DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this is my own and personal work, except where the word(s) or publications of others have been acknowledged by means of accepted reference techniques.

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Date: 19/12/2017
# Table of contents

The mission of Paul and Tertullian ................................................................. 4

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................. 4

2.0 The phenomenon of early Christian apologetics in the second century .... 4

3.0 Identity ........................................................................................................ 6

3.1 Christian and Jewish identity ..................................................................... 7

3.2 Different suggestions of how to understand the Christian identity ......... 7

3.3 A new identity ............................................................................................ 8

4.0 Early Christian understanding of faith / πίστις ......................................... 9

4.1 Christianity’s non-monopoly on faith ....................................................... 10

4.2 The specificity of faith ............................................................................. 11

4.3 Summary .................................................................................................... 12

5.0 Basis of comparison of Paul and Tertullian .............................................. 12

6.0 Paul’s speech on Areopagus according to Luke ...................................... 13

6.1 Introduction to Acts .................................................................................. 14

6.2 Introduction to Acts 17:22-34 ................................................................ 15

6.3 An exegetical exposition of the speech .................................................... 16

6.4 How Paul respond to the pagan beliefs and proclaim his own ............. 20

7.0 Tertullian ................................................................................................... 21

7.1 Tertullian’s life ......................................................................................... 21

7.2 Tertullian’s reason for writing Apologeticum ......................................... 22

7.3 The rhetoric in Apologeticum .................................................................. 23

7.4 Tertullian’s rejection of the pagan faith .................................................. 24

7.5 Tertullian’s views on the pagan reason ................................................... 25

7.6 Tertullians attack on the philosophers .................................................... 26

7.7 Tertullians attempt to win people over ................................................... 27

7.8 Tertullian’s views on the pagan traditions ............................................. 28

8.0 Discussion .................................................................................................. 29

8.1 Paul and Tertullian’s responses to the pagan faith ................................. 29
8.2 Paul and Tertullian’s persuasion strategies .................................................................31
8.3 A “third race” ..................................................................................................................32
9.0 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................33
10.0 What can we learn? .......................................................................................................33
Bibliography .........................................................................................................................34
The mission of Paul and Tertullian

1.0 Introduction
In this assignment, I will investigate the missionary strategy of the Lukan Paul and Tertullian. The goal for my research report is then to answer how Paul and Tertullian conduct missionary work among pagans, and whether they do it in different ways\(^1\). This is an important question because they both live close to the time of Jesus, and consequently they are some of the first ones to act out Matthew 28:19. I will use historical analysis combined with literary analysis on Luke’s narrative of Paul’s speech on Areopagus and on Tertullian’s *Apologeticum* to investigate the contra pagan discourse from Paul to Tertullian.

The main question is: How do Paul and Tertullian meet the pagan belief and how do they correspondingly try to persuade others to convert to their belief?

Consequently, I will ask these two subquestions:

1) How do Paul and Tertullian react to the pagan faith? The answer to this question will tell whether Paul and Tertullian are polemic towards the pagan faith. It will also tell in which way Paul and Tertullian enter into a dialogue with their contemporaries and whether they compromise with their faith to gain some new followers. Here I will also investigate how they react to the pagan thoughts. Are pagans on the right track and just need to be led further down the road or do they need to convert to a whole new system because their reasoning cannot find the true God?

2) Furthermore, I will try to answer the question: in which way do Tertullian and the Lukan Paul proclaim that their faith is the truth? In the same vein, how do Paul and Tertullian try to make their statement acceptable? How do they present their own faith?

2.0 The phenomenon of early Christian apologetics in the second century
I will first account for Christian apologetics because it is in this frame that this research report is written. The term apologetics derives from the Greek word ἀπολογία and originally it means a speech for the defense in a courtroom. The word is also used in The New Testament where it both means to defend oneself and to do missionary work. Christians who are judged in the courtroom at this time are not allowed to defend themselves, only to answer “yes” or “no” to whether they are a Christian or not. This means that the Christian apologetics is not carried out as the classic speech for

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\(^1\) With the word “pagan”, I mean a non-Christian person and not a civilian as it first meant (see Bernard Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome: The First Three Centuries*, 1 edition. (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 129).
the defense. The earliest known apologetic speech is from the fifth century BCE, according to Jörg Ulrich. The Christian apologetics has its provenience in both Jewish and pagan apology. This means that the Christians are influenced by Socrates, Filon, the Jew from Alexandria, and especially Josephus². According to Ulrich, the Christians are first widely recognized as an independent group in the second half of the first century CE. From the very beginning, the Christians clash with the Roman culture because they will not acknowledge the pluralistic culture in the society. Instead they believe in only one true God which means that all other gods are false. In this way they place themselves outside the common society at this time³. Much is at stake when someone becomes a Christian because it is illegal, and one can be punished with death⁴. According to Michael W. Holmes, there are sporadic and local persecutions of the Christians after the time of Emperor Nero’s executions, but in 250 CE the persecution became systematic and occurred all over the empire⁵.

There is no evidence that tells us whether the pagans are acquainted with the Christian apologetic writings from the first three centuries. It is a common observation that Christian literature from this period is mostly read by the authors own communion and thus it is reasonable to suggest that the intended recipients in the first place are Christians and not pagans⁶.

According to Ulrich, the Christian apologetics has three specific agendas. Firstly, the Christians in the second century CE want to promote and convince others that the Christian faith is the only true way to God and the truth. In this way, Justin tries to persuade the Emperor to become a Christian because it is the most logical. In this way, it is a very missionary approach⁷.

Secondly, Christians, at this time, want to defend themselves because there are many accusations against them. With their apologetics, they want to give their opponent the right picture of what it is like to be a Christian. In this way, the apologetic approach is in this way an information campaign to fend off misunderstandings and disprove wrong accusations⁸. This is important because the Christians are accused of outrageousness such as cult murder, cannibalism and cultic promiscuity.

The accusation of cannibalism probably derives from a misunderstanding of the Christian Eucharist.

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³ Ibid., 19–22;37.

⁴ Ibid., 23.


⁷ Ulrich, “Apologeter og apologetik i det 2. århundrede,” 18–19; 56.

⁸ Ibid., 18–19.
They are also accused of incestuous relationships which most likely are due to a misunderstanding of the brotherly and sisterly love among Christians. The first Christians are also accused of subversive activity in relation to the Roman Empire because they hope for Christ’s kingdom. The Romans misunderstand it to be about an earthly kingdom. Likewise, they are accused of being atheist because they do not recognize and worship the Romans’ gods. Consequently, they are seen as bringing bad luck to the nation and the Christians are in this way treated as scapegoats of all the catastrophes which hit the society. The Christian faith is further accused of being a new religion which means that it has no authority. The apologists thus have much to defend and they try defending themselves with reasoning. Sometimes the apologists try to show that the things that they are charged with do not apply to them, but is rather true regarding those who accuse the Christians. By defending themselves, the Christian apologists try to demonstrate that the Christian faith is philosophically superior and in fact the only true philosophy.

The third agenda of the apologetic approach is to advocate for an abolition of the injunction to be a Christian. Moreover, they seek to establish that it is against all common sense to kill such good citizens as the Christians.

3.0 Identity

I will now account for identity-making because one can see this assignment to be in the realm of identity. Kimberly B. Stratton highlights that identity and narrative are in close relationship to each other. The narrative about Jesus’s death and resurrection is among Christians regarded as the most significant of his actions and this ends up being the collective memory of the Christians and thus it shapes their identity. In this way, identity is, among other things, created through narratives. I will in this assignment further argue that both Paul, according to Luke, and Tertullian are following this trajectory because they believe in Jesus and in his resurrection as the core of their Christian identity (cf. Act 17:31 and Apol. 21.21-27). Paul and Tertullian are both trying to argue that their Christian identity is the only true identity and they are doing it by defending and proclaiming it.

9 Ibid., 35–39.
10 Ibid., 33;39;45.
11 Ibid., 19.
13 Ibid., 227.
14 Tertullian and Paul also believe that the Christian identity is not bound to any fixed location but is rather realized through the act of worship. In 1 Corinthians 1:2 Paul writes “called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NRSV, my italics). In the same way, Tertullian emphasizes that he belongs to a race that one can find all over the world (Apol. 37.4–6) (see Kimberly Stratton, “Identity”, 235).
3.1 Christian and Jewish identity
According to Brengt Holmberg, what defines the Christian identity is that they have “their belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ”\(^ {15} \). From the start, the Christian movement is a part of the Jewish community but this changes during the first 100 years, according to Holmberg, because most Christians are from the pagan world at the time of the Bar Kochbah uprising. Consequently, it now has its own identity\(^ {16} \). Josef Lössl does not agree with this assertion because he states that Jewish and Christian identities in first centuries are closely intermingled and it is hard to separate them. Even though Christians use anti-Jewish language it is hard to separate the two and to talk about two entirely different religions. This is, among other things, seen when Gentile Christians are attending Jewish forms of worship and at the same time have their own Christian worship\(^ {17} \). According to Lössl, the close bond to Judaism is caused by the fact that Christians “are not prepared to pay the price of abandoning their ‘received’ tradition, notion of God and Christ, which is, essentially Jewish”\(^ {18} \). There is no consensus on this subject in research according to Bernard Green, but he points to the fact that in 49 CE Christians and Jews are regarded as one unity because Claudius expels “Jews” for making disturbances because of Christ. However, already in 64 CE, the Christians are singled out as scapegoats for the fire in Rome and they are seen as a new alien religion\(^ {19} \). In this way, the world around the two religions separates them and Green states that the persecution in 64 “completed the process of the parting of the ways”\(^ {20} \).

3.2 Different suggestions of how to understand the Christian identity
The early Christian identity as a phenomenon is debated in research. I will now present different views on this subject. Judith Lieu states that the Christian identity is a rhetorical construction caused by polemic and separation from the Jews. In this way, the Christian identity is something they create for themselves through their texts, and it is not something that already exists. According to Holmberg, Lieu’s intention is not to describe the real development of Christian identity but rather to stay in the world of the texts. In this way, she disconnects the texts from the actual history\(^ {21} \). Gerd Theissen does not agree with Lieu because he claims that the textual data from the first centuries CE can be used to get a grip on an actual reality outside the data themselves. He further argues that


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 1–2.

\(^{17}\) Josef Lössl, *The Early Church: History and Memory*, 1 edition. (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 92. See Lössl’s exposition of these statements on page 75–91.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 91.

\(^{19}\) Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome*, 57–58.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 59.

the Christian identity is developed through the struggle against Judaism and later Gnosticism. In this way, the Christians find themselves to be different from the world and this is also seen in a visible lifestyle. On the other hand, according to Holmberg, Ferdinand Christian Baur states that the Christian identity is not a unified one but rather several competing ones. David Horrell argues that the forming of a Christian identity is a draw-out process which starts with the Jesus movement. This specific Christian identity is manifested in beliefs, rituals, and cult. But this changes when non-Jews enter the scene and it now becomes clear that it is the faith in Christ which defines the Christian identity. The decisive event is the meeting in Jerusalem where it is decided that Gentiles belong to the Christian identity by faith and not by becoming Jews.

Ben F. Meyer believes that the Christian identity is rooted in the belief of the risen Christ. Easter is the event all Christians are gathered around. When many Gentiles enter this community the solution according to Meyer is to distinguish between identity and self-definition. This means that all Christians have the same identity in their faith in Christ while their self-definition can at the same time vary. The identity is the same but the way of living it out can be different whether one is a Jewish Christian or a Gentile Christian. This means that Torah observation is not a strict part of the identity - rather it can be a part of one’s way to manifest one’s identity in Christ. Holmberg agrees with Meyer’s observation that Paul does not create the Christian identity, but rather tries to clarify what the Christian identity implies. At the same time, Meyer asserts that Christian identity is not something static that is given from start, but rather is it a process in understanding what it means to belong to Jesus Christ. Meyer’s argument seems sound and thus this assignment agrees with Meyer and David Horrell that the Christian identity is faith in God.

3.3 A new identity

Christian identity has a big impact on one’s life. As Holmberg puts it, Christian identity “is embodied in corporative action of a deeply formative nature, such as common prayer, worship, and ritual praxis, as well as in shared behavior patterns, custom, and ethos.” Anders Runesson claims, according to Holmberg, that even though the Jesus movement starts as a Jewish phenomenon it ended up being a whole new movement. The Christian identity is not ethnically determined as a Jewish identity because Gentiles also are welcome. In practice, they begin to pray to Jesus as their Lord

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22 Ibid., 20–22.
23 Ibid., 10.
24 Ibid., 20.
26 Ibid., 26.
27 Ibid., 29.
and they have communion with non-Jews. Furthermore, the salvation is no longer exclusively for the Jews but open to all nations. A Christian receives a new identity because he is baptized into a new Messianic congregation. Moreover, this means that all cultural and ethnic differences have no importance because Christians are all one in Christ.

At the same time, Christianity is not unique in its way of thinking, according to Fredrik Ivarsson, because it borrows its vocabulary and grammar from the Hellenized Mediterranean environment. Furthermore, it has also borrowed its way of thinking about the human being and gender roles. So, the believers in Christ are very much children of their own time. Runar Thorsteinsson agrees with this consideration and he states that the growth of the Christian movement in the Roman Empire is, among other things, due to Christians not being unique and different from all others but rather because they have a similarity in their moral teaching. This means that people listen to the Christians not because they teach something different according to moral teachings but because they taught the same moral message as the Stoics, but in a new way. The moral teaching is in this way an important part of the Christian identity. From that standpoint in the surrounding culture, the Christians try to show that they are superior and above the world in relation to the nearness of the divine and that they have a better sanctification as is evident with Tertullian. In this way, Christians enter the already existing debate about moral behavior, but they do it in a new way by trying to show that their identity is better. That the Christians use cultural language from their own time is a typical sign of a healthy religion, according to Hurtado: “Healthy religious movements use and redefine terms and categories they inherit from their “parent” traditions, as any scholar of new religious movements can attest.”

4.0 Early Christian understanding of faith / πίστις

If the core of Christian identity is faith in God, then it is important to account for what it means to have faith in something. It is essential to do this given that to have faith in something or someone can denote something else today than it does in antiquity. It is also important to find out whether or not to believe in something is a specific Christian term or if it is something that people at the time of

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28 Ibid., 175–76.
31 Larry W. Hurtado, Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 367.
Jesus can relate to. The Greek word πίστις can mean to have faith in and to believe in. Therefore, I will use the terms “faith” and “believe” as synonyms.

4.1 Christianity’s non-monopoly on faith

Hendrik Simon Versnel states that it is widely recognized that belief is only a Christian term and it cannot be used to analyze other religions because Greek religions in antiquity are only about rituals. This is, among other things, due to a fear of imposing Christianizing assumptions on other religions. Even though the word to “believe in something” (νομίζω) has been found in ancient texts, it has been interpreted to be about religious practices. But this is a wrong translation of the word, according to Versnel, and he argues that, in at least some cases with Socrates and Plato, the word is used in the sense of believing in the existence of gods. Furthermore, Versnel points to the fact that ἥγεσθαι θεούς unambiguously means “to think that gods exist” and this term existed already in the last quarter of the 5th BCE. Eberhard Jüngel agrees with this notion that faith in a religious context is found in the Greek pre-Christian language.

Versnel thinks, according to Gerhard van den Heever, that there is not a sharp distinction between Christianity and ancient Greek religion. Christians are not alone in believing in their God and Greeks are not alone in their performative acts. The Greek religion is predominantly performative but has also beliefs regarding the gods. On the other hand, Christianity is not only a religion of cognitive doctrines but has also rituals. Since Martin Luther scholars have put an absolute contrast between faith (πίστις) and the Law (νόμου) it ends up putting a false contradistinction between Christianity and all other religions such as the Graeco-Roman religions. The language of faith and belief in the New Testament is both concerned with the meaning to believe in God and to have a specific religious practice due to this belief (see e.g. εὐσέβεια). This is the same kind of combination that the Greeks in antiquity have and there is consequently no absolute contrast between the two religions. In this way, Heever argues that belief in God and the practice of this belief are so closely connected that the one naturally causes the other: “Faith, belief, and piety are, semantically, action

33 Hendrik Simon Versnel, Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 541–43.
34 Ibid., 558–59.
37 Ibid., 6.
words”\(^{38}\). This means that one cannot separate belief and practice from each other and the one does not eliminate the other.

Versnel points to the obvious point that the Greeks may indeed have had a belief in their gods because otherwise they would not have worshipped and given them gifts. The consequence is that it is impossible to be a religion that only has practices but not beliefs. A practice always has an emanate from a certain belief. In this way, the Christians do not have monopoly on belief in religious sense\(^{39}\).

### 4.2 The specificity of faith

To believe in something can be used in many different settings today, according to James Kirwan:

> We can define ‘belief’ as the acceptance of the existence of a certain state-of-affairs, the putting of one’s trust in the truth of a statement, or the efficacy of a principle. But belief may be more or less explicit, and our use of the word ‘belief’ extends from the description of knowledge, direct acquaintance with a state-of-affairs, to opinion, or belief based on grounds short of proof, that is provisional conviction\(^{40}\).

But Dieter Lührmann states that faith in a Christian setting is mostly a term that has Christological content and that it is a response to a proclamation. Paul uses faith in relation to the cross and resurrection. At the same time, Lührmann makes it clear that faith in the New Testament generally has many nuances and it is not restricted to be a relationship between us and God\(^{41}\).

Ingolf U. Dalferth agrees with this view but at the same time insists that faith in Christianity always has been faith in God or Jesus. This means that faith, according to Dalferth, can be defined as “the basic Christian term for our inclusion into the saving eschatological relation between God and us that God himself has set up”\(^{42}\). This means that faith is not a belief in others or oneself as it is often used today but it is always having God as the object\(^{43}\). According to Morna D. Hooker, the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω cover a variety of meanings. Sometimes, the New Testament uses the word absolutely which means that the authors find that the object of the word is so obvious that the

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\(^{38}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{39}\) Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 552;554.


\(^{43}\) Ibid.
reader knows what he is talking about. This may indicate that even though faith figures in many contexts the authors think that there is a common fixed meaning to the word. Although, it sometimes lacks this clear object, Hooker declares that belief in Acts is always in Christ. Furthermore, the noun πίστις is very important for Paul's understanding of the gospel and it appears in all his letters. Like other NT writers, Paul spells out surprisingly rarely what or in whom it is that one believes. But when he does, it can be about faith in God or in Christ. Occasionally, Paul specifies what is believed and this is almost invariably associated with the resurrection. Thus, it can be said that the Christian faith is fundamentally in Jesus as Lord and in his resurrection.

4.3 Summary
In this section, I have shown that the Christian faith in not unique because Roman-Greek religion also believe in their gods. At the same time, the way one tends to use faith today is different from the Christian use of the word. In a Christian context, faith in something is often implied but when it is spelled out it is almost always faith or belief in Christ or God. It is also clear that Christian faith is not just a cognitive phenomenon but has an impact on one’s practices.

5.0 Basis of comparison of Paul and Tertullian
I will start by giving a short introduction to the two words “apologetics” and “mission”. I will use the definition of apologetics by Horst G. Pöhlmann who defines it in this way: “Apologetics, the teaching of defense (apology) or defensive scholarship, is the thoughtful interaction of Christian faith with contemporary teachings and ideologies that are opposed to the gospel.”

The Christian term “mission” is from the Latin word missio which means sending or release. It is not found in the Bible, but the idea is expressed by words which have the same semantic field such as proclamation, gospel, sending, apostle and prophet. It is likewise clear that Jesus sends out his disciples to be missionaries (confer Joh 20:21 and Matt 28:18-20).

I will argue that mission and apologetics are close because apologetics is a way of doing missionary work. Christian authors write more rhetorically from the second century and onward because they

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45 ibid.
want to reach out to the upper classes of the empire. In this way, the apologetic approach becomes the way to do missionary work among the elite in the second century because this is the language that the elite are familiar with. As argued (see section 2.0), one of the main goals of apologetics is to convince that the Christian faith is the best way to live one’s life. So, it is clear that mission is one of the heartbeats in apologetics. Likewise, I will argue that one can compare Paul’s speech and the Apologeticum because they both missionize and have apologetic aspects (see sections below). At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that there also are some limits. It is two different forms because even though Acts 17:22-34 is in writing, it is a summary of a speech. Paul’s speech is moreover much shorter and much more compressed while Tertullian has space to develop his arguments. Paul is only proclaiming the basic aspects of his faith while Tertullian has several agendas as is the case with an apologetic writing (see section 2.0) and consequently uses a lot of space to explain different aspect of the Christian faith.

With this said, there are several good reasons to compare them. A parallel between Tertullian’s and Luke’s texts is the exhortation to the pagans to respond and convert themselves to Christianity. I will argue that this is the main goal for both texts and therefore they are comparable. It is also conceivable to compare them because their presentations of the Christian faith address pagans in a Stoic marked culture.

An additional important aspect is that they fundamentally believe in the same God. This is also evident in the two texts I study. They both believe in a God who created the world (Apol. 17.1; Act 17:24) and who sent his Son to die and rise again from the dead (Apol. 21; Act 17:30-31). Furthermore, both texts are constructed as forensic rhetorical texts as I will account for below.

6.0 Paul’s speech on Areopagus according to Luke
I will now turn to the first text. First, it is important remember that the Pauline speech on Areopagus is written by Luke. For that reason, we do not have direct access to Paul but only through the account by Luke. Thus, I will consider Paul’s speech on Areopagus to be a product of Luke in Acts.

52 That Acts 17:30 is about Jesus is implicit but it is obvious that it is him Paul talks about. See e.g. Craig S Keener, Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014), 2674.
On can ask whether Paul and Luke are consistent or whether Paul and Luke are independent of each other. This is a very difficult question to answer, but according to Craig S. Keener it seems as if Luke is independent of Paul and his letters, but at the same time Luke is accurate in his basic portrait of Paul. Even though Paul does not mention the speech on Areopagus in any of his letters, it does not mean that it has not happened. This is since Paul never mentions what he does in Athens, and he only, as an exception, mentions an audience to his speeches. It is also plausible that the event occurred because Luke mentions two people by their names who begin to follow Paul. It is non-unlikely either that Paul uses elements of Stoic philosophy because he is exposed to it through dialogue with people who most likely are influenced by stoicism at this time. It is accordingly fair to say that Luke writes his own account of what Paul said and it is possible that it took place.

6.1 Introduction to Acts
Acts 17:22-34 is a part of a large section from 15:36-18:23 in Luke’s narrative which entail the second missionary journey of Paul. This journey can be dated to be in 50-52 CE. Luke’s overall aim to write Acts is to show the horizontal universalism of the Gospel which means that it is for all regardless one’s culture, nationality and geographical location. This means that one can see Acts 2:1-21 as the overall theme of Acts. It is most likely that Acts is composed around 70-80 CE among other things because Luke does not mention Paul’s letters. It can be argued that the author of Acts is Luke, an employee of Paul who is mentioned in Philemon 24; Colossians 4:14; and 2 Timothy 4:11. Luke seems to be very much aware of the rhetorical conventions of that time since Acts’ composition is outlined as in classical rhetorical treatises and in the rhetoric of Greek historiography. The places in which Luke’s rhetoric is most visible are in the prologues, speeches, in his summaries and in his own travelogue in the end of Acts. Acts can be seen overall as an apologetic work, especially in the speeches and the trial material. Luke is making a defense for Theophilus.

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54 Keener, Acts, 2570. See Keener’s exposition of the difference between Paul’s account of his visit to Athens in 1-2 Thessalonians and Luke’s narrative of the event at page 2570-2572. I do not go in to this due to the scope of this research report.
55 Ibid., 2567–69.
57 Ibid., 69.
58 Ibid., 62. See a more comprehensive discussion on this dating at page 60-63.
59 Ibid., 57–58. See the full argument on page 51-60.
60 Ibid., 45–46,65.
who seems to be a neophyte and not an outsider of the faith. Moreover, Acts is described as the first history of mission.

6.2 Introduction to Acts 17:22-34

I will now turn to Acts 17:22-34. The audience of this speech is an educated and philosophical pagan one. The Areopagus speech is a clear example of Acts’ main message which is that the Gospel is for everyone. The speech has its background in Paul’s encounter with Stoics, Epicureans, and his experiences in Athens. Acts 17:16 is a very important verse in order to understand the whole speech. Here Paul becomes παρωξύνετο which means that he is indignant with the many gods in Athens. The construction μὲν οὖν in 17:17 makes a division in the narrative and means that verse 16 is a headline to the following verses and it is the setting in which Paul makes his speech.

The speech on Areopagus seems to be before a council because Paul is standing in the middle (v. 22) and because of the reference to Dionysius who is a member of the Areopagite council (v. 34). This means that it is an official hearing of a new teaching because the council is responsible for religious order. It does not give the impression that it is a friendly meeting, according to Witherington. On the contrary, Keener argues that this is not the tone of the setting even though the Athenians are previously known to have executed others who tried to initiate Athenians into foreign gods. Athens is much more hospitable at the time of Luke but he agrees with the statement that it is a hearing. C. Kavin Rowe states that δούλωμεν is not said in a polite tone (see also Act 25:11), consequently it is no invitation but a demand. In any way, it seems to be a hearing setting, friendly or not, where Paul must defend his belief in front of the Areopagite council. In this way the speech is apologetical.

Luke is trying to appeal to his Hellenistic readers by identifying Paul with Socrates. He does so among other things when he mentions Paul’s charge in verse 18 (“proclaimer of foreign divinities”

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61 Ibid., 63.
64 Ibid., 515–17.
65 Keener, Acts, 2597-99. Bruce W. Winter agrees and states that this is not a court setting but a normal hearing because the tone in verse 19 is polite. They want Paul to introduce his God to find out if this is a new God to worship (see Bruce W. Winter, “Introducing the Athenians to God: Paul’s Failed Apologetic in Acts 17?” (2004): 5).
(NRSV)) which alludes to Socrates’ charge. Socrates is a hero for philosophers at this time and by comparing him to Paul, Luke implicitly gives him the wisdom of Socrates.\(^{67}\)

Witherington argues that Paul must present and defend his teachings before the Areopagus hearing. He is consequently using forensic rhetoric because he wants to defend himself and his vision of salvation and God with the purpose of changing the audience’s behavior. It means that it can be divided into rhetorical parts.\(^{68}\) The narration is missing, and this is maybe because it is found in vv. 18-19 and for that reason Luke does not want to make reduplication of the case history. Paul is additionally following the basic rhetorical pattern because he first establishes ethos, then offers logos and, in the end, makes an indirect appeal to convert oneself with pathos.\(^{69}\)

Generally, the speech entails many Stoic elements, and this is a smart move, according to Keener: “Stoicism’s most representative arguments had become relatively familiar in popular culture.”\(^{70}\) On the other hand, Paul does not meet the pagans halfway, but he rather uses familiar ideas to proclaim the Christian faith.\(^{71}\) In this way, it is a missionary speech as I will show in the following section.

### 6.3 An exegetical exposition of the speech

I will carry out an exegetical exposition of verses 22-33 with focus on the questions: How does Paul respond to the pagan faith and how does he try to convince others that his faith is the truth?

#### v. 22

It is a rhetorical convention in Athens to begin a phrase with ἄνδρες Αθηναῖοι as Paul does in verse 22. The word δεισιδαιμονεστήρους is ambiguous and can both mean religious and negatively superstitious. Witherington states that it probably means the latter because it must be seen in the light of verse 16.\(^{72}\) However, the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament does not agree with this claim and declares that NT only uses the word in a neutral expression for religion.\(^{73}\) On the other hand, Keener argues that the word here has a more negative connotation though the earliest meaning is more positive.\(^{74}\) Rowe has a good point when he argues that it might be both. Paul is not

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\(^{68}\) Witherington, The Acts of the Apostles, 517–18. The rhetorical parts is: Exordium with captatio: vv. 22-23; Proposito; v. 23b; Probatio; vv. 24-29; Peroratio; vv. 30-31.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 518. See further arguments for why this speech is rhetorical in Keener, Acts, 2618. It can also be argued that this speech is more like deliberative rhetoric or as Keener suggests the speech can be a mix of various elements which means that classification is less important than the analysis of these different elements (see Keener, Acts, 2617-2618).

\(^{70}\) Keener, Acts, 2614. Winter further argues that the whole speech actually follows a Stoic pattern of how to present the existence of one’s divinity (see Winter, “Introducing the Athenians to God: Paul’s Failed Apologetic in Acts 17?”, 8-10).


\(^{72}\) Ibid., 520.


\(^{74}\) Keener, Acts, 2629.
opening this apologia with an insult in the ears of this audience and therefore they will hear it neutrally. But the reader of Luke’s narrative will know it to actually be an insult because he has just read vv. 16-21 and knows what Paul truly thinks of the Athenians and their many gods. Thus, the Athenians are religious, but the context shows that is a false religiosity.

v. 23

The word σεβάσματα has negative overtones and refers to worship of idols. Torben Kjær states that Paul connects to their existing understanding of God. The Athenians know something about God through natural theology, but they have oppressed it. Rowe, on the other hand, disagrees with this statement and argues that Paul does not teach natural theology though it has been interpreted in this way many times. The Athenians do not have knowledge of God but rather ignorance. Paul is presenting an alternative way of life, not a continuation of their previous lives. Witherington takes a stand in the middle and contends that in verse 23b Paul gives an affirmation that there is natural revelation, like in Romans 1:20-23, but this revelation does not lead to natural theology and therefore he must proclaim his own God because else they will not know him.

I will argue that this is not about natural theology because Paul does not agree that the Greeks are on the right track. They do not know the real God, and therefore he underlines their ignorance (see below). They only know that there is a god and that is all.

The Lukan Paul takes a starting point in one of their altars and he rephrases it to be about the one and only God. In this way, he uses their vocabulary but does not identify his God with theirs as Kjær also is aware of. Moreover, according to Witherington, the Lukan Paul does not compromise with his faith. This is an apologetic speech which defends the Christian faith and attacks the Greek faith. He only uses Greek thoughts to make contact to the audience and from that he establishes

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78 Kjær, “Talen På Areopagos (Acta 17,22-31),” 8. Kjær further states that the pagans know the natural revelation according to verse 27 but they have oppressed it (see page 17). It is unclear why he states that. Even though Paul says that God is not far away from them this does not mean that they know anything about him. They are blind and cannot see anything although God is close to them (see the exegetical exposition of verse 27 below).
monotheistic points. The call for repentance in the end shows that he is not trying to exercise diplomacy. Moreover, Paul several times refers to the audience’s ignorance (see vv. 23 and 30). Their ignorance of God is a very negative thing for Paul due to his Jewish tradition.

vv. 24-25
Because God made everything such a God cannot be confined to anything built by humans. Furthermore, God does not need anything of us but we, on the contrary, need everything from him. This is an echo of an Epicurean idea. And the Stoics believe, too, that no human-built can offer anything worthy of the gods. The Epicureans also agree with the statement that God does not live in temples. Paul is showing the audience what they have in common, but this does not mean that they know the true God.

v. 26
Here Paul rejects the Athenians’ etiological legend which says that they stem from the soil of their own country, Attica, because Paul claims that all humans came from one human. The Athenians saw themselves as superior because they are autochthonous according to this legend, but Paul here says that they have no reason to feel superior. God has determined where the nations on earth shall live, because he is the governor of history. Paul is here setting an ironic scene of the human situation. God is omnipotent and not far from anyone, but humans are stumbling around in blindness. They cannot and will never find God unless he reveals himself to them. This is contrary to Stoic belief which argues that God’s existence can be known by examining nature.

vv. 28-29
Witherington asserts that it is possible to translate the word ἐν into “by” which means that humans

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88 Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 526–28. Keener warns about caution in relation to this argument because the audience may not have had this local tradition in mind because there are many other similar traditions and Paul’s idea is not threatening because they have heard it before (see Keener, *Acts*, 2644).
90 Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 528–29. Keener agrees with Witherington that ψηλαφήσειαν is a negative image since it is used in this way in both classical texts and in LXX (see Keener, *Acts*, 2652). Kjær also states that it is not an actual possibility that the pagans will find God on their own (see Kjær, “Talen På Areopagos (Acta 17,22-31)”, 15).
in every way are dependent on God. There are two quotes and the second one is from Aratus. It is not to confirm his notion but rather to attack idolatry and false conceptions of God. It is a rhetorical ploy for Paul to support his point by quoting an authority acknowledged by his audience. Generally, the two quotes appeal to Stoic circles. Paul uses the last quote - not in a pantheistic way as it is understood originally - but to tell that humans are in lineage with God because he has created them. Humans are created in God’s image, not God in ours.

vv. 30-31

Until this point, Paul has established common ground with his audience but now comes the controversial part, according to Keener, and it is offensive to the pagans. But Witherington argues that there is an integrated criticism throughout the whole speech. All the previous verses lead up to this statement. The Greco-Roman world needs to convert from a culture which makes God the one who is depending on human temples to the one and only God. Even though the speech has been drawing on Greek ideas, it is apologetical for monotheism, according to Witherington, and accordingly it is entirely biblical rhetoric. God has overlooked previous ignorance but because of the Christ event this will no longer be the case. Now everyone needs reconciliation with God through Christ. That Christian knowledge can be added to what pagans already know is not something Luke is advocating for. They need a total conversion to a new worldview. From the previous verses, I think it is clear that the whole speech is controversial towards the pagans and not just in the end.

vv. 32-33

The resurrection is in contradiction to what the Athenians believe. But for Paul the resurrection is the decisive act of God which changes times in a way so that God will no longer bear with the previous ignorance. The Council of the Areopagites are founded on the assumption that there is no resurrection. Consequently, judgment must be passed before death because there is no resurrection. Thus, this is an attack on their system of justice.

Still, some people join Paul. The resurrection is

91 Ibid., 529–30.
95 Ibid., 2667-2669. The important point is that Paul in the end breaks with his audience regardless of whether it is through the whole speech or just in the end.
97 Witherington, The Acts of the Apostles, 532;535. Some of the intellectuals assert that not even a supreme deity can raise anyone from the dead (see Keener, Acts, 2673). So, it seems to be clear that people at this time do not believe in the resurrection, not even in theory.
the climax of this speech and this is not unlike the gospel and the rest of the apostolic speeches in Acts an in the letters of Paul\textsuperscript{100}. From the whole speech it is clear that Paul knows his audience and their beliefs. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that Paul also knows that his listeners will be offended when he tells them about Jesus’ resurrection. Even though he knows this, he still proclaims it and makes it the culmination of the speech and the argument of why they must believe him. The resurrection is what makes Paul’s message trustworthy. Paul is in no way trying to compromise with his faith but is telling people about it although his audience does not like it. Consequently, he clings to his Christian identity as the apologist and missionary he is.

Moreover, both Werrington and Keener argue that the speech is seen by Luke as a good example of how one shall approach educated Greeks due to the fact that Paul is not stoned, but rather a few of the listeners join Paul\textsuperscript{101}.

6.4 How Paul respond to the pagan beliefs and proclaim his own

Stephen G. Wilson states that the speech on Areopagus and Romans 1 do not fit together because the letter to Rome emphasises the Gentiles’ culpability in relation to God, given that they know him but do not worship. Acts 17 says that the Gentile response to God is correct because they worship him, but it is misguided since they do not know him\textsuperscript{102}. This is a wrong interpretation, according to Witherington. The Gentiles do not have any salvatory knowledge of God and they cannot deduce it from the nature. The only thing nature reveals is that God is the Creator and both Romans 1:20 and Acts 17 agree on that. The pagans know that there is a god, but they are groping in the dark and they do not respond in a proper way. The Gentiles are not even on the right track, but they need to convert completely\textsuperscript{103}.

Kjær emphasizes more than Rowe and Witherington that Paul sees continuity between the pagan faith and the Christian faith. However, Kjær makes it clear that Paul fundamentally finds that there are antitheses between the two and that there is only one true God, and, accordingly, Paul rejects Athenians’ gods\textsuperscript{104}. A thing Kjær overlooks is the underlining criticism in the speech. Paul connects with his audience but at the same time corrects their misconceptions by proclaiming a clear Christian message\textsuperscript{105}. He is not pleased with their ignorance and their many gods. Rowe has a good point here when he argues that from vv. 26 to 31 Paul tells the audience the humanity’s story, beginning

\textsuperscript{100}Keener, Acts, 2673-74.


\textsuperscript{104}Kjær, “Talen På Areopagos (Acta 17,22-31),” 31;36-37.

with the creation of Adam (v. 26) and ends with the eschatological finale in Jesus (v. 31). It is in this frame that Paul quotes pagan tradition and by doing so he takes it as hostage and gives it a Christian meaning. So, this is a collision between the Christian world and the pagan one. By using pagan vocabulary, Paul is not trying to show how similar the Christian and pagan thoughts are. Instead, he uses their language to get their attention, but he puts it in the Christian narrative which makes it his own. In conclusion, Christianity and Stoicism are competing languages about the truth of the world, and the Lukan Paul only uses vocabulary common to both Christianity and pagan traditions to save his own life. I argue that Paul tells his audience a clear and understandable Christian message without compromising it, and at the same time makes it clear that his audience must convert and cease being ignorant.

7.0 Tertullian
I will first explain why Tertullian wrote *Apologeticum*. Then I will analyze it through the questions: how do Tertullian respond to the pagan faith and how does he convince them to convert to his? Due to the scope of this research report, I cannot go through the whole writing but only mention what is relevant to the thesis of this report.

7.1 Tertullian’s life
It is difficult to give a full picture of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian’s life and background but there is some consensus that Tertullian is born approximately in 160. He lives his life in Carthage and dies at latest in 240. Tertullian grows up as a pagan until he converts to Christianity. According to Jane Merdinger, Tertullian has a philosophical and literary education and he is one of the few Christians at his time who is a member of the upper class. His works are already known in Late antiquity. Tertullian is the first Latin-writing Christian we know of and he has extensive influence on Western Christianity. It can be argued that he is the founder of western theology.

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107 Ibid., 49-50.
113 Ibid., 10.
It seems as if Tertullian turned to Montanism in 207\textsuperscript{115}. However, it is uncertain if this means that he has a schismatic departure from the main church\textsuperscript{116}. Many of Tertullian’s writings are written in times of persecution. This is also the case with Apologeticum which is probably written in 197\textsuperscript{117}.

7.2 Tertullian’s reason for writing Apologeticum

Rome establishes its rule in North Africa in 146 BCE by conquering Carthage\textsuperscript{118}. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Stoicism becomes elevated as the right philosophy to direct society. From 197-211 CE Septimius Severus is the emperor\textsuperscript{119}. The North African church experiences growth due to urbanization under the Romans, as François Decret states: “the limits of imperial power also determined the limits on Christian expansion”\textsuperscript{120}. But in the end, the Romans try to stop this. Severus wants to mobilize all the empire’s forces against the Parthians and in 202 CE an edict is carried out to stop the growth and evangelism of the Christian community\textsuperscript{121}.

Africans have a welcoming attitude towards various religions, but they have a problem with Christianity because it makes an exclusive claim to be the only truth\textsuperscript{122}. At this time, paganism penetrates all aspects of life. In 197, Carthage enjoys many carnivals but the Christians decline to participate because they will not honor the genius of the Emperor and collaborate in the licentious behavior of the parties\textsuperscript{123}. Furthermore, Christians refuse to participate in, for example, weddings and funerals with pagan rituals and also town councils, games, and ceremonies since they all contain pagan cult practices. In this way, the Christians behave as aliens in the society and people are thus suspicious of them. Rumors begin to spread caused by, among other people, two Africans, Fronton and Apuleius who libel the Christian community. Christians are accused of indecent and disgraceful acts such as incest and killing children. It is these rumors that Tertullian tries to refuse as false\textsuperscript{124}. Quite

\textsuperscript{115} May, “Literature, Biblical and Early Christian”; Timothy David Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study, 1971st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 46. See the full exposition on page 42-48. I will not further engage in this subject because it took place after he wrote Apologeticum

\textsuperscript{116} Ferguson, “Tertullian,” 1; Sider, Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire, xi.

\textsuperscript{117} Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study, 31;34. In relation to the handing over of Apologeticum I will direct to Niels Willert, Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1990), 29-32. This is a Danish book and the title in English is:” Tertullian’s apologia for the Christians”.

\textsuperscript{118} Decret, Early Christianity in North Africa, 1.

\textsuperscript{119} Willert, Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne, 11–12.

\textsuperscript{120} Decret, Early Christianity in North Africa, 5.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 23–24.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 19.

\textsuperscript{123} Barnes, Tertullian, 88.

\textsuperscript{124} Decret, Early Christianity in North Africa, 19–20. Tertullian writes: “Not only shall I refute the charges that are brought against us, but I shall even hurl them back upon those who make them, so that people may thereby know that among the Christians those crimes do not exist which they know exist among themselves;” Apol. 4.1. The quotation is from Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire by Robert Sider. I will primarily use this translation because it is a new and precise translation. Here the most of Apologeticum is found from page 8-70. Sider has omitted some parts of the Apologeticum and in these cases I will use Willert’s translation of the Apologeticum in Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de
the reverse, he contends that these things happen among pagans (Apol. 7-9)\textsuperscript{125}. Consequently, Christians experience persecution at a local level at this time. This is also caused by the fact that the Christians do not maintain pax deorum. They are seen as a threat against society because they refuse to please the gods by worship\textsuperscript{126}. Consequently, Christians become scapegoats for all natural disasters, floods, epidemics, and draughts because they have angered the gods by their impiety (cf. Apol. 40.2)\textsuperscript{127}. Hence, to be a Christian is something that can lead to capital punishment if one not renounces his Christian affiliation\textsuperscript{128}. This is why Apologeticum is addressed to the Roman procurators (see Apol. 1.1)\textsuperscript{129}. Tertullian wants to stop this sporadical persecution of the Christians by informing the procurators that Christianity is a true religion and not a new superstition. He tries to show that Christians are treated unjustly and that the procurators have the responsibility to change this circumstance. Accordingly, Christianity is not captured by the Roman legislative acts and it is not a crime per se (Apol. 2.20). Tertullian is also both missionizing and defending his belief, and at the same time he is polemical towards the pagan belief he has abandoned\textsuperscript{130}. As a result, it may also be Tertullian’s object to reach a wider readership, perhaps even the Emperor. In general, Tertullian wants his readers to understand that his religion should be regarded as the only true religion\textsuperscript{131}.

7.3 The rhetoric in Apologeticum

According to Dunn and Willer, Apologeticum is structured as a forensic speech\textsuperscript{132}. This is because it is both instructive, moving, entertaining, and evoke indignation. Another rhetorical characteristic is that Tertullian is not only defending his faith but also attacks the pagan faith and their inferior moral behavior. Tertullian uses many antithetic allegations to show what he does not believe in and what

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\textsuperscript{125} Willert, “Tertullian,” 250.

\textsuperscript{126} Willert, Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne, 12–13.

\textsuperscript{127} Decret, Early Christianity in North Africa, 20.

\textsuperscript{128} Willert, Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne, 13–14.

\textsuperscript{129} This look like a courtroom scenography, according to Willert, and it seen due to the fact that Tertullian addresses the procurators directly several times (see Willert, “Tertullian”, 254).

\textsuperscript{130} Willert, Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne, 12–15.

\textsuperscript{131} Willert, “Tertullian,” 238–40. Willert also states that it can be argued that Tertullian also is writing to his old pagan fellowship and attempts to elucidate what he now believes in and hope to convince them to follow him. Barnes agrees with Willert and argues that Tertullian writes not only to the Magistrates of the Roman Empire but also to the cultured classes and the learned in general (see Barnes, Tertullian, 109-110;113).

\textsuperscript{132} Dunn, Tertullian, 39; Willert, “Tertullian,” 248. This is debated in research. See an appraisal of the debate about the rhetorical genre in Apologeticum in Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Rhetorical Structure in Tertullian’s Ad Scapulam,” Vigiliae Christ. 56.1 (2002): 48–51.
the pagans do believe in. It is a recurring characteristic of the *Apologeticum* that Tertullian turns the accusation against the Christians towards the pagans. This is a rhetorical ploy called *retorsio*. According to Everett Ferguson, Tertullian is best comprehended as a rhetorician because Tertullian is writing as an advocate to win his arguments. In this way, he chooses the approach most suitable in relation to the issue and the opponents. Consequently, he uses rhetoric because it has a crucial importance for the educated and literate in Rome at his time. Moreover, it can be argued that this work is written in a way that it can be delivered as a speech.

7.4 Tertullian’s rejection of the pagan faith
The faith in the monotheistic God who has created the whole world out of nothing is the point of departure for Tertullian:

> The object of our worship is the one God, who, out of nothing, simply for the glory of his majesty, fashioned this enormous universe with its whole supply of elements, bodies, and spirits, and did so simply by the Word with which he commanded, the Reason by which he arranged, the Power through which he was able to bring it all into being (*Apol. 17.1*).

By this statement, Tertullian combines biblical creation theology with Greek philosophy which believes that the world is held together by an underlying Reason. Tertullian also uses Stoic philosophy when he writes about Logos as the Reason who permeates the universe (*Apol. 21.10*). But he makes it clear that he only worships one God. Previously, Tertullian states that the pagan’s gods are not really gods but just names from deceased humans (*Apol. 12.1*). Tertullian’s first issue is to attack polytheism, according to Osborn, and he does it in seventeen chapters by, among other things, proclaiming a rational monotheism (*Apol. 17.1*) in which Christ is an indispensable part (*Apol. 21*) when someone has recognized Christ as God it is then clear that all other pagan gods are demons. This means that Christians are not guilty of evading worship but rather the Romans are because they do not worship the real God who also is responsible for the Roman Empire’s glory.

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133 Willert, “Tertullian,” 248–49. *Apologeticum* is informing of the Christian faith (*Apol. 17-27*) and at the same time it has an ironic and sarcastic tone (*Apol. 13.4-5*). Tertullian wants to evoke his reader’s indignation by showing how the Christians are treated unjustly (*Apol. 2.2-3*). See also how he classifies the specific rhetorical parts of *Apologeticum* and how he in general divides *Apologeticum* into separate sections on page 248-254.

134 Willert, “Tertullian,” 255.

135 Ferguson, “Tertullian,” 32.


137 Willert, *Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne*, 17.


139 Ibid., 242.

Andreas Sahlholdt Nielsen

(Apol. 17-27). Christians are accused of not worshipping the Emperor and according to Tertullian this accusation is correct because the Emperor is not God but has been given all his power from God and if anyone calls the Emperor God this will evoke the true God’s anger. Christians are, on the contrary, praying to God for the Emperor’s well-being. In this way, it is the Christians who are in fact the emperor’s true supporters (Apol. 28-35)141.

7.5 Tertullian’s views on the pagan reason
Tertullian spurns the pagan gods, but does he believe that they can find God by themselves? Tertullian believes that every human being can acknowledge God through their reason and they consequently have no excuse when they do not know him142. Therefore, it is the highest sin, according to Tertullian, not to recognize God (Apol. 17.3). Willert states that Tertullian teaches natural theology because he believes that God can be proved through nature, history and by the testimony of the soul which is by instinct Christian143. Consequently, Tertullian argues through reason that his religion is the true one. All humans can acknowledge God’s existence because the human soul is by nature Christian, as he states in Apologeticum 17.4-6. Moreover, in Apologeticum 21.24 he states that Pilatus in his inner self is already a Christian because he has acknowledged Christ as God through his reason. Accordingly, it is very rational to worship the one and true God who has created everything. Willert argues that Tertullian is influenced by Stoicism which also believed in natural realization through one's reason144. But this is not the whole picture because at the same time Tertullian makes it clear that the written sources are better guides because here is a fuller revelation of God (Apol. 18.1-2). This is where the one who seeks God can find him and begin to believe.

Sider is in this way accurate when he in Apologeticum sees a distinction between general revelation given in the physical world and in the witness of the soul and a special revelation given through the Hebrew Scriptures145. Furthermore, Tertullian states that “Christians are made, not born!” (Apol. 18.4). It appears as if Tertullian wants to avoid the conclusion that one automatically becomes a Christian146. One can know that there is a God through his work and through the testimony of the

142 Ibid., 242. According to Willert, this is maybe where Tertullian is influenced by the Apostle Paul.
143 Willert, Tertullians forsvars skrift for de kristne, 111.
144 Willert, “Tertullian,” 258. Willert provides other examples that Christianity, per Tertullian, is based on reason (see Willert, “Tertullian”, 258-59). At the same time, Willert is also aware that there are further three other roads to acknowledge God, according to Tertullian: through the Old Testament (Apol. 18-20), through Jesus Christ (Apol. 21), and through the demons who implicitly give evidence to Jesus and God (Apol. 22-23) (see Willert “Tertullian”, 242).
145 Sider, Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire, 36.
146 Barnes supports this point because he states that in De Testimonio Animae Tertullian writes that the soul is not Christian, but it bears witness and lead to Christianity (see Barnes, Tertullian, 113). This verse in Apologeticum can be an
soul, but God is only known fully through Christ (cf. *Apol. 21.28*)\(^{147}\). Osborn argues that, according to Tertullian, all humans know God, but the recognition of God is first completed when one sees him in Christ\(^{148}\). To summarize: “Truth in theology may be reached from common powers (*sensibus*) provided it follows divine dispensation”\(^{149}\). Humans both need their reason and God’s dispensation to fully know him. The natural and divine order are closely combined. It seems as if Osborn emphasizes the natural revelation in his commentary to this subject but at the same time he is aware that God must reveal himself\(^{150}\). In some statements, as seen above, it seems as if Tertullian believes that it is possible to recognize God almost entirely through one’s own reason if one looks closely enough and this means that Tertullian believes in natural theology. But the subsequent verses seem to point to a more balanced picture. At the same time, it is also important to bear in mind that in the rest of *Apologeticum*, Tertullian generally rejects the pagan faith, as seen above, and he is not fond of the people who actually worked with their reason: the philosophers. Here it seems as if Tertullian does not believe in natural theology according to his clear-cut boundary between Christianity and pagan philosophy.

### 7.6 Tertullian’s attack on the philosophers

Because Christianity is the oldest (see below), it is all the other religions and philosophies that have stolen their ideas from the Christians (*Apol. 45.5*)\(^{151}\). Christians are accused of having stolen their virtues from the philosophers, but it is the philosophers who have borrowed their virtues from the Christians. Moreover, the Christians are keeping them so much better than the philosophers (*Apol. 46.8-17*)\(^{152}\). Furthermore, the philosophers believe that the moral obligation is based upon human authority. This means that it can be wrong. Christian morality is based upon a divine revelation and consequently it goes much further in its demands and cannot be a deception (*Apol. 45.2-3*)\(^{153}\).

This leads Tertullian to set up a distinct contrast between the philosophers and the Christians: “So, then, where is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? between the disciple of Greece and of heaven? between the man whose object is frame, and whose object is life? between the talker and the doer?” (*Apol. 46.18*)\(^{154}\). In the end there is actually no similarity between the two

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\(^{149}\) Ibid., 83.

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 80-83.

\(^{151}\) Willert, “Tertullian,” 264.

\(^{152}\) Ibid., 265.

\(^{153}\) Dunn, *Tertullian*, 32.

\(^{154}\) This quotation is from Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 51.
and accordingly it is not possible to compare them to each other because Christianity exceeds the philosophers in every way. Tertullian thinks that the philosophers corrupt the Christian revelation (Apol. 47.9) and David Wright further argues that: “Tertullian is indeed pre-eminently a theologian of revelation and an opponent of all curiositas beyond the church’s rule of faith”\(^\text{155}\). At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that even though Tertullian is critical of philosophy, he does not reject it entirely because he himself makes use of it, especially Stoicism\(^\text{156}\). Still, Tertullian compares the two to show that Christianity is superior in relation to its older age and that it is more rational. This means that Christianity is the real source of the truth (Apol. 47-48). Furthermore, the goal for Tertullian, according to Willert, is to show that Christianity is useful for the community\(^\text{157}\).

7.7 Tertullian’s attempt to win people over
Tertullian has several good arguments of why one should be a Christian. A strong argument for the Christian faith is the life of the Christians. Tertullian argues that Christians have a high moral behavior and with their supportive and loving communities they contribute to holding the Roman Empire together. It is the Romans who are responsible for the natural calamity and political adversity because they do not worship the one and only God and this causes his anger. In this way, it is a loss for society when good Christian citizens are killed (Apol. 36-45)\(^\text{158}\). The Romans need the Christians because without them the Empire will be empty, and the Romans will be terrified in their solitude and there will be more enemies than friends (Apol. 37.7)\(^\text{159}\). Moreover, Tertullian believes that Christ is Logos who should guide Christians to a better life (Apol. 21.7). Here is he fundamentally agreeing with a Stoic idea which says that one must live in accordance with nature, which is a part of Logos\(^\text{160}\). Consequently, Tertullian states the there is no criminals among the Christians (Apol. 44.3). And since the Christians have been a part of the world it has become a better place with fewer disasters due to the believers’ intercession to God (Apol. 40.13)\(^\text{161}\). Tertullian also accentuates the Christian community which is characterized by its generosity because they, among other things, collect for the poor (Apol. 39.6). Additionally, Christians share everything with each other: “So we who have become mingled in mind and soul have no hesi-


\(^{156}\) Ferguson, “Tertullian,” 315:320.

\(^{157}\) Willert, “Tertullian,” 266–67; Willert, *Tertullians forsvarsskrift for de kristne*, 122. Moreover, Tertullian argues that the Christian belief in the resurrection, judgment, Hell, and Paradise is rational and the philosophers have borrowed these ideas (see Willert, “Tertullian,” 266-67).

\(^{158}\) Willert, “Tertullian,” 251–52.

\(^{159}\) Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West*, 74.

\(^{160}\) Willert, “Tertullian,” 260.

\(^{161}\) Ibid., 260–63.
tation about sharing what we have. Everything is in common among us—except our wives.” (Apol. 39.11).

In this way, Tertullian mocks the pagans because they do the opposite of the Christians and consequently have a poorer moral standard. According to Tertullian, the Christians are essentially known for their love: “See, they say, how they love one another, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred” (Apol. 39.7, original italics)\(^\text{162}\). Once again, Tertullian puts a sharp contrast between the pagan way of living and the Christian way.

Tertullian also argues on the basis of Christianity’s utility because it encourages people to live good lives due to the fact that they believe in a final Assize where the worshippers of God will be reward with an eternal life (Apol. 49.2). Such a religion should not be condemned according to Tertullian\(^\text{163}\). Another important argument is that even though Christianity is a new religion (Apol. 37.4), he argues that it is actually old because it belongs to the Jewish tradition (Apol. 19.2) which is much older than any Greek-Roman tradition\(^\text{164}\). This argument is important because the old age is a criterion of truth in the Greek-Roman culture of Tertullian’s time (cf. Apol. 21.1)\(^\text{165}\).

7.8 Tertullian’s views on the pagan traditions

Tertullian makes a clear demarcation between a Greek-Roman culture and his own Christian belief\(^\text{166}\). And by doing this, he proclaims that Christianity is the only true interpretation of the existence and it becomes the fundamental stipulation for the ongoing existence of the Roman Empire\(^\text{167}\). Thus he sticks to his Christian identity and does not compromise with it.

That Tertullian saw a contrast between his faith and the pagan faith is also seen some of his other writings. In Ad Uxorem he uses the word “Gentiles” to refer to the non-Christians which has an entirely negative meaning. The word has the connotation of the blindness and immorality that he associates the pagans with, according to Green\(^\text{168}\).

But at the same time, it is important to remember that Tertullian is not in all ways against his own culture. Tertullian cites many different authors in his writings and for instance he cites thirty differ-

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\(^{162}\) Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 46. This quotation is from Alexander Roberts’ translation of Tertullian’s *Apologeticum*. The pagan expression from the quotation can be understood as a derisive expression as it is remarked on page 46.

\(^{163}\) Sider, *Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire*, 68.

\(^{164}\) Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 33. The understand of Apol. 19.2 is from this translation.


\(^{166}\) Willert, “Tertullian,” 268.

\(^{167}\) Willert, *Tertullians forsvarsfrift for de kristne*, 24-25.

\(^{168}\) Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome*, 128–29.
ent authors in *Apologeticum*, according to Osborn. It is clear that Tertullian is a part of his own time. Through his writings he uses the quotations in different ways, but they generally show a positive attitude towards his own culture. This is also seen in the fact that Tertullian holds the Roman state in high regard.

But when this is said, it is clear that there is one general intention of *Apologeticum*, according to Willert, which is that Tertullian wants his readers to turn away from their ignorance and convert to Christianity because it is the only true “philosophy”. This is a clear similarity to the speech on Areopagus as seen above, which is also a missionary speech.

8.0 Discussion

The final focus of this research report is to conduct a comparative synthesis on Paul and Tertullian in relation to how they react to the pagan faith and how they try to convince the pagans that their faith is the only true one. I will further investigate the fact the Christians are called a “third race”.

8.1 Paul and Tertullian’s responses to the pagan faith

First is it clear that the Lukan Paul and Tertullian are children of their own time and use their “parent” traditions to redefine their own. Thus, they use the pagan culture to proclaim their Christian identity and to argue that it is the only true identity.

Especially Paul makes no secret of the fact that pagans must convert to an entirely new faith. They are stumbling in the dark and they will never know God as he is. Paul tells them about his faith in a Greek-Roman language but only to make sure they understand him. Paul does not tell his audience that they are on the right track because after this he goes on to proclaim that they have to convert to Christianity and abandon their own beliefs entirely.

At the same time, I will argue that the Lukan Paul goes as far he can in terms of contextualizing. Paul makes it clear that the pagans have understood something about the world. They know that there is a God, that they cannot offer anything to this God, and he does not live in a temple. But this is where the the parallels end. Paul rejects the Athenians’ etiological legend; they will never find the true God even if they look closely like the Stoics believe. Paul quotes their authorities but only to give them a new meaning. Moreover, the climax in the speech is when Paul proclaims the resurrection, and this is against beliefs in Athens. The whole setting also shows that this speech is a break

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Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West*, 32–34. Barnes agrees and elaborates that Tertullian draws on the culture he lives in and “took all that he can use from his Greek predecessors” (Barnes, *Tertullian*, 107). See also a full list of all the writings Tertullian alludes to on page 108-109. See also Wright, “Tertullian”, 1036.


with the pagan faith because it must be seen in connection to verse 16 when Paul dissociates himself from the many gods of the pagans. Consequently, Paul according to Luke, is only ostensibly complimentary towards the pagans in verse 22. In verse 27, Paul makes it clear that God must reveal himself because otherwise they will not know him, and this contrasts with what is commonly believed. I will consequently argue that the whole speech is in stark contrast to pagan beliefs. In the end, there is no doubt that Paul is polemic against the pagan faith and he calls for them to repent.

Both Tertullian and Paul combine their statement about God as the creator with Greek-Roman philosophy. In this way, Paul and Tertullian use philosophy but at the same time they are critical of it because it will never lead to the truth in itself.

A decisive difference between Paul and Tertullian in this regard is that Tertullian is more positive towards the notion that reason can acknowledge God. Both agree that there is a specific revelation from God, but it seems as if Tertullian emphasizes the natural revelation much more than Paul does. In this way, he is much more positive in relation to the human reason and what it can achieve. Consequently, one can argue that he advocates for natural theology. When this is said, it is also important to bear in mind that he is also critical of the human reason in relation to the philosophers. I will, however, argue that Tertullian seems to think that the pagans are on the right track in relation to their reason. They just have to start to listen to their soul who is already Christian. In this way Tertullian encourages his listeners to use their reason because then they will begin to understand the Christian faith. This is not something Paul says. In this way, Tertullian has a stronger confidence in the human reason than Paul.

At the same time, it is also clear that Tertullian rejects the pagan faith. He does not compromise with his own faith, but clearly proclaims that there is only one true God and consequently all others so-called gods are in fact demons. Furthermore, Christians do not honor the genius of the Emperor because he is no god, but only human. Tertullian makes it clear that his audience should not trust the philosophers since they do not hold the truth given that the only true knowledge they possess is stolen from the Christians and subsequently contorted.

In the end, both Paul and Tertullian are clear about their Christian identity and they are also missionaries who try to convince others to be a part of their identity.

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172 Of course, one has to be aware that Tertullian’s text is much longer and therefore he has more space to develop his ideas.
8.2 Paul and Tertullian’s persuasion strategies

I will argue that because Paul and Tertullian speak a pagan language they get their listeners attention. Both Tertullian and the Lukan Paul use philosophical language that people at this time are familiar with. They especially use Stoic thinking and this is a clever move because this philosophy is well-reputed and well known at the time of both Paul and Tertullian. By contextualizing their message in this way, they both establish a common ground with their readers. In this way they show that they are familiar with their own time and that the message they want to bring is relevant to this time.

For Paul, an important argument why his listeners should convert is that Jesus has resurrected. This is a polemic argument because it is not something the pagans can believe in. Here is Tertullian more accommodating because he argues on the basis of pagans’ values and shows that Christianity is better according to these values. Hence, Tertullian has two good arguments of why the Christian faith is the right. The first is his historical argument where he shows that his beliefs are the oldest and consequently the truest. Secondly, he also wants the pagans to realize that the Christians are living more morally correct lives than the pagans and in this way they must believe in something better than the pagans. Hence, it is both a critique of the pagan faith because it cannot live up to the Christian faith and at the same time Tertullian wants his readers to understand that they can have a better life if they convert. Both Tertullian and Paul use rhetorical means so that they may convince the pagans.

Luke uses ethos and tries to show that Paul is a credible person. He does this by identifying Paul with Socrates. Also, Tertullian writes in a philosophical and rhetorical way so that his readers may see him as a trustworthy person because he masters the important skills at this time. In this way, both the Lukan Paul and Tertullian tries to appeal to their audience by use of their linguistic proficiency and want them to know that it is wise to trust these competent and trustworthy persons. By establishing an ethos in their rhetoric, they want their readers to acknowledge that their beliefs and proclamations also must be trustworthy.

Moreover, they also appeal to the readers and listeners by logos. They both show their belief in one God on the basis of the commonly acknowledged philosophy at this time which in both cases primary is the Stoic philosophy. In this way, they argue that it is reasonable to believe in their God.

Another common characteristic of the two writings is that they both use pathos to affect the readers. Paul is doing it in the end with an indirect appeal. According to Willert, Tertullian also uses this appeal because he finishes his work by proclaiming that the Christians will be resurrected and that
their death is a testimony so that others will begin to follow them. Tertullian then makes it clear that when Christians are condemned by the procurators they are acquitted by God. In this way, Tertullian appeals to the procurators by trying to move them (Apol. 50)\textsuperscript{173}. Furthermore, Tertullian states that his faith is more important than his life, and he is willing to die for this case. Tertullian here claims that this is a testimony that convinces people who see this martyrdom (Apol. 50.15).

In this way, they both use rhetorical ploys to persuade the listeners to convert because it is both a trustworthy, logical, and moving message. On the other hand, they do not compromise with their own faith but state that their audience is wrong, and they need to believe in their God because it is the only truth. Thus, the Christians, per Tertullian and Paul, stand apart from the Greek-Roman world as another religion or race. The Christians are in fact described as a “third race” because of their different religious practices by the pagans in antiquity, according to Mark Edward\textsuperscript{174}.

8.3 A “third race”

To see Christians as a “third race” can be a an exact way to describe it. This means that they are separated from the Greek-Roman and Jewish beliefs. This can further cause that they are to be recognized as a third legitimate religion. At some point, this is what Tertullian attempts when he wants the Romans to recognize his faith as legitimate. At the same time, it is also clear that Tertullian wants more than just his faith to be recognized as lawful because he wants it to be seen as the only true faith.

Some Christians see the term “third race” as positive because it means that they are a new race outside the normal expectations and originally this division between three races (Roman, Jewish, and Christian) is an attempt to establish legitimate differences between the groups. However, Tertullian resists trying to define people in terms of their ritual practices. Tertullian is against it because the term at this time in practice is used against Christians and they are implicitly not seen as fully human according to him. Thus, it is a hierarchical ranking of identities where the Christians are in the bottom because they do not have a temple nor sacrifices and, accordingly, they are in a bad position compared to the Jews. Consequently, because of their lack of religious practices, the Christians are not seen as people at all\textsuperscript{175}. This is also evident in the Apologeticum where Tertullian proclaims that the Christians actually are humans: “For a Christian, too, is a human being even as you are” (Apol. 8.5). This statement is necessary for Tertullian because he opposes the condescending notion that

\textsuperscript{173} Willert, “Tertullian,” 254.
\textsuperscript{174} Edwards, “Apologetics,” 551.
Christians are *tertium genus* which lead to the consequence that they are not real people. In this way, Tertullian is not fond of the word because it is used to discriminate against the Christians and alludes to Christians not being real people compared to the Romans.

### 9.0 Conclusion

Both Paul’s speech on Areopagus and Tertullian’s *Apologeticum* proclaim the same monotheistic God and, consequently, that all of the pagan gods are false. The pagans are not on the right track and therefore Paul proclaims the God who they never will find on their own. Tertullian, however, is more positive towards the pagan reason and states that it can find God. The pagans can with their reason get on the right track, but they still need God’s revelation. But in the end, Paul and Tertullian agree that the pagans must convert from their ignorance because the Christian faith is the only true faith. It is clear that the Lukan Paul and Tertullian contextualize their belief in every way possible to get the audience’s attention and to show that their faith is not utterly strange. At the same time, both Paul and Tertullian stick to their Christian identity and do not compromise with it. From this standpoint, they use rhetorical argumentation to convince the pagans that their faith is both trustworthy, logical, and moving. Paul argues more polemically that his faith is true while Tertullian shows that his faith meets the pagan’s requirements. So, their contextualization is slightly different. This leaves me with one final question:

### 10.0 What can we learn?

Even though there are roughly 150 years between Tertullian and Paul, they both agree that their faith in God is the only true faith. At the same time, they contextualize this faith as much as they can by using pagan thoughts and language, but without compromise with it. They do not avoid mentioning what they believe even though it is inappropriate. In this way it is clear that mission at this time, according to Paul and Tertullian, is all about contextualisation because this is the way to be understood and heard, and at the same time it is equally important to remain faithful to one’s Christian identity.

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176 Willert, *Tertullianus forsvarsskrift for de kristne*, 104.
Bibliography


