Even Beale 2004, in his intertextual biblical theological study of Temple, overlooks the significance of this passage for Samaritans.

use of Isaiah 53.7-8 in Acts 8.32-33 demonstrates he is working in Isaiah at this point and, as Seccombe has argued, ‘in approaching quotations from and allusions to Isaiah there is a presumption in favour of Luke's awareness of their context and wider meaning within Isaiah as a whole’.⁶⁸

The next two intertextual links, while intricate, solidify Luke’s identity-forming agenda for this passage. First, the Samaritans are said to have ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ περὶ... τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 8.12). This is the only time in Luke-Acts that anyone comes to ‘faith’ in the ‘name’ of Jesus Christ.⁶⁹ It evokes Isaiah 56.6 where the ἀλλογενής who attach themselves to God are said to ἀγαπᾶν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου.⁷⁰ Those who love the ‘name of the Lord’ in Isaiah 56 are subsequently identified as δούλοι and δούλαι of God. Thanks to the addition of the double μου in Acts 2.18, Luke’s hearers know that when the Spirit falls upon Samaritans, they are deemed to be δούλοι and δούλαι of God. Isaiah 56.6 is the *only other instance* beside Acts 2.18 in either the LXX or New Testament where people are identified as δούλοι and δούλαι of God.⁷¹

The intertextual logic for Luke runs as follows. In Isaiah, ἀλλογενής who have attached themselves to the Lord need not fear being ‘separated’ from the people (Isaiah 56.3a), but if they love the ‘name (ὄνομα) of the Lord’ they can become δούλοι and δούλαι of God and be welcomed to worship in the Temple, a ‘house of prayer for all nations’ (Isaiah 56.6-7). In Acts 8, the Samaritans – definitively ἀλλογενής (Luke 17.18) – believe the announcement about the ‘name (ὄνομα) of Jesus Christ’ (Acts 8.12) receive the Spirit (Acts 8.17) and thus, by virtue of Acts 2.18, are identified as δούλοι and δούλαι of God. It is hard not to wonder whether Luke is presenting the new community as the eschatological Temple. Luke’s use of Isaiah 56 in this section would explain why Luke (of all the evangelists!) stops short in his Gospel quotation of Isaiah 56.7, stating only that the Temple is a ‘house of prayer’, but omitting ‘for all nations’ (Luke 19.46; cf. Mark

⁶⁸ Seccombe 1981:259.

⁶⁹ ‘In Jesus Christ’ is normally a baptismal or a healing/exorcism formula (Acts 2.38; 3.6; 4.10; 10.48; 16.18).

⁷⁰ Jesus is called κυρίου Ἰησοῦ in Acts 8.16. Associating the ‘Lord’ of Isaiah 56.6 with Jesus would be an impressive Christological move by Luke.

⁷¹ Other tandem occurrences of δούλοι and δούλαι, though not as genitive subjects of ‘God’, are 1 Samuel 8.16; 2 Chronicles 28.10; Joel 3.2; Isaiah 14.2.

11.17). Perhaps Luke forestalls his use of Isaiah 56.7 in order to demonstrate it narratively in Acts.⁷²

As co-δούλοι with Israelite Jesus-followers, the Samaritan believers now exist as a part of one people – an absolutely essential factor in ‘salvation’ according to Peter’s Acts 3 speech. Luke is never satisfied to portray ‘salvation’ as a status conferred. Instead it always involves an identity consummated and a people inaugurated.

The Retention of Ethnic Particularity in Samaria

There are several ramifications in this pericope for the relationship between ethnicity and the Spirit. The Samaritans, to receive the Spirit, do not have to renounce either their Samaritan ethnic identity or (evidently) any of the markers of Samaritan identity that competed with Israelite identity markers. Given later rabbinic rhetoric, this is surprising.⁷³ It is foreigners *as foreigners* whom God will not separate from his people but who will pray in the house of prayer *for all nations* (Isaiah 56.7). Yet this ethnic identity is chastened and can only function as a nested identity within the new superordinate identity formed by the Spirit. While these groups remain, at one level, composed of Israelites and Samaritans, the group functions properly when they relate as co-members of the community of the Spirit. The Spirit *marks* a new identity that destroys ethnic hegemonies and relegates ethnic identity always to a (wholly valid) penultimate level.

Acts 8.26-40: The Ethiopian Eunuch

Luke’s treatment of the Ethiopian eunuch forms the second half of Luke’s allusion to Isaiah 56.3-7 and the eunuch constitutes another member of the category ‘those who desired to attach themselves to the God of Israel, but who were not permitted’. While the man is an Ethiopian, Luke highlights his eunuch identity by

⁷² Dunn 1996:xv notes Luke’s penchant to omit Markan material from Luke in order to retain the material for Acts, but he does not note this passage.

⁷³ See, e.g., *m.Kuttim* 28. ‘When shall we take them back? When they renounce Mount Gerizim, and confess Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead. From this time forth he that robs a Samaritan shall be as he who robs an Israelite.’

designating him ‘eunuch’ five times in twelve verses (8.27, 34, 36, 38, 39).⁷⁴ Because deviant labels (‘eunuch’) typically override conventional labels (‘official’, ‘Ethiopian’), his ‘eunuch’ identity is clearly in view.⁷⁵ This passage allows Luke to demonstrate the second major incorporative function of the Spirit, the *orchestration* of intergroup contact. In this case, intergroup contact leads to the formation of a micro-community representative of the larger Jesus-following in-group.

The eunuch’s identity caused him to be viewed as a grotesque ‘other’, who, though politically influential, existed at the margins of both Israelite and Greco-Roman culture.⁷⁶ Eunuch identity was a formidable barrier to participation in the Israelite ἔθνος, a fact of which the eunuch was painfully aware after his visit to the Jerusalem Temple (see Deuteronomy 23.2 LXX; cf. Leviticus 21.17-21).⁷⁷ Some evidence suggests that, in the period, eunuchs were both castrated and partially or fully dismembered, thus rendering circumcision (and Israelite social conversion) impossible.⁷⁸

Spirit Orchestration of In-group Incorporation

Philip’s encounter with this ‘other’ is a divinely orchestrated creation of a micro-community.⁷⁹ Philip is commanded by an angel to make a trip to an unlikely destination in 8.26.⁸⁰ Upon arrival and after noticing the eunuch, the *Spirit* speaks to Philip in 8.29 with a clear command.

Πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι τῷ ἄρματι τούτῳ.⁸¹

⁷⁴ He is only called an Ethiopian once (Acts 8.27). Thus C. Martin’s focus solely on the eunuch’s Ethiopian identity addresses a social boundary that was secondary in Luke’s presentation (1989:105-136).

⁷⁵ Spencer 1992:156.

⁷⁶ Parsons 1998:108 fn 6. Lucian of Samosata *The Eunuch* 6.11; Deuteronomy 23.2 LXX (cf. Leviticus 21.17-21); *Antiquities* 4.290-291; Philo *Spec Leg*; *t.Megillah* 2.7.

⁷⁷ Parsons 2006:123-142 studies ancient physiognomic methods of human description and connects conceptions of the eunuch’s character to his physical deformity.

⁷⁸ Witherington 1998:296 fn 64. See Martin 1985 for a full treatment of eunuchs in the era.

⁷⁹ Structurally, O’Toole 1983 modifies the analysis of Mínguez 1976 and sees ‘preaching about Jesus’, baptism and the role of the Spirit as central to Luke’s telling.

⁸⁰ Strelan 2001 observes that revelations regarding the spread of the Gospel to non-Israelites frequently occur at noon: Acts 10.9; 22.6; 26.13; cf. John 4.6. μεσημβρίαν can mean either ‘noon’ or ‘south’.

⁸¹ The full force of the demonstrative pronoun is important and here, as elsewhere, gives emphasis to the particularity of the referent. Cf. Acts 10.36.

This is the first instance of a highly significant aspect of Luke's presentation of the Spirit: *direct speech of the Spirit always directs the hearer toward non-Israelites* (Acts 8.29; 10.19; 11.12; 13.2).⁸² This is a manifestation of the allocentric influence of the Spirit encountered in earlier sections. The Spirit commands Philip to 'be joined/united to' (κολλάω) the eunuch's chariot. κολλάω is an important incorporation word for Luke that occurs at boundary crossing moments and that indicates the potential for the initiation of community and possible incorporation of out-group members.⁸³ In Acts 5.13 the numinous fear of the community prevents outsiders from daring to unite themselves (κολλάω) to the community. In Acts 9.29 Paul tries to unite himself (κολλάω) to the Jerusalem community. In Acts 10.28 Peter tells Cornelius that it is forbidden (ἀθέμιτος) for Israelites to unite themselves (κολλάω) to non-Israelites. In Acts 17.34 some members of the Aereopagus, having believed, unite themselves (κολλάω) to Paul. The verb only appears as a passive – perhaps the divine passive – giving the sense that the 'uniting to' is God's action exerted upon the person in question. P50 may give evidence that the early church recognized the importance of this boundary crossing word. The papyrus (ca. 4-5 c. CE) includes only Acts 8.26-32 and Acts 10.26-31. Both passages deal with conversion and baptism, but neither includes the climactic moments. They do, however, both share the verb κολλάω, perhaps indicating that early interpreters recognized the significance of Jesus-followers being united to outsiders in these passages.⁸⁴

The Spirit's command results in the formation of a micro-community between Philip and the eunuch, akin to the micro-(anti-)community formed by Ananias and Sapphira. Philip is 'united to' the chariot (8.29), he discusses the passage while 'sitting with' the eunuch (8.31: παρεκάλεσέν τε τὸν Φίλιππον ἀναβάντα καθίσαι σὺν αὐτῷ), and emphatic repetition indicates that they go down into the baptismal water together (8.38: κατέβησαν ἀμφοτέροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, ὃ τε

⁸² Hur 2001:14 notices this pattern.

⁸³ Luke 10.11 (dust that 'clings' to feet) is an exception. See Luke 15.15; Acts 5.13; 8.29; 9.26; 10.28; 17.34. Cf. Matthew 19.5; Romans 12.9; 1 Corinthians 6.17, 18; Revelation 18.5. Its most frequent New Testament usage outside of Luke is to describe the intimate 'cleaving' of marital or sexual union (Matthew 19.5 [cf. 1 Esdras 4.20; Sirach 19.2]; 1 Corinthians 6.17, 18). More broadly in the LXX it can describe 'clinging' to the testimonies of God (Psalm 118.31), 'cleaving' to the Lord (Deuteronomy 6.13; 10.20), God's 'cleaving' to Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 13.11); and the way that the scales of leviathan 'cleave' to one another (Job 41.8).

⁸⁴ Johnson 1992:159-160.

Φίλιππος καὶ ὁ εὐνοῦχος).⁸⁵ The Spirit does not just send Philip to the ‘other’, it seeks to incorporate the ‘other’ into the community of which Philip is a Spirit-filled exemplar (cf. Acts 6.3).

The pericope is driven by the eunuch’s question regarding Isaiah 53.7-8b: ‘About whom, I pray thee, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’

As a sheep led to slaughter
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he does not open his mouth.
In humiliation his justice was taken away (αἴρω).
Who will speak of his descendants (γενεάν)?
For his life is being taken away (αἴρω) from the earth.⁸⁶

It is not unusual for commentators to question why Luke does not include the sacrificial imagery of Isaiah 53 in this quotation.⁸⁷ Yet there is powerful – and overlooked – significance in Luke’s emphatic declaration that Philip began his exposition *from this particular passage* (8.35: ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης). In this very passage the eunuch identifies with Jesus.

Returning from Jerusalem, where the eunuch’s identity prevented him from joining the people of God, the eunuch reads of another man who, like himself, cannot bear a family. The identification arises at Acts 8.33/Isaiah 53.8: ‘Who can speak of his descendants?’ The eunuch wants to know if the prophet – or someone else – shares his plight, the impossibility of familial generation.⁸⁸ This is, at least in part, the ‘humiliation’ (8.33: ταπείνωσις) that both the eunuch and the Servant-figure share. Philip’s began *at this very passage* and εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν. The text allows for a connection between the family-less Isaianic servant and the family-less eunuch. If Isaiah 56.3ff is in the background of this text, as most scholars assume, this observation is all the more certain.⁸⁹ The promise in Isaiah 56 is related to the ability of the eunuch to be a part of a household (family?).

⁸⁵ Spencer 1992:162 notes the community between the characters, but he does not develop its implications for the formation of common identity.

⁸⁶ Luke uses αἴρω as a death metaphor in Luke 23.18-21; Acts 21.36; 22.22.

⁸⁷ Barrett 1994:429 thinks the ‘long journey’ allowed for the entire fourth servant song to be discussed (Isaiah 52.13-53.12). Cf. Bruce 1989:382; Marshall 1980:164.

⁸⁸ This is against suggestions that this is an expression of ‘wonder’ based on the innumerable disciples of Jesus. See e.g. Barrett 1994:431.

⁸⁹ Porter 1988:55 argues that Philip’s exposition of Isaiah begins at the quoted passage and arrives climactically at Isaiah 56.

Let not the eunuch say, 'I am a dry tree'. This is what the Lord says to the eunuchs, as many as keep my Sabbaths and choose the things that I want and hold fast my covenant, I will give to them, in my house and within my walls, an esteemed place, better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name and it shall not fail.⁹⁰

The Isaianic invitation to participation in the household of God reaches its climax in Isaiah 56.7, the promise of participation in Temple worship – a 'house of prayer for all nations' – the very house from which the eunuch was recently prohibited from entering. Just as Jesus' lack of 'descendants' did not prevent God from giving him a new and large 'family' (cf. Luke 8.21), the eunuch's lack of 'descendants' will not prohibit him from being incorporated into a new and large 'family'.

Barrier Removal and Incorporation into the Community

The eunuch's final question indicates that, while previously he was prevented from joining the Israelite ἔθνος, there is now no reason that full incorporation into the Jesus group cannot happen.

'Behold, water! What is to *forbid* [κωλύω] me from being baptized?'⁹¹

κωλύω gives the sense of 'to stop or prevent against one's will', and for Luke regularly means forbidding access to Jesus, to God or the *benefits of God*.⁹² It is a boundary word and is important in this section concerned with the incorporation of various 'others' (esp. Acts 10.47; 11.17). Formerly, and painfully, it was identity as a eunuch that forbade the eunuch from participating in a community-entry ceremony.⁹³ But after Philip's exposition of the good news of Jesus, the eunuch recognizes that his eunuch identity is not his terminal identity and cannot bar him from the Jesus group. There is likely a Lukan play on words with κολλάω and κωλύω framing the passage. Philip is *commanded by the Spirit* to be united (κολλάω, 8.29) to the eunuch because there is nothing that can forbid (κωλύω, 8.37) the eunuch his desire to enter the community. The eunuch, in his identification with Jesus, receives a *new superordinate identity* consummated by acceptance into the community of the Spirit (the ἐκκλησία) through baptism. Though the eunuch has

⁹⁰ Isaiah 53.3b-5.

⁹¹ Acts 8.36.

⁹² Luke 6.29; 9.49, 50; 11.52; 18.16; 23.2; Acts 8.37; 10.47; 11.17; 16.6; 24.23; 27.6.

⁹³ The prohibition is based upon Deuteronomy 23.2 LXX, a passage that bans eunuchs from the ἐκκλησία [!] of Israel.

no contact with a settled community of faith, he has clear micro-community with Philip – a Spirit-filled exemplar of the Jesus-group (Acts 6.3, 5) – and perhaps can anticipate his welcome from the Jerusalem believers next time around. The eunuch goes on his way rejoicing in the joy that is so characteristically Spirit-created for Luke while the Spirit snatches Philip and thrusts him toward another category of ‘other’ (Acts 8.39).

Summary

The incorporation of the eunuch highlights the Spirit’s role in *orchestrating* intergroup contact and ‘fulfills’ Isaiah 56.3b-5: the eunuch is no ‘dry tree’, but, by virtue of his admission into the community represented by Philip, he becomes a member of a new group – even if from a distance. The eunuch now has a family. The Spirit overcomes the natural impulse to forbid (κωλύω) the incorporation of the ‘other’ and instead joins (κολλάω) the ‘other’ to the in-group. The eunuch, like the Samaritans, retains his old identities; but now those identities take on new and chastened significance thanks to the work of the Spirit. The eunuch can now know himself not primarily as ‘eunuch’ but as a baptized (and Spirit-filled) member of the Jesus group.⁹⁴

Acts 9: Spirit-orchestration and Identification in the Incorporation of an Enemy

Saul’s encounter on the Damascus road is a striking example of the function of the Spirit in both the *orchestration* of intergroup contact and the *identification* of those who share a common social identity. Approaches to Saul’s ‘conversion’ evidence two main approaches: (1) discerning whether Saul experienced ‘conversion’ or ‘commission’ and (2) redaction critical studies seeking either Luke’s sources or Luke’s redactional hand in the differences between the three tellings of the event.⁹⁵ Stendahl was the first to propose that Saul’s conversion was no conversion at all,

⁹⁴ Luke, as is frequently the case, is here *showing* rather than *telling* the full effect of the Spirit. The Western text makes explicit what Luke leaves implicit: ‘the Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord snatched Philip away.’ See Fitzmyer 1998:415.

⁹⁵ See Hurtado 1993 for overview. Important works include DuPont 1970; Kim 1981; Gaventa 1986; Fredrickson 1986; Dunn 1987; Segal 1990. For redaction-critical treatments, see Hedrick 1981; Witherup 1992; Marguerat 2002.

but rather a commission similar to Old Testament prophetic commissions.⁹⁶ This position correctly appreciates that Saul never renounced his identity as a member of the elect Israelite ἔθνος, but does not do justice to Saul's changed behavior and group memberships.⁹⁷ Saul's experience is a social reorientation rooted in the fundamental transformation of his own identity.⁹⁸ My approach, in which the Spirit forms an allocentric ethos and fosters social identity through incorporation into the community, appreciates both the 'commissional' (allocentric) and 'conversional' (identity-forming) aspects. A close reading of the explicit and implicit functions of the Spirit, viewed through an intergroup lens and emphasized by a comparative reading of Luke's repetitions of the Damascus incident (Acts 22.1-21; 26.4-23) highlights the fact that emphasis in Acts 9.1-31 is on the full incorporation of Saul into the Jesus-group via the identity-forming work of the Spirit upon both Saul and the Jesus-group.⁹⁹ This account is another double identity-transformation.

Social Identity and Threat in Acts 9.1-31

Acts 9.1-31 should be read in the context of the group's response to external identity threat, a factor that increases in-group bias, minimizes intragroup difference and leads toward out-group antagonism and heightened group boundaries – especially among high in-group identifiers.¹⁰⁰ The threat introduced in the chapter heightens the barrier between Saul and the Jerusalem leaders and the μαθηταί. Both these groups are introduced in Acts 9.1 but are known from earlier in Luke's narrative. Saul is a persecutor (Acts 7.58; 8.3) in league with the unfavorably portrayed chief priests (Luke 3.2; 9.22; 19.47; 20.1, 19; 22.2, 4, 50, 52, 54,

⁹⁶ Esp. Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1.4-10. See Stehdahl 1976:89-91, who follows Munck 1959:11-35. Cf. Gaventa 1986:37-38 who claims that Saul underwent a 'cognitive shift' based upon his new understanding of Jesus' identity.

⁹⁷ Segal 1990:11 notes the importance of Saul's change of communities, though he strangely calls Saul's new community a 'gentile Christian community'.

⁹⁸ Marguerat 2002:179-204 suggests that Saul's identity is transformed in this experience, but it is unclear exactly what he implies by 'identity'.

⁹⁹ See Marguerat 2002:185 fn 19 for Acts 9.1-30(31) as a single narrative unit. Taking Acts 9.1-31 solely as 'commission for mission' is a key feature of 'Spirit of prophecy' treatments. See *inter alia* Cho 2005:150; Bruce 1951:188-189; Gaventa 1986:90-92; Menzies 1992:260-263; Shelton 1991:135; Huffman 1994:168-175; Penney 1997:97.

¹⁰⁰ Dietz-Uhler 1998:33; Rothgerber 1997:1207-1210.

66; 23.4, 10, 13; 24.20; Acts 4.6, 23; 5.17, 21, 24, 27; 7.1; 9.1, 14, 21).¹⁰¹ This group is a tandem threat to the μαθηταί (Acts 9.14, 21) and has already engaged in deadly intergroup conflict with the Jesus-group (Acts 7.1ff; cf. Luke 22.2ff; Acts 5.17ff).¹⁰² Conversely, Luke describes the community as μαθηταί, a name last used in the dispute between the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek speaking widows (Acts 6.1, 2, 7) where it prepared hearers to recognize that the high priest assented to the death of a μαθητής (Acts 7.1). μαθηταί appears in 9.1 to describe the Jesus-followers as a group, in 9.10 to describe Ananias (who functions as a representative μαθητής), 9.19 to describe the local Jesus-community in Damascus, 9.25 in an odd usage to describe Saul's μαθηταί, and twice in 9.26 to describe the reluctance of the Jerusalem disciples to believe that Saul is a μαθητής.¹⁰³ The intergroup contact in the pericope is fully intra-Israelite and the narrative is intensely concerned with community incorporation. It is the work of the Spirit that brings Saul from the out-group to the in-group and that prompts the in-group to recognize Saul as 'one of them'.

Saul's Encounter with the Exalted Jesus

The place to begin the discussion of the pericope is with the 'unvarying kernel' repeated verbatim in Acts 9.4-5; 22.7-8; 26.14-15.¹⁰⁴

Jesus: Σαούλ, Σαυόλ, τί με διώκεις;

Saul: τίς εἶ, κύριε;

Jesus: ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς, ὃν σὺ διώκεις.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Hengel 1991:81, 84 thinks that Saul felt the Jesus-followers were threatening the 'traditional conception of Jewish theocracy' and leading the people 'astray'. I note these concerns are central to Israelite ethnic identity. Marshall 1980:168 thinks the text implies intended murder of believers.

¹⁰² See 1 Maccabees 15.16-21, *War* 1.474 and *Antiquities* 14.192-195 for the authority of extradition. Because Acts describes an intra-Israelite affair it is likely that the chief priests were exercising their authority in the synagogues of the Diaspora and did not need authorization from Rome. For rabbinic discussions of 'lynch laws' see *m.Sanhedrin*. Damascus had a large Israelite population (*War* 2.561; 7.368).

¹⁰³ It is possible that αὐτοῦ in 9.25 is a corruption of αὐτόν, thus originally indicating not 'disciples of Saul' but that the 'disciples lowered him [Saul]' (Metzger 1975:366; Haenchen 1959).

¹⁰⁴ Margeurat 2002:184.

¹⁰⁵ Acts 22.8 includes 'Jesus of Nazareth'.

The crucial question, ‘Who are you, lord?’ is a question of identity.¹⁰⁶ Much ink has been spilled trying to ascertain all that Jesus’ self-revelation must have meant for Saul.¹⁰⁷ But Saul’s identity is not transformed only because he discovers Jesus’ true (and living) identity; Saul is transformed because *the exalted Jesus identifies himself with a particular group* – the very group Saul has been seeking to destroy.¹⁰⁸ Saul is persecuting the μαθηταί, yet Jesus claims Saul is persecuting *him*. The double repetition of Jesus’ identification as the persecuted one (‘Why do you persecute me?’; ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting’) makes this unmistakable.¹⁰⁹ It was the combined force of Jesus’ exalted status and Jesus’ identification with Saul’s enemies that shattered Saul’s former identity. Saul’s in-group was actively opposing God.¹¹⁰ But God himself, through the exalted Jesus, was actively identifying with Saul’s enemies.

The Role of the Spirit in the Incorporation of Saul

The Spirit is explicitly mentioned just once (9.17) in the account, but it implicitly pervades the narrative in order both to orchestrate intergroup contact and to identify Saul as a member of the Jesus group.¹¹¹ We learned in Acts 2.17 that visions (ὄρασεις) and dreams (ἐνύπνια) are the work of the Spirit. Ananias has a vision (ὄραμα) in which the Lord tells him that Saul has had a vision (ὄραμα).¹¹² This

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the ‘identity’ question of the eunuch in Acts 8.34. ‘Lord’ should not here be taken with the full force of its LXX usage (contra Johnson 1992:163). It is more, however, than the common ‘sir’. Saul uses the word in response to a numinous vision – but the point of the question precludes that he already knows he is confronted by Jesus the exalted ‘Lord’ (Witherington 1998:317).

¹⁰⁷ See among others Dupont 1970; Kim 1981; Dunn 1987.

¹⁰⁸ The double naming of Saul provides an interesting parallel with Peter’s double-naming (Luke 22.31-32). There, as here, the plea by Jesus is that the double-named person work *for* and not against the Jesus-community.

¹⁰⁹ Johnson 1992:168: ‘Distinctive to Luke’s account as well is the identification of the risen Lord with the community... Luke could scarcely have found a more effective way of establishing the living relationship and presence of the raised prophet with those who continued to live and speak and act with his prophetic spirit. And for Saul, if the living and powerful Lord identifies himself with this community, then joining this community is the sign of obedience to his presence.’ Cf. Luke 10.16; Matthew 25.40, 45. See also 1 Samuel 8.7 and perhaps Numbers 11.20 for God’s identification with his representatives.

¹¹⁰ Cf. the equation between a lie to the community and a lie to God/Spirit in Acts 5.1-11.

¹¹¹ Gill 1974:547-548 demonstrates the near perfect parallel between the two narrative settings (human hesitation, divine reassurance, fellowship, preaching, persecution, escape) in Damascus and Jerusalem, arguing the parallelism highlights solidarity in preaching and suffering (548). This may be true, but Gill overlooks the parallel concerns for incorporation and identity formation.

¹¹² ὄρασις and ὄραμα are synonymous. Both are used to translate מִשְׁאָה, מִרְאָה and חֲזוֹן. חֲזוֹן is translated ὄρασις in Joel 3.1 LXX, but is translated ὄραμα in Job 7.14 LXX (Michaelis 1967:370-372). ὄρασις only appears in Acts 2.17; Revelation 4.3; 9.17. Luke has 11 of the 12 New Testament

is a common feature of this section of Acts; Acts 8.29; 9.10, 15; 10.19; 16.6-10 depict Spirit-inspired visions orchestrating intergroup encounters with sometimes threatening 'others'.¹¹³ Wikenhauser has demonstrated that embedded visions (*doppeltraume*) in Greco-Roman literature regularly indicate divine orchestration of events.¹¹⁴

Ananias, introduced as a μαθητής whose group is threatened by Saul, resists the direction of the vision out of fear.¹¹⁵ Ananias' words express an identity under threat: 'I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon your name' (Acts 9.13-14). This protest reveals both an identity shaped by community membership and the expected tightening of group boundaries as a result of identity threat.

The Lord, through the vision (presumably with some agency of the Spirit based upon Acts 2.17), prevails upon Ananias, turns him in an allocentric direction and prompts one of the most poignant scenes in Acts.¹¹⁶ Ananias, functioning as a representative μαθητής, goes to the enemy of his in-group, greets him as (ethnic?) 'brother', lays his hands upon him, and prays that Saul will receive both his sight and the very Spirit that marks common identity as a δούλος of God.¹¹⁷ Saul is cured of his blindness (Acts 9.18), filled with the Spirit, baptized and fed (the latter two presumably done by Ananias).¹¹⁸ Though Luke does not explicitly narrate Saul's

occurrences of ὄραμα (Matthew 17.9; Acts 7.31; 9.10, 12; 10.3, 17, 19; 11.5; 12.9; 16.9, 10; 18.9). Perhaps Luke wished to preserve the actual noun used in Joel 3.1 LXX (ὄρασις) in his Acts 2.17 quotation. All of Luke's modifications to Joel 3.1-5 LXX are additions or transpositions, not vocabulary alterations. Litwak 2005:168 notices the connection between 'visions' in 2.17 and 'visions in 9.10, 10.10-16, but he does not associate these with the Spirit.

¹¹³ So Wenk 2004:289. Johnson 1992:164 notes that visions are an important part of Spirit-inspiration for Luke.

¹¹⁴ Wikenhauser 1948:100-111.

¹¹⁵ Wall & Robinson 2006:136 misread the text when they claim that Ananias does not resist because of fear for his safety but because he makes 'the "hard rationalist's" case against the possibility of Saul's conversion - and by implication the full salvation of the gentiles'.

¹¹⁶ Could it be that Ananias, whose group had suffered at the hands of Saul, now feels solidarity with the one who will also suffer for the name of Jesus (Acts 9.16)?

¹¹⁷ Bock 2007:362 is correct to note that laying on of hands serves to connect Saul to the new community, though he speeds ahead of the narrative in assuming that the appellation 'brother' has at this point a 'Christian' meaning. On balance it is likely that 'brother' is a greeting of ethnic kinship here (with Dunn 1970:74 and against Cho 2005:149; Barrett 1994:457; Bruce 1952:202; Neil 1973:131; Ervin 1984:41-49; Shelton 1991:131). Luke regularly depicts Jesus-following Israelites addressing fellow Israelites with the kinship-greeting 'brother' (Acts 2.29; 3.17; 7.2; 13.26; 22.1; 23.1, 6; 28.17).

¹¹⁸ Heil 1999:245: 'Just as their sharing of food in meal hospitality "in their houses" (2.46) was part of what united the newly baptized Jerusalem believers with all other believers (2.44), so the newly

reception of the Spirit, it is unmistakably implicit. Jesus sent Ananias so that Saul might regain his sight and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 9.17). Because the former happens immediately, we are undoubtedly to expect that the latter occurred immediately as well. The result of Saul's Spirit-filling and baptism is quick and complete incorporation into the Damascus community of believers. Saul remains with the μαθηταί in Damascus for many days, proclaiming the true identity of Jesus.¹¹⁹ The wonder of the Damascus disciples, expressed in 9.21, makes the radical nature of Saul's identity transformation apparent:

Is not this the man destroying (πορθέω) in Jerusalem those who calling upon this name?¹²⁰

The group boundary between the Damascus μαθηταί and Saul is overcome by the Spirit, which both orchestrates intergroup encounter and marks a common identity. For the Damascus disciples, the one who had set out to destroy the μαθηταί is now 'one of us' – at least, that is, in Damascus.¹²¹

Apostolic Resistance to the Incorporation of Saul

The dynamic in Jerusalem is different for two likely reasons. First, no one in Jerusalem had witnessed a manifestation of the Spirit upon Saul, the usual signal of a common superordinate identity. Second, when faced with external identity threat, those who highly identify with the in-group are the most prone to extreme in-group bias and out-group derogation.¹²² In Jerusalem, the conflict is indisputably a conflict of identity.

καὶ πάντες [τοῖς μαθηταῖς] ἐφοβοῦντο αὐτὸν μὴ πιστεύοντες ὅτι ἐστὶν μαθητῆς.¹²³

baptized Saul's taking of food in meal hospitality "in the house of Judas" (9.11) is part of what unites him to the believing community at Damascus.'

¹¹⁹ Intimate fellowship and gospel proclamation are two characteristics of the Jesus-following in-group (Acts 2.42; 4.33).

¹²⁰ My translation.

¹²¹ Though I am not addressing it at length here, the sending of Saul to the ἔθνη is obviously of inestimable importance to Luke-Acts. It should be noted that all who are 'elect' or 'chosen' thus far in Acts are chosen for the sake of the 'other' (Acts 1.8; 6.5; 9.15).

¹²² Rothgerber 1997:1207.

¹²³ Acts 9.26.

The μαθηταί cannot believe they share a common identity with Saul and evidently have no room for a (former) enemy in their conception of their identity. Much hangs in the balance here. Saul cannot be a full member of the community unless the Jerusalem community can reconceptualize their own group identity in such a way as to make room for this ‘other’.¹²⁴ Something is necessary to convince the apostles that Saul is indeed ‘one of them’.

Saul’s own re-identification is made evident in his desire to ‘be joined to’ (κολλάω) the Jerusalem disciples. Once more, Luke uses the important (and intensely personal) verb κολλάω (cf. Acts 5.13; 8.29; 10.28; 17.34), again in the divine passive, to highlight the work of God in forming this new group. To aid Saul’s community incorporation, Luke reintroduces Barnabas (Acts 9.27) – the Spirit-filled exemplar of allocentric group identity last present in 4.36-38. It is Barnabas’ Spirit-effected allocentric identity, I suggest, that moves him to reach across a social barrier to Saul.¹²⁵ Yet this is not done without good evidence of common identity.

Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.¹²⁶

Saul’s preaching of the gospel to those who are now ‘other’ is definitive evidence of the allocentric identity characteristically empowered by the Spirit.¹²⁷ But Barnabas, not Saul, must speak because Barnabas already shares a common identity with the Jerusalem μαθηταί.¹²⁸ Barnabas’ testimony on Saul’s behalf is simple: Saul has seen Jesus and spoken boldly in Jesus’ name. Seeing Jesus and bearing witness are the two marks of a ‘witness of Jesus’ (the very identity Jesus predicts will be empowered by the Spirit in Acts 1.8) according to Luke 24. While Saul’s Spirit-reception was

¹²⁴ Turner 1982:27.

¹²⁵ Scholars are sometimes surprised at the sudden reintroduction of Barnabas. Barrett 1994:468 is representative: ‘Why he [Barnabas] should have acted as Paul’s sponsor remains unknown’. My approach explains the anomaly: Barnabas is a Spirit-filled exemplar – just the person we would expect to navigate an intergroup identity dispute. Fitzmyer 1998:438 (cf. Johnson 1992:174) notes that ‘encouragement come[s] from the Holy Spirit, who makes Barnabas the mediator of it’, but he does not note Luke’s characteristic connection between the Spirit and one’s posture toward the ‘other’. Bock 2007:370 suggests Barnabas’ ‘stature and respect’ could speak for Saul, but he makes no connection with the Spirit. Conzelmann 1987:75 suggests Luke inferred Barnabas’ role from later cooperation between Paul and Barnabas.

¹²⁶ Acts 9.27.

¹²⁷ Dunn 1996:126 suggests Saul’s preaching is a recognizable identity marker for the movement. I go one step further to ground the preaching/witness in the work of the Spirit.

¹²⁸ Barnabas is clearly the subject of εἶδεν in 9.27. See Fitzmyer 1998:438.

evident to the disciples in Damascus, neither Barnabas nor the Jerusalem disciples had eyewitness access. But so closely is ‘witness’ connected to Spirit-formed identity that either the visible manifestation of the Spirit or the fruit of the Spirit – allocentric witness – can serve as evidence of a common identity. This is enough for the Jerusalem community and their own identity is transformed by virtue of Saul’s incorporation. Saul, who once ravaged the church entering (8.3: εἰσπορευόμενος) house after house *against them*, now joins the disciples, entering (9.28: εἰσπορευόμενος) and exiting *with them* and proclaiming the name of Jesus. Saul, the Damascus community, and the Jerusalem community share a common identity in the Spirit-empowered community of witness.

Comparative Emphasis on Incorporation

A comparison of Luke’s three repetitions of Saul’s Damascus experience supports my argument that Acts 9.1-31 emphasizes Saul’s incorporation into the community via a dual identity-transformation wrought by the orchestrating and identity-marking functions of the Spirit.¹²⁹ The varied narrative contexts of the repetitions cannot be overlooked: in Acts 9.1-31, the question is whether Saul can gain access to the Jesus group, in Acts 22.1-21 Saul defends his Israelite identity under duress at the Jerusalem Temple; in Acts 26.4-23 Saul makes a legal defense before an ethnically mixed crowd including Felix, Agrippa and Bernice. Scholars have noted the increasing prominence of Saul’s commission to non-Israelites in the retellings of the story.¹³⁰ But a decisive blow against those who connect the Spirit primarily or exclusively to empowerment for mission is the fact that as Saul becomes more and more explicit about his call to the non-Israelites, *the Spirit is altogether absent*.¹³¹ While the close connection between the Spirit and boundary-crossing witness is already firmly established (Acts 1.8), I suggest that the overt

¹²⁹ Recent studies have described how narrative repetition emphasizes key aspects, but have tended to focus on the apparent discrepancies in the accounts: Who saw the light? Was there a sound? Etc. See Hedrick 1981; Witherup 1992; Kurz 1993; Marguerat 2002:179-204. For overview, see Witherington 1998:302-315.

¹³⁰ Dunn 1987:255-256; Witherup 1992:70.

¹³¹ Penney 1997 frames the Spirit as a ‘missions director’. This is true but ultimately too restrictive as a dominant paradigm. Cf. the emphasis on empowerment for mission in Cho 2005 and Menzies 1991. I have yet to discover a single scholar who discusses the presence of the Spirit in Acts 9 versus its absence in Acts 22 and 26 beyond those who suggest that the Spirit in Acts 9 is simply a Lukan addition but who do not comment on its *significance* (e.g. Hedrick 1981).

presence of the Spirit in Acts 9.1-31 and its absence in the retellings highlights the Spirit's role in the formation of common identity. The Spirit is essential for Saul's incorporation into the community of believers.

All of the features essential for Saul's incorporation in Acts 9.1-31 are absent in Luke's two retellings of the event. Ananias, who represented the μαθηταί, prayed for Saul, witnessed his Spirit-reception, baptized him and ate with him becomes in Acts 22.12 simply 'a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Israelites in Damascus'. This re-characterization of Ananias is a fitting modification for Saul's Jerusalem defense of his own ethnic identity. In Acts 22, Ananias heals Saul's blindness and gives Saul a commission to the nations, but he represents prototypical ethnic Israelites and *not* the Jesus community. In Acts 26, Ananias disappears. Neither Acts 22 nor Acts 26 contain any mention of Barnabas' role in Saul's incorporation, any reference to fellowship with disciples in Damascus or Jerusalem or any mention of the Spirit-orchestrated intergroup encounter facilitated through the embedded vision (ὄραμα, cf. Acts 2.17) of Ananias. Most importantly, however, neither passage includes either the mention or active agency of the Spirit.¹³² This is almost certainly because the retellings of Saul's transformation do not concern incorporation for the sake of common identity formation.

My argument stands in even greater relief when viewed against Luke's retelling of the Cornelius incident. The Spirit disappears from retellings of Saul's transformation when identity and incorporation are not in view, but the Spirit remains a central feature in each telling of the Cornelius incident.¹³³ As we will see in the next chapter, this is because each retelling of the Cornelius incident concerns the navigation of identity barriers *en route* to Luke's demonstration that all who follow Jesus share a common identity.¹³⁴ When the context demands intergroup reconciliation, for Saul as for the ἔθνη from Cornelius' household, the Spirit is the

¹³² Hedrick 1981:422 discounts the importance of the Spirit even in Acts 9.1-31: 'The motif of receiving the holy spirit (9.17b) is probably a Lucan addition to a legendary miracle of Paul's healing'.

¹³³ Acts 10.19, 38, 44, 45, 47; 11.12, 15, 16; 15.8, 28.

¹³⁴ Acts 15.9; cf. 10.47; 11.17.

agent that orchestrates intergroup contact, marks those rightly related to Jesus, and in so doing creates a community capable of forming a new social identity.¹³⁵

The Incorporation of the 'Other': A Surprising Path to Peace

Luke concludes this treatment of the incorporation of Saul with a short summary.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied.¹³⁶

Just as 2.42-47, 5.12-16, and 6.1-7 ended with accounts of the successful growth of the community, so here also. When the community is faithful to its own identity the life of the community itself is witness to outsiders.

Three further points that implicate the Spirit, identity and group reconciliation bear mentioning here.

(1) ἐκκλησία appears in the singular in 9.31, a break with Luke's typical usage in which the word normally describes a localized community of believers.¹³⁷ This underscores the common identity shared by those across greater Judea based upon their membership in the Jesus-following in-group.¹³⁸

(2) Luke's description of Saul's initial response – that he was 'led by the hand' and 'he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank' (Acts 9.8, 9) – thrusts us back into the birth hymns in Luke 1. Mary rejoiced that God would 'put down' the mighty and that he would fill the hungry with good things but send the rich away 'empty' (Luke 1.52-53). Zechariah recognized that the coming of God's anointed servant would fulfill the covenant by granting that God's people, 'being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear' (Luke 1.74). Saul, the enemy of the people of God, has been knocked low (Acts 9.4) and sent away empty

¹³⁵ Marguerat 2002:179-204 suggests Acts 9 is primarily about the reversal of Saul's identity and the role of ecclesial mediation in this reversal. Marguerat does speak of God's need to 'convert his own church' (196) but he makes no connection with the Spirit.

¹³⁶ Acts 9.31.

¹³⁷ See Barrett 1994:473. Of the 23 occurrences of ἐκκλησία in Acts, 4 do not refer to the community of believers (Acts 7.38;19.32, 39, 40). Acts 9.31 is the *only* time the word describes the community across a region.

¹³⁸ This was hinted at in Acts 9.1-30 with the consistent use of the category 'disciple' to refer to those in both Damascus and Jerusalem.

(‘hungry’; Acts 9.9) and the people have been delivered from their enemy.¹³⁹ It appears that God’s people – the μαθηταί – will have the ‘peace’ anticipated by Zechariah’s claim that the Coming One would ‘guide our feet in the way of peace’ (Luke 1.79). But ‘peace’ comes not through the *destruction* of the enemy but through reconciliation and the incorporation of the enemy into *one’s own group*. This is a stunning subversion of typical intergroup processes and is revolutionary enough to repeat. *For the Spirit-empowered community of Jesus-followers, ‘peace’ does not come by removing or destroying enemies but by welcoming enemies into the in-group. Divine victory comes through the creation of a common identity that allows enemies to become brothers and sisters.*

(3) Saul’s retellings of his Damascus experience give us a critical window on the relationship between ethnic identity and the superordinate identity formed by membership in the community of the Spirit. Acts 22 makes it clear that Saul still fully identifies as an Israelite, though now he uses his varying nested identities strategically (as indicated by his deployment of Hebrew/Aramaic speech, Greek speech and Roman citizenship) in order to legitimate his mission. He appears to be in a situation where he does not *lose* his ethnic identity (assimilation) or *abuse* his ethnic identity (ethnic hegemony), but he does *use* his ethnic identity to extend the gospel to ‘others’ of many ethnic groups.¹⁴⁰ Saul’s Israelite identity has been chastened – it is no longer his terminal identity, but it remains intact as a valid way, secondarily, of knowing himself in his social context. His willingness to render his Israelite identity secondary, however, brings murderous rage from those who do not identify themselves with the Jesus-group:

‘Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he ought not to live.’¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Conzelmann 1982:73 says it well: ‘The appearance [of the exalted Jesus] serves first of all not to convert a sinner, but to put down the persecutor.’ Gaventa 2003:147 treats Saul as an ‘overthrown enemy’ but overlooks the significance for the community’s overall relationship to the ‘other’. Cf. Gaventa 1985.

¹⁴⁰ Saul’s use of a Hellenistic proverb (Acts 26.14: ‘It hurts you to kick against the goads’) in his conversion story told in an ethnically mixed context and his famous quotation of Aratus’ *Phainomena* in Acts 17.28 are examples of his ‘ethnic savvy’.

¹⁴¹ Acts 22.22; cf. the rage directed toward Jesus after his refusal to privilege his village in-group in Luke 4.14-30.

Conclusion

Much ground has been covered in Acts 6-9, but several salient points emerge. The ethno-linguistic conflict in Acts 6.1-7 is evidence that whenever identities other than identity drawn from membership in the Jesus group become salient, the community malfunctions and intragroup conflict occurs. Those best equipped to deal with such a crisis of identity are Spirit-filled members – those we can expect to have the ability to embrace the ‘other’ through the Spirit-empowered allocentric impulse. Yet even the Spirit-filled community needs constant identity transformation in order to accept the diverse group of ‘others’ who now are joining their ranks. The incorporation of the ‘other’ is, in a sense often made clear in the text, always a ‘dual identity transformation’ – and it is the in-group that is most often challenged to transform its own group identity. The Spirit is central to this process and both orchestrates intergroup contact and marks those who share a common identity. The result is more than just ‘mission’ to the ‘other’; it is full-fledged *incorporation* of the ‘other’ into the community. It is, then, participation in this allocentric Jesus group that functions as the incubator for a new social identity capable of chastening and transcending ethnic identities, resisting ethnic hegemonies but affirming old identities at a penultimate level. The boundaries of this new identity are maintained by the Spirit and thus, rather than forming positive identity by denigrating the out-group, the group’s identity is expressed rightly only when the group exists in an allocentric posture toward the ‘other’. We are beginning to see that for Luke, the goal of ‘witness’ is a multi-layered reconciliation in which the ‘other’ is brought into right relationship with Jesus and with the community. Tannehill, though writing with a different emphasis, summarizes nicely what my reading has revealed regarding the Spirit and the incorporation of the ‘other’: ‘The church... has difficulty keeping up with such a God.’¹⁴²

¹⁴² Tannehill 1990:117.

TRANSCENDING ETHNICITY

THE SPIRIT AND TRANS-ETHNIC IDENTITY IN ACTS 10-15

In Acts 10-15 Luke confronts the most intractable intergroup barrier in his context: ethnic identity. Here Luke will climactically press hearers toward a new social identity that affirms, but simultaneously chastens and transcends ethnic identity. Many of Luke's identity-related themes rise to prominence in this section: Spirit-orchestration of intergroup encounters, Spirit-identification of those who are servants of God and the dual identity transformation created through incorporation of the 'other' into the Jesus-community, to name but a few. My primary foci will include the extent of Luke's awareness of the interethnic issues in play, the role of the Spirit in circumnavigating interethnic barriers and Luke's construction of a new superordinate identity capable of reconciling various categories of ethnic 'other'.

Interpreting Acts 10.1-11.18

Scholars have suggested the following readings for the function of the Cornelius episode:

1. an attempt to negotiate Israelite purity regulations and the on-going role of the Mosaic Law in the new community;¹
2. the facilitation of table fellowship between Israelites and non-Israelites in one community;²

¹ Bauckham 1996; 2005.

² Esler 1987:93-109.

3. the in-gathering of the nations as a result of God's eschatological restoration and cleansing of Israel;³
4. a transition from Temple and exclusivity toward household and inclusivity;⁴
5. emphasis upon the Spirit as the agent that empowers inspired speech and missionary activity;⁵
6. identifying the Spirit as the key factor in making a person a believer;⁶
7. the Spirit's indication that the 'Gentiles' can be participants in salvation history;⁷
8. an indication of Luke's 'universalism', the contemporary implications of which are often taken to be a hospitable pluralism.⁸

Luke is concerned with something far more revolutionary than the notion that 'Gentiles' could participate in salvation history (a proposition widely affirmed in Israel's prophetic corpus), that non-Israelites could retain ethnic particularity, or even that non-Israelites and Israelites could engage in fellowship with one another. Luke uses the Cornelius episode to solidify the fact that all who identify with Jesus are incorporated into a group *sharing a common identity* that affirms yet transcends ethnic identity. The Spirit guarantees that those calling upon the name of Jesus form *one people*.⁹

Resources from SIT

SIT provides several theoretical resources that are useful for interpreting the intergroup dynamics and identity processes in Acts 10-15.

1. The evaluative criteria upon which intergroup comparisons are made are fluid and change with respect to the target out-group in question. To maintain positive identity, groups base intergroup differentiation on criteria that give them comparative advantage. Luke reflects the fluidity of evaluative criteria by focusing on various aspects of the identity of the 'other': linguistic distinctives (Acts 2.1-11;

³ Turner 1996:346.

⁴ Elliott 1991.

⁵ Cho 2005:150-154; Menzies 1991:267.

⁶ Dunn 1970:82.

⁷ Tannehill 1990:144.

⁸ Bond 2002:81; Stendahl 1977.

⁹ Contra Jervell 1972 who positions the Gentiles as an 'associate' people of God.

6.1-7), eunuch (Acts 8.26-40), disciple/non-disciple (Acts 9.1-31) and in this section ἀδελφοί. Who can, or cannot, be identified as ἀδελφός constitutes an ethnic boundary in Acts 10-15.

2. The maintenance of group boundaries is an *intragroup* phenomenon superintended by the group itself. Common identity can only be achieved if the in-group gives its assent to the 'other'.¹⁰ The self-maintenance of in-group boundaries often becomes a locus at which community can be used as a tool to exclude or oppress. Acts 10-15, however, describes a group that relinquishes boundary maintenance to the Holy Spirit.

3. SIT presents three primary strategies for intergroup reconciliation:

(1) The creation of cross-cutting evaluative criteria designed to destabilize social categories. For example, one attempt to ease tension between Israelites and Romans could be to emphasize the criterion 'honor' in order to create social groups that incorporate members of each ethnic group. This strategy has proved unsuccessful in 'real world' identity issues.¹¹

(2) The creation of a superordinate identity that encompasses competing subgroup identities. This strategy has often led to chronic projection of subgroup prototypicality and a resulting inability to reach consensus regarding the prototypical attributes of the superordinate group.¹²

(3) The creation of a superordinate identity with simultaneous retention of subgroup salience.¹³ The superordinate identity 'Rainbow People' in South Africa is an example of this strategy.¹⁴ For this strategy to work, subgroup identities must remain valid but penultimate. The superordinate identity is rendered more powerful when it is organized around a collaborative goal.¹⁵ This strategy has shown promise in 'real world' conflict, but Hewstone contends that it may only be able to overcome powerful ethnic categorizations on a temporary basis.¹⁶

Ethnic identity is too often a bastion of intergroup conflict. Global history has demonstrated, and social research has corroborated, that ethnic intergroup bias

¹⁰ Turner 1982:22.

¹¹ Brown 2000.

¹² Mummenday & Wenzel 1999.

¹³ Dovidio, et al, 1998; Gaertner, et al, 1999; Brown 2000; Dovidio & Kafati 1999; Gonzalez & Brown 2000; VanOudenhoven, et al, 1996.

¹⁴ Tutu 1996; Gibson 2006.

¹⁵ Bown 2000:755.

¹⁶ Hewstone 1996:351.

is often intractable. This is heightened all the more when ethnic particularity is mutually reinforced by religious particularity.¹⁷ The boundary confronted in Acts 10, 11 and 15 is a serious social boundary. Luke approaches this boundary with a strategy most akin to the creation of a superordinate category with the simultaneous retention of subgroup identities. One might even wonder if the task of ‘witness’ is a uniting collaborative goal. Acts 10-15 reveals that the new primary social identity for Jesus-followers is an identity that transcends ethnicity. But it is equally clear that ethnic identity is a valid and valuable identity at a secondary level. To achieve this radical transformation of social identities, Luke makes recourse again to the Spirit.

Luke’s Use of ‘Ethnic Language’

Luke’s use of ‘ethnic language’ reveals the precision with which Luke handles inter-ethnic issues, especially in this section of Acts. Three ethnic categories are of concern in Acts 10-15: Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος and ἀδελφοί.¹⁸ Luke’s usage of these identity-laden words gives clues to the social context and raw material with which Luke will press for a new social identity. The changes in Luke’s usage of these categories after the Cornelius episode in Acts 10 (changes that are solidified in Acts 15) are powerful reflections of the transformed social identities in view.

Ἰσραήλ and Ἰσραηλίται are consummate insider terms, appearing 12 times in Luke and 20 times in Acts. Ἰσραήλ/Ἰσραηλίται is only used in intra-Israelite dialogue, by the narrator (Luke 1.80; 2.25; Acts 5.21) or a divine messenger (Luke 1.16; Acts 9.15), but never by non-Israelites.¹⁹ Acts 10.36 is the only time the word is spoken to a non-Israelite, but Cornelius was likely well-enough acquainted with intra-Israelite usage. Israel/Israelite is language of the ethnic in-group and (for Luke) language of ethnic privilege, even if in non-Israelite eyes ‘Israel’ was a figment of the increasingly distant past. Members of the Jesus group continued to identify

¹⁷ Wald 2005:10.

¹⁸ See Elliott 2007 for NT usage.

¹⁹ Luke 1.16, 54, 68, 80; 2.25, 32, 34; 4.25, 27; 7.9; 22.30; 24.21; Acts 1.6; 2.22, 36; 3.12; 4.10, 27; 5.21, 31, 35; 7.23, 37, 42; 9.15; 10.36; 13.16, 17, 23, 24; 21.28; 28.20. This pattern conforms to the other gospels (Matthew 2.6, 20, 21; 8.10; 9.33; 10.6, 23; 15.24, 31; 19.28; 27.9, 42; Mark 12.29; 15.32; John 1.31, 47, 49; 3.10; 12.13).

both themselves and their hearers as Ἰσραηλίται throughout Acts 1-14.²⁰ Remarkably, 'Israel' is used only 2 times after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15): once by Jerusalemites incensed over Paul's transgression of ethnic boundaries (Acts 21.28) and once in Paul's novel phrase 'the hope of Israel' (Acts 28.20).²¹

Luke's usage of Ἰουδαῖος, the categorical designation for 'Israelites' used either by non-Israelites or by Israelites speaking to non-Israelites, reveals an identical pattern. The word appears 5 times in the Gospel: twice by the narrator (Luke 7.3; 23.51) and once from Pilate (23.3), Roman soldiers (23.37) and on the *titulus* (23.38).²² Ἰουδαῖος occurs 74 times in Acts and is the favorite category of the narrator (46 times) to describe the Israelite ἔθνος.²³ It is used 6 times by non-Israelites and 15 times by Israelites speaking to non-Israelites.²⁴ There are two possible exceptions to this pattern prior to Acts 15. Peter's address in Acts 2.14, ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλήμ πάντες, could be a geographic usage distinguishing regional Judeans (Ἰουδαῖοι) from Judea proper from those living in Jerusalem.²⁵ In Acts 12.11 Peter reflects internally about his deliverance from Herod and from all the plans τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. This is a clear exception to the rule, but we must at least account for the fact that Luke presents this event *after* Peter's transformative experience with Cornelius. Perhaps Luke deftly depicts Peter as anticipating the broader identity transformation that will grip the entire community after Acts 15. Hence 69 of 74 occurrences of Ἰουδαῖος demonstrate no deviation from the pattern set forth in the Synoptics or Luke-Acts. The remaining 5

²⁰ Acts 1.6; 2.22, 36; 3.12; 4.10, 27; 5.31; 7.23, 37, 42; 13.16, 17, 23, 24.

²¹ Paul's phrase 'hope of Israel' is not quite a reference to the people as 'Israel'. The phrase (τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) occurs only here in the New Testament and nowhere in the LXX, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Philo or apostolic fathers. Cf. ὑπομονή Ἰσραήλ in Jeremiah 14.8; 17.3 and Ezra 10.2 where ὑπομονή translates נִקְיָה. In Acts, the phrase likely refers to the resurrection, which is the 'hope' in Paul's defense speeches in Acts 23.6; 24.15; 26.6 (Haacker 1985:437-451).

²² Cf. Ἰουδαῖος in the Synoptics: *Narrator*: Mark 7.3; Matthew 28.15. *Non-Israelites*: Mark 15.2, 9, 12, 18, 26; Matthew 2.2; 27.11, 29.37. John's unique usage cannot be treated here.

²³ *Narrator*: Acts 2.5, 11; 9.22, 23; 11.19; 12.3; 13.5, 6, 43, 45, 50; 14.1, 2, 4, 5, 19; 16.3; 17.1, 5, 10, 13, 17; 18.2, 4, 5, 14, 19, 24, 28; 19.10, 13, 14, 17, 33, 34; 20.3; 21.27; 22.30; 23.12; 24.9, 27; 25.2, 7, 9, 15; 28.17.

²⁴ *Non-Israelites*: Acts 10.22; 16.20; 18.12; 23.20, 27; 25.24. *Israelites to non-Israelites*: Acts 10.28, 39; 20.19; 20.21; 21.11 (at least an ethnically mixed group is implied in this text), 39; 24.5, 19; 25.8, 10; 26.2, 3, 4, 7, 21.

²⁵ Cf. Josephus' ability to differentiate within a Pentecost crowd those who were 'actually from Judea' from other regional identities of ethnic Ἰουδαῖοι (*War* 2.43). Bechard 1999:675-691 notes that Luke uses Ἰουδαία to describe either a geographical region, political jurisdiction or a 'theological' concept for the 'land of the Jews'. A similar regional usage of Ἰουδαῖοι by Peter would thus differentiate those who had come from 'Judea' (the Ἰουδαῖοι) for the festival from Diaspora Israelites who had resettled permanently (κατοικέω) in Jerusalem. Alternatively, perhaps Ἰουδαῖοι was used to refer to Diaspora Israelites, though I am not convinced this is Luke's usage.

exceptions mark Luke's shift in usage after Acts 15 (Acts 21.20, 21; 22.3, 12; 28.19) and present Israelite *Jesus-followers* addressing other Israelites as Ἰουδαῖοι. This post-Acts 15 intra-Israelite usage is unique among the Synoptics. After Acts 15, those outside the Jesus group use Ἰουδαῖος when addressing non-Israelites, but *never when speaking to Israelites* (Acts 24.5; cf. 21.28). This indicates a significant shift in identity, the impact of which will be developed in this chapter.

The resulting image is striking: prior to Acts 15, Israelite Jesus-followers know themselves and their ethnic group as Israel, an insider name connoting ethnic privilege before the Creator God. After Acts 15 Israelite Jesus-followers (even a character no less 'conservative' or 'Israelite' than James) abandon the category Ἰσραήλ and replace it with Ἰουδαῖοι, a category that, similar to the names of all other ancient ethnic groups, derives from the group's relationship to their territorial homeland Ἰουδαία.²⁶

The remarkable nature of the shift is underscored when we take into account Luke's usage pattern for the ethnic insider term ἀδελφοί. Of the 23 occurrences in Luke's Gospel, the word is used to describe physical kin 21 times. In Luke 8.21 it is used to describe Israelites in general and in Luke 22.32 it is used to describe the disciples' in-group.²⁷ In Acts the word is used 54 times, either as an insider term for the Israelite ἔθνος or for the in-group of Jesus-followers.²⁸ The word functions primarily as an ethnic descriptor for Israelites in the early sections of Acts.²⁹ Yet in these early sections ἀδελφοί also can be used to describe the Jesus group as distinct from the larger ἔθνος (1.15, 16; 6.3; 9.30). Jesus' followers are able to identify in-group members as their 'brothers' while simultaneously identifying all ethnic Israelites as 'brothers'.

Prior to Acts 15 *no non-Israelite is ever categorized as a 'brother'*. Of the 96 deployments of ἀδελφοί in the Gospels, *no non-Israelites are ever included as 'brothers' of Israelites*.³⁰ In literature relevant to this period, the only instances I can discover in

²⁶ See *Contra Apionem* 1.179 and Esler 2008 forthcoming.

²⁷ Luke 3.1, 19; 6.14, 41, 42; 8.19, 20, 21; 12.13; 14.12, 26; 15.27, 32; 16.28; 17.3; 18.29; 20.28 (3x), 29; 21.16; 22.32.

²⁸ Acts 1.14, 15, 16; 2.29, 37; 3.17, 22; 6.3; 7.2, 13, 23, 25, 26, 37; 9.30; 10.23; 11.1, 12, 29; 12.2, 17; 13.15, 26, 38; 14.2; 15.1, 3, 7, 13, 22, 23, 32, 33, 36, 40; 16.2, 40; 17.6, 10, 14; 18.18, 27; 21.7, 17; 22.1, 5; 23.1, 5, 6; 28.14, 15, 17, 21.

²⁹ Acts 2.29, 37; 3.17, 22; 7.2, 23, 25, 26, 37.

³⁰ Matthew 1.2, 11; 4.18 (2x), 21 (2x); 5.22 (2x), 23, 24, 47; 7.3, 4, 5; 10.2 (2x), 21 (2x); 12.46, 47, 48, 49, 50; 13.55; 14.3; 17.1; 18.15 (2x), 21, 35; 19.29; 20.24; 22.24 (3x), 25 (3x); 23.8; 25.40; 28.10; Mark 1.16, 19; 3.17,

which non-Israelites are called ἀδελφοί by an Israelite are in Josephus' *Antiquities* 12.225-228; 13.43-45, 163-170 and 1 Maccabees 12.1-23 (cf 1 Maccabees 14.16-23; 2 Maccabees 5.8-9), texts that describe the 'brotherhood' between the Spartans and the Hasmonean dynasty. Yet these instances are severely qualified by their clear political expedience. Further, the generation-long delay in Israelite response to Sparta's overture indicates possible reluctance to assent to the relationship, and, quite clearly, the claim to 'brotherhood' still rests on physical kinship – the 'discovery' of common Abrahamic descent.³¹ This strange exception serves to prove the rule that Israelites simply did not either call or conceptualize non-Israelites as 'brothers'.

Ethnic Language and the Awareness of Ethnic Boundaries

Luke's use of ἀδελφοί as the primary category name for the Jesus group in Acts 10-14 indicates that the in-group's identity is being defined against an ethnic 'other'.³² Luke moves away from the category μαθητής (an appropriate category to differentiate within a group possessing common ethnic identity; cf. Acts 9.1-31) and implements ἀδελφοί to emphasize both the mutuality of the group and its ethnic homogeneity.³³ The use of ἀδελφοί is not the only clue that the ethnic boundary is primary in the Cornelius episode.

1. Cornelius is introduced as a Roman soldier (even if he practices acts of Israelite piety).³⁴
2. Caesarea had an overwhelmingly non-Israelite population.³⁵
3. Cornelius' envoys mark the contrast between Cornelius and the entire Judean ἔθνος (note the envoys' use of the out-group categorical ethnic designation 'Judean' rather than the insider 'Israelite' in 10.22).

31, 32, 33, 34, 35; 5.37; 6.3, 17, 18; 10.29, 30; 12.19 (3x), 20; 13.12 (2x); For Luke see fn 28. John 1.40, 41; 2.12; 6.8; 7.3, 5, 10; 11.2, 19, 21, 23, 32; 20.17; 21.23.

³¹ Katzoff 1985:486-487.

³² In Acts 10-14 ἀδελφοί appears 10 times (10.23; 11.1, 12, 29; 12.2, 17; 13.15, 26, 38; 14.2). Cf. 7 appearances of ἐκκλησία (11.22, 26; 12.1, 5; 13.1; 14.23, 27) and μαθητής (11.26, 29; 13.52; 14.20, 21, 22, 28).

³³ Acts 15.4 may indicate that Samaritans were not categorized as a part of the ἔθνη even if they were a non-Israelite ἔθνος. See chapter 7 on Samaritans.

³⁴ Acts 10.1-2. Bauckham 2005:113 notes that Cornelius, like all non-Israelites and irrespective of his piety, was likely suspected of being idolatrous.

³⁵ Bock 2007:385. See Rowe 2005 for Caesarea's social significance.

4. The Spirit's command to Peter (10.19-20) and Peter's proclamation in Cornelius' household implicate ethnic issues (10.34-35).
5. Cornelius disappears from Luke's narrative repetitions, indicating that he is less interesting as an individual than as an exemplar of his category – the ἔθνη (Acts 11.1-18; 15.7-11).³⁶

The Spirit at the Ethnic Boundary

The section in Acts most concerned with ethnic boundaries is also the section containing the densest cluster of Spirit-references. Acts 10.1-11.18 contains 8 references to the Spirit, with Acts 10.44-47 and 11.12-16 each containing three references in a handful of verses. This is paralleled only by the prologue (three occurrences in eight verses: 1.2, 5, 8) and the incorporation of the Samaritans (four occurrences in five verses: 8.15, 17, 18, 19). As we have seen throughout, wherever identity is in question Luke makes recourse to the Spirit.³⁷ A close reading of Acts 10.1-11.18 and 15.1-31 will demonstrate that this section brings to a climax Luke's Spirit-fueled identity-forming project by describing the role of the Spirit in the incorporation of the ethnic 'other' through both the orchestration of intergroup contact and the identification of 'others' who properly belong to the Jesus group.

The Spirit and the Orchestration of Intergroup Encounter

The Spirit orchestrates the interethnic encounter between Cornelius and Peter through a series of visions (cf. Acts 2.17). Cornelius has an angelic vision (ὄραμα) commanding him to send men to Joppa to ask after Peter (Acts 10.3). Peter, in the midst of noontime hunger pangs, receives a thrice repeated vision (ἑκστασις in 10.10), receives direct clarification from the Spirit concerning the ὄραμα (10.19) and reports his experience to the Jerusalem disciples (ἑκστασις and ὄραμα in 11.5). This is the second time Luke has used a double vision in order to orchestrate an intergroup encounter, a convention that asserts divine control over a situation (cf.

³⁶ Witherup 1993:56, 62 notes Cornelius' absence but not its significance.

³⁷ 'Spirit of prophecy' proponents (even those who connect prophetic speech closely to mission) must grapple with the fact that there are exactly zero references to the Spirit in Paul's evangelistic speeches in Acts 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18 and there are exactly zero references to the Spirit in Paul's legal defense speeches in Acts 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27.

Acts 9.10-12).³⁸ Finally, the direct speech of the Spirit in Acts 10.19-20, as elsewhere in Acts, sends Peter to the ethnic ‘other’:

While Peter was pondering the vision (ὄραμα) the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without discriminating (διακρίνω); for I have sent them.’

Ultimately, it is this *Spirit-given* direction, not the dream in 10.11-16 that drives Peter to mix with non-Israelites.³⁹ The Spirit’s orchestration of the interethnic encounter between Peter and Cornelius is evidence that boundary maintenance for the in-group is being commandeered by the Holy Spirit.

Peter’s initial vision is relevant for intergroup contact insofar as it deals with a prominent marker of Israelite ethnic identity. Peter sees all manner of clean and unclean animals, and hears the command:

Rise, Peter! Kill (θύειν) and eat!⁴⁰

But Peter protests vehemently:⁴¹

By no means (μηδαμῶς), Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.⁴²

Yet the voice reasserts the meaning of the vision:

What God has cleansed you must not call common.⁴³

The vision is puzzling and Luke expects his hearers to think as much, for he depicts Peter twice ruminating on its meaning (Acts 10.17, 19).⁴⁴ Initially, the vision indicates the freedom of God to declare all animals clean; Peter is to make no

³⁸ Wikenhauser 1948:100-111. Achilles Tatius *Clitophon and Leucippe* 4, 1, 4-8; Apuleius *The Golden Ass* 11.6, 13, 22.

³⁹ Esler 1987:94.

⁴⁰ Acts 10.13. Bock 2007:389, Barrett 1994:507 and O’Toole 1996 have suggested that θύειν should be translated ‘sacrifice’. Luke uses θύειν to mean sacrifice on several occasions (Luke 22.7; Acts 14.13, 18), but also for to the non-cultic slaughter of an animal before consumption (Luke 15.23, 27, 30). Fitzmyer 1998:455 denies ritual or sacrificial meaning in Acts 10.13; 11.7.

⁴¹ Wall 1987:80 notes a ‘reluctance’ motif in Acts 10 and Jonah. ‘The point is that Jonah’s God is Peter’s God and both have the prerogative to extend life to non-Israelites.’

⁴² Acts 10.14. μηδαμῶς only appears in the New Testament here and in Peter’s retelling in 11.8.

⁴³ Acts 10.15.

⁴⁴ Turner 1996:379.

distinction between the animals.⁴⁵ But we must go further to recognize that food laws were one of Israel's most prominent markers of the distinctness of their ethnic identity vis-à-vis the ἔθνη.⁴⁶

It is not, however, until the additional direction given to Peter by the Spirit in 10.19-20 that the interethnic boundary comes into view.⁴⁷ It may be the case that the Spirit's command to 'make no distinction' between Israelites and non-Israelites (Acts 10.20) is not a clarification of Peter's initial vision, but rather that Peter's initial vision indicated the ability of God to destabilize one sort of (ritual) boundary in preparation for the Spirit's destabilization of another sort of (ethnic) boundary. While detailed arguments have been made concerning the nature of the 'Jew'/'Gentile' boundary, especially as it relates to moral or ritual purity, it is simply an ethnic boundary in view in Luke's text.⁴⁸ My claim is supported by two facts. First, non-Israelites were not subject to ritual purity laws until the Tosefta and Talmud.⁴⁹ Second, there is no Levitical law prohibiting social intercourse or shared meals with non-Israelites.⁵⁰ Luke's emphasis on the ethnic nature of the boundary in view (manifest in his use of the category name ἀδελφοί) makes it highly likely that ritual impurity is not the barrier to intergroup interaction, but rather the barrier is constituted by the repugnance of the ethnic 'other'. This is further augmented by two points. Returning both to SIT and Barthian ethnic theory, it must be noted that ethnic difference is not the *a priori* cause of ethnic identity or ethnic differentiation. Rather, ethnic identity arises as a *result* of intergroup contact, and distinct ethnic identity markers develop as a *result* of the distinction. With regard to Israelite purity laws, there is a bit of a chicken and egg argument here. Does Israel's divinely ordained purity code create an impermeable boundary with the ethnic other, or does intergroup differentiation cause a certain reading of

⁴⁵ Bock 2007:389.

⁴⁶ Bauckham 2005:94 notes the connection between Levitical food purity laws and Israel's distinct identity among non-Israelites.

⁴⁷ Elliott 1991:103: 'Concern for the purity of blood lines is replicated in a concern for the purity of food'.

⁴⁸ For purity distinctions, see Klawans 2006:266-284; Bauckham 2005:91-142. For impurity in the era, see Büchler 1928; Hoenig 1970: 63-75; Frymer-Kensky 1983:399-414; Milgrom 1991:37-38, 44-45; Chilton and Neusner 1991:63-88.

⁴⁹ Bauckham 2005:92.

⁵⁰ There appears to have existed a general fear that association with non-Israelites would inevitably lead to idolatry (Bauckham 2005:97). Esler 1998:93-116 discusses the danger of eating food associated with idols in a non-Israelite home.

purity laws that reinforces the group boundary already present through the identity-forming process of categorization, identification and differentiation? The latter seems most likely, especially given the lack of Israelite statutory prohibitions for intergroup contact. Second, Peter does not claim that commiserating with non-Israelites was considered ἄνομος, but rather ἀθέμιτος (forbidden, disgusting) in Acts 10.28.⁵¹ Danker states that ἀθέμιτος is primarily not what is forbidden by ‘ordinance’ but by ‘violation of tradition’.⁵² This seems to be Luke’s usage, especially when compared to his use of ἀνόμος in Luke 22.37 clearly to indicate a legal transgression, not just an action that breaks the ‘canons of decency’.⁵³ Regardless of the exact relationship between the purity issues in Peter’s initial vision and Israelite/non-Israelite relationships, the ethnic boundary is subverted ultimately only by the Spirit’s direct command in Acts 10.19-20.

The Spirit tells Peter to not διακρίνω concerning Cornelius’ envoys, a term that can carry the strong meaning of ‘discriminate’ or ‘make a distinction between them and us’. This is certain evidence of the perception of an intergroup (ethnic) boundary.⁵⁴ Peter’s extension of hospitality (ξενίζειν) to the non-Israelites from Cornelius demonstrates that Luke’s Peter thinks a certain level of social intercourse is now possible that previously was unlikely.⁵⁵ Peter’s revelatory proclamation in Cornelius’ household indicates that his (Spirit-mandated) refusal to διακρίνω is a reflection of God’s unwillingness to draw distinctions based upon ethnic origin.

⁵¹ Turner 1996:378, 387 is wrong when he notes that Peter is accused of eating with ‘unclean’ men in 11.2-3. Peter is actually accused of eating with ‘uncircumcised’ men. The distinction is ethnic, not ritual.

⁵² BDAG 2000:124.

⁵³ BDAG 2000:124. It appears that ἀνόμος most frequently is equated with sin (Matthew 23.28; Romans 4.7; 6.19; 2 Corinthians 6.14; Titus 2.14; Hebrews 1.9; 10.17. Cf. 2 Maccabees 6.5, which seems to indicate that explicit clarification is necessary if something is *legally* (vs. socially) ἀθέμιτος.

⁵⁴ Bauckham 2005:105; Johnson 1992:185. Luke uses the word with the stronger meaning in Acts 11.2, 12; 15.9, all of which solidify the claim that this refers not to ‘hesitation’ but to distinctions between peoples. The stronger meaning is appropriate in intergroup settings (cf. 1 Corinthians 4.7; 6.5; 11.31; James 2.4). The softer meaning (‘hesitate’) is appropriate in situations of trust or discernment (cf. Matthew 16.3, 21.21; Romans 4.20; 14.23; James 1.6; Jude 1.22). Luke uses ἀναντιρρήτως for ‘hesitation’ (Acts 10.29).

⁵⁵ ‘Guestfriendship’ is a common theme in Greco-Roman community foundation stories (Wilson 2001:77-99).

In truth I am understanding (καταλαμβάνομαι) that God shows no partiality (οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήπτης), but in any nation (ἔθνος) any one who fears him and does righteousness is acceptable (δεκτός) to him.⁵⁶

There is rich irony in light of the fact that in Luke 4.24 Jesus claims that he is not δεκτός among the people most closely related to him (his πατρίς) because he is unwilling to restrict the benefits of his ministry to his townsfolk. Now Luke reveals that every ἔθνος can be δεκτός to God, assuming that they properly submit to the God of Israel. The benefits of God transcend ethnic distinctions. This recognition, and the experience that illustrates this fact, only occur through the Spirit's comprehensive orchestration of this interethnic encounter.

The Spirit as the Marker of a Superordinate Identity

The orchestrating work of the Spirit is only half of what is necessary for the incorporation of the ἔθνη into the Jesus group and hence the creation of a common superordinate social identity among formerly ethnic 'others'. Acts 10-11 gives Luke's clearest evidence that the Spirit functions as the definitive identity marker for those who are rightly identified with Jesus. First, Peter's speech to Cornelius draws on Luke's intergroup 'peace' motif to emphasize that one result of the reorientation of identity around Jesus is reconciliation with the ethnic 'other'. Second, Luke's presentation of the falling of the Spirit upon the ἔθνη definitively identifies the Spirit as the agent that overcomes the 'us' versus 'them' distinction.

Peter's speech is a masterful recapitulation of Luke's Gospel, recounting Jesus' ministry from Galilee to the ascension.⁵⁷ Several themes re-emerge here.

1. Peter's speech begins with ethnic particularity: the message of Jesus was sent to the υἱοὶ Ἰσραήλ.
2. The speech names Jesus, emphatically, as Lord of all (Acts 10.36: οὕτως ἔστιν πάντων κύριος).⁵⁸ The notion that Jesus is Lord not just

⁵⁶ Acts 10.33-34, my translation. There is no sense that by 'the ones fearing him' (10.35: ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτόν) Luke intends only a category of 'god fearers'. Israelites are called 'god fearers' (Luke 1.50: τοῖς φοβουμένοις αὐτόν), Jesus uses the language in a parable (Luke 18.2: τὸν θεὸν μὴ φοβούμενος), and those who are clearly not 'god fearers' come to faith in Jesus in Acts (see esp. Acts 17.34).

⁵⁷ Johnson 1992:195. The suggestion that Cornelius was a 'Christian' prior to Peter's coming (Wilckens 1963:46-50; Arrington 1988:114) is not sustainable given both Cornelius' 'worship' of Peter (10.25-26) and Peter's speech in Acts 15.7.

⁵⁸ Rowe 2005 discusses the force of the construction.

of Israel but of *all* is foundational to the fact that all non-Israelites can submit to Jesus as *non-Israelites*.

3. The claim that Jesus is Lord of all opens an *inclusio* that emphatically names Jesus as judge of all (Acts 10.42: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὠρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτῆς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν).⁵⁹ This should be taken as a counterpoint to the Spirit's command in Acts 10.20 that Peter should not διακρίνω when his non-Israelite courtiers arrive in Joppa. Only Jesus is the ordained judge of people.
4. Jesus is depicted as the prototypical Spirit-inspired figure in the speech. Jesus' filling with the Spirit causes Jesus to 'do benefaction' (εὐεργετέω) and healings in order to free people from the power of the devil (Acts 10.38). The use of εὐεργετέω is significant in a Greco-Roman context.⁶⁰ As in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is the exemplar of Spirit-enabled allocentric identity.
5. The latter point reveals again Spirit/Satan dichotomy and its resulting effect upon a community. Spirit-filled Jesus thwarts the work of the devil just as Satan-filled characters (Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, Simeon, and Elymas) can destroy the Spirit's work in the Jesus group.

Peter's 'aha!' moment in Acts 10.34-35 leads to the recognition that God is at work to incorporate the ἔθνη into the Jesus-group. This leads to an altogether new emphasis in Peter's gospel presentation, the organization of the message under the rubric of 'peace through Jesus Christ'.

τὸν λόγον [ὄν] ἀπέστειλεν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Witherington 1998:358.

⁶⁰ See Danker 1982; Bock 2007:398 for benefaction in the Greco-Roman context. Jesus' allocentric benefaction is displayed in Luke 22.25-27.

⁶¹ Acts 10.36. Barrett 1994:521 considers the verse nearly 'untranslatable'. If we retain ὄν (the majority and most difficult reading: P74, κ, C, D, E, Ψ, Byz. Omitted in κ¹, A, B, 81) the relative pronoun is the direct object of οἶδατε in 10.37. This renders the phrase, 'the proclamation of good news of peace through Jesus Christ' and places it as the centerpiece of the message. My reading is with Fitzmyer 1998:463 and Parsons & Culy 2003:210, but against Witherington 1998:356 who takes the statement as an apposition to the preceding clause and Barrett 1994:521-522 who suggests either dropping ὄν or assuming that 'Luke, after writing his parenthesis (this Jesus is Lord of All), forgot

The message of ‘peace’ through Jesus Christ apparently is a result of the fact that Jesus is Lord of ‘all’. *This paradigmatic interethnic encounter is the only time in Acts that the apostolic kerygma is classified as a message of ‘peace’.* I have already demonstrated that other significant ‘peace’ passages focus on the potential for real intergroup peace even with non-Israelites (esp. Luke 1.79; 2.14; Acts 9.31). The effect of narrative accumulation, building from Luke’s earlier deployments of εἰρήνη, makes it highly likely that Acts 10.36 is another example of the surprising fact that peace with the enemies of Israel (in this case no less than a mid-ranking Roman military official) will come not through their destruction but through reconciliation and incorporation.⁶²

Returning again to Acts 10.34-35, we can now see how the identity-marking function of the Spirit allows for the formation of a common identity that results in interethnic ‘peace’ between Israelites and non-Israelites. καταλαμβάνω, for Luke, is closely connected to the discovery or comprehension of something that heretofore was unknown, a nuance consistent with Peter’s ongoing identity-transformation in Acts.⁶³ προσωπολήπτῃς and its verbal cognates appear in the New Testament consistently to indicate the fact that God treats each person according to their own relationship to him and not according to their social standing (Israelite/non-Israelite; master/slave, etc).⁶⁴ The word has its origins in a conflation of the LXX πρόσωπόν λαβεῖν and emerges as a key term for the impartiality of God that is also required of humans.⁶⁵ The point of Peter’s declaration is clear: with God there is no bias on the basis of group identity.⁶⁶

What Peter recognizes cognitively in Acts 10.34-35 is depicted experientially – and definitively – in Acts 10.44-48. While Peter is still speaking the Spirit falls on

how the sentence was intended to run’. Witherington’s view, would actually support my thesis because it would set God’s refusal to make a distinction between peoples at the center of the gospel proclamation.

⁶² O’Toole 1996 suggests that ‘peace’ here implies all the other nuances of ‘peace’ throughout Luke-Acts. Thus, the word encapsulates the fullness of life described by the Hebrew *shalom*. O’Toole makes some reference to peace as the antithesis of ‘division’ in Acts (p. 467), but he neglects the intergroup implications of ‘peace’.

⁶³ See Acts 4.13; 25.25.

⁶⁴ Romans 2.1; Ephesians 6.9; Colossians 3.25; James 2.1, 9. Cf. 1 Peter 1.17: ἀπροσωπολήπτῃς.

⁶⁵ See 2 Kings 3.14; Leviticus 19.15; Deuteronomy 10.17; Psalm 81.2 LXX; *Psalms of Solomon* 2.18. For later usage, see 1 Clement 1.3; *Letter of Barnabas* 4.12; Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians* 6.1. Johnson 1992:191.

⁶⁶ There are two things that God ‘remembers’ (μιμνήσκομαι) in Luke-Acts: (1) the Abrahamic covenant in Luke 1.54, 72 and (2) the almsgiving of a non-Israelite in (Acts 10.31) who is incorporated into the people of God *because of God’s faithfulness to the Abrahamic covenant* (cf. Acts 3.25).

the whole non-Israelite household of Cornelius. This obliterates ethnicity as a basis for intergroup comparison.⁶⁷ The language of the text highlights the fact that the Spirit is, in Luke's view, evidence for shared identity.⁶⁸ It must be clearly understood that there is a vast difference between understanding 'salvation' as a 'status conferred' and the Lukan view of salvation as the initiation of a new identity. Believers do not simply receive the status 'saved'; they are incorporated into a new trans-ethnic people, a new social reality sharing a common identity.

1. The falling of the Spirit 'even upon the non-Israelites' (καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη) amazes (ἐξίστημι) the 'believers from the circumcision' (Acts 10.45). Apparently, even given Peter's new understanding that non-Israelites can be acceptable to God, nobody expected the Spirit to be given to non-Israelites as *non-Israelites*.⁶⁹
2. The Spirit-manifestation is audible (and possibly visible). Every other visible/audible manifestation of the Spirit in Luke-Acts has served definitively to identify the person(s) in question (esp. Luke 3.22; Acts 2.18; 8.17). The Spirit-manifestation marks Cornelius and his family as δοῦλοι and δοῦλαι of God (cf. Acts 2.18) without requiring a social conversion to become a part of ethnic Israel.
3. Luke highlights the common identity shared by these ἔθνη and the Jesus group by using the verb ἐκχέω to describe the Spirit's falling in Acts 10.45, a word only used to describe the Spirit event at Pentecost (Acts 2, 17, 18, 33). The Spirit falls on non-Israelites in the *exact same manner* as it fell paradigmatically upon Israelite Jesus-followers in Acts 2.

⁶⁷ See Esler 1992:136-142; Borgen 1994:220-235 for tongues and social boundary crossing. Menzies 1991:265 despite a total absence of evidence pleads that this remains the 'Spirit of prophecy' and that 'we may presume that the prophetic band in Caesarea... by virtue of the pneumatic gift participated effectively in the missionary enterprise'. Dunn 1970:231-232 considers the Spirit to be the bearer of forgiveness here, based on a retroactive reading of a conceived parallel between 11.17 and 11.18. This does not appear to be Luke's concern in the pericope.

⁶⁸ Menzies 1991:265 is representative of the overwhelming number of scholars who recognize in this instance that the Spirit marks 'Gentile' incorporation into the 'community of salvation'. But scholars do not regularly differentiate between common *status* as 'saved' and common *identity* as a co-community member (cf. Acts 3.23). There is, indeed, a great practical difference. Cf. Cho 2005:154.

⁶⁹ Turner 1998:346: 'Their participation in the Spirit of prophecy shows that Cornelius' household has a part in the "Israel" the Messiah is cleansing/restoring by the Spirit'. Yet Turner does not account for what, precisely, happens to existing ethnic identities nor does he grapple with Luke's general avoidance of 'Israel' after Acts 15.

4. Luke uses ‘us’/‘them’ language to describe the common experience of the Spirit in Acts 10.47. Non-Israelites can be baptized because ‘these’ (τούτους) have received the Holy Spirit just like ‘us’ (ἡμεῖς).
5. Peter’s decision to baptize the members of Cornelius’ household is the sign of their full incorporation into the Jesus group.
6. Peter remains with Cornelius for some days (Acts 10.48), an indication that Peter has also experienced identity transformation based upon the Spirit-proved fact that there is no distinction based upon ethnic identity.

Peter’s identity transformation is underscored again by Luke’s use of an inclusio framed by κωλύω /κολλάω in Acts 10.28 and 10.47 (cf. Acts 8.29, 36)

You yourselves know how forbidden (ἀθέμιτος) it is for a Judean to unite with (κολλάω) or to visit any one of another nation (ἔθνος).⁷⁰

Is anyone able to forbid (κωλύω) water, that these who have received the Spirit just as we did should not be baptized?⁷¹

The Spirit overcomes Peter’s identity-based reluctance to ‘be united to’ (κολλάω) the ethnic ‘other’ and Peter recognizes he cannot forbid (κωλύω) the Spirit-orchestrated incorporation of the ‘other’ into full membership in Peter’s own in-group. This full incorporation is effected by the surprising *pre-baptismal* arrival of the Spirit, and subsequently is marked by baptism and commensality (Acts 10.47-48). In SIT terms, what has occurred in the Cornelius episode is the creation of a superordinate social identity capable of transcending interethnic barriers.⁷² By virtue of their incorporation into the Jesus group, both the ἔθνη of Cornelius’ household and Peter’s Israelite group experience identity transformation, now drawing their identity from their shared group membership. In the case of the characters from Acts 10, it is clear that this new identity is superordinate because it allows for expressions of intergroup behavior among diverse ethnic identities that were clearly considered deviant (or, ἀθέμιτος; cf. 11.2-3) prior to the Spirit’s work in

⁷⁰ My translation.

⁷¹ My translation.

⁷² Turner 1996:386 misses the mark when he suggests that the significance of the incorporation of ‘God-fearers’ is that (1) they counterbalance ‘Jewish’ rejection of the gospel and (2) they diminished the offense of the ‘law free’ gospel because of their ‘Jewish’ sympathies. This neglects precisely the point. All of Luke’s boundary and identity language points to their importance not as God-fearing ‘Gentiles’ but as ethnic non-Israelites.

incorporating non-Israelites into the group. This new identity transcends ethnic identity.

Criticism in Jerusalem: Evidence of an Intractable Boundary

The immediate reaction described by Luke indicates that the ethnic boundary is stubborn and reflects a prompt cultivation of Israelite subgroup distinctiveness in an effort to defend Israelite identity. The subgroup emerges as: ‘the believers from the circumcision’ (Acts 10.45: οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοί).⁷³ This is the second time (with the incident in Acts 6.1-7) that the incorporation of some category of ‘other’ has led immediately to the reassertion of subgroup distinctiveness. The immediacy of this new subgroup identification is striking: in Acts 10.44 the Spirit falls on the ἔθνη, obliterating ethnic barriers, and in Acts 10.45 we are introduced for the first time to a subgroup identified as ‘circumcised’, a category that arises again in Acts 11.2. From a social identity perspective, this reflects the fact that the falling of the Spirit has created a common trans-ethnic identity, yet Israelites are clinging to their ethnic identity as a means for creating intragroup differentiation between themselves and non-Israelite Jesus-followers. This should not be taken as an already formed ‘conservative’ Israelite subgroup existing among the larger community of Israelite Jesus-followers.⁷⁴ It is simply the new subgroup boundary with which Israelite Jesus-followers differentiate themselves *en toto* from non-Israelite Jesus-followers *en toto*.⁷⁵

This is expressed in Acts 11.3.

Εἰσῆλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς.

The judgment (διακρίνω: Acts 11.2) against Peter is a statement of accusation (not a question, as in the RSV) and makes intergroup comparison on the basis of an identity marker that heretofore was irrelevant.⁷⁶ The problem is that eating together erases the intergroup identity distinction between Israelite Jesus-followers

⁷³ Acts 10.45.

⁷⁴ Johnson 1992:197 thinks that ‘the circumcision’ is already a distinct ideological group within the church.

⁷⁵ So Bauckham 2005:116-117.

⁷⁶ Ironically, the circumcised believers do to Peter (Acts 11.2) what the Spirit commanded Peter not to do on the basis of ethnic identity (διακρίνω: Acts 10.20).

and non-Israelites.⁷⁷ Peter's responds with a defense speech that is a *tour de force* of common identity, but he does not call for a relinquishment of ethnic particularity.

1. The *Spirit* told Peter to go with the men from Joppa without discriminating (Acts 11.12: διακρίνω).⁷⁸
2. The Spirit fell upon the non-Israelites as Peter was *beginning* to speak (Acts 11.15). The Spirit-interruption highlights the free action of God in accepting non-Israelites.
3. Peter uses 'us'/'them' language to connect the experience of the ἔθνη to the paradigmatic experience at Pentecost, and thus demonstrates that the Spirit is the marker of a common identity: 'The Holy Spirit fell on them (αὐτοὺς) just as (ὡσπερ) on us (ἡμᾶς) at the beginning' (Acts 11.15).
4. Peter recalls Jesus' teaching: 'John baptized with water, but you (ὕμεῖς) will be baptized with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 11.16). The falling of the Spirit on the ἔθνη indicates that they are members of *the same group* implicated in Jesus' teaching to his (Galilean Israelite) disciples in Acts 1.5. The ἔθνη and the Israelite believers constitute the same plural 'you'.
5. In Acts 11.17 Peter makes the logical connection that faith in Jesus is marked by reception of the Spirit.

'If then God gave the same gift to them (αὐτοῖς) as he gave to us (ἡμῖν) when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand (κωλύω) God?'

The reception of the Spirit marks the ἔθνη as servants of God (cf. Acts 2.18) and transcends the 'us'/'them' ethnic distinction.

6. Once again the Spirit overcomes human resistance (Acts 11.17: κωλύω) to allowing the 'other' to be joined to Jesus and, by extension, to the Jesus group (cf. Acts 8.36; 10.47).

The Jerusalem brothers rejoice that God has given repentance unto life 'even to the non-Israelites' (Acts 11.18: καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). Yet there is a significant gap

⁷⁷ Esler 1987:95-97 comes close to this point in his emphasis on the establishment of table fellowship, but his work is a step removed from recognizing that table fellowship is, ultimately, indicative of a common identity.

⁷⁸ Witherup 1993:53 suggests the change of order – moving Peter's vision to the fore – highlights divine initiative.

between the accession of the Jerusalem brothers in 11.18 and the declaration of James in Acts 15.13ff.⁷⁹ It appears that Peter is convinced, through the Spirit's orchestration and identification, that there is no identity differentiation between Israelites and non-Israelites who submit to Jesus. But the response of the Jerusalem believers ('God has given even to the non-Israelites repentance into life.' [Acts 11.18]) implies *shared status*, but not *shared identity*.⁸⁰ This is highlighted by the apparent salience of ethnic subgroup identity (Acts 10.45; 11.3) and is a good example of social creativity – the attempt to maintain positive group identity by choosing alternative comparative criteria.⁸¹ This is a common defense mechanism among social minorities who feel a sense of threatened identity.⁸² In cases like these, minority groups elevate their distinctives or risk losing their group identity. The result of Israelite subgroup differentiation is that non-Israelites have been given repentance unto life, but they are not yet ἀδελφοί.

Acts 15: The Spirit and the Intragroup Expression of a New Identity

The projection of Israelite subgroup prototypicality is a barrier to the development of common identity. It arises again in Acts 15, the chapter Luke uses as the lynchpin of his identity-forming project. In this section I will demonstrate that Luke's antithesis between divine and human intergroup boundary maintenance, especially as evident in the 'unvarying kernel' extant in Luke's retellings of the Cornelius event, firmly establishes the role of the Spirit in the incorporation of non-Israelites as *non-Israelites* into the community of faith. Luke magnifies the boundary crossing work of the Spirit by presenting James as a *prototypical Israelite* and thus as the member of the early community who fully understands the relationship between the particularity of ethnic identity and the trans-ethnic identity available through the Spirit. Finally, and climactically, I will

⁷⁹ Wenk 2004:301 is correct that the gift of the Spirit to non-Israelites testified to the membership of 'Gentiles' in the people of God. He is wrong, I think, to call this entire body 'restored Israel' without grappling with Luke's abandonment of the category 'Israel' after Acts 15. Further, while he is correct that the gift of the Spirit to 'Gentiles' 'redefined the community at the same time', he has sped ahead of the text. Full incorporation via creation of a common superordinate identity does not occur until Acts 15.

⁸⁰ This is noteworthy for those who think Acts 15 and Acts 11 involve the same decision. Acts 11 does not establish common identity in the way Acts 15 does.

⁸¹ Dietz-Uhler 1998:25.

⁸² Tajfel 1981:309-315.

demonstrate definitive evidence for the existence (at least in Luke's view) of a new superordinate group identity that affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity.

Human Action vs. Divine Action at the Group Boundary

In a typical social group, intergroup boundaries are maintained by group members themselves who act collectively in an evaluative process that aims to positively differentiate the in-group from the out-group. We see precisely this process in the activity of the 'men from Judea' in Acts 15.1 who exert boundary control by teaching 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved'. At stake here, viewed through Luke's inseparable connection between community membership and 'salvation' (cf. Acts 3.23), is 'salvation' itself. The implicit claim of the 'men from Judea' is that 'salvation' (read, community membership) is only available to those who assimilate to the projected prototypicality of the Israelite subgroup. Luke understands this to be a *human* impulse in its origin and execution, a fact made clear by the declaration of certain Jesus-following Pharisees in Acts 15.5:

It is necessary (δεῖ) to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

The boundary securing claim of the Pharisees implies an action *done* by ethnic insiders to ethnic outsiders and its emphatic nature is underscored by the use of δεῖ, a word normally used by Luke to indicate the divine plan.⁸³

Luke sets this implied human maintenance of the intergroup boundary in contrast with the divine maintenance of the boundary so obvious in the Spirit's orchestration and identity-marking activity in the incorporation of the 'other'.⁸⁴

⁸³ On Luke's use of δεῖ see Cosgrove 1984:168-190. Bock 2007:496 thinks the use of δεῖ means this is perceived by the Pharisees to be a divine necessity. Even so, the point is that the circumcision is done by Israelites to non-Israelites and thus remains humanly orchestrated boundary maintenance.

⁸⁴ Commentators largely overlook the contrast between human and divine maintenance of the group's boundary see Fitzmyer 1998:545-548; Bock 2007:496; Marshall 1980:248-250 notes God's initiative evident in Peter's speech, but does not contrast it with 15.5. So also Witherup 1993:61; Conzelmann 1987:116-117. Wall 2002:207 notes that the issue has shifted from 'soteriology to sociology', though, as I have shown from Acts 3, Luke knows of no such distinction.

The Acts 15 retelling of Cornelius' incorporation is highly abbreviated, and Peter makes only five points:

1. God chose Peter to be the person through whom non-Israelites would hear the gospel and believe (Acts 15.7).
2. God has testified to the hearts of the non-Israelites by giving them the Spirit just as he had to the Israelites (ἡμῖν: Acts 15.8).
3. God has not made a distinction (διακρίνω) between *them* (αὐτῶν) and *us* (ἡμῶν), but has cleansed their hearts by faith (Acts 15.9).
4. We should not test (πειράζω) God by putting a yoke on the neck of the μαθητής that the ethnic Israelites and their forbearers had been unable to bear (Acts 15.10).
5. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *we* believe to be saved just as *they* (Acts 15.11).

Peter's testimony reflects the divine maintenance of community boundaries, especially through the work of the Spirit. *God does not discriminate* (διακρίνω) *on the basis of ethnic identity*. God is no mere tribal deity, but Lord of all peoples.⁸⁵ God chose Peter to go to the ἔθνη, God testified to the non-Israelites by giving them the Spirit, and God did not make a distinction based upon ethnic identity.⁸⁶ The work of God is the discerning and cleansing of the human heart and subsequent navigation of the boundaries of the Jesus-following in-group. This is set in stark contrast to the humanly-initiated boundary maintenance suggested by certain Pharisees in Acts 15.5.

Spirit-maintenance of the intergroup boundary becomes even more evident when examining the 'unvarying kernel' contained in Luke's triple retelling of Cornelius' incorporation. The common thread that runs through this triple repetition is itself threefold:

1. God's refusal to make a distinction based upon ethnic social identity overwhelms the human tendency to form intergroup boundaries based upon ethnicity.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Lotz 1988:201.

⁸⁶ Acts 15.8-10.

⁸⁷ Acts 10.20; 27-28, 34-35; 11.12, 15.9. Dunn 1996:200 goes so far as to say that Peter had been 'forced by clear directive and approval from God to accept a Gentile'.

2. The *Spirit* testifies to those whom God determines to be rightly related to him through the Lord Jesus.⁸⁸
3. The group must not resist God by erecting barriers to the work of incorporation, reconciliation and identity-formation which God appears to be doing between non-Israelites and Israelites.⁸⁹

This is combined with the striking fact that all evidence of Cornelius, both as an individual and in reference to his piety, drops from the retellings.⁹⁰ This surely is meant to emphasize Cornelius' social identity as a non-Israelite and is unsurprising given they way Luke regularly uses individuals to represent their social group.⁹¹ The clear point of the repetition of the Cornelius narrative in Acts 11.1-18 and 15.7-11 is that God himself placed no barrier between non-Israelites and participation in the people of God and that resistance to this movement is nothing less than a struggle against God. In Peter's view, the Spirit has fully commandeered maintenance of the Jesus group's social boundary.⁹² Thus the work of the Spirit explicitly resists ethnic hegemonies and exclusion based upon interethnic boundaries.

James the Prototypical Israelite: The Universal Particularity of Spirit-formed Identity

James' role in the meeting in Jerusalem is pivotal and it is his first explicit appearance in Acts (cf. implicitly, Acts 1.14). Both Acts and the broader historical portrait of James indicate that he was held in high esteem by Israelites and non-Israelites. James was a 'pillar of the church' (Galatians 2.9). Eusebius suggests that James was the first 'bishop' of the Jerusalem church.⁹³ Josephus reports that the most exemplary Israelites in the city honored James after his execution by Ananus

⁸⁸ Acts 10.44-47; 11.15-17; 15.8. Dunn 1996:201 notes that the 'Spirit is the central figure in this process of conversion-initiation'. I agree, but press further and insist that the Spirit does not just 'initiate' the non-Israelites, it *incorporates* them *en route* to the formation of a common identity. My distinction is in contrast with Bock 2007:500 who states that the gift of the Spirit 'bore witness to their genuine response and God's acceptance of them'. Proper response and divine acceptance are indicated already at Acts 11.18. Common identity is yet one step further.

⁸⁹ Acts 10.47; 11.17; 15.10.

⁹⁰ Witherup 1993:56 notes Cornelius' absence and suggests this highlights Peter's role and makes Cornelius a representative of the 'Gentile world'.

⁹¹ Cf. Ananias as representative of the Damascus disciples (Acts 9.10-20) and Philip as an exemplar of the early community (Acts 8.26-40).

⁹² Wenk 2004:307 notes the church's submission to the Spirit's authority, but does not understand how unique this is in light of normal intragroup processes.

⁹³ *Ecclesiastical Histories* 2.23.4-7.

(ca 62 CE).⁹⁴ Even the Gospel of Thomas takes a high view of James.⁹⁵ Though often caricatured as a strong advocate of the Mosaic Law and ‘conservative Jewish Christianity’, Luke presents James as a prototypical mix of ethnic particularity and the Spirit-empowered allocentrism characteristic of Luke’s view of the Spirit. This is evident in the nuanced hints regarding James’ identity, his hermeneutical logic and his unwillingness to make Israelite ethnic markers the primary identity markers for the Jesus group.

James begins his speech with the address ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί (Acts 15.13), and so indicates both the ethnic boundary in view and that James fully identifies as an ethnic Israelite.⁹⁶ James then alludes to the explanation by ‘Simeon’ regarding God’s decision to take a people for his name from the non-Israelites (Acts 15.14). Interpreters have been stymied by Luke’s reference to Simon/Simeon, with some suggesting that this refers to the conflation of two separate meetings with the second reflecting a decision involving Simeon of Niger (Acts 13.1) or, more idiosyncratically, perhaps even Simeon from Luke 2.25.⁹⁷ But one need not look so far afield for a plausible reason for Luke’s use of the Hebraicized version of ‘Simon’. Bauckham has shown the widespread use of variant versions of names based upon differing linguistic contexts. In particular Simon, the most common name in the period, ‘was at one and the same time the Hebrew name Simeon and the Greek name Simon, with the latter treated virtually as the spelling in Greek letters of the Hebrew name’.⁹⁸ Evidence in 1 Maccabees 2.3, 65 indicates that both ‘Simon’ and ‘Simeon’ can be used to refer to the same person.⁹⁹ Luke is not conflating sources or events; he is seeking to present James as a high-identifying ethnic Israelite. James alone, in all the Gospels and Acts, refers to his ethnic (and Jesus-following) brother Simon with the Hebraicized version of his name – Simeon, and thus reveals his own Galilean Aramaic-speaking background and identity.¹⁰⁰

The quick juxtaposition of James’ address to his ‘brothers’ in Acts 15.13 and his use of the Hebraicized ‘Simeon’ in Acts 15.14 leads directly into the beginning of

⁹⁴ *Antiquities* 20.197-203.

⁹⁵ *Gospel of Thomas* 12.

⁹⁶ Luke is here still following a pattern in which ἀδελφοί can only refer to Israelites.

⁹⁷ For Simeon of Niger, see Fitzmyer 1998:552-553, for Simeon of Luke 2, see Reisner 1994:263-278, a view shared by Chrysostom.

⁹⁸ Bauckham 2006:72.

⁹⁹ Bockmuehl 2005:53-90.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 2 Peter 1.1.

a hermeneutical logic which allows Luke to paint the most prototypically Israelite leader of the community as the person who most understands the relationship between the Spirit and ethnic particularity. This is evident in two ways. First, James interprets Peter's testimony as an indication that 'God visited (ἐπισκέπτομαι) to take from the non-Israelites (ἔθνη) a people (λαός) for his name' (Acts 15.14). Of the eleven occurrences of ἐπισκέπτομαι in the New Testament, seven occur in Luke.¹⁰¹ While the word can mean 'to select from' (Acts 6.3; a sense that could imply God removed individuals from the ἔθνη and, perhaps, eliminated their ethnic particularity), Luke's most common usage is 'to visit' (Luke 1.68, 78; 7.16). The sense 'to visit' is most likely in Acts 15.14, not least because the word appears in this sense in 15.36. Moreover, whenever the subject of the verb is God/Jesus/eschatological figure (Luke 1.68, 78; 7.16; Acts 15.14) the sense is always 'to visit'. The verb twice is used to describe God's visitation of his people in Zechariah's praise hymn (Luke 1.68, 78). In its initial appearance (1.68) it describes simply God's visitation of his people Israel. In its second appearance, the 'visitation' (ἐπισκέπτομαι) of the ἀνατολή will

give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.¹⁰²

I have argued consistently that 'those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death' includes non-Israelites, a feature that allows Luke to develop a theme of inter-ethnic peace with former enemies partly on the basis of this *Spiri-inspired* hymn of Zechariah.¹⁰³ The language ascribed to James in Acts 15.14 is thus reminiscent of Luke's penchant for describing the in-breaking work of God as a 'visitation' that includes non-Israelites and that can result in just the sort of *peace* implied by the creation of a singular λαός.

Second, James includes for the first time non-Israelites as clear members of the formerly ethnically homogenous in-group called λαός. For Luke, prior to Acts 15.14 λαός in the singular *only refers to ethnic Israelites*.¹⁰⁴ After Acts 15.14, the usage of singular λαός becomes fluid, describing mainly non-believing Israelites but is also

¹⁰¹ Luke 1.68, 78; 7.16; Acts 6.3; 7.23; 15.14; 15.36.

¹⁰² Luke 1.79.

¹⁰³ See discussion in ch. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Singular λαός: Luke. 1.10, 17, 21, 68, 77; 2.10, 32; 3.15, 18, 21; 6.17; 7.1, 16, 29; 8.47; 9.13; 18.43; 19.47, 48; 20.1, 6, 9, 19, 26, 45; 21.23, 38; 22.2, 66; 23.5, 13, 14, 35, 37; 24.19; Acts 2.47; 3.9, 11, 12, 23; 4.1, 2, 8, 10, 17, 21; 5.12, 13, 20, 25, 26, 34, 37; 6.8, 12; 7.17, 34; 10.2, 41, 42; 12.4, 11; 13.15, 17, 24, 31; 15.14; 18.10; 19.4; 21.28, 30, 36, 39, 40; 23.5; 26.17, 23; 28.17, 26, 27. Plural λαός: Luke 2.31; Acts 4.25, 27.

used to include non-Israelite believers (Acts 18.10).¹⁰⁵ Bauckham is correct to note that James cannot conceive of the possibility of two peoples of God.¹⁰⁶ This prototypical Israelite's recognition that Israelites and non-Israelites compose the singular λαός of God is a major step on the way to the construction of a group identity that transcends ethnic identities.¹⁰⁷ This observation will have a hermeneutical payoff in ruling out one common suggestion regarding the prohibitions in the Jerusalem Decree.

James' use of Amos 9.11-12 LXX in Acts 15.16-18a further emphasizes his awareness that Israelites and non-Israelites share a common identity as the one people of God. While many passages describe the nations joining the people of God as non-Israelites, Amos 9.12 provides the only Old Testament instance in which non-Israelites (ἔθνη) are named as those over/upon whom the name of God is called (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς).¹⁰⁸ The phrase reflects an Old Testament tradition in which 'the divine name is invoked over a thing (the temple, the ark, Jerusalem) or person(s) (e.g. Israel), indicating that a relationship of dominion and possession towards God is established'.¹⁰⁹ James thus declares that non-Israelites belong to God as non-Israelites.¹¹⁰ Some commentators have suggested that the use of the LXX by such a 'conservative' Israelite figure as James betrays the unhistorical nature of Luke's account, but this precisely misses the point.¹¹¹ The LXX provides the key alteration of the MT that makes the passage suitable for James' conclusion that non-Israelites as non-Israelites are equal members of the people of God.

¹⁰⁵ Acts 26.23 demonstrates that Paul can still work with these categories for unbelieving non-Israelites.

¹⁰⁶ Bauckham 2005:117.

¹⁰⁷ Dahl 1954 overlooks the full significance of the inclusion of non-Israelites, rendering the verse 'God has chosen from Gentiles people for his name' (326). This gives no sense of the common identity implied in James' formulation. DuPont 1985 rightly emphasizes that this is 'one' people but he does not unpack the ramifications for ethnic identity.

¹⁰⁸ Amos 9.12 LXX, Acts 15.17b. For other examples of non-Israelites coming to God as non-Israelites, see Psalm 96.7-8; Isaiah 2.2-3; 25.6; 56.6-7; 66.23; Jeremiah 3.17; Micah 4.1-2; Zechariah 14.16; Enoch 90.33.

¹⁰⁹ van de Sandt 1992:89. For other uses see 2 Samuel 6.2; 1 Kings 8.43; 2 Chronicles 7.14; Jeremiah 14.9; Daniel 9.19; etc.

¹¹⁰ The reference to the 'fallen tent of David' (Amos 9.11 LXX // Acts 15.16) has been interpreted as referring to the 'people of Israel' (cf. Luke 1.69; Isaiah 7.2, 12; Jeremiah 21.12; Zechariah 12.7-12) or the Temple (cf. Nehemiah 12.37). See Ravens 1995:37. For the 'fallen tent of David' implicating the people of God as the eschatological Temple, see Bauckham 1996.

¹¹¹ Barrett 1998b:xxxvii-xxxviii.

Amos 9.12b MT: That they [the rebuilt tent of David from Amos 9.11] may possess [שׂר] the remnant of Edom and all the nations [גוים] over whom my name is called.¹¹²

Amos 9.12b LXX: ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς,

In the MT reading, non-Israelites are incorporated but only after subjection to Israel. In the LXX reading, there is no sense of the ἔθνη being subservient to Israel or even to the ἔθνη living like Leviticus 17-18 aliens in the land of Israel. The point of James' use of Amos 9.11-12 LXX is that the key factor in the new work of God is the possession of a single people by God; they are one λαός, possessed by God who has called his name over/upon them.¹¹³ It is not coincidental, given the Spirit-based reasoning of James' decision, that the only other entity that comes upon/over non-Israelites in Acts is the Spirit.

Acts 10.45: καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκκέχυται.

Acts 15.17: καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς.

For Luke, the coming of the Spirit upon a person definitively identifies that person as God's possession (or 'servant' [Acts 2.18], or 'witness' [Acts 1.8]).

It is noteworthy that Luke has James cite the Greek rendering of Israel's prophets. Bauckham has demonstrated that Luke can rely on MT texts.¹¹⁴ But I suggest that Luke uses James' recitation of the LXX to accommodate the members of the community who would have been included in a subservient sense were Luke to have given James Amos 9.12 MT as a text.¹¹⁵ In Luke's portrayal, James is fully Israelite in his language, manner and custom, yet he understands that the privileged

¹¹² My translation.

¹¹³ Bauckham 1996:170 suggests that the possible baptismal formula [τὸ] ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς in James 2.7 could be a secondary attestation of 'incorporation of the Gentiles into the eschatological people of God with no requirements for admission other than baptism in the name of Jesus'. The Epistle of James and Luke's James in Acts 15 produce the only two occurrences of this phrase in the New Testament. Cf. Sirach 36.12; Baruch 2.15, 26, 1 Maccabees 7,37; 1 Esdras 4.63 for Second Temple occurrences of [τὸ] ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς which refer only to Israelites or Israelite institutions.

¹¹⁴ Bauckham 2001:435-487.

¹¹⁵ See ch. 4 for evidence that Hebrew/Aramaic was the anticipated language of restored Israel. Bauckham 1995:415-480 shows that the MT version of Amos was known to the Jerusalem church. It follows that the decision to use the LXX was quite deliberate by James and/or Luke.

identity of Israel is for the sake of the nations.¹¹⁶ Thus he uses a language aprototypical for the Israelite in-group to make a key point about a superordinate identity that can incorporate both Israelites and non-Israelites. James maintains his ethnic particularity, but his own ethnic identity is subjected to his identity formed by membership in the Jesus group.

The Jerusalem Decree: An Injunction against the Trappings of Idolatry

James claims to give the definitively proper 'judgment' (κρίνω cf. Luke's concern against ethnic διακρίνω) that the ἔθνη who are turning to God should not be troubled.¹¹⁷ Proper interpretation of the Decree has ramifications for precisely which ethnic identity markers must be abandoned and which can be retained in this trans-ethnic group. Three basic positions exist regarding the significance of the Decree's prohibitions.¹¹⁸

1. The Decree is a reflection of Noachide laws applicable to universal humanity. This is argued most thoroughly by Bockmuehl, who acknowledges Rabbinic genesis of the definitive Noachide tradition, but suggests the possibility that 'proto'-Noachide laws undergirded the Decree.¹¹⁹
2. The probable majority view interprets the Decree as dependent upon certain of the laws for resident aliens in Leviticus 17-18. This view is argued most forcefully by Bauckham and allows James to uphold the Mosaic Law for both Israelites and non-Israelites.¹²⁰
3. Most convincing, in my view, is the suggestion by Wedderburn and Witherington (though from different angles) that Acts 15.20 is concerned with the avoidance of idolatry and the trappings of idol worship.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ James' 'pastoral' sensitivity to inter-ethnic issues is apparent again in Jerusalem in Acts 21.20-25.

¹¹⁷ Acts 15.19.

¹¹⁸ See Proctor 1996 for overview of positions.

¹¹⁹ Bockmuehl 2000:164. Bockmuehl is followed in part by Taylor 2001 who suggests that James interpreted the command as Noachide, thus ensuring that there was an enduring distinction and no commensality between Israelites and non-Israelites while Peter interpreted the command in accord with Leviticus 17-18 and the requirements for resident aliens, thus allowing for a level of intergroup commensality.

¹²⁰ Bauckham 1996; 2005.

¹²¹ Wedderburn 1993; Witherington 1992; 1998:460-467; 2001:228-248. Cf. Pao 2003:241.

I will briefly review the latter position and add several supporting arguments in its favor. The four prohibitions of the Decree are as follows:

1. ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων (15.20)/ εἰδωλοθύτον (15.29, 21.25)
2. πορνεία (15.20, 29; 21.25)
3. πνικτός (15.20, 29; 21.25)
4. αἷμα (15.20, 29; 21.25)

Witherington argues that of the 125 references to εἰδωλοθύτον in the TLG, 123 are definitively Christian uses with the two exceptions (4 Maccabees 5.2; Sibylline Oracles 2.96) likely Christian interpolations.¹²² He argues the word is a Christian novum that functions as the negative counterpart to the Aramaic ‘corban’ and is best translated as ‘idol stuff’.¹²³ This gives the word a broader sense than the common translation ‘food devoted to idols’ and incorporates all things associated with idol worship. The three items that follow are likewise associated with the trappings of idol worship. Wedderburn goes so far as to suggest that the first clause may serve as a heading to the list.¹²⁴ Πορνεία is commonly associated with temple prostitution and is not the same as the common word for marital infidelity, μοιχεία.¹²⁵ Αἷμα and πνικτός are both associated with pagan sacrifice, the latter of which may have either been a special method of cooking sacrificed meat seen to be a ‘delicacy for demons’ or a recognized sacrificial practice in which an animal was strangled in the presence of an idol so that the animal’s ‘life’ would animate the idol.¹²⁶ Further, it is likely that the most common location in which non-Israelites would eat meat would have been festivals in pagan temples.¹²⁷ In essence, this position reads the force of the Decree as ‘stay away from things associated with idol worship’.¹²⁸

¹²² Witherington 1998:460-461.

¹²³ Witherington 1998:461.

¹²⁴ Wedderburn 1993:378.

¹²⁵ εἰδωλοθύτον and πορνεία are connected in Revelation 2.14. Wisdom 14.12: ‘The idea of making idols was the beginning of πορνεία.’

¹²⁶ Wedderburn 1993:383-389. For connections between blood and idolatry: Minucius Felix 30.6; Tertullian *Apologeticum* 9; Justin Martyr *Dialogue with Trypho* 34.8. Klijn 1968:308 shows that participation in sacrificial meals entailed public subjection to demons or false gods. For choking sacrifices, see Witherington 1998:464; Ciralo 1992:240-254.

¹²⁷ See Didache 6.2 for a similar use of εἰδωλοθύτον.

¹²⁸ McMillan 2001:401 likely is correct, these are the minimum requirements for the church’s distinction from culture, though he thinks it is distinction from a sex-saturated culture while I suggest it was an idol-saturated culture.

This is preferable to either the Noachide proposal or the Leviticus 17-18 proposal for many reasons.

1. Neither the Noachide lists nor Leviticus 17-18 can adequately account for the inclusion of πνικτός.¹²⁹
2. The sexual relations forbidden in Leviticus 17-18 concern sexual relations with people who are too closely related. πορνεία may not be a suitable category for these laws.
3. There is no coherent explanation for why these four alone, out of other 'resident alien' laws, are singled out.¹³⁰
4. Imposition of the practical burden created by food laws upon non-Israelites (avoidance of blood and strangled things, according to Leviticus 17-18) violates James' own criterion not to 'trouble' (παρενοχλέω) non-Israelites (Acts 15.19).
5. James' use of (singular) λαός to include Israelites and non-Israelites makes it difficult to imagine he would then create the distinction required by the appropriation of Leviticus 17-18 which would maintain the primacy of ethnic Israel with non-Israelites existing only as 'aliens in the midst'.
6. Idolatry is a singularly non-Israelite problem in Luke-Acts, thus an injunction against idols fits well with Luke's portrayal of non-Israelites.¹³¹
7. Acts 10.34-35 makes the avoidance of idolatry the sole criterion for acceptability to God.
8. James' claim that non-Israelites have turned (ἐπιστρέφω) to God (and, presumably, away from idols) makes an anti-idolatry injunction fitting.¹³²

For Luke, the Decree does not compel non-Israelites to take up certain Israelite identity markers, it compels them to abandon any of their own ethnic identity markers associated with idolatry or idolatrous practices.

¹²⁹ Callan 1993.

¹³⁰ Callan 1993 lists 25 Levitical laws applicable to resident aliens.

¹³¹ See Acts 10.25-26; 14.11-18; 17.22-31; 19.22-35. Garrett 1989:40 cites Luke's 'horror at the prospect of misdirected worship' in conjunction with the first two of these passages.

¹³² Acts 15.19.

The Role of the Spirit in James' Logic

The four stipulations in the decree are introduced with the clause, 'For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things' (Acts 15.28). Exactly what is intended by this agreement between the community and the Spirit is difficult to say. Some have suggested that the Spirit allows for complete freedom with regard to social issues.¹³³ McIntosh has suggested that the threefold witness provided by Peter, Barnabas and Paul, and James' citation of Amos entail the testimony of the Spirit.¹³⁴ Seitz suggests that the limit on the interpretive freedom of the community with regard to the interethnic issue is the Amos quotation; nothing contrary to the Scriptures can be the work of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁵ Some combination of the latter two views is the most coherent. The point, however, seems to be less *how* the church ultimately discerned its agreement with the Holy Spirit but rather *that* the church discerned its agreement with the Holy Spirit.¹³⁶ The Spirit, for Luke, has been the principal figure in the ongoing incorporation of all manner of 'other'. It is no longer surprising that Luke would here equate the Spirit with the decision *not* to require non-Israelites to sacrifice their ethnic 'otherness' in order to join the Jesus-group.

The Transformation of Identity after the Jerusalem Decision

Nowhere is Luke's conviction that Israelite and non-Israelite believers share a common identity more evident than in his use of the heretofore ethnically exclusive group name ἀδελφοί to identify non-Israelites with Israelites. I demonstrated above that, for Luke, ἀδελφοί is used only as an intra-ethnic name among Israelites (both for believers and non-believers). Never once, prior to Acts 15, is a non-Israelite recognized as an ἀδελφοί of an Israelite.¹³⁷ As in Acts 10-11, ἀδελφοί in Acts 15 highlights the ethnic boundary in view. ἀδελφοί appears in Acts

¹³³ Johnson 1983:82-99.

¹³⁴ McIntosh 2002:133.

¹³⁵ Seitz 2001:121-129.

¹³⁶ My reading opposes Danker 1983:54 who envisions benefaction from the Jerusalem church as an attempt to solidify a position of power by 'bestowing their bounty on the Antiochenes by lifting all sanctions, except those specifically mentioned in Acts'. I see rather a willingness to sacrifice ethnic primacy in submission to the work of the Spirit.

¹³⁷ Acts 13.26, 38 may include proselytes as 'brothers', but this is not obvious and given the focus on ethnic Israel in Paul's speech in Antioch it may well be that the narrowing focus on Israelite identity elicits Paul's use of 'brothers' in these instances. Either way, this is far from an unambiguous application of the word to non-Israelites *as non-Israelites*.

15.7, 13 and 22, each time referring to the ethnically exclusive group of Israelite Jesus-followers. The salient question is, 'Now that non-Israelites are deemed to be the possession of God (cf. Acts 15.17), will they be viewed as ἀδελφοί of Israelites, or will ἀδελφοί (conceived via common ethnic identity) remain the primary intergroup boundary marker?'

But Luke begins a subtle reorientation of his usage in Acts 15.1:

Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers (ἀδελφοί), 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'.

And again in Acts 15.3:

Being sent on their way by the church, they [Paul and Barnabas] passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting the conversion of the non-Israelites (ἔθνη), and they gave great joy to all the brothers (ἀδελφοί).

The second reference is clear cut. In Acts 15.3 ἀδελφοί cannot include those categorized as ἔθνη, for there is no reason that the ἔθνη would need to hear news that the ἔθνη had converted. Acts 15.1 is more ambiguous. When taken with the claim in Acts 15.24 that men from Jerusalem had troubled the ἔθνη, it is likely that Acts 15.1 implies that the ἔθνη are here counted as 'brothers' of Israelites. This, however, is not clarified until Acts 15.24 and may have been less than clear upon an initial hearing of Acts 15.1.¹³⁸

Luke is not content to leave this issue ambiguous.

The brothers (ἀδελφοί), both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the non-Israelites (ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν) in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting.¹³⁹

We have here, in my estimation, the first unambiguous instance in the Gospel tradition or indeed in contemporary Israelite literature outside the New Testament (with the anomalous exception of the case of the Spartans described above) in which Israelites refer to non-Israelites as ἀδελφοί.

¹³⁸ Pesch 1986:75 thinks ἀδελφοί was 'in der antiochenischen Diktion schon heissen', but not in Jerusalem.

¹³⁹ Acts 15.23.

Luke's use of ἀδελφοί after Acts 15.23 reflects a profound shift in the community's identity as it relates to ethnicity.¹⁴⁰ After Acts 15 ἀδελφοί appears in one of two ways: (1) to express ongoing ethnic solidarity with fellow Israelites or (2) to describe the Jesus group, irrespective of the ethnic identities of its members.¹⁴¹ When Luke uses ἀδελφοί for the Jesus group after Acts 15.23 the category can include people of any ethnic identity. For example, in Acts 21.7, 17 and 22.22-23 – after a three chapter hiatus from the use of ἀδελφοί – Luke uses ἀδελφοί to describe an undifferentiated community of Jesus-followers (21.7), a group of Israelite Jesus-followers (21.17) and, in the same pericope, to address non-believing Israelites (Acts 22.1, 5, 13). *The trans-ethnic identity marked by the Spirit does not obliterate ethnic Israelite identity.* Israelite believers can still know one another as ethnic 'brothers'. Yet this identity is subordinated to the identity formed by membership in the Jesus group.¹⁴² It is instructive that in the Acts 22 pericope the transgression of ethnic boundaries, in this case resulting from the fact that Paul is expressing the norms of his trans-ethnic identity at the expense of ethnic primacy, elicits murderous rage (Acts 21.27-31; 22.22-23). When the privileges of Israelite identity are shared with the ethnic 'other', non-believing Israelites defend their group identity by attempting to eliminate Paul.¹⁴³ Those in the Jesus group recognize the possibility of sharing an identity as 'brothers' without sacrificing ethnic particularity; those outside the group do not, apparently, recognize this potential. Paul exhibits this ability to identify primarily as a 'brother' of other Jesus-followers but also as an ethnic 'brother' of Israelites in Acts 28.14, 15 and 17. It is fitting that Acts ends on this note – with Paul exhibiting both engagement and frustration with his ethnic brothers while now fully expressing the social identity formed by his participation

¹⁴⁰ Jervell 1998:400, cited by Bock 2007:512 fn 3 is the only interpreter I know who recognizes that this is the first use of 'brothers' for non-Israelites, yet neither Jervell nor Bock develop the significance of this observation.

¹⁴¹ For the use of 'brother' to express intra-Israelite ethnic solidarity, see Acts 22.1, 5, 13; 23.1, 5, 6; 28.17, 21; 28.17, 21. For applications to undifferentiated groups of believers, see Acts 15.32, 33, 36, 40; 16.2, 40; 17.6, 10, 14; 18.27; 21.7, 17, 20; 28.14, 15.

¹⁴² The incorporation of non-Israelites into a group now collectively known as 'brothers' calls for the radical redefinition of social identity for both in-group and former out-group members. This is just the sort of double identity transformation we have come to expect whenever the 'other' is added to the community. For the impact of the addition of non-Israelites to the community, see Dollar 1993:178-179; Haulotte 1970:72.

¹⁴³ Cf. Luke 4.14-30.

in the Spirit-created group composed of all those in relationship with Jesus – a new kind of ‘brothers’.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to document the pervasive activity of the Spirit in the *orchestration* of the intergroup encounter between Peter and Cornelius, nor is it difficult to see that the Spirit clearly *identifies* Cornelius as a member of the Jesus-group. What has not, to this point, been noticed is the fact that Luke presses these two Spirit-activities beyond the affirmation of a common *status* (e.g., member of the people of God, or ‘saved’) and instead aims for the creation of a common *identity* (ἀδελφοί) through the work of the Spirit. This is evidence of the full incorporation of non-Israelites into the Jesus group and it is only the recognition of this full and common membership in the singular λαός that can allow for a common social identity to be recognized. According to Luke, therefore, membership in the community of believers – a social group composed of allocentrically oriented, Spirit-empowered individuals – forms a common superordinate identity that transcends ethnicity and allows for the supreme goal of ‘witness’: multi-layered reconciliation. In this sense, ethnicity is chastened; it can no longer function hegemonically, nor can it be used as a criterion for exclusion. At the same time, ethnic identity is not obliterated. Israelites can still know themselves as the ethnic ἀδελφοί of other Israelites. Yet this ethnic identity can only function properly when it is subordinated to the Spirit-marked identity formed by life in the Jesus group.

Writing within living memory of the composition of Luke-Acts, Justin Martyr was able to proclaim:

We who hated and killed one another and would not associate with people not of the same tribe because of customs, now after the coming of Christ live together and pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate us... so that they may share with us the good hope of receiving the same things from God, the master of all.¹

Justin's declaration is a fitting encapsulation of Luke's identity-forming project. For Justin there was something wondrously unprecedented about the existence of a community of former enemies now united around Jesus and oriented toward the still threatening 'other'. The possibility of just such a community is a vision that captivated Luke, who went beyond simply a description of such a community to describe *how*, precisely, this new trans-ethnic identity came into existence.

A Summary of Luke's Portrait of the Spirit, Social Identity and the 'Other'

I have demonstrated in this thesis that, for Luke, *the Holy Spirit is the central figure in the formation of a new social identity that affirms yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity*. We have seen that the formation of this trans-ethnic social identity requires both a certain kind of *person* and a certain kind of *group*. The character and

¹ 1 Apology 14.3.

characteristics of these persons and this group are, for Luke, entirely Spirit-wrought realities.

The baseline for Luke's identity-forming project is a clear declaration that ethnic Israel enjoys a privileged identity by virtue of its position as God's elect people. This is immediately evident in the dense cluster of allusions to Genesis 15-18 that combine to present Zechariah and Elizabeth as Abraham and Sarah-like exemplars of faithful Israelite identity (Luke 1.5-25). The birth hymns, with their focused emphasis on Israel's past covenantal history and anticipated future divine deliverance – especially set against the backdrop of Herodian client rule and Roman power (Luke 1.5; 2.1-2; 3.1-2) – further the notion that Israel's ethnic identity is uniquely privileged among other (seemingly higher status) ethnic groups. Luke celebrates Israel's identity and affirms robust intra-Israelite expressions of in-group love.²

Yet Luke is keenly aware that in-group love focused too narrowly on Israel's privileged ethnic identity is dangerously open to distortion. Specifically, any expression of privileged identity that views in-group privilege as its own end is inherently defective. The initial public appearances of John and Jesus, Luke's Spirit-empowered figures *par excellence* (Luke 1.15; 3.22), make this clear. John contrasts a defective expression of Israelite identity (Luke 3.8) with an exhortation not to use privileged identity to the detriment of the 'other' (Luke 3.12-14) but instead to use privilege for the sake of the 'other' (Luke 3.10-11). In Nazareth, Jesus resists his townsfolk's implicit entitlement claim founded upon the presumption of privileged access to the benefits of his ministry based upon shared identity within Jesus' πατρίς. SIT indicates that shared identity and entitlement claims to group resources are mutually constitutive, but Luke resists this impulse. The restriction of entitlement to the in-group only is, for Luke, both normative in his context and (in light of the transforming power of the Spirit) a decidedly defective way of expressing privileged identity. This old paradigm arises at various points in Luke and Acts and is consistently resisted by Luke (Luke 9.46-48, 49-50; 51-56; cf. Acts 1.5, 21-26; Acts 6.1-7).

² 'In-group love' is the positive evaluation of the in-group and the ramifications of this evaluation for group solidarity, resource allocation and social identity. It is drawn from Brewer's assertion that social identity is more about 'in-group love' than 'out-group hate', but that the evaluative nature of social identity ensures that in-group favoritism is 'not benign' (Brewer 1999:438).

In light of this normative (and defective) expression of privileged ethnic identity, Luke is convinced that the transformative power of the Spirit creates a concern for the 'other' expressed by the willingness to leverage privileged identity for the sake of the 'other'. This *allocentric identity*, defined in this thesis as the ability simultaneously to express in-group love and out-group love, is a defining characteristic for the kind of *person* capable of participation in a trans-ethnic social group. This Spirit-wrought transformation has intimately personal effect, but thoroughly social ramifications. Initially, for Luke, the influence of the Spirit upon individuals functions to broaden the 'ethnic horizon' of those so affected. This is evident in the chiasmic arrangement of Luke's birth hymns, which establish a relationship between the overt influence of the Spirit (for Zechariah and Simeon) and the extension of divine benefits to the ethnic 'other'. The motif is advanced in Luke's presentation of Jesus, whose life and teaching are the paradigmatic expression of a Spirit-empowered allocentric identity capable of extending in-group benefits beyond the self/group (Luke 4.1-13, 16-30; 12.32-35; 24.25-27). Jesus implies a causal link between the Spirit and openness to the 'other' for his disciples in Acts 1.8, and throughout Acts those who are marked by the Spirit are those most capable of navigating identity conflicts that implicate the 'other' (Acts 6.1-7; 11.24). The relationship between the Spirit and a concern for the 'other' is, for Luke, in clear contrast with the alternative, which is a link between the influence of Satan and an egocentric identity often marked by an impulse to hoard personal resources (Acts 5.1-11; cf. Luke 4.1-13; 22.3, 31; Acts 1.15-26).

If the formation of trans-ethnic social identity requires Spirit-transformed allocentric individuals, it also requires a certain kind of *social group* capable of incorporating the 'other'. The early community (Acts 2.42-47; 4.32-38; 5.12-16) emerges as both the logical extension and the corporate expression of the Spirit-empowered allocentric identity evident in Luke's Gospel. Like all social groups, this group is an incubator of social identity for its members, and Luke's language reflects that the group is increasingly entitative in its context (Acts 2.47; 5.13; 6.7; 9.31).³ Unlike most social groups, the boundaries of the Jesus group are not primarily enforced through intragroup processes of intergroup differentiation. Instead, the

³ An 'entitative' group is a group that is recognized by out-groups and has an effect upon its social context.

Spirit maintains the group boundary and forms a specific type of community in two ways. First, the Spirit becomes the primary identity marker for those rightly related to God through Jesus. This is initially displayed at Jesus' baptism (Luke 3.22) but is expressed programmatically in Peter's modification of Joel 3.1-5a LXX (Acts 2.18) in which Luke establishes the fact that the Spirit is the definitive identity marker for all who are *δοῦλοι* and *δοῦλαι* of God. Luke draws on this at critical intergroup junctures in Acts. Namely, wherever human identity is in question the Spirit appears to clarify identities and to establish who, precisely, is properly submitted to the lordship of Jesus (Acts 8.14-17; 10.44-47; cf. 11.15-18; 15.8-9). Second, the Spirit orchestrates intergroup encounters between (Israelite) members of the Jesus group and the (often ethnic) 'other'. This occurs through visions (cf. Acts 2.17) but also through the Spirit's direct speech (Acts 8.29; 9.10-17; 10.3-7, 10-16, 19-20; 13.2ff). Whenever the Spirit speaks in the narrative it commands Israelites to cross an ethnic boundary and extend the benefits of the Jesus group to the ethnic 'other' (Acts 8.29; 10.19-20; 11.12; 13.2). The Spirit commandeers the boundaries of the Jesus group and fully incorporates the 'other' initially by orchestrating intergroup encounters and ultimately by marking common identity.

The result of the Spirit-guided incorporation of the 'other' is consistently a 'dual identity transformation' that reconfigures the identities of former non-believers as well as existing believers. Former out-group members reconfigure their social identity to reflect their membership in the Jesus group. Significantly, in-group members also are forced to reconfigure their own social identities to reflect the changing demographic of their group. The incorporation of the (sometimes threatening) 'other' changes the in-group perspective on who, precisely, constitutes the 'we' and the 'they'. The change in behavior elicited by these dual identity transformations is evident both in the changing usage of categorical language and changed behavior with regard to intergroup contact (Acts 8.25; 9.28-29; 10.48), though this is often not without reluctance (Acts 9.13-14, 26; 11.2-3; 15.1-5). Luke never shies away from the fact that the ethnic boundary regularly is intractable (see esp. Luke 9.51-56).

The ultimate result of the Spirit's work to gather allocentrically oriented individuals into a community composed of many categories of 'other' is the formation of a new identity under the rubric *ἀδελφοί* (Acts 15.22). Luke's use of

ethnic language leading to, and proceeding from, this point highlights the fact that a profound shift of identity has taken place in accord with the work of the Spirit (Acts 15.28). There is no possibility of non-Israelites participating either like the resident aliens of Leviticus, as a parallel but separate people or only after undergoing Israelite social conversion. *For Luke, all who follow Jesus share a common identity marked by the Spirit.* The result of this new identity is intergroup peace, anticipated already in Luke 1.79 and 2.14 and narratively expressed through the incorporation of the ‘threatening other’ (Acts 9.1-31; 10.36). The deliverance from enemies predicted in the birth hymns comes not through violent encounter but through reconciliation and incorporation. This is a profound vision of other-centered identity.

The new social identity formed by participation in the Jesus group has important ramifications for ethnic identity. First, *ethnic identity must be submitted to the lordship of Jesus - not to do this would be unfaithful.* The practical effect of this posture is that identity as a Jesus follower must remain one’s primary identity. For Luke, there is no place for ethnic hegemonies or ethnocentrisms that use ethnic privilege to exclude, to oppress or to hoard resources (whether social or physical). Luke goes to great lengths to demonstrate that whenever subgroup identities (especially ethnic identities) become primary within the Jesus group, the group malfunctions (Acts 1.21-22 [subtly]; 5.1-11; 6.1-7; 11.1-2; 15.1-5). This leaves us with a question regarding what aspects of ethnic identities remain acceptable for Jesus followers and what aspects must be jettisoned. Luke gives us less help here, but he does not leave us helpless. The consistent call for those outside the Jesus group is simply to abandon idolatry and instead to worship the cosmic Lord. This is most evident in the anti-idol thrust of the Jerusalem Decree. Ostensibly, those aspects of ethnic identity not tainted by idol worship remain acceptable. This is a complicated matter in a context like Luke’s where ‘religion’ was embedded within political and kinship structures, thus allowing the taint of idolatry to spread to various quarters of society: games and festivals, the meat market, the public bath, etc. How these ethnically embedded customs should be treated by Jesus followers would arise as a matter of some controversy. Yet it remains clear that ethnic identity can only exist as a penultimate layer of social identity.

Second, *ethnic identity must be retained – not to do this would be unfaithful*. Luke nowhere suggests that ethnic identity must be abandoned by those who choose to follow Jesus. To the contrary, Luke celebrates the diversity of ethnic identities within the Jesus movement. This is expressed paradigmatically at Pentecost where, contrary to the discernable Israelite expectation of a return to the universal use of Hebrew, the Spirit radically *affirmed* ethno-linguistic particularity (Acts 2.4-11). Pentecost, for Luke, was not a miracle of impossible communication made possible, but a miracle that validated the Diaspora languages, cultures and identities of the Diaspora Israelites who had resettled in Jerusalem. Though we are forced in one way to argue from silence, given Luke’s keen awareness of the ethnic issues at play in his text it is significant that Samaritans apparently do not need to abandon their ethnic distinctives. The Ethiopian eunuch (for whom full social conversion to the Israelite ἔθνος may have been impossible) is welcome as both Ethiopian and eunuch. And, emphatically, the falling of the Spirit upon Cornelius’ household comes without condition for ethnic assimilation. The greeting of the Jerusalem Decree made the nature of the relationship between membership in the Jesus group and ethnic identity clear: ‘To the ἀδελφοί from the ἔθνη.’ All who call on Jesus and are marked by the Spirit are ἀδελφοί, yet they remain ‘brothers’ from the ‘non-Israelites’.⁴ Paul becomes the exemplar of the appropriate ordering of identities within the Jesus movement later in Acts. *Paul never ceases to identify as an ethnic Israelite*. He identifies himself as an ethnic ‘brother’ of other ethnic Israelites (Acts 22.1, 5; 23.1, 5, 6; 28.17), he refers to Israel’s patriarchs as his ‘fathers’ (Acts 26.6; 28.17) and he calls Israel his ἔθνος (Acts 24.17; 28.19). Yet his ethnic identity is now clearly nested within his new identity as a Jesus follower. The finest example of Paul’s deployment of his nested identities is in his willingness to use, alternatively, Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic in Acts 21.37 and 40 in order to gain an opening to proclaim the gospel. In short, Paul neither *abuses* (ethnocentrism) nor *loses* (assimilation) his ethnic identity, but he *uses* it for the sake of the gospel of the exalted Lord – the orienting focus for the identity of all Jesus followers.

⁴ The construction ‘to the ἀδελφοί from (ἐκ) the ἔθνη’ (Acts 15.23) can not be taken to imply ‘the brothers taken out of the ἔθνη’. Luke regularly uses ἐκ to denote the ongoing identity of figures in his narrative (e.g. Luke 1.5; 2.4).

The transformation wrought by the Spirit in both persons and groups underscores the fact that, for Luke, the Spirit creates a *new way of being human in community* – especially as it relates to the ‘other’. The Spirit molds followers of Jesus into Jesus’ own allocentric image and forges an identity that transcends ethnicity, while refusing to eliminate all vestiges of ‘otherness’. This, I suspect, is in large part Luke’s narrative presentation of one aspect of the reality of New Creation. Apart from the Spirit, one’s true identity can neither be adequately known nor faithfully expressed. Luke’s description of this new way of being human contrasts quite distinctly with both the identity-forming processes described by SIT. Luke’s community – when keeping in step with the Spirit’s influence – appears surprisingly able to love both the in-group and the out-group, a trait most evident in the community’s willingness to extend the benefits of the in-group to the ‘other’ through witness, hospitality and incorporation. But perhaps the most striking difference between Luke’s community and most human social groups is that Luke portrays a community whose boundaries have been commandeered by the Holy Spirit, a figure who appears in the narrative as one determined to disregard social barriers in order to create a singular trans-ethnic people for God. This is true both when viewed against Luke’s portrayals of other social groups in the text – both Israelite and non-Israelite groups – but also against basic data from social groups across contemporary cultures.⁵ The Spirit, for Luke, creates the possibility of loving the ‘other’ and incorporating even the threatening ‘other’ (while allowing the ‘other’ to retain a large measure of ethnic particularity) in a way that simply does not occur very often in contemporary intergroup and especially interethnic situations.

It must be noted, however, that Luke does not produce a simple caricature of ‘universalistic Christianity’ over against ‘particularistic Judaism’.⁶ Universalism, too often, can be taken to imply an absence of social boundaries. This is not only untrue of the Jesus movement; no social group can exist without boundaries. Thus to suggest that the Jesus movement does not imply a clearly defined ‘other’ is misleading. The Jesus movement, as described by Luke, exhibits a ‘universal

⁵ See the intragroup identity maintenance strategies exhibited by Jerusalem leaders (Acts 6.9ff; 9.1-2) and non-Israelites in Ephesus (Acts 19.24-29).

⁶ Several scholars have expressed anxiety over dualistic reconstructions of ancient ‘Christianity’ and ‘Judaism’: Johnson 2006; Buell 2002; 2005; Barclay 1997; Dahl 1977.

particularity', with its universal aspect defined by the cosmic lordship of the exalted Jesus. Jesus' lordship over all peoples is the prerequisite which allows all humans, regardless of class, ethnicity or gender, the opportunity to recognize, affirm and submit to Jesus' true identity. The Jesus community, marked by the Holy Spirit, is universally open to the 'other', but acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus remains a very real boundary in the group's conception of its social context. For Luke, one cannot be 'in' until they submit to Jesus' cosmic lordship, full stop (e.g. Acts 10.36, 42). Luke's vision is more aptly described as a *Spirit-empowered 'other-centered' particularity*. The particularity of the movement is marked by a resistance to 'coercive sameness', the affirmation of a broad array of subgroup identities but also the unquestionable criterion of submission to Jesus' universal reign.⁷ The 'other-centeredness' of this Spirit-empowered group, at its best, does not denigrate the 'other' but invites the 'other' to join. This stands in contrast to some, but by no means all, expressions of Israelite identity – as well some Lukan characterizations of non-Israelite identity.⁸

Having summarized the findings of this thesis, it can here finally be noted that approaches to the Spirit in Luke-Acts that conceptualize Luke as wed to a 'Spirit of prophecy' motif culled from Second Temple Israel and the Old Testament are ultimately too restrictive. It cannot be doubted that Luke was heavily dependent on Old Testament materials, motifs and expectations at many points in his text – including a good deal of his Spirit material. The effort, however, to use a diachronic approach across texts, times and places to distill a 'concept' or 'conception' of the Spirit and then to reify the 'concept' and use it heuristically for Luke-Acts creates a hermeneutical circle as well as the possibility that the aggregate 'concept' intelligible within a conglomeration of particular textual witnesses was not held by any one real person. Further, these approaches have a tendency to admit little in the way of novelty with regard to Luke's treatment of the Spirit, a problematic feature when one considers the unexpected ways in which Luke concluded that the

⁷ 'Coercive sameness' is a concern of Boyarin 1994:233.

⁸ See the discussion of Second Temple literature in chapter 2 for an example of the broad range of Israelite responses to the ethnic 'other'. For non-Israelite out-group antagonism, see Acts 16.19-23; 19.24-29.

events surrounding Jesus ‘fulfilled’ the Old Testament.⁹ Old Testament texts, according to Luke, needed to be reinterpreted in light of Jesus’ actual life, death and resurrection, a process that filled old texts with new meaning.¹⁰ Luke’s narrative appropriated, reworked and moved beyond apparently traditional Israelite expectations in order to describe ‘the things which have been accomplished among us’ (Luke 1.1). It should not be surprising that Luke, reflecting on the early church’s *experience* of the Holy Spirit, would redefine and broaden Old Testament and Second Temple expectations of the Spirit. Most importantly, however, ‘Spirit of prophecy’ approaches – regardless of the content they ascribe to the concept – prove misleadingly restrictive in light of Luke’s own presentation of the Spirit. Specifically, they do not account for the ostensible goal of the Spirit within the broader narrative, the impact of Spirit-empowered characters, or the cumulative effect achieved when tracing the relationship between the Spirit, ethnicity and the ‘other’. These approaches have many valuable insights, but they ultimately fall short of a fully-orbed appreciation of Luke’s view of the Spirit – a view that inseparably links the Spirit with human identity.

Social Identity Theory and a Different Way of Being Human in Community

This project reveals at least five significant ways in which SIT is useful for interpreting biblical texts. First, SIT helps interpreters to understand typical identity-forming processes within human groups. Understanding normative social processes provides a context within which Luke’s depictions of the identity processes evident in the early Jesus movement often appear distinctive. Second, SIT reminds interpreters that even in overwhelmingly individualistic modern North Atlantic cultures, social groups are powerful identity-forming agents. This is amplified greatly in collectivistic societies like the ancient Greco-Roman world.¹¹ In one way, SIT helps us to read as collectivists, aware that a group always stands behind an individual and that most social interactions have intergroup ramifications. This helps greatly to sensitize the interpreter to the effect of groups

⁹ A crucified messiah, a resurrected messiah, an ascended messiah, a messiah who pours out the Spirit, the incorporation of the *ἔθνη* as *ἔθνη*, the gift of the Spirit to the *ἔθνη*, constitute just a few examples of the ‘unanticipated’ features of Luke-Acts with respect to Israelite tradition.

¹⁰ See, emphatically, Luke 24.27, 32, 44-49.

¹¹ Brown 2000:753.

and group exemplars within the text. Third, SIT demonstrates the close connection between identity and resource allocation. This often overlooked phenomenon makes evident intragroup and intergroup tensions at multiple points in the text. This is especially useful for understanding the intragroup dynamics created by the subgroup projection of relative prototypicality and the entitlement claims that arise from such projection. Fourth, SIT sensitizes the interpreter to the stubborn nature of social boundaries between groups, especially ethnic groups. The difficulty with which identity-based intergroup conflict is mitigated makes Luke's project shine for its uniqueness and the scope of the problems addressed. Finally, the use of SIT as an interpretive grid with which to read biblical texts forms a natural bridge across which ancient data can assume new relevance in modern intergroup contexts.

Possibilities for Future Comparative Work on Identity within the Early Jesus Movement

This reading of Luke's treatment of the role of the Spirit in the formation of a superordinate social identity that affirms, yet chastens and transcends ethnic identity raises interesting possibilities for further comparative work on identity in the early church. In light of the long history of research on the relationship between Lukan and Pauline conceptions of the Spirit, a fresh comparison with Paul's view of the Spirit seems a natural place to begin. A proper understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and identity in Luke-Acts grants the Spirit a much greater role in the lives of all Jesus followers that often is admitted by the strictest of the 'Spirit of prophecy' proponents who regularly set Luke and Paul at opposite ends of a pneumatological spectrum.¹² While this is not the place for analysis, it is clear that for Paul (or, depending upon certain judgments regarding authorship, the Pauline school) the Spirit is a significant source of unity and identity within the early (multi-ethnic) church.¹³ SIT would be a useful heuristic device with which to compare and contrast Lukan and Pauline conceptions of the Spirit, ethnic identity and the 'other'. Likewise, Luke's view appears to bear some affinity with the

¹² This is most true for Gunkel, von Baer, Schweizer, Menzies and Cho.

¹³ E.g. Romans 8.14, 16; 14.17; 1 Corinthians 3.16; 6.19; 12.4, 7, 13; 2 Corinthians 1.22; Galatians 4.16; Ephesians 1.13; 4.3-4; Philippians 3.3; Titus 3.5; cf. Hebrews 6.4; 1 Peter 4.14; 1 John 3.24; 4.13.

catholic epistles, where the Spirit (and discerning the spirits), plays a central role in discerning accurately the identity of true and false teachers.¹⁴

A comparison of Luke's conception of the Spirit and identity and the conception expressed by early Christian apologists would also be of great interest. The key pressure point between identity in Christ and ethnic identities in this conversation revolves around the salience of ethnicity for those who have submitted to Jesus. Several recent treatments have analyzed the 'ethnic reasoning' of the early apologists and have revealed that one common apologetic position was the categorization of the Jesus movement as an ethnic alternative to either 'Jewish' or 'Greek' ethnic identity.¹⁵ This view, which seems to be at loggerheads with the Lukan view, expected that ethnic identities were obliterated by transferal into the Jesus group. This is blatantly evident in Aristides' *Apology* 2.2: 'For it is clear that there are three kinds (γένη) of humans in this world: worshippers of so-called gods, Jews, and Christians.' Likewise, Eusebius calls Jesus followers 'a new ἔθνος called after his [Jesus'] own name'.¹⁶ Eusebius argues for a 'rupturing of ethnic identities' which results in the ultimate unacceptability of Christians being 'identified with any of the other nations'.¹⁷ Yet this position is markedly different from the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which claims that Christians have a measure of ethnic continuity with their countrymen but ultimately have a higher level identity to which they are faithful:

For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language, or custom. But while they live in both Greek and barbarian cities, as each one's lot was cast, and follow the local customs in dress and food and other aspects of life, at the same time they demonstrate the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship.¹⁸

It would be well worth enquiring into the identity related pressures that caused ethnicity to be viewed with such variation in the early centuries of the Jesus movement.

¹⁴ See 2 Peter 1.16-2.22; 1 John 4; Jude 1.17-21.

¹⁵ Buell 2005; Johnson 2006.

¹⁶ *Demonstratio Evangelica* 3.6.

¹⁷ Johnson 2006:200, 209-210.

¹⁸ *Epistle to Diognetus* 5.1, 4.

Fruitful comparisons could be made between Luke's vision of Spirit-formed trans-ethnic social identity and the other trans-ethnic identity on offer in his context – Roman citizenship. Here I suspect that the chief difference will be in the view of the 'other', especially given Luke's insistence that deliverance from the threatening other comes through the creation of a common identity that is initiated by encounter with Jesus, not by military domination.¹⁹ Luke's view, on its surface, seems very different from the Roman metanarrative shaped by the four virtues: *piety - war - victory - peace*.²⁰ How did these alternative visions shape the identities of their ethnically diverse constituents?

Possibilities for Contemporary Application

It is deeply ironic that the rapid pace of globalization and the increased intergroup contact available on a worldwide scale due to modern technologies has led not to global homogenization, but to an entrenchment of ethnic identities and increasing volatility at interethnic boundaries. Social identity theory can explain the drive to assert identity distinctiveness in order to maintain positive differentiation from the 'other' in the light of globalization's pressure toward assimilation. Yet while social identity theory can describe the reasons for heightened interethnic tension, it has been exponentially more difficult to produce a strategy for the mitigation of ethnic intergroup conflict. More than ever it remains apparent that ethnic identity, and the interethnic social dynamics it creates, is one of the most pressing issues of our generation. One can quickly produce a tragic litany of places and peoples ravaged by interethnic conflict, the ferocity of which has proved often to be nearly unimaginable and simply inhuman: Rwanda, the Balkans, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Darfur, and now recently Kenya – the list goes on. In addition to these widely publicized interethnic conflicts, ethnic tension simmers in plenty of other less publicized places: Moldova, Burundi, Georgia, Solomon Islands, New Guinea/Bougainville and Chiapas, Mexico. It is scarcely possible to count the lives lost, families destroyed, innocence stolen or memories seared and haunted by acts perpetuated in the name of ethnic identity.

¹⁹ See especially the incorporations of the former enemy Paul (Acts 9.1-31) and the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10), and note Luke's distinct vision of the intergroup peace that is one result of the gospel (Luke 1.79; 2.14; Acts 10.36).

²⁰ Crossan 2004:xi, 284; Galinsky 1996:106-121.

Perhaps most troubling is the unabated continuation of this trend despite increasingly intense attention given to ethnicity and ethnic conflict in the academy, by politicians and in the wider culture. A recent study has estimated that over 300 ethnic groups are currently either in protest or rebellion.²¹ Nearly 30 civil wars are currently in progress, many spilling across national borders.²² Both of these statistics are nearly double their value just fifty years ago.

These statistics, and the images from television newscasts that detail their reality, can seem so inconceivable that we can easily disassociate ourselves. But the conflict at the seam of competing ethnic identities is usually expressed in less violent though more pervasive ways. In the United States, people who categorize themselves as 'Black' have a median annual household income of \$32,372, while those who respond as 'White alone, not Hispanic' average \$52,375 per household.²³ In Canada, the provincial government of Ontario has released a four volume report detailing a more appropriate response to the protests of aboriginal peoples.²⁴ There also, the tension between French and English speaking Quebecers continues to simmer. In Germany, educational attainment for second generation children of traditional migrant workers lags far behind that of native Germans.²⁵ These problems are symptoms of a complex nexus of societal factors, but the clear distinctions among ethnic groups are telling.

Yet the problem moves even closer to home. Jokes are told in factory break rooms. Pulses and paces quicken on poorly lit roads when someone meets a passerby who is obviously an ethnic 'other'. Interethnic marriages still cause great angst in many quarters, not to mention the difficulties faced by the children of these marriages. People are frozen out of neighborhoods, social clubs and schools because they are not 'one of us'. Tragically, in the USA at least, the well-known

²¹ Wimmer, et. al. 2004:2.

²² Centre for the Study of Civil War, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway. Data accessed 5 December 2007 at www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/.

²³ Statistics are from the U.S. Census Bureau 2006 American Community Survey and reflect income statistics from 2006. Accessed 5 December 2007 at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-08.pdf/>.

²⁴ The Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry (released 31 May 2007) can be accessed at <http://www.ipperwashinquiry.ca/report/>.

²⁵ Data can be accessed from the *Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung* at <http://doku.iab.de/discussionpapers/2007/dp0407.pdf/>.

claim that 11 AM on Sunday mornings is the most segregated hour in America seemingly remains irreversibly true.²⁶

In the midst of a world scarred by interethnic antagonism, Luke's Spirit-centered vision stands as a challenge for contemporary Christian faith and practice. Luke-Acts confronts the church with the question 'Who are we?' There is no more basic – or important – question for discerning the appropriate posture toward the 'other' on both an intra-church and intergroup level. The competing answers given to this question form the neuralgic points in ecumenical and missional issues. At an ecumenical (or intra-church) level, where ethnicity is less regularly in view, the issue often revolves around the place of denominational identities within a broader Jesus-centered identity. When it comes to interaction with Christians of differing doctrinal perspective, do we interact as Methodists and Roman Catholics, or primarily as Jesus followers? Properly understanding the primary nature of Jesus-centered identity reframes these conversations and locates the stakes of the conversation at an intragroup, not an intergroup level. This eases identity tensions and may create space for both more fruitful interaction and a more unified public face for Christianity. In a world filled with competing identities, the ability of the church to exist as a community composed of former 'enemies' and 'others' would no doubt provide a compelling vision of the kingdom reign of the exalted Jesus.

With respect to Christian missions, the relationship between ethnicity and Christian identity moves to the fore. The broader missions movement is recovering from the ethnic imperialism that marked too many cross-cultural missionary endeavors in the previous two centuries. Questions remain, however, regarding the intersection between gospel and culture at points where one culturally specific expression of the gospel encounters the ethnic 'other'. Here it seems clear that Luke would urge Jesus followers critically to examine the intersection between their Christian faith/praxis and its inherent cultural imbeddedness. Which aspects of sending or receiving ethnic identities must be jettisoned? Which aspects must be allowed to flourish? These are critical issues of no little significance.

Both of these important factors are enveloped within a broader, and more profound, ramification of Luke's understanding of the Spirit, ethnic identity and the

²⁶ 11:00 A.M. Sunday morning is the traditional hour for corporate, public Christian worship in the USA.

'other'. Luke is utterly insistent that identity as a Jesus follower must remain the primary identity for all who follow Jesus. Christian identity, for Luke, is not first among equals; it is first – full stop. When it comes to one's sense of social identity in one's social context, Luke has no patience for the primacy of subgroup identities. One is never an Argentinian or a Democrat or a unionist first – one is a Jesus-follower first. All other social identities must be nested within one's identity as a member of the community of Jesus followers. Essential to recovering this fact is the reconceptualization of Christianity not as a 'religious movement' or 'belief system', but primarily as *participation in the people who belong to the Lord of the cosmos*. Not only have modern conceptions of 'religion' (usually conceptualized as a system of beliefs and practices to which one voluntarily adheres) distorted readings of biblical texts, modern conceptions of 'religion' inherently remove believers from the biblical notion which embeds all who affirm the lordship of Jesus within a *people group* that possesses its own ontological reality. Participation in this *people* serves as the incubator for a social identity that can affirm yet transcend ethnic identities. The recovery of the ontological reality of the Jesus movement primarily as a *people* calls for a radical reconfiguration of social identities akin to the identity transformations experienced by the Jesus group throughout Acts. The subjection of other social identities to one's identity as a Jesus follower is the necessary precondition for the manifestation of Luke's greatest contribution to the arena of human identity. Namely, Luke proclaims the Spirit-created possibility of a community of peace that exists as an outpost of the eschatological New Creation in the midst of a world marked by interethnic strife. The existence of such a community of former enemies who now share a common identity and who collectively are oriented toward the 'other' may provide the world both a beacon of hope and a different way of being human in community. This Lukan vision allows for the fact that, when properly oriented, one need not *lose* (assimilation) or *abuse* (ethnocentrism) their subgroup (ethnic) identities. Instead, Jesus followers can *use* these identities – especially privileged identities – on behalf of the exalted Jesus and for the sake of the 'other' in a multi-ethnic world. A possibility so great, however, requires nothing less than the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

In the midst of pervasive interethnic tension, Luke was convinced that followers of Jesus possessed a new identity that transcended ethnicity, yet affirmed ethnic identity at a penultimate level. This new identity was the locus for a profound reconciliation of formerly incommensurate social identities. Luke's vision anticipates the vision of John of Patmos in Revelation 7.9-10:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no person could number, from every nation (ἔθνος), from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"

In John's vision the heavenly throng possesses a common identity formed not by the denigration of the 'other' but by the magnetic force of God's glory. Those sharing this identity are still recognizable on the basis of their ethnic identities; they have not become an amorphous, non-ethnic mass.²⁷ Centered upon the throne of God, these subgroup identities neither divide disparate groups nor do they form the pressure point for intergroup antagonism or violence, rather together they create a symphony of praise, the song of God's one redeemed people. The vision is John's, but it is shared by Luke. It is a vision that speaks of the hope, within a world that has tasted the bitter fruit of interethnic hatred, that the people of God through the power of the Spirit can actualize the ontological reality of their shared identity – an identity that transcends intergroup antagonism and is formed within an allocentric community that lives in the way of peace and stretches outward toward the 'other'.

²⁷ Luke does not give justification for Boyarin's fear that Christianity leads to a 'coercive sameness' that eliminates 'the rights of Jews, women and others to retain their difference' (1994:233).

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