

# **The Areopagus Speech of Saint Paul: Prototype of Modern Interreligious Dialogue or Biblical Witness for Christian Chresis?**

*Heinz-Lothar Barth, Bonn*

## *Abstract:*

Since some decades it has become usual to refer oneself to the Areopagus speech of St. Paul as a model for modern interreligious dialogue, where the Christian part offers esteem to the representatives of other religions. The present contribution, however, underlines the fact that the apostle of the gentiles is only interested in mission: in order to lead people from other beliefs to the true God, Paul refers to their culture, insofar he cites (by using some ambiguity) texts from pagan experience. At the same time, the apostle himself and his narrator Luke don't leave any doubt that they consider pagan religion, as a whole, an erroneous way, even if there are some elements of truth: redemption and salvation come only from Jesus Christ who will judge the whole world. The invitation to conversion is accepted only by few Athenians.