Yale
DIVINITY SCHOOL
Yale Bible Study

The Book of Acts
Co-Operative Ministry

Interpreting the Text:

1. This section of Acts seems to have some significant historical data. How important is it for our understanding of early Christianity to uncover and confirm such data? How important is it to us to classify Acts as a work of history? Does our answer say more about us or about Acts?

2. The persecution of Christians in Ephesus due to the disturbance of the economic order comes up in fits into a more encompassing theme in Luke's Gospel as well. Can you recall other texts in Luke or Acts that offer a similar perspective? Why does Luke find these stories so important in capturing the history of the church?

3. The account in Acts of the departure speech of Paul to the elders of Ephesus seems to presuppose a certain kind of church order. How does the organization of the church here compare with other accounts in the New Testament?

Applying the Text:

1. Paul's speech to the elders of Ephesus warns against various threats to the Christian community. Do any of these warnings speak to our current church?

2. This section of Acts includes a number of details that are traceable through the historic record, but also may have taken creative liberties in drawing on Greek and Roman literature. How does the historical accuracy affect your relation to this text as part of scripture?