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***THE SOCIAL MEANING OF LOVE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN***

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY**

in the subject

**NEW TESTAMENT**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**PROMOTER: PROF J E BOTHA**

**NOVEMBER 2003**

Student number **390-192-0**

I declare that

**THE SOCIAL MEANING OF LOVE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**REV P A ROUSSEAU**

**30 / 11 / 2003**

## ABSTRACT

The concept of love abounds in the Bible but it is questionable whether the same understanding that the antique audiences of the biblical documents could have had of this concept is prevalent in our time. The reason for such doubt lies, simply, in the noticeable absence of regard for each other among (even devout) people.

The study was directed towards an investigation of theological and popular views on biblical love as well as a brief overview of lexicographical works by known scholars as regards the noun *agaph* and the verb *agapaw*. It was found that, despite the volume of entries, not much in the way of clarification of the meaning of *agaph* and related words is available. There is, indeed, a dire lack of contemporary social-scientific related data as regards this important concept and related matters.

The world of the New Testament differs widely from the one we live in and a brief overview was given from social-scientific sources on the historical-cultural aspects of the first century Mediterranean world. This was done from the perspective of making use of such data in the exegesis of three short text-segments selected from the Gospel of John.

The text-segments John 3: 16; 13: 34-45 and 21: 15-17 are well-known for the bearing they have on the noun *agaph* and the verb *agapaw* in the Fourth Gospel as well as the popular meaning/s that is quite commonly ascribed to the texts. Exegesis was done from a grammatical-historical paradigm with joint usage of applicable historical-cultural data.

Keywords: agápé, believe, dyadism, Evil Eye, eternal life, exegesis, individualism, John's community, limited good, honour and shame, love, loyalty, Mediterranean culture, patronage, social-scientific, world.

## PROLOGUE

To God our Lord I offer thanks for the enriching experience I was afforded in this study. May it bring glory to his Name in the promoting of a true and faithful exegesis of his Word.

Professor J. Eugene Botha was not only an outstanding promoter but has become a trusted friend whose academic ability and positive guidance will always be fondly remembered and remain with me as an example of excellence.

Ms Natalie Thirion, subject librarian (Theology), has rendered much assistance. Her friendly co-operation is mentioned with great gratitude, as is the assistance of the University's library staff.

The University of South Africa has been my alma mater for the past twenty plus years. My loyalty shall not dwindle.

I consider myself very privileged for the family and friends God has granted me. My dear wife Annette's loyalty, understanding and encouragement has not only let me experience, but helped me to understand a beautiful facet of *agápé* as it was exemplified in all the time that she willingly spent alone. Our daughter Toinette's and friend Barbara's assistance in the final stages of the preparation of the manuscript is gratefully acknowledged.

A special word of thanks must be extended to my students in the Senior New Testament Course, class of 2003. Their encouragement in the course of the study and the enthusiasm we shared as regards the excellence of Scripture and the diligent application of a genuine grammatical-historical hermeneutic in the exegesis of the Word lets me cherish the hope that I may have succeeded in laying a strong foundation for their development. In Fred Manske Junior's words about a successful leader, that s/he is willing to develop people to the point where they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability, I dare wish myself (and so, them,) a grand success.

I also wish to express gratitude for financial assistance by the Board of Control of the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of South Africa where I was privileged to serve.

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