

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE: CULTURE, FICTIVE KINSHIP AND IDENTITY IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

Dirk G. van der Merwe

University of South Africa

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate the domestic architecture of the First Epistle of John. It seems that the author has used family metaphors to make the invisible (Father) visible in the community and also to characterise this early Christian community. Group orientation, also spelled out in terms of kinship, which appears to be the *main social construction* in the first-century Mediterranean world, was the driving force behind this research. This orientation together with the social identity theory, pioneered by Henri Tajfel, has been applied to the situation depicted in this epistle to characterise the identity of this Johannine group.

1 Introduction

Just more than a decade ago Jerome Neyrey (1995:156–7) expressed the need for further studies of fictive kinship. He defines this as “the ways in which the first Christians regarded and treated each other as ‘family’”. Two years later Halvor Moxnes (1997:1) made a nuanced related statement that “... although ‘family’ is such an important topic in Christianity, there have been few comprehensive studies of family in early Christianity”. Since these statements a number of publications have followed on “the family in early Christianity”.¹ This research also aims at making a contribution to this subject, albeit from a metaphorical discourse perspective.

This study is a critical enquiry (using socio-cultural, literary and theological perspectives) into the character and identity of the hypothetical Johannine community towards the end of its existence. We will examine how the author of the First Epistle of John (hereafter referred to as the Elder) used family metaphors² to describe the identity of this community in order to identify the *pater familias* whom they have never seen, but whom they worship.

This research will start with an investigation into the key socio-cultural feature of the first-century Mediterranean world, namely group orientation. This feature will be applied to the Johannine community to explore the identity of this community and

life in the community as a fictive family. The social identity theory of Henri Tajfel will be used to show how the Elder describes the identity of the community in order to characterise the God they worshipped.

2 Modelling Mediterranean Culture

This first section examines what probably is the most important social aspect relating to how the people of the first-century Mediterranean world lived. This provides a setting for the rest of the research.

2.1 Groups and Familism

In his study of first-century Mediterranean people, Malina (1996:64) concluded that these people were strongly group-embedded, collectivistic persons.³ Malina (1982, 1986, 1993), Esler (2000:147), Harland (2003) and others have pointed out what prevailing group identity, real kinship and fictive kinship relations were like in this world – such relations fully determined the identities of individuals. These people were socially minded, and attuned to the values, attitudes and beliefs of their in-group. Individual behaviour was constituted and regulated by the community or the group to which such a person belonged.

For societies that are group-oriented, the major group or the dominant institution tends to be the family (cf. Esler 2000:151; Guijarro 1997:43). Although many other kinds of groups existed, including trade associations, army units, and so on, the basic social distinction in the society was the one between kin and non-kin. Among a person's kin (insiders) there were strong bonds of affection, co-operation and sharing of available resources. Towards non-kins (outsiders) an attitude of suspicion and competition prevailed.

In the New Testament, Jesus groups are also described from a strongly “group-embedded, dyadic,⁴ collectivistic perspective”,⁵ conceiving of themselves as forming, metaphorically speaking, “the household of God” (*familia Dei*).⁶ Being aware that the family metaphor is involved here, it is necessary to bring together questions about metaphoric language and the dynamics of family life. Let us first explore the use of metaphoric language in early Christianity.

2.2 Family Metaphorics in Early Christianity

To describe the existential reality of being and living as a Christian in the first century CE, early Christian authors used the most intimate social phenomenon in the ancient world, namely “the family” (cf. Van der Watt 1999:494).⁷ The authors employ the language of kinship from their surrounding cultures in relation to them and their readers and in relation to the God they worship.⁸ This concerns both the distinctive features of Mediterranean family life and also the various ways in which they utilise such features

in seeking to develop and maintain a positive group identity. In so doing they want to distinguish their readers from the negatively valued out-groups (Esler 2000:167).

They define and describe the kind of fellowship that should be constituted and should exist in this Christian community, by applying the best of what they know about earthly families to the relationship between true believers communally and between these believers corporately with their God (cf. Tollefson 1999:85).

2.3 The Household Metaphor in the First Epistle of John

When reading 1 John it becomes apparent how the Elder uses a coherent network of metaphors,⁹ related to the social reality of first-century family life (cf. Van der Watt 1999:491; Lassen 1997:103; Moxnes 1997), to explain fundamental Christian concepts, identity¹⁰ and ethical matters. *The Elder incorporated widely accepted conventions from everyday family life and applied them to what happens in the community. He used generally accepted ideas on family life to explain what the Christian life in the community comprises.*¹¹ By way of doing this he rhetorically tries to activate the social dynamic of the interrelatedness between a father and his child in the mind of the first-century reader (cf. Van der Watt 1992:272–9). Fortunately, the images referring to certain social aspects are developed in the text itself.

The Elder extends this motif when he portrays the Christian life of fellowship¹² in the Johannine community as existence in a family (Van der Watt 2000:157, 161–394; cf. Rusam 1993:105ff.; Van der Watt 1999:494ff.; Van der Merwe 2005:443f.),¹³ the *familia Dei*,¹⁴ where God is the Father (1:2, 3)¹⁵ and the head. Jesus is the only Son of the Father (4:9)¹⁶ and the believers are “children of God” (τέκνα θεοῦ, 3:1–2, 10; 5:2)¹⁷. Although there is no direct reference to the “Spirit of God” as in 1 John (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:2f.) it is clear from the texts of reference that it is the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit, 14:26)¹⁸ which constitutes the presence of the Father (1 John 4:13; 3:24) in the *familia Dei*. By doing this the Elder brings the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and believers into fellowship like that of an extended earthly family (cf. Tollefson 1999:88).

2.4 Conclusion

This investigation abundantly confirms that the first-century Mediterranean Christians were strongly group-embedded, collectivistic people. In 1 John the Elder explains the relationships and conduct in this new corpus of Christian believers.

By reminding the Johannine community of their fictive kinship, of their common identity,¹⁹ and the values, conduct and doctrine that set them apart from other groups (the deceivers) in their society, the Elder entrenches their identity as a group, and serves to continue to regulate social (ethical) behaviour in this group. This injunction by the Elder and his paraenesis serves to strengthen their identity and unity in a world which seems somewhat hostile towards them. The rest of this study will revolve around how he depicts the identity of this corpus.

3 Kinship and Christian Identity in the Johannine Community

The social identity theory of Henri Tajfel will be utilised to determine the identity of this group.

3.1 Social Identity Theory of Henri Tajfel

The socio-cultural aspects just considered (group orientation) relate to the primary level of socialisation of people across the Mediterranean and ancient world. Yet in 1 John the Elder is addressing the same audience of a particular type within this larger context, namely the *Johannine community*, a community of Christ-followers who were in various ways in a state of tension with other people and groups in the surrounding environment. The particular identity and status of these Christ-followers as members of the Johannine community and as members of the *familia Dei* suggest that the social-scientific theory of Henry Tajfel, who can be regarded as one of the pioneers of this theory, might be useful to explicate the identity of this group in the Gospel of John.²⁰

The crucial question regarding a social psychological approach to the subject relates to how, and through what psychological processes, a community or a particular group manages to install itself in the minds and hearts of individuals in order to affect their behaviour. An important point conceived by Tajfel is that a group needs to establish a positively valued distinctiveness from other groups. The rationale behind this is to provide the members of the in-group with a positive social identity. The members of these in-groups will then learn who they are. They will develop an appreciation for this, and be perceptive of the ways in which they were differentiated from out-groups. The empirical stimulus for this view lies in research that indicates that the categorising of people to belong to a specific group leads to social comparison with other groups. Such a comparison will then result in significant forms of group behaviour. The members in the group will favour one another while they will discriminate against members of out-groups (cf. Esler 2000:158f.).

Tajfel interpreted this process as a concern to establish a “social identity”, which refers to that part of a person’s self-understanding which derives from the belonging to groups (1978:63, 67). He defines social identity as “that *part* of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (1978:63).

The basic hypothesis, then, is to evaluate a group positively through in-group/out-group comparisons. This leads groups to attempt to differentiate themselves from each other (see Tajfel 1978:61–76; Turner 1978:235f.; Austen 1979:41). Hence, according to Tajfel’s definition there are at least three classes (dimensions) of variables that should influence intergroup differentiation or identity in concrete social situations:

1. the cognitive dimension: refers to the simple recognition of belonging²¹
2. the evaluative dimension: refers to the positive or negative connotations of belonging²²
3. the emotional dimension: refers to the attitudes, such as love and hate, which members hold towards insiders and outsiders²³ (see Esler 2000:159)

The application of this theory of Tajfel to 1 John necessitates examining what the Elder must have thought to maintain the distinctive identity of this community/family in each of the cognitive, evaluative and emotional dimensions in this congregation.

This theory will now be applied to discover the type of identity the Elder may have recommended to the Johannine community.

3.2 Kinship Imagery and Identity in the Johannine Community

Central to the theory of Tajfel is the extent to which humans derive a sense of identity from belonging to a group. In the particular group they then develop ways of differentiating their in-group from negatively regarded out-groups. He clearly explains the extent to which the oppression of a group contributes to strengthen the sense of belonging to the group. In 1 John the Elder utilises such ill-treatment of Christ-followers as a prototypical experience for the in-group in Ephesus.²⁴ The oppression implied throughout the document will force members to act according to their membership and implied character.

We will now apply the different elements of “social identity theory” to how the Elder depict the Johannine community as a fictive family, as the *familia Dei*, in order to distinguish them from out-groups. In this effort of identification it will become evident how the character of the Father becomes illustrious.

3.2.1 The Cognitive Dimension

According to Tajfel the “cognitive dimension” refers to the simple recognition of belonging. “Individuals must have internalized their group membership as an aspect of their self-concept: they must be subjectively identified with the relevant in-group” (Austen 1979:41). The Elder articulates to his readers this cognitive dimension, the sense of belonging to the Johannine community. In this dimension the research will focus on the identity of the constituents of this family.

3.2.1.1 Knowing the Father²⁵

Kinship language begins already in the prologue in verses 2 and 3 with the references to the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).²⁶ “Father” is the most common designation of God in 1 John. The readers know the Father through the description of His character and the lifestyle in which they should partake.

In 1 John God is depicted as the Father (1:2, 3; 2:14, 15, 22–25; 3:1), as the *pater familias*. He is depicted as the head of the family. The nature of the Father determines the new status and rules of conduct to which His newborn children have to conform. The Elder characterises Him to be light (ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν, 1:5), righteousness ([ὁ θεὸς] δίκαιός ἐστίν, 2:29) and love (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν, 4:8, 16).²⁷ As the one who cannot be seen (4:12, 20), He is the One who is in command. He knows everything (3:20). He creates κοινωνία, enabling them to be part of this new family (2:25; 3:14–15; 5:11–13). He gives eternal life through his Son (1:2, 4:9; cf. also 4:11, 14) and to his children. He forgives His children when they confess their sins (1:9). The Father lives with and in His children by way of the Spirit (3:24). The Father takes care of His family through His Spirit. Therefore, His children have to take on His character.

3.2.1.2 *Knowing the Son (of God)*

In 1 John familial terminology refers to Jesus as the Son of God.²⁸ In 4:9 Jesus is referred to as the *only*²⁹ Son of the Father and in 1:1–2 Jesus is eternal life personified (1:1–2). He is without sin (3:5). He is also referred to in functional terms (Van der Watt 1999:502) in relation to God’s children: therefore through him (his blood) people are cleansed from all sin (1:7). He is the believer’s atoning sacrifice (ἰλασμός, 2:2) and advocate (παράκλητος, 2:1) with the Father. He is righteous (Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον, 2:1). He is pure (ἐκεῖνος ἄγνός ἐστιν, 3:3). As the truth (5:20), he reveals (1:1) in order to give understanding (5:20). He restores broken κοινωνία.³⁰ He gives God’s children understanding to know Him who is true (5:20). Therefore, the children of God have to believe in the Son and follow him. They are commanded by the Elder, in his usage of the emphatic subordinating comparative particle καθὼς, juxtaposed to the adverb οὕτως, to live as Jesus lived: καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς [οὕτως] περιπατεῖν (2:6).

3.2.1.3 *Knowing themselves (the children of God)*

The family metaphor is further strengthened by the Elder when he refers to his adherents as “(little) children or children of God”³¹ and also in terms of “brothers”³² (also the frequent occurrence of the preposition with the pronoun μετ’ ἀλλήλων³³ – with one another).

The description of the Johannine community as children of God has been extensively elaborated on in the epistle. The adherents of the Elder were depicted as “the children of God” (3:1, 2, 10). They are born of God (2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 18) and in 3:9 it is said that “God’s seed” abides in them. Thus they are attached to God by birth, to the Son by faith and confession and to the Spirit by truth. The community of mutual love is none other than an expression of a mutual abiding (μένειν)³⁴ with God the Father. God’s children abide in Him and He in them (3:24; 4:13, 16).

Another main area of (fictive) kinship language in 1 John consists of the frequent use of “brothers” (ἀδελφοί). On a number of occasions³⁵ he directly addresses his readers as ἀδελφοί³⁶. The extent of such fictive sibling language in such a short letter is

very impressive. He seeks that the members treat one another as brothers should. Thus the Elder is endorsing a fictive kinship within the community which is imbued with the ideal characteristics of actual kinship in Mediterranean culture. The Elder is both advocating a particular identity for his Johannine Christ-followers as well as bringing out some specific features which consist of certain behavioural norms.

The behaviour of God's children has to relate to the social behaviour (rules and values) of the family into which they are born. "Family life" implies specific ethical conduct. Therefore, the Elder insists upon a correspondence between internal state and external behaviour. The Elder is playing particularly on the Greco-Roman image that children are extensions of their father's character.³⁷ Children are of the same essence as their father, and children will exhibit a character that is indicative of their origins.³⁸ They should act according to their status and knowledge.³⁹

3.2.1.4 Knowing the Spirit of God

According to the Elder, this new existence of the believer as an existence in the *familia Dei* can be experienced in a concrete way by the Holy Spirit who applies to God's children the redemptive work of the Father and the Son (2:20). The Spirit becomes the guiding influence in the lives of God's children (2:20–7; 5:7), influencing their conduct. It is the Spirit that influences and leads these children to act right (δικαίως – 2:29; 3:7, 12; cf. also 3:10), to walk just as Jesus walked (2:6). The Spirit will give God's children knowledge (οἶδατε – 2:20). The Spirit witnesses to this truth (5:6a) and will guide these children in the truth (5:6) (see also Von Wahlde 1990:126ff.). The purpose of the multiple references to the work of the Spirit by the Elder is to convince the readers that they, as children of God, have no excuse not to become Father-like. They are anointed by the Spirit (2:27).

3.2.1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that in using the family metaphor the Elder tried to strengthen "familial associations" to rhetorically express and bring about "familial responsibilities and conduct". Such familial responsibilities and conduct are expressed by the Elder in terms of "life as existence in the family".

3.2.2 The Evaluative Dimension: The Significance of the Family

According to Tajfel the "evaluative dimension" refers to the positive or negative connotations of belonging. "The social situation must be such as to allow for intergroup comparisons that enable the selection and evaluation of the relevant relational attributes" (Austen 1979:41).

Central to this are group norms (cf. Brown 1988:42–8). Such norms are a scale of values which defines a range of acceptable and unacceptable definitive principles (doctrines), attitudes and behaviour of the group's members, in our case the family members. It co-ordinates and regulates behaviour and covers issues such as ideologies and

traditions. It also assists the members of the particular group/family to act appropriately in new and ambiguous situations. Hence, such norms maintain and enhance the identity of the group/family (Brown 1988:251).

The norms and connotations of the *familia Dei* will now briefly be investigated as depicted in 1 John. For the Elder to distinguish this community from other groups the text includes (1) *dualistic concepts* (in 1 John these concepts are spelled out in terms of dialectic discourse); (2) *confession about Jesus*: the confession in the epistle that Christ is the Son of God incarnated; (3) *harsh terminology*: the character of the opponents of this *familia Dei* are depicted in terms of harsh expressions through which the opposite of this family has been inferred.

3.2.2.1 Dialectic discourse

Throughout the epistle the Elder makes use of dialectic discourse. *Dialectic discourse* is defined as one kind of rhetorical technique that makes extensive use of antithetical and binary language to persuade or convince others of the element of truth or correctness of one's position that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.⁴⁰

Dialectical discourse makes special use of metaphors referring to transformation or "becoming", to persuade the reader that change is not only possible, but inevitable (Murphy 1971:116). In the case of 1 John, each new dialectical choice becomes an opportunity to guide the reader in the selection of these decisions in life which give a measure of right conduct regarding the ethics of the *familia Dei*.⁴¹ This way of life, according to the Elder, involves to love against to hate, to live a life of righteousness against a life of unrighteousness, and to live in the light against to live in darkness.⁴² *These three characteristics that have been attached to the Father and his Son are now applied to the children of God. This was raised because these three ethical problems occurred in the community, under those who broke away and those who remained loyal to the Elder.* Thus the Elder explains how they should live as children of God. This will distinguish them from other groups.

3.2.2.2 Confession that Jesus is the Son of God or that the Son of God is Jesus

This evaluative dimension of Tajfel which refers to the positive or negative connotations of belonging is also sensible in the confession of the *familia Dei*. The Elder and his opponents differed on the question of whether the man Jesus could be the same person as the divine Christ. For those that left the family, this proposition was unacceptable, since it was radically in conflict with their belief. But for the Elder it was a matter of epistemology, it concerned the main and crucial point of the Christian faith – for the existence of this family as well as the existence *in* the family: "No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23).

"To have the Father" expresses a close and intimate communion with the Father, not the possessing of the Father, of course. Some renderings are, "to be with the Father", or "to be a child of the Father". Only by accepting Jesus Christ who, as man, has been part of this material world, can one "have the Father": that is, have fellowship with

God, the Father of Jesus Christ. This infers that in this *familia Dei*, intimate communion between a child of God and the Father can only take place through the Son, when he is acknowledged to be part of the family.

Those who left the *familia Dei* did not confess that Jesus was the Christ. What is denied here is not a statement, but a person, implying that Jesus is not the Son of God, and consequently not part of the *familia Dei*.

3.2.2.3 Harsh depiction of the opponents of this community (family)

Harsh terminology has been used to depict those outside of this family. Within the framework of this investigation, these opponents can perhaps best be identified through a study of the three key passages: 1 John 2:18–27; 4:1–6 and 2 John 7–11.⁴³ These passages delineate some aspects regarding the background of these opponents of the Elder:

- 2:18 ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γέγονασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.
 4:1 Πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται . ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.
 2 John 7 πολλοὶ πλάνοι ... ἐξῆλθον ... εἰς τὸν κόσμον

In these texts the Elder refers to the fact that in the schism apparently *many* (polloi;) had separated from him and his network of house churches.⁴⁴ It can be deduced that *many* people left the community. Since there is no inference that they left their environment, they could still have influenced the adherents of the Elder.

By *labelling his opponents* as ἀντίχριστοι, ψευδοπροφήται and πλάνοι, the Elder refers to unnamed people who had once been members of the Johannine group, but had subsequently abandoned their association with this group (2:19). Other references in this passage are to “lies” (2:21), “liars” (2:22), and “those who would deceive you” (τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς, 2:26; cf. also 4:6), probably also referring to those who had left the Johannine community. They promoted a religious viewpoint that differed so much from “what they ha[d] heard from the beginning” (cf. 1:1; 2:7, 13, 14, 24) that the Elder regarded it as an unacceptable innovation (Hurtado 2003:408f.). The names “deceiver”, “liar” and “antichrist” seem to focus on the leader(s) of the opponents. His followers are characterised in similar terms (Painter 2002:203). The reference in the plural form, made to the ἀντίχριστοι (2:18), ψευδοπροφήται (4:1) and πλάνοι (2 John 7), should be understood in the light of the impact of the schism and the activities of those who were, according to the Elder, false teachers, false prophets and deceivers.

That “*they went out*” (ἐξῆλθον) implies that they were once part of the community and left of their own accord (Painter 2002:204). The phrase εἰς τὸν κόσμον (4:1; cf. 2 John 7)⁴⁵ is merely another way of stating emphatically that they have left the community and characterises them as opposing those in the community. They are of the world, while those in the community are of God (see 4:1–6).

Throughout 1 John the opponents are vehemently depicted and treated as existing outside the Johannine community⁴⁶ and are (1) labelled according to the deeds they

committed at the ethical level, on account of which they are called murderers (α) ἀνθρωποκτόνος, 3:15; see also 3:12, ἔσφαξεν) who do not love a brother (4:20; also cf. 2:11; 3:15), and at the doctrinal level, on account of which they are depicted as deceivers (2 John 7; also 1 John 2:26; 3:7), antichrists (2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 8), liars (2:22) and false prophets (4:1). (2) These deceivers are also described within specific relationships: concerning the devil they are seen “as children of the devil” (3:8, 10); in relation to God they are depicted “as not from God” (3:10; 4:3, 6), “do not know Him” (God) (3:1), and “do (not) have fellowship with Him” (1:6). Finally they are seen as “to be in the world” (4:5). (3) Metaphorically speaking, in a reciprocal sense, it is said that they walk in the darkness and do not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness (2:11). (4) In what is probably the harshest description of all, it is said that they “do not have life” (5:12; also 3:15) and “abide in death” (3:14). In most of these references the harsh depiction of these opponents is contrasted with the characteristics of the adherents of the Elder (see Van der Merwe 2005:430ff.).

3.2.2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that the Elder characterised the opponents of this group/family very negatively while those who are part of the family are portrayed in clear terms. Social formation took place through the paraenetic utterances. The admonitions towards the opponents strengthened the induction of this family. In 1 John a scale of values was presented to define a range of acceptable and unacceptable attitudes and behaviour of the family members. This was to assist the members of the Johannine family to act appropriately in new and ambiguous situations. These norms enhanced the identity of the family.

3.2.3 The Emotional Dimension: Life in the Family

According to Tajfel, the “emotional dimension” refers to the attitudes, such as love and hate, which members hold towards insiders and outsiders.⁴⁷ One extreme feature of social comparison, common in all groups, is the tendency of the in-group to stereotype out-groups. Within the paradigm of social identity theory, stereotypes are described by Hogg (1988:65) as “... beliefs that all members of a particular group have the same qualities, which circumscribe the group and differentiate it from other groups”. Stereotypes seem often to be associated with the evaluation of groups. There is this tendency to attach positive stereotypes to the describer’s in-group and negative stereotypes to out-groups (Esler 2000:162).⁴⁸ This would infer that in the in-group members will love and honour one another.

3.2.3.1 Love in the family

Quite a number of times the children of God’s family are called to love one another. The phrase “let us love *one another*” occurs throughout the epistle.⁴⁹ Here love seems to be the *sine qua non*⁵⁰ for the ethics of the Johannine community⁵¹ (cf. Schnackenburg

1992:217). In 1 John the believer's subject of love is indicated as ἀλλήλους⁵² (one another). More important than the number of uses of ἀλλήλους is the concentration of the command to ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους (*love one another*).⁵³

In 1 John the Elder exhorts love for one another because "love is from God" (4:7) and "God loved us so much" (4:11). The fundamental action of the Father is in sending his Son as the expiation of sins (4:10; cf. also 4:9, 14). The obligation is grounded in the loving action of the Father in the Son and is expressed in the love command (ἐντολή).⁵⁴ Therefore, according to Painter (2002:101), "those who bear the message of that love assert that acceptance of the message is the means by which the love of the Father becomes effective, creating community (κοινωνία): 1 John 1:3, 6, 7. Community with the Father does not bypass community with the children of God, and that community is expressed in love for one another."⁵⁵

3.3 Conclusion

The application of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory on the circumstances of the hypothetically constructed Johannine community helped the reader to get a better idea of the identity of the in-group of this community to which the Elder in the Johannine narrative refers as the children of God. The application and interpretation of Tajfel's cognitive, evaluative and emotional dimensions also help the reader indirectly to get an idea of the character of the Father who is the head of this virtual family.

4 Family Metaphorics Used to Talk about God

4.1 "Nobody Has Ever Seen God"

This last section links up with the conclusion of the "Introduction". Nowhere in the New Testament are there any references such as "nobody has ever seen God". This phrase and related nuanced references occur only in the Johannine writings as many as nine times. Of all the NT books, the family metaphor has been developed mostly in the Johannine literature. These two unique phenomena are certainly not coincidental. Metaphors are used to describe the unknown in terms of the known. This implies that the metaphor is used to construct meaning metaphors (Schroots, Birren and Kenyon 1991:2; cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5). Therefore, the Elder has purposefully made use of the family metaphor to talk about the deity "whom nobody has ever seen", but in whom they believe and whom they worship. Even the heartbeat of the First Epistle of John is a matter of theology and not ethics or Christology. Everything said about the Son, the children of God, and even the opponents in 1 John revolves around the identity of God, the Father, who is depicted by the Elder as "God is Light; God is Righteous; God is Love".

The denial that anyone had seen God is inserted in the following texts:⁵⁶

“θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται ...” (No one has ever seen God, 1 John 4:12);

“...τὸν θεὸν ὃν οὐξ ἑώρακεν (God whom they have not seen, 1 John 4:20)⁵⁷.

See also the texts from the Gospel of John:

“Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε:....(No one has ever seen God, 1:18);

οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἑώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.

(Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God, 6:46);

οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἑώρακατε

(His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, 5:37);

Δείξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα

(Show us the Father? 14:9).

In the tradition of John 1:18, the Elder also denies that anyone has seen God: “No one has ever seen God (4:12)”.⁵⁸ The Elder confirms this further in 4:20, “God whom they have not seen”. There are no exceptions to who has seen God (“no one”), and there are no exceptions to the time frame (“has ever”).

It is more likely that the denial is made to make clear that the only means of seeing God, according to the FG, was in the revelation in the Son.⁵⁹ This revelation brought honour to the Father (17:1–4). This is the point in John 14:8–11. It is also fundamental in 1 John 4:7–12 that the love of the Father (God) is made known in the Son. The alternative to seeing God, now according to the Elder (and the FE), is “if we love one another”. The point I want to make is that both cases call “the family” image to the fore (see also 4:20). He, the Father, can be seen, however, within the *familia Dei*, in the lives of those who live as Jesus lived (1 John 2:6), for example to demonstrate the love of the Father to others.⁶⁰ Differently stated, in his depiction of the identity of the community as the children of God, the Elder depicts the identity of the Father.

4.2 Conclusion

It seems as if the Elder used the family metaphor to converse about the God whom they have not seen. To talk about this deity obviously has revelatory and ethical implications. Therefore, this community who believes in Him and wants to honour Him must have a certain identity which has been explained and described in family dynamics. For the Elder, the identity of the *familia Dei* is a description of who this deity is and what it means to stand in a relationship with Him.

5 Conclusion

In this essay I tried to indicate how the family concept has been used metaphorically as a strategy by the early Christians in order to make the invisible visible for them and to identify the Johannine community as a *familia Dei*. On the one hand, metaphor was

used to describe that which is by definition unknowable, the divine. On the other hand, it was used to describe how members, associated with one another, have to behave towards one another. In 1 John (and the Fourth Gospel) these two functions of metaphor frequently converge. The Elder used the conventional constituents of family life but innovatively adapted and developed it, according to his theological convictions, to fit his dynamics of the *familia Dei* and his conception of who God is.

NOTES

- 1 See Moxnes (1997); Osiek (1996); Osiek & Balch (1997); Guijarro (1997); Van der Watt (2000); De Silva (2000); Van Henten & Brenner (2000) as a result of the colloquium at Leuven. There were also a few other publications prior to 1995: Cosby (1988); Carter (1994); Barton (1994); cf. also Malina et al (1995).
- 2 The description of family metaphors in the first part of this article relates closely to my 2009 publication: Family metaphors: a rhetorical tool in the Epistle of 1 John, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 20:89–108.
- 3 A member of a particular kinship or fictive kinship group could not show any allegiance to any other group (Ἐδὺ ἐῖπωμεν ..., 1:6, 8, 10; ὁ λέγων ..., 2:4, 6, 9; εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ..., 4:20). See also Van der Watt (2000:161–394).
- 4 See Malina & Neyrey 1993:67–96.
- 5 When looking at Robbins' (1996:101) definition of a corporate group, the Johannine community relates closely to it: "A corporate group is a body with a permanent existence: a collection of people recruited on recognized principles, with common interests and rules (norms), fixing rights and duties of the members in relation to one another and to these interests."
- 6 See Van der Watt (2000:31, 38, 81, 161–394, especially 209, 406–411) on cohesion and integration in the Johannine community; cf. also Käsemann (1978:56ff.) on expressions of family unity that are typically of the Fourth Gospel.
- 7 According to Berger and Luckmann (1966:120), part of the function of paraenetic utterances is social formation, where admonitions are made to strengthen the induction "of an individual into the objective world of a society or sector of it". This is exactly what the Elder is doing; he is reminding his adherents of the shared common values of their particular group that set them apart from the group of deceivers.
- 8 Lassen (1997:114f.) stated in his comparison between the Roman family and the family used as metaphor in Christianity that "Roman family metaphors were in many respects dissimilar to the metaphorical family introduced by the first Christians. Whereas the Roman family signalled, first and foremost, hierarchical power relationships, the family metaphors as used by the first Christians did not primarily support a hierarchical order on earth. When in the Gospels, to take the most prominent Christian texts, family metaphors were used to describe inter-human relationships, their function was primarily to create equality and a new sense of belonging. From the point of view of pagan Romans, then, there was a contrast between the Roman use of family metaphors, most often conveying authority, and the family metaphors used by the first Christians, expressing equality." In his introduction to his book *Constructing early Christian families*, Moxnes (1997:1–2) briefly points out the fundamental distinction between kinship and fictive kinship, between reality and metaphor in this area.

- 9 Metaphorical language forms an important part of any culture (Lassen 1997:103). Its main function is to “provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:154).
- 10 It is at this point that Esler put me on the track of Henri Tajfel’s social identity theory from a social psychological perspective. This is just one aspect of the way in which an in-group (in this context the family) maintains a positive identity for itself by generating a negative picture of outsiders and stereotyping them as untrustworthy.
- 11 Achtemeier, Green and Thompson (2001:547) assert that the family imagery may provide useful evidence regarding the internal structure and organisation of the Johannine community. This implies that the Johannine community would have understood exactly what the Elder was trying to communicate.
- 12 Alongside “to have fellowship with God”, which is only found in 1:3 and 6, one of the most common phrases is “to be in God” (ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν, 2:5; 5:20) or “to abide” (μένειν, 2:6, 24; 3:24; 4:13, 15, 16). This combination with the typical word μένειν is usually expanded (except in 2:6, 24) into a twofold or reciprocal formula (“we in God and God in us”) or vice versa. Another expression of fellowship with God found only in 1 and 2 John is “to have the Father” (τὸν πατέρα ἔχει) or “the Son” (ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱόν, 1 John 2:23; 5:12; 2 John 9). “To know the Father” (ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα) comes down to the same thing (2:3 [cf. 2:5]; 2:13, 14 [cf. 1:3]). Believers are also indicated to be “of God” (ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, 3:10; 4:4, 6; 5:18f.). God also abides in believers through His Spirit that He has given them (μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν, 2:3; 3:24). See also Lieu 1991:31–48; Schnackenburg 1992:190f.
- 13 Esler (2000:148) points out that neither in Greek nor in Latin was there even a word that corresponded to our word “family”, although οἶκος in Greek and *domus* in Latin refer to the house and the household. This concept is also found in Galatians and 1 Thessalonians in the New Testament (Esler 1997:121ff.; 2000:145ff.).
- 14 In the Old Testament the term “*bēth*” or “house”, like the word “family” in modern languages, is flexible and may even include the entire nation (“house of Jacob” or the “house of Israel”), or a considerable section of the people (the “house of Joseph” or the “house of Judah”). It may denote kinship in the wide sense (De Vaux 1973:20).
- 15 τὸν πατέρα, 1 John 3:1
- 16 See also John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 where it refers to the “only” (μονογενῆ) “Son” of the Father (Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:15).
- 17 τέκνα θεοῦ, John 1:12; 11:52
- 18 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God (3:34; 14:26).
- 19 See ἀδελφοί [2:9, 10; 3:10, 12bis, 13, 15, 17; 4:20bis, 21; 5:16], ἀλλήλους [1:7; 3:11, 14, 16, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5].
- 20 Esler in 1994 and later in 2000 introduced this theory of Tajfel in his work on Matthew, Thessalonians and Galatians. “Social identity theory adopts a distinctive position in relation to the continuing issue of the relationship of the individual and the group” (Esler 2000:158).
- 21 “... individuals must have internalized their group membership as an aspect of their self-concept: they must be subjectively identified with the relevant in-group” (Austen 1979:41)
- 22 “... the social situation must be such as to allow for intergroup comparisons that enable the selection and evaluation of the relevant relational attributes” (Austen 1979:41).

- 23 "... in-groups do not compare themselves with every cognitively available out-group: the out-group must be perceived as a relevant comparison group. Similarity, proximity and situational salience are among the variables that determine out-group comparability..." (Austen 1979:41).
- 24 The concern of the Elder with a particular in-group versus an out-group in the surroundings emerges as early as chapter 2:18 "*Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour.*"¹⁹ *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.*" Here we find – closely integrated – a strong rationale for the existence of an in-group of a particular kind.
- 25 See the excellent work done by Thompson (2001:60–100).
- 26 The rest of the prologue (1:14–18) characterises this group by its relationship to God the Father (1:18) and to Jesus Christ who is, according to the FE, the only Son of the Father (1:18). With these connections and the description of Jesus' function in establishing such a group in the latter part of chapter one, the FE creates a desire to belong to this particular group. This statement (1:11–13) confirms both the "agonistic" nature of an out-group and also the relevance of the theory of Tajfel which shows how the social identity of members of the Johannine group is developed in the FG.
- 27 According to Culpepper (1995:142), believers' "fellowship with God" is constituted in the light, in truth, in righteousness, and in love – which he calls metaphors for God's nature. He adds the noun ἡ ἀλήθεια (5:6) where the Elder refers to "the Spirit is the truth" (πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια).
- 28 See 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 13, 20; cf. 1:3, 7; 3:23; 4:9.
- 29 Μονογενῆς is used as a term for the relationship of the Son with the Father only in the Johannine writings. In the Gospel of Luke (7:12; 8:42) it is used of the only child of a parent, but also as an indication of the *value* of a certain child with no indication of how many children the parent has (cf. Heb 11:17). In the Gospel of John, the reference is clearly to oneness and not in number but in being; the utter uniqueness of the Sonship of Christ (cf. Ridderbos 1997:53).
- 30 See Kok (2009:112–147) for an explicit reference to the restoration and reconciliation dimension in the Johannine literature.
- 31 2:1, 12, 14, 18, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 19, 21
- 32 2:9, 10; 3:10, 12, 13, 15, 17; 4:20, 21; 5:16
- 33 1:7; 3:11, 14, 16, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
- 34 The verb μένειν is used 117 times in the New Testament. Over half the uses occur in the Johannine writings in connection with God's word (2:14, 24bis), seed (σπέρμα, 3:9), anointing (χρῖσμα, 2:27), the Spirit (3:24; 4:13), God's love (3:17), God (3:24bis) abiding in the believer and reciprocally the abiding of the believer in the Son (2:6, 24, 28; 3:5, 24), and I the truth (2 John 2). Mutual abidance is referred to in 4:13, 15, 16; 2 John 9.
- 35 1 John 2:9, 10; 3:10, 12bis, 13, 15, 17; 4:20bis, 21; 5:16
- 36 See footnote 4.
- 37 As theology dominates the Fourth Gospel (see Thompson 2001:1ff.), 1 John is also theocentric (cf. Lieu 1991:198; cf. also Malatesta 1978:96): it explores the nature of God's character.

- 38 Look at how this imagery is used in the following passage to draw the distinction between “children of the light”, those “born of God” and children of the devil. Then notice how sibling language is used to signify appropriate relationships toward other believers.
- 39 See 1 John 1:6, 7; 2:3–5, 9–10; 6; 3:16; 4:11; 2 John 6, 9; cf. also 2:29; 3:6, 9–10, 18; 4:7.
- 40 Cf. also Benjamin 1983:65; Cosigny 1989:281–87; Gadamer 1980:3; Holmberg 1977:233; Lake 1986:206f.; Murray 1988:286.
- 41 Du Rand (1981:2) describes the thought process in 1 John as “a spiral, for the development of a theme often brings us back almost to the starting point, almost but not quite, for there is a slight shift which provides a transition to a fresh theme which has apparently been dismissed at an earlier point; and now comes up for consideration from a slightly different angle ... This results in a recapitulation of certain themes.”
- 42 This part of the article links closely with the tripartite division of this epistle by Tollefson (1999:81–84; cf. also Bruce 1970:29): Prologue 1:1–4; (I) Walking in the light – walking in the darkness (1:5–2:27); (II) Works of righteousness – works of unrighteousness (2:28–4:6); (III) Love brings life – hate brings death (4:7–5:13); and Conclusion (5:14–21).
- 43 Although 2 John has not been selected in this research, these verses have been incorporated here due to their relevance.
- 44 See more details in the works of: R. A. Culpepper, *The Johannine school* (Scholars Press: Missoula, 1976); O. Cullmann, *The Johannine circle*.(trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1976); R. E. Brown, *The community of the Beloved Disciple: The life, loves and hates of an individual church in New Testament times* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1979); K. S. Fuglseth, *Johannine sectarianism in perspective: a sociological, historical, and comparative analysis of temple and social relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo, and Qumran* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 119; Leiden: Brill, 2005).
- 45 Of the 23 occurrences of κόσμος in 1 & 2 John, only two (4:9, 17) refer to locality. In 4:1–6 κόσμος occurs six times. In all these cases it is used antithetically to God. The phrase “they have gone out into the world” (also 2 John 7) alludes to 2:19, where it is stated: “They went out from us” which infers that they were formerly part of the community but had severed all ties. See Schnakenburg (1992:199) for a different interpretation. “They went out from us...” characterises their appearance in public all over the world. The adherents of the Elder may come upon them anywhere.
- 46 Scholars refer to them differently. Painter (2002:84) refers to them as “opponents”. According to him, they could also be called “schismatics” or “heretics”. An alternative nomenclature used by Brown (1982:69, 70, 70, n. 156; also Hurtado 2003:409ff.) is “secessionists” (1982:69); he also refers to “adversaries” (1982:415, 574, 618), “opponents” and “deceivers” (1982:358f.), and “propagandists” (1982:429). Schnackenburg (1992:18) calls them “heretical teachers”. Each of these terms can be justified as representative of the Elder’s point of view. See Hurtado (2003:418) for a brief discussion of why references to these secessionists as “docetists” or “gnostics” are unacceptable.
- 47 “... in-groups do not compare themselves with every cognitively available out-group: the out-group must be perceived as a relevant comparison group. Similarity, proximity and situational salience are among the variables that determine out-group comparability...” (Austen 1979:41).
- 48 For a detailed discussion of stereotypes, see part II (from perceptual judgement to social stereotypes) in H. G. Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories: studies in social psychology* (Cambridge, 1981).

- 49 See 1 John 2:10; 3:10, 11, 14, [18], 23; 4:7, 11, 12, 21; 5:1–3; 2 John 5. Love terminology is characteristic of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. The two verbs ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν are used without distinction in the Gospel of John. Only ἀγαπᾶν appears in the Epistles 31 times (28 in 1 John) and the noun ἀγάπη is used 21 times (18 in 1 John) and ἀγαπητοῦ 10 times. This high frequency of occurrence marks out the Johannine writings from the rest of the NT and other Greek literature of this period. These Johannine writings, especially 1 John, make love a theological category derived from the character and action of God. On this basis it becomes an ethical category, placing God's children under the obligation to love (cf. Painter 2002:170).
- 50 “an essential requirement” or “an essential element or condition” from *The Free Dictionary*. Available online at: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/sine+qua+non> – accessed 11/06/2009.
- 51 Other references, ἀδελφοί (2:9, 10; 3:12, 13, 15, 17; 4:20, 21; 5:16) and ἀγαπητοί (2:7; 4:1, 7; ἀγαπητῶ, 1 John 3:2; 3 John 1; also τεκνία, 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; ἐκλεκτῆ, 2 John 1; φίλοι, 3 John 14) that occur are forms of address when the Elder speaks to his adherents, but they also spell out some characteristics of being τέκνα θεοῦ. Ἀδελφοί in the NT denotes “fellow-Christians” or “Christian brothers”. In John 20:17 Jesus calls his disciples his brethren, and he also uses the same term to describe the relations of the disciples to one another (Mt 23:8; Lk 22:32). Ἀδελφοί refers to their relationship with other believers belonging to the same family, while ἀγαπητοί refers to the believers' relationship of love with God and fellow believers (cf. 2:5, 10; 3:1, 11, 14, 16, 23, etc). Consequently, it can be deduced that the meaning and assessment of ἀδελφοί and ἀγαπητοί (also ἀλλήλους and τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ) are determined more closely by τέκνα θεοῦ. This contains a qualitative indication of the believer's new identity and status as part of God's family (*familia dei*), which is, in principle, a *communio sanctorum* (holy community).
- 52 This reciprocal pronoun is used 100 times in the New Testament. Of these occurrences a great concentration is found in the Fourth Gospel (15 times). 1 John uses the term 6 times (1 John 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12) and 2 John once (v 5).
- 53 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5 (cf. also John 13:34bis, 35; 15:12, 17)
- 54 Note the importance of commandments in 1 John 2:3, 4, 7ter, 8; 3:22, 23bis, 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3; 2 John 4, 5, 6bis.
- 55 Two texts in 1 John cast some light in determining what is meant in reference to love God the Father and fellow members within the *familia Dei* (cf. Schulz 1987, 524–527; also Van der Watt 1999, 508–510).
- 56 The texts from the Gospel of John that reflect the same idea have been included here. The First Epistle of John was probably written very closely after the Gospel and therefore could they have been written in the same situation.
- 57 Also cf. related texts 3:2, 6; 3 John 11; John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 14:9.
- 58 In 3:2 the expectation of seeing him (Jesus) as he is was the ground of the hope that “we will be like him”. This is the Johannine version of the vision of God. When he is revealed, at his coming (2:28), we will be like him because we will see him as he is (Painter 2002:271).
- 59 The Son came to do the will of the Father. He spoke what the Father told him to say and he performed the deeds shown to him by the Father. When the Son, according to the FE, revealed the Father “by finishing the work that you gave me” (17:4) and through his crucifixion (17:1), he also glorified the Father.

- 60 Jesus claimed that the one who had seen him had also seen the Father (John 14:9), but this is not the kind of seeing referred to here." See also D. L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John* (The New American Commentary, vol. 38; electronic Logos Library System; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 181; and P. W. van der Horst, "A wordplay in 1 John 4:12," *ZNW* 63 (1972):280–82 for studies relating to 1 John 4:12.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achtemeier, P. J., J. B. Green, & M. M. Thompson 2001. *Introducing the New Testament: its literature and theology*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids.
- Austen, W. G. 1979. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*. Brooks/Cole, Monterey.
- Balch, D. L. 2003. Paul, families and households. In *Paul in the Graeco-Roman world. A handbook*, edited by J. P. Sampley, 258–92. Trinity Press International, Harrisburg.
- Barton, S. C. 1994. *Discipleship and family ties in Mark and Matthew*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Brown, R. E. 1982. *The epistles of John*. Doubleday, New York.
- Brown, R. 1988. *Group processes: dynamics within and between groups*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Benjamin, J. 1983. The Greek concept of dialectics. *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 48:356–67.
- Berger, P. L. & T. Luckmann 1966. *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Doubleday, Garden City, NY.
- Bruce, F. F. 1970. *The Epistles of John*. Pickering & Inglis, London.
- Carter, W. 1994. *Households and discipleship: a study of Matthew 19–20*. JSOT Press, Sheffield.
- Cosby, M. R. 1988. *House of disciples: church, economics, and justice in Matthew*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.
- Cosigny, S. 1989. Dialectical, rhetorical, and Aristotelian rhetoric. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22(1):281–87.
- Culpepper, R. A. 1995. *The General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, 1–2–3 John*. Fortress, Minneapolis.
- De Silva, D. A. 2000. *Honour, patronage, kinship & purity: unlocking New Testament culture*. IVP Academic, Downers Grove.
- De Vaux, R. 1973 (1961). *Ancient Israel: its life and institutions*. Darton, Longman & Todd, London.
- Du Rand, J. A. 1981. A discourse analysis of 1 John. *Neotestamentica* 13:1–42.
- Esler, P. F. 1994. *The First Christians in their social worlds: social scientific approaches to New Testament interpretation*. Routledge, New York.
- Esler, P. F. 1997. Family imagery and Christian identity in Gal 5:13 to 6:10. In *Constructing early Christian families: family as social reality and metaphor*, edited by H. Moxnes, 121–149. Routledge, London.
- Esler, P. F. 2000. Keeping it in the family: culture, kinship and identity in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians. In *Families and family relations as represented in early Judaism and early Christianities: texts and fictions*, edited by J.W. van Henten and A. Brenner, 145–184. Deo Publishing, Leiden.

- Gadamer, H. G. 1980. *Dialogue and dialectic: eight hermeneutical studies on Plato*. Trans. Smith. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Guijarro, S. 1997. Family in first-century Galilee. In *Constructing early Christian families: family as social reality and metaphor*, edited by H. Moxnes, 42–65. Routledge, London.
- Harland, P. A. 2003. *Associations, synagogues, and congregations. Claiming a place in ancient Mediterranean society*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis.
- Hogg, M. A. 1988. *Social identifications: a social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. Routledge, London.
- Holmberg, C. B. 1977. Dialectic rhetoric and rhetorical rhetoric. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 10(4): 232–43.
- Hurtado, L. 2003. *Lord Jesus Christ*. W B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids.
- Käsemann, E. 1978. *The Testament of Jesus: a study of the Gospel of John in the light of chapter 17*. Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
- Kok, J. 2009. Die opstanding van Jesus as kulminerende genesingshandeling in Johannes. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30(1):112–147.
- Lake, R. 1986. The rhetor as dialectician in the last chance for survival. *Communication Monographs* 53(3):201–20.
- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago University Press, Chicago.
- Lassen, E. M. 1997. The Roman family: ideal and metaphor. In *Constructing early Christian families: family as social reality and metaphor*, edited by H. Moxnes, 103–120. Routledge, London and New York.
- Lieu, J. M. 1991. *The theology of the Johannine Epistles*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Malatesta, E. 1978. *Interiority and covenant: a study of [einai en] and [menein en] in the first letter of Saint John*. Biblical Institute Press, Rome.
- Malina, B. J. 1982. The social sciences in biblical interpretation. *Int* 37:229–242.
- Malina, B. J. 1986. *Christian origins and cultural anthropology: practical models for biblical interpretation*. John Knox, Atlanta.
- Malina, B. J. 1993. *The New Testament world*. Fortress, Philadelphia.
- Malina, B. J., S. Joubert & J. G. van der Watt 1995. *Vensters wat die Woord laat oopgaan*. Orion, Halfway House.
- Malina, B. J. 1996. *The social world of Jesus and the Gospels*. Routledge, London.
- Moxnes, H., ed. 1997. *Constructing early Christian families: family as social reality and metaphor*. Routledge, London.
- Murphy, R. F. 1971. *The dialectics of social life: alarm and excursions in anthropological theory*. Allen and Unwin, London.
- Murray, J. 1988. Disputation, deception, and dialectic: Plato on the true rhetoric (Phaedrus 261–266). *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 21(4):279–89.
- Neyrey, J. H. 1995. Loss of wealth, loss of family and loss of honor. In *Modelling early Christianity: social-scientific studies of the New Testament in its context*, edited by P. F. Esler, 139–158. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London.
- Osiek, C. & D. Balch, eds. 1997. *Families in the New Testament world: households and house churches*. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.

- Osiek, C. 1996. The family in early Christianity: 'family values' revisited. *CBQ* 58:1–24.
- Painter, J. 2002. *1, 2, and 3 John (Sacra Pagina)*. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville.
- Ridderbos, H. 1997. *The Gospel of John: a theological commentary*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Rusam, D. 1993. *Die Gemeinschaft der Kinder Gottes: Das Motiv der Gotteskindschaft und die Gemeinden der Johanneischen Briefe*. Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.
- Schnackenburg, R. 1992. *The Johannine epistles*. Crossroad, New York.
- Schroots, J. J. F., J. E. Birren & G. M. Kenyon 1991. Metaphors and aging: an overview. In *Metaphors of aging in science and the humanities*, edited by G. M. Kenyon, J. E. Birren & J. J. F. Schroots, 1–16. Springer Publishing Company, New York.
- Shulz, S. 1987. *Neutestamentliche Ethik*. TVZ, Zürich.
- Tajfel, H. G. 1981. *Human groups & social categories: studies in social psychology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Tajfel, H. G. 1978. Social categorization, social identity and social comparison. In *Differentiation between social groups*, edited by H. Tajfel, 61–76. Academic Press, London.
- Thompson, M. M. 2001. *The God of the Gospel of John*. W B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids.
- Tollefson, K. D. 1999. Certainty within the fellowship: dialectical discourse in 1 John. *BTB* 29:79–89.
- Turner, J. C. 1978. Social comparison, similarity and in-group favouritism. In *Differentiation between social groups*, edited by H. Tajfel, 235–250. Academic Press, London.
- Van der Merwe, D. G. 2005. Understanding "sin" in the Johannine Epistles. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 26(2):543–570.
- Van der Watt, J. G. 1992. Interpreting imagery in John's Gospel: John 10 and 15 as case studies. In *Hupomnema: Feesbundel opgedra aan J.P. Louw*, edited by J. Barkhuizen et al, 272–282. University of Pretoria Press, Pretoria.
- Van der Watt, J. G. 1999. Ethics in First John: a literary and socioscientific perspective. *CBQ* 61: 491–511.
- Van der Watt, J. G. 2000. *Family of the King: dynamics of metaphor in the Gospel according to John*. Brill, Leiden, Boston.
- Van Henten, J. W. & A. Brenner 2000. *Families and family relations as represented in early Judaism and early Christianities: text and fictions*. Leo Publishing, Leiden.
- Von Wahlde, U. C. 1990. *The Johannine commandments. 1 John and the struggle for the Johannine tradition*. Paulist Press, New York.