

Studien zum Neuen Testament
und seiner Umwelt

23

STUDIEN ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT UND SEINER UMWELT (SNTU)

Serie A, Band 23

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The Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel of John

1. Introduction

The ability of a word or a phrase to have a reference other than 'literal reference', is usually described by terms such as metaphor, simile, comparison, symbol, etc. However, defining a word or phrase as metaphor, symbol or something similar, within a certain context describes its *semantic function*, and more importantly, the way in which that particular word or collocation should be interpreted.

The various ways in which the figurative sections in John's Gospel were defined in the past, poses a serious problem. For example, John 15:1-8 has been identified as: a '*Gleichnis*' (Schenkel, Nägelsbach), a parable (Soltau, O'Grady), a '*Bild*' or '*Bildrede*' (Grundmann, Dahl), an allegory (Minear, Painter, Laney) and a metaphor (Broome, Wind, Ritt). Each of these descriptions presupposes a different approach to John 15:1-8, which would inevitably result in a different interpretation,¹ and this is the actual crux of the problem.

It has been found that the use of modern theories of metaphor is unsuitable for the interpretation of the dynamics of metaphor in the Fourth Gospel, not only on account of the multiplicity of theories about metaphor,² but also because of the methodological problem of applying modern theories to an ancient text such as the Gospel of John.³ This calls for a different approach.

¹ J. G. van der Watt, "Metaphorik" in Joh 15,1-8, in: BZ 38 (1994) 67-80, here 67-72.

² D. Geeraerts, *Woordbetekenis. Een overzicht van de lexicale semantiek*, Leuven 1986, 49, speaks of '*de gigantische hoeveelheid literatuur*'. Besides this, theories on metaphors are often complicated and difficult to understand. Sometimes literature on this rather resembles mathematics than studies on literary theory. For instance, an example from F. Guenther, *On the semantics of metaphor*, in: *Poetics* 4 (1975) 199-220, here 207, is as follows: $[\emptyset \rightarrow \alpha]^m = T$ if either $[\emptyset]^m = F$ or $[\alpha]^m = T$.

³ A. Warren - R. Wellek, *Theory of literature*, London 1955, 203, point out that during different eras in history people tended to favour different theories about metaphor. To apply a modern metaphor theory to an ancient text such as John, therefore seems to be an infelicitous *modus operandi*. This is not to deny that insights gained by modern metaphor theorists are of use, but that an approach which follows a modern literary or linguistic theory which forces a model of metaphor interpretation on the text, is not suitable.

Studying metaphor in the Gospel of John has an added advantage. Some of the major metaphors are developed in detail. This facilitates an understanding of John's⁴ own interpretation and usage of these metaphors. Such metaphors are, for instance, found in John 10 (shepherd imagery) and 15 (vine imagery). A deductive instead of an inductive approach is followed. By closely describing the way in which the metaphors and other figurative elements are used in these extended and complex collocations of metaphor⁵ (in Chapters 10 and 15), the basic elements of what could be called 'John's metaphor theory' can be established. This is possible because a metaphor directly relates to the function of language. Thus once the function of a particular phrase or word is determined, one may proceed to the formulation of a theory of the use of metaphors.

The results of this analysis form the basis for the analysis of the rest of the metaphors in the Gospel. There are larger complex metaphor groups (imageries) which are spread throughout the Gospel. Together these metaphors form a network, which serves as cohesive and determinative factor for the theology of the Gospel.

2. The development of a 'Johannine metaphor theory'

As a point of departure, it is necessary to describe some basic characteristics of metaphors.⁶

Definitions of metaphor vary.⁷ Miller⁸ provides a usable description of metaphor. This description of metaphor consists of two lexical items⁹ of disparate

⁴ Referring to *John*, is simply a convenient way to refer to the person or people who were responsible for writing the Gospel, and is no decision on authorship.

⁵ These are also called *imageries* in this paper.

⁶ The figurative nature of the Gospel is often described as 'symbolism', cf. for instance *J. Painter* Johannine symbols. A case study in epistemology, in: *JTSA* 27 (1979) 26-41; *C.R. Koester*, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel. Meaning, Mystery, Community*, Minneapolis 1995. Symbols and metaphors are often not distinguished from one another and it is possible to use these as synonyms. *Symbolism* is, however, generally used to refer to virtually all forms of figurative language. *Metaphor* is more specific, which implies that a more refined approach may follow in interpreting the figurative language in the Gospel. Hence a study of the use of figurative language of this should be based on theory of metaphor. Cf. *O. Schwankl*, *Licht und Finsternis. Ein metaphorisches Paradigma in den johanneischen Schriften* (Herders Biblische Studien 5), Freiburg 1995, 362-369, for a further discussion.

meanings that are linked on the basis of some form of comparison.¹⁰ 'A metaphor maintains the individual meanings of both "words" at the same time that it combines them to form a new meaning.¹¹ This new meaning¹² is metaphorical. In its equation of disparate meanings, metaphor achieves a juxtaposition which is transformed into a superimposition of the one term upon the other. The effect is of neither the one nor the other, nor yet the simple combination of the two, but of a third meaning¹³ that can be expressed in no other way. In a sense, each metaphor is a new word that encourages the exploration of free meanings without giving up the tied meanings of its constituent parts' [Footnotes JGvdW].¹⁴

*Incongruency*¹⁵ (on syntactic or semantic levels), therefore, plays an important role in identifying metaphors.¹⁶ Even if the sentence does not violate selectional

⁷ *Geeraerts, Woordbetekenis, 49-50. I. Gräbe, Aspekte van poëtiese taalgebruik. Teoretiese verkenning en toepassing, Potchefstroom 1985, 7-102, describes several ways in which metaphors are identified and interpreted. Ricoeur unites two dimensions, namely 'explanation' and 'understanding'. A.C. Thiselton, New horizons in hermeneutics, Grand Rapids 1992, 344-372, gives a detailed discussion of Ricoeur's approach.*

⁸ *D.M. Miller, The net of Hephaestus. A study of modern criticism and metaphysical metaphor, The Hague 1971, 127.*

⁹ 'Lexical items' should be understood in a broad sense. Sometimes an item may be submerged or may even be an entire phrase.

¹⁰ *Geeraerts, Woordbetekenis, 49.*

¹¹ '... each term acts upon, alters, the other, so that a third term, a new apprehension, is created by the relationship' *Warren - Wellek, Theory, 206. Geeraerts, Woordbetekenis, 47; P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy. An essay on interpretation, New Haven 1970, 8.*

¹² Since Aristotle strong emphasis has been laid on the freshness and newness of metaphorical communication. In his later writings Ricoeur focuses on the creative power of language, as *Thiselton, Horizons, 351, remarks: 'Metaphor produces new possibilities of imagination and vision'. According to Ricoeur metaphors should therefore extend meaning. Cf. also K. Berger, Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments, Heidelberg 1984, 32.*

¹³ Here analogy plays an important role (*Gräbe, Aspekte, 145*).

¹⁴ *I.A. Richards, The philosophy of rhetoric, Oxford 1936, 98; Gräbe, Aspekte, 633; Guenther, Semantics, 211.*

¹⁵ *Berger, Formgeschichte, 32, refers to the "'Störende" und Spannungsvolle' between the metaphor and context. It seems that he means by 'metaphor' the focus, and by context frame. J.J.A. Mooij, Metafoor en vergelijking in de literatuur, in: Forum der Letteren 14 (1973) 121-158, here 125, maintains that a metaphor is created when the literal meaning of a word in the sentence is absurd, irrelevant or untrue, but that sentence may nevertheless have a useful content.*

restrictions, (like 'My Father is the gardener' in 15:1), the context will indicate that the sentence is deviant.¹⁷ As Lyons says: '... all that is required (to identify a metaphor) is that the literal sense should be contextually improbable'.¹⁸

2.1 *The dynamics of metaphor, on micro level*

I will now focus on the metaphorical dynamics in John 10 and 15. A more detailed analysis was done elsewhere.¹⁹ What is reflected here is a synthesis of the results of that investigation. The different results will be illustrated with examples from Chapters 10 and 15.

2.1.1 *Substitution as a device to create a metaphor*

John frequently uses metaphors (usually copulative metaphors) which function on the basis of *substitution*. Several 'grades' of substitution should be distinguished, depending on the literary context. Substitution implies that a word is used metaphorically, when it is substituted by a figurative counterpart on the basis of analogy. Discovering this substitutive word, is the key to the understanding of the metaphor. For instance, in John 10 the *gate* and *sheep* are replaced by Jesus and his disciples respectively. There is a literal reference to a gate or sheep, which should be substituted with Jesus and his disciples on figurative level. In John the literal

¹⁶ 'Selectional restrictions which exhibit the general non-metaphoric usage in terms of the lexical feature systems of the constituent words of a sentence are violated in the case of deviant sentences. The presence of a selectional restriction violation is thus a necessary and sufficient condition for the distinguishing of metaphor from non-metaphor, excepting of course those cases where the utterances are not intended to be meaningful', *R.J. Matthews*, Concerning a "linguistic theory" of metaphor, in: *Foundations of language* 7 (1971) 413-426, here 424. Cf. also *J. Lyons*, *Language, meaning and context*, Fontana 1986, 213-214; *Mooij*, *Metafoor*, 125.

¹⁷ *Guenther*, *Semantics*, 203-204, maintains that metaphors are not only recognized syntactically, but also semantically. He observes that '... the various kinds of contextual relevance and background knowledge, effects on the hearer, etc. are the primary co-ordinates of analysis' (204).

¹⁸ *Lyons*, *Language*, 216.

¹⁹ Cf. *Van der Watt*, *Metaphorik*, 67-80 and *J.G. van der Watt*, *Interpreting imagery in John's Gospel. John 10 and 15 as case studies*, in: *J.H. Barkhuizen, H.F. Stander, G.J. Swart* (eds), *Hypomnema*, Pretoria 1992, 272-282.

and figurative levels run parallel as far as these objects are concerned,²⁰ forming two levels of reality. For instance, in John 15 (*Figure 1*):



Substitution may also imply reciprocal transference of qualities between two respective words, specially in cases of personification. Because of the close association of two incongruent 'worlds', a transfer of semantic possibilities becomes possible. For example, it is impossible for a person to let something 'pass through' him (like sheep pass through a gate), or for a gate to 'come',²¹ but personification of an inanimate object makes this semantically possible. When it is realized that this 'door' is Jesus and the 'sheep' are his followers, the benefits of coming to Jesus, receiving his message as the only legitimate way of receiving salvation, become possible. Through personification the 'qualities' of the inanimate door are transferred to Jesus, and *vice versa*.

2.1.2 Interaction as metaphorical device

There are also metaphors in the Gospel where the dynamics of metaphor are best explained as *analogical interaction*. Usually this type of metaphor is found in verbs used in conjunction with objects. The same verb can apply to both the figurative and the literal level respectively. For instance, the sheep, as well as the disciples, can *hear* a voice, neither the sheep nor the disciples will *perish* (Chapter 10), the branch as well as a disciple can *bear* fruit (Chapter 15). This use of the same verb for both the literal and the figurative level, indicates the point of analogy; that point where semantic transference takes place.

Interaction specifically takes place by means of analogy and this analogy plays an important part; but what does analogy imply? It involves a point of similarity, and exactly at this point of similarity, the point of difference - which is semantically significant - is to be found. The verb leads the reader to the point of analogy. The moment this point of similarity is discovered, it is also realized that although the same

²⁰ I.e. in Chapter 10: door - thieves - sheep : Jesus - opponents - followers of Jesus, and in Chapter 15: vine - gardener - branches : Jesus - the Father - disciples.

²¹ Cf. Chapter 10:7-10.

verb is used, the verb is applied in different ways to the literal and figurative objects respectively. The point of difference is therefore established. Certain qualities of the verb on figurative level are taken up on literal level, but in a different sense. In this sense there is some form of interaction between the two metaphorical levels. For instance, the disciples and the branches will not bear fruit in the same way (Chapter 15), neither do the sheep and the disciples hear the voice of the shepherd and Jesus respectively, in the same way. In terms of the definition of metaphors this is the 'new' meaning which originates.

2.1.3 Comparison as literary device

A comparison differs from a metaphor in that it states the point which is to be compared clearly. It is more specific than a metaphor. By way of comparison two situations are paralleled. John makes good use of comparison on different levels. In 15:4 a direct comparison is made between the fruitfulness of the branches and that of the disciples, while an implicit comparison is made in 10:11-13 between the shepherd and the hireling.

2.1.4 Climactic description²²

One also finds short parable-like stories in the Gospel. Typical examples are for instance the description of the hireling in 10:12-13 or what happens to the branches in 15:6.²³ Since these brief 'anecdotes', communicate as units in order to illustrate a point, one should not search for *substitutions* or interactive metaphors by allegorizing each element.

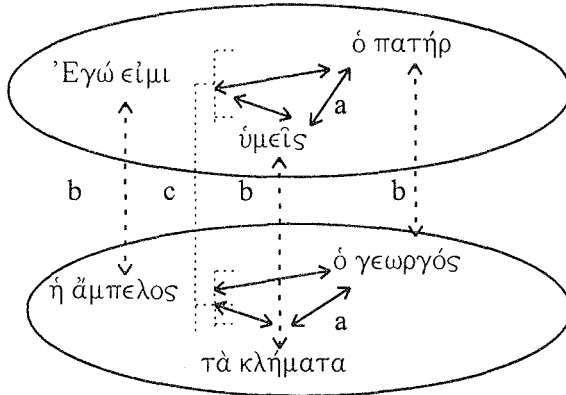
²² Illustrative descriptions can simply be several remarks, basically conveying the same message, linked together with 'and' or it can take the form of a brief 'anecdote'. In both instances these descriptions serve to create a '(dramatic) atmosphere' which is effective within the larger communicative event within a particular context. It adds to the dramatic impact of the imagery.

²³ ἐὰν μὴ τις μένη ἐν ἐμοί, ἐβλήθη ἔξω ὡς τὸ κλήμα καὶ ἐξηράνηται καὶ συνάγουσιν αὐτὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ πῦρ βάλλουσιν καὶ καίεται.

2.2 The dynamics of metaphor on meso-level

2.2.1 The creation of a metaphorical network

On meso-level (reading the metaphors as a unit in a particular pericope, for example John 15) the substitutional and interactional metaphors function together²⁴ to form a larger imagery²⁵ (Figure 2).



* The solid arrows represent the interrelations between the different objects within the same reality (figurative or literal). (Marked 'a').

* The broken arrows represent the metaphorical relations between the figurative and literal objects. (Marked 'b')

* The broken line with the two 'boxes', marked 'c', represents the metaphorical similarities in the interrelatedness between the different objects within the same reality (i.e. figurative or literal).

²⁴ What we have in John corresponds with the general theoretical model of Link. *J. Link, Die Struktur des literarischen Symbols. Theoretische Beiträge am Beispiel der späten Lyrik Brechts, München 1975, 18-20*, has identified and described the structure in symbolic texts, where he distinguishes between three different relations, namely, syntagmatic relations, relations which copy the different elements, and isomorphic relations. In my schema above, the syntagmatic relations will represent the relations marked 'a', the relations which copy the different elements are those marked 'b' and the isomorphic relations those marked 'c'. J. Thom has drawn my attention to the works of *J. Link, Literaturwissenschaftliche Grundbegriffe. Eine programmierte Einführung auf strukturalistischer Basis, (UTB 305), München 1974* and *J. Link, Die Struktur des Symbols in der Sprache des Journalismus. Zum Verhältnis literarischer und pragmatischer Symbole, München 1978*.

²⁵ Militating against a designation such as *compound metaphor* for these metaphors functioning together is that these also contain *comparisons* and *climactic descriptions*. 'Imagery' is preferred as a more inclusive term.

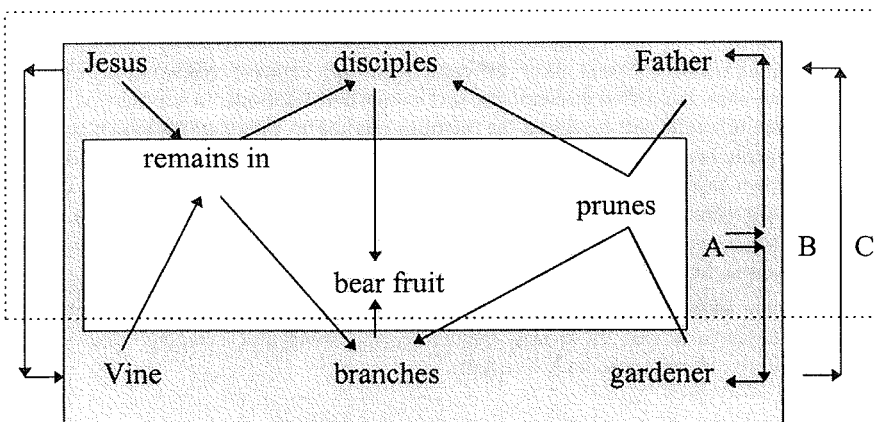
Different relations unfold in the formation of an imagery. The individual metaphors (*substitutional* as well as *interactional*) should be read in conjunction, to constitute a larger imagery.

Firstly, there are the metaphors based on substitution. In the one reality objects such as a vine, a gardener and branches play a role. In the reality referred to figuratively, we find persons such as Jesus, the Father and the disciples, substituting the vine, the gardener and the branches, respectively. These two realities are functionally linked (relations marked 'b' in Figure 2 and 'b' in Figure 3). If one speaks of the vine of the one reality, then one should think of (or substitute it with) Jesus of the other reality.

Secondly, these objects stand in relation to each other (relations marked 'a' in Figure 2 and 'a' in Figure 3). The gardener (Father) *prunes* the vine (Jesus), while the branches (disciples) *stay* in the vine (Jesus). These relations are usually described by using metaphors of interaction. The semantic transition and interaction take place in the use of the verb, after the relevant objects were substituted. The interaction would not have been possible if the two 'realities' were not associated by means of substitution.

Thirdly, the way in which the different individual metaphors are interrelated also communicates metaphorically (relations marked 'c' in Figure 2 and 'c' in Figure 3). Through the complex dynamics of metaphor, the truths of one reality (i.e. vine farming with vine, branches and gardener) are transferred to another reality (i.e. the spiritual reality of Jesus, his disciples and the Father). By way of cohesion several metaphors are used in conjunction to form a metaphorical network. This process can be presented schematically (*Figure 3*):

[A = interaction; B = substitution; C = complex metaphor or imagery]



2.2.2 *Factors which effectuate cohesion*

It is clear that several metaphors function together to form a coherent imagery or metaphorical network. The way in which John cohesively unites his imagery, should be noted, especially in the light of the argument that metaphors throughout the entire Gospel, should be read together to form a complex of imagery.

2.2.2.1 *Thematically related words or collocations (terminology)* are a clear indication of coherence. For instance, vocabulary related to vine farming is used in the same context in Chapter 15. The concurrent occurrence of such words or phrases are united to constitute the larger whole. In this way all the imagery is extended. When interpreting metaphors, not only syntagmatic relations but also paradigmatic relations are important.

This implies that the notion of 'semantic fields'²⁶ becomes useful. Words used from the same semantic field, would suggest some cohesion, for instance imagery based on 'light', evoke associations of darkness, day, night or lamp. Even if the writer connects words that are semantically only remotely related (e.g. light and blindness), a connection between those two words could be suggested. They could be functioning in cohesion with each other, if the context supports such an interpretation.

2.2.2.2 *Linguistic features* (e.g. syntactic and semantic factors) are well-known factors which establish cohesion in a text.

2.2.2.3 *Stylistic features* like parallelism²⁷ or chiasm²⁸ are also obvious indications of cohesion.

2.2.2.4 *Repetition* of parts of the image, motifs, objects or words about the imagery is a clear indication of cohesion.²⁹ Often a word, used previously, is repeated, but now in conjunction with some new words or ideas. In such a way the imagery is confirmed, but simultaneously extended.

²⁶ Cf. J.P. Louw - E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon* 1, New York 1988, xv-xx, for the theoretical considerations behind semantic analysis, *inter alia* semantic fields.

²⁷ For instance 'thieves and Christ' in John 10:10.

²⁸ For instance in John 10:15, 15:4.

²⁹ For instance 'gate' in John 10:7 and 9; 'good shepherd' in 10:11 and 14; 'stay in ...' in 15:4,5 and 7.

2.2.2.5 *Suggestion*, (e.g. using a well-known word, or a word with double meaning) can indicate coherence.³⁰

2.2.2.6 Cohesion also exists between words used in a rather *single context*. For instance, in a context where vine farming is the dominant imagery, any word that has the potential to be related to this basic theme will semantically be drawn into the particular sphere of the theme.

2.2.2 *Socio-historical ecology*³¹ of metaphors

The imagery in for instance Chapters 10 and 15 functions with the presupposition that what applies to sheep or vine farming respectively, can effectively express (by way of analogy) what is true of the spiritual world. This further presupposes a point of view which sees no tension between what happens on earth, and the way things are in the spiritual realm. That is why spiritual truths can be based on what is accepted to be true on an earthly level.³²

Metaphors are semantically embedded in a socio-cultural framework.³³ They use elements that are known, to express something new. The 'known elements' have to be known, before metaphors can be understood.³⁴ If a person has no idea of

³⁰ In 3:8 it can be asked who or what is actually blowing: is it the wind or is it the Spirit or is it both? This vague and ambiguous way of expressing himself gives the author the opportunity to 'bind' the figurative and the literal aspects together. The reader should be able to understand that the Spirit and the wind are bound together by analogy. This is therefore a rather compact way of binding motives together.

³¹ This term is taken over from A. Malherbe who uses it to describe the totality and interrelatedness of the social reality of the ancient Mediterranean world.

³² *Koester*, Symbolism, 2, might be correct in relating this to the idea of creation.

³³ There might be a problem with the notion that ancient Mediterranean texts reflect this culture, with the culture as Platonic ideal of which all texts are circumscribed copies. Although this is not a theoretical study on the method of social studies of biblical texts, it should be noted that from a socio-linguistic point of view texts communicate with and within social conventions. These conventions are reflected in the language, *inter alia* through imagery and metaphors, of which the family imagery is an example.

³⁴ The external social information does supply the interpreter with contemporary social information, which can serve as reference material in order to confirm that what is deduced from the Johannine text was indeed probable, or was even common, in the ancient Mediterranean world. This "reference material" is indeed important, since modern interpreters experience social alienation from the ancient world and therefore need this type of information to 'guide' and confirm their results.

sheep farming or what a vine looks like, it will be difficult to understand what is being said. John's refrainment from the use of technically involved elements, and his readiness to explain the nature of the imagery he is employing (e.g. in 10:1-5 he prepares his reader with the necessary information), facilitates the interpretation of his imagery. The reader has a firm idea which aspects of the imagery are metaphorically applied and why. Even so, in the interpretation of a metaphor the socio-ecological framework remains necessary for the proper understanding of the metaphor.

3. *Aanalysis of metaphors on macro level*

3.1 *Survey of metaphors on macro level*

There are several metaphors that are not found in a single 'closed' context in the Gospel, but are spread throughout the Gospel as a whole. They will be read together on the basis of the cohesive factors discussed earlier. The most evident factor is *thematic* cohesion. It is interesting that the moment a survey is made of the dynamics of metaphor in the Gospel, a central key imagery presents itself, namely the *family imagery*.³⁵ Language related to ordinary family life presents itself throughout the entire Gospel, such as: birth - life; food, bread and water; members of the family, Father, Son, children, orphan, friend, slave; familial actions, service, obedience, copying the Father, love, protection, education and even farming with sheep and vinedressing, housing, staying with each other.

³⁵ A responsible description of what ancient 'family life' was like, is not an easy venture without encountering some theoretical problems, since it should not be uncritically assumed that what is attested in some ancient documents about family life was generally (i.e. all times and all places) true in the ancient Mediterranean world. That people form different social structures (i.e. nomads vs. city families) organized their families differently, or that different ways of living also had an effect on the way family life was organized, cannot be ignored. Cf. *R. de Vaux*, *Ancient Israel. Its life and institutions*, London 1974, 20-23. Even the perception about the position of women in society differed in the eastern and western parts of the Empire. *M. Gielen*, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelthik*, Bonn 1990, 146, distinguishes between the Roman-Latin and the Hellenistic-Greek views of the *patria potestas*. The cultural diversity within the ancient Mediterranean world should be recognized, which entails that one can only work in rather abstract and generalized terms. Cf. *J. Stambaugh - D. Balch*, *The Social World of the First Christians*, London 1986, 123, on the Graeco-Roman situation and *E.M. Lassen*, *Family as metaphor. Family images at the time of the Old Testament and early Judaism*, in: *SJOT* 6 (1992) 247-262, here 247, 254-254, on the situation in ancient Israel and early Judaism. Cf. *B. Rawson*, *The Roman Family*, in: *B. Rawson* (ed), *The Family in Ancient Rome. New Perspectives*, New York 1987, 7-8.

It can be argued that the author develops his theological thinking by using a coherent network of metaphors³⁶ related to first century family life.³⁷ The author succeeds in utilizing established and generally accepted knowledge related to family life metaphorically in order to explain redemptive and ethical events on a spiritual level. By using the important theoretical information discussed above, an analysis and synthesis of these metaphors in the Gospel will now be made.

3.2 A metaphorical network forming an imagery is created

The rest of the discussion will focus on the way in which the different elements, related to the familial imagery, are applied metaphorically. The basis of the dynamics of metaphor lies in the incongruence that exists between the world 'above' and the world 'below'. God is not an ordinary father. As was explained earlier the dynamics of metaphor operate on the basis of analogy, where the point of similarity (being like an earthly father) also contains the point of difference (not being like an earthly father).

The discussion will follow the different elements of family life used by John in developing his familial imagery.³⁸ This is done under the following headings:

³⁶ There are only few exceptions, like the open heavens (1:51); the temple (2:21 or 1:14); the Word (1:1), the Spirit as dove or wind (1:32 and 3:8); the Lamb of God (1:29); the snake in the desert (3:14); the seed which dies (12:24).

³⁷ The family was generally regarded as the 'basic social structure' in ancient Mediterranean life. *G. Schrot*, *Familia* in: *Der Kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike*. Bd. 2, München 1979, 512; *M.T. Gilbertson*, *The way it was in Bible times*. Minneapolis 1959, 43-44; *De Vaux*, *Ancient*, 20; *E. Bund*, *Pater familias*, in: *Der Kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike* Bd. 4, München 1979, 546.

³⁸ Although there are references to relations which form part of an extended family, they will not receive attention here. Cf. for instance references to friends (15:14), slaves (8:34,35) and orphans (14:18). Cf. Aristotle (*Ethica Nicomachea* 8.11, 1159b,31): 'And the proverb: "What friends have is common property" expresses the truth: for friendship depends on community'.

* Birth		
* Life	- Personal family relations	+ Knowing the Father and Son
		+ Hierarchical family structure
		+ Family unity
	- Education	
	- Sustaining life	+ Bread
		+ Water
	- Protecting and caring	
	- Service	
* Doing what your Father requires (family ethics)		
* Familial love as common attitude in the family		
* Knowledge as basic familial requirement		
* Communication within the family		
* House and property in familial context		

3.2.1 *Birth* is the basic element in becoming part of a family, and serves as an effective metaphor³⁹ to activate family imagery in the Gospel. Through birth a person becomes part of a family, which implies certain privileges, but also certain responsibilities. Birth plays an important role in determining a person's identity and social position in the ancient Mediterranean society.⁴⁰ In the Gospel of John references to birth are found in 1:12-13, 3:1-8 and indirectly also in Chapter 8. In all these passages the references to birth should be interpreted as part of the larger family imagery.

In 1:12-13 the participation in the family of God is established through birth from God (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν), and the mediational work of Jesus (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι). The specific point is that family (τέκνα θεοῦ) is constituted on account of birth from God. This becomes possible through Jesus as Son.⁴¹

³⁹ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John.*, London ²1978, 164, speaks of a 'new metaphor'.

⁴⁰ Cf. B.J. Malina - J.H. Neyrey, Honor and shame in Luke-Acts. Pivotal values of the Mediterranean world, in: J.H. Neyrey (ed), *The social world of Luke-Acts*, Peabody 1991, 25-65, here 28.

⁴¹ R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John 1*, London 1971, 10-11, for the interpretation of ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν. He points out that a semi-juridical interpretation is

The comparison between aspects of physical birth (οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς)⁴² and birth from God (ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν) in 1:13 suggests a contrast between physical and divine birth.⁴³ Physical birth is used as point of orientation for the development of the analogy. Incongruency exists between godly and human birth, which differs on the qualitative level (birth from God is and cannot be the same as human birth). This is substantiated by the contrast in 1:13 (οὐδὲ ... ἀλλ' ἐκ). Believers are children of God, and to become children of God they are born from God.⁴⁴ This suggests a new identity.⁴⁵ 'Children of God' is the vehicle in the metaphorical expression 'They (defined as those who receive him: Tenor) are children of God (vehicle)', where the genitive phrase co-determines 'children'.⁴⁶ The 'system of associative commonplaces' between 'they' and 'children' points to intimate familial relations, or put differently, an introduction into the most intimate social structure, which 'they' - irrespective of age or sex⁴⁷ - become part of. Θεοῦ, being in the genitive, is an indication of the nature of this social structure and relationship.

The references to birth in 3:1-8 are well known. The first metaphorical remark is found in 3:3 (ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν) and the same expression is repeated in 3:5, except for the prepositional phrase at the end: (ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος) [underlining JvdW]. Compare also the similar remark in 3:8: οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

These remarks are clearly in contrast to the reaction of Nicodemus. He interprets the words of Jesus literally and gives a whole exposition of the process of physical birth, and why it is impossible to be born for a second time. The two

foreign to John and relates it to the process of birth. R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John 1*, London 1968, 262, emphasizes the new life as a gift.

⁴² Cf. S. van Tilborg, *Imaginative love in John*. Leiden 1993, 34-47, for a detailed discussion of the physiology hidden in these words. Brown, *Gospel 1*, 12-13.

⁴³ Schnackenburg, *Gospel 1*, 263-264. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Göttingen 1968, 38.

⁴⁴ Barrett, *Gospel*, 164, correctly rejects the idea that the reference to birth in verse 13 is to Jesus.

⁴⁵ Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 37.

⁴⁶ Note that the incongruency does not exist between 'they' and 'children'. 'They' can be 'children'. However, the incongruency exists in the godly versus the human process of becoming a child.

⁴⁷ This is possible because of the figurative nature of the text.

levels (i.e. the earthly and heavenly levels) on which the imagery functions are thus contracted in the text.⁴⁸

Nicodemus objects to the ideal that birth is required of a person who already lives.⁴⁹ Birth as such cannot be repeated for the same person. This objection arises on account of the *misunderstanding* of Jesus' description of a different nature of event, also called 'birth', which initiates living in the figurative reality. This 'birth' differs from the natural process both in quality as well as nature, because birth from the Spirit transcends physical birth.⁵⁰ This is underlined by Jesus' explanation in 3:5, that ἀνωθεν⁵¹ should be understood as: ἐξ ὕδατος⁵² καὶ πνεύματος. Physical birth simply serves as an analogy for what happens on the spiritual level.⁵³ The source of spiritual birth is the Spirit that also indicates its nature.

The interactive metaphorical transition takes place in the verb γεννάω, which contains the points of comparison, as well as the points of difference. The point of comparison, is that 'birth' implies entrance into a new life or existence. This is true of both the literal and figurative ways of interpreting γεννάω. The main difference is the mode and nature of being born. The natural process do not apply to the birth Jesus is talking about, since Jesus moves to the spiritual level. Γεννηθῆ ἀνωθεν can only to be experienced by a person and cannot be explained in natural terms (3:8)

⁴⁸ *Van Tilborg*, *Imaginative*, 48-49, underscores the qualitative difference, which contrasts the changeable, transient and transitory with the unchangeable, remaining and permanent respectively.

⁴⁹ ἀνωθεν may be used for 'again' or for 'above'. This double meaning makes Nicodemus' interpretation possible.

⁵⁰ *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 97.

⁵¹ Ἀνωθεν is used four times in the Gospel: 3:3, 7, 31; 19:11. To a certain extent 3:7 is a repetition of 3:3, designating the heavenly world of God. It is used adverbially to indicate the nature of this birth. People are from 'below' and Jesus is from 'above'. He is not from this world while people are from this world." *Schnackenburg*, *Gospel 1*, 367-368, discusses the different possibilities for the interpretation of ἀνωθεν.

⁵² What exactly is meant by 'water' cannot be discussed now, however cf. *W.-Y. Ng*, *Johannine water symbolism and its eschatological significance*. With special reference to John 4, Philadelphia 1997, 95-104, for possible solutions. This is a case of a 'submerged metaphor' (Miller) for which the tenor is not at all supplied by the literary context.

⁵³ Cf. *Van Tilborg*, *Imaginative*, 47-53, for a detailed discussion especially on the background information.

as Nicodemus tries to do (3:4). God is the source of all life.⁵⁴ The analogy is only partial and selective - no further reference is made to the womb of the mother or other physical aspects related to the natural birth event.

The two levels of reality that is analogically linked, and the essential differences between the two realities, are explained in 3:6⁵⁵:

τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν
τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμα ἐστίν

The birth from the *σὰρξ* results in a human existence because of human birth. The birth analogous to natural birth is spiritual by nature, and results in a spiritual existence. This should serve as a clue to Nicodemus of what Jesus is trying to convey to him. By birth from above the one who believes receives a total new existence which determines his entire existence. This person still lives in this world, in the flesh, but this natural way of existence is transcended by the birth from above. These are two levels of reality for the same person; although he still lives as a human being, he is nevertheless also born spiritually. The latter form of existence (i.e. the reality described by the metaphor) dominates the former.

The way in which an ordinary and well-known natural (earthly) event (birth) is used analogously to express such a profound spiritual truth, namely of being introduced into such an intimate relation with God is extremely significant.

Although birth and life are nowhere directly linked, except perhaps for the contextual link in 3:3-8 and 3:14ff, *διδόναι ζωὴν αἰώνιον* could be seen as equivalent to giving spiritual birth. Being born, leads to life. Life and birth not only belong to the same field of imagery, but are indeed conceptually linked in the Gospel. This makes the construction of a larger metaphor network possible. Birth introduces life, and life is the corollary of birth. This reference to *birth*⁵⁶ thus opens up the potential application of the wider imagery of the family (with God as

⁵⁴ Schnackenburg, Gospel 1, 368-369.

⁵⁵ Schnackenburg, Gospel 1, 371.

⁵⁶ In the Gospel of John, participation in the Kingdom, is in essence equivalent to having eternal life. (These two terms are not synonyms, but the author tends to move from the sphere of *kingdom*, to that of *life*, e.g. in the first part of Chapter 3. Brown, Gospel 1, 138 also points this out).

Father⁵⁷) and thus the creation of a *metaphor*. Birth leads to life; the one is not possible without the other, the same agents are involved in both, etc.⁵⁸ The reference to ζωή αἰώνιος in the section immediately following (3:15, 16) therefore comes as no surprise. Birth leads to life. Ordinary birth leads to ordinary life in an ordinary family; while spiritual birth leads to spiritual, eternal life (3:15, 16; 6:63, 7:39) in the family of God.⁵⁹

3.2.2 The words ζάω, ζωή (or ζωή αἰώνιος) and ζωοποιέω, which refer to *eternal life*, occur not only frequently, but in many different contexts, throughout the entire Gospel. In most of the usages in John the concept 'eternal life' may be replaced by 'to be/receive a state of being (existence) which allows actions and relations associated with God' (e.g. 5:40). Therefore, 'having life' functions as a constitutive element for being a part of the family.⁶⁰ Without this birth and life, a person cannot be part of God's family and it will be impossible to function within that family.

Life indeed constitutes the essential metaphor within the family imagery. A large number of the references to other metaphors related to the family imagery, either directly occur in the context of life, or are directly linked to life, to form a

⁵⁷ It was not uncommon in ancient literature to use the 'father metaphor' for God. (Cf. Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* II.152; *Lassen*, Family, 251-254.) The powers and position of the father within the family differed from region to region, from time to time, and from culture to culture (cf. for instance *De Vaux*, Ancient, 23. In Jewish circles the father had no absolute power over his children (as was for instance the case in Roman circles during certain periods), although *De Vaux*, Ancient, 20, points out that initially the father had absolute authority. That gradually changed. In cases of serious offences by children, the father was not in a position to punish the child accordingly, but the matter was to be taken to the elders for a verdict (Deut 21:18-21; *C.F. Keil*, Manual of Biblical Archaeology, Edinburgh 1888, 177). In the Graeco-Roman world the father had more and absolute powers (*Gielen*, Tradition, 147). He could even reject a newborn child, which probably meant death to the child. In the second and third centuries these absolute rights and powers over children diminished (*Gielen*, Tradition, 147; *Lassen*, Family, 260).

⁵⁸ Except for the Prologue, Chapter 3 contains the first reference to *life* in the Gospel. It occurs in the immediate context, where birth is discussed. The network between birth and life is thus established.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Bultmann*, Evangelium, 36, sees 3:1-21 as the explanation of what was said about childhood in 1:12-13.

⁶⁰ The terminology is often contextually linked to family terminology like 'father' (3:35-36; 5:21 etc.) or 'son' (3:16; 3:35-36; 5:21 etc.).

complex metaphor (i.e. light of life; bread of life). The different family related metaphors, linked to eternal life, will now be discussed.

3.2.2.1 Personal family relations

Personal family relations are often expressed in terms of life, or are at least related to being alive.

(a) Αὕτη δέ ἐστὶν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν in 17:3 indicates that eternal life is expressed in terms of *knowing God and Jesus*.⁶¹ The pronoun αὕτη may be replaced by a ἵνα-clause.⁶² Jesus states that He gives eternal life to the Father's people in 17:2, which implies that they have to know God and Jesus (who are identified in verse 2 by means of family terminology). Being alive, enables such a person to know and relate to God. John 17:2-3 thus contributes to the general family metaphor in the Fourth Gospel. Living in the family implies knowing (and accepting) God and Jesus.

(b) John 6:57 expresses the typical *hierarchical structure* within the family.⁶³ καθὼς ἀπέστειλεν με ὁ ζῶν πατὴρ καγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ὁ τρώγων με κακείνος ζήσει δι' ἐμέ. Because the Father disposes over life, and gives it to Jesus, Jesus gives life to believers. The notion of a hierarchical structure is common in this Gospel and can be seen in the Father who sends the Son, and the Son who sends the believers (20:21-22); or in the Father who shows the Son everything (5:20-21), so that He can reveal it to the believers. The relationship between the Father, his unique Son and his children, is expressed as the links in a chain⁶⁴ in order to illustrate the close relationship which exists between the different

⁶¹ Knowing the Father and the Son is discussed in detail in 4.2.4.4.

⁶² Metaphorically speaking, the function of this metaphorical relation should be seen as one further explanation. With the ἵνα-clause, which should syntactically replace the αὕτη, the explanatory nature of the metaphor is clear.

⁶³ The Father was the authoritative head of the family. Cf. *Lassen*, Family, 248, 254-255, 258-259, on both the Roman and the early Judaistic situations and *De Vaux*, Ancient, 20, on Ancient Israel; *Bund*, Pater, 547. It was, however, only Antoninus Pius (Caesar from 138 to 161 AD) who eventually provided a legal basis to the responsibility of the father towards his family. See further *G. Schrenk*, Pater, in: ThDNT V, Grand Rapids 1973, 949; *Schrot*, Familia, 512; *Malina - Neyrey*, Honor, 26; *Gielen*, Tradition, 135; *K. Christ*, The Romans. An introduction to their history and civilization, London 1984, 10; *S. Dixon*, The Roman Family, London 1991, 131, 138; *Rawson*, Roman, 7.

⁶⁴ *Brown*, Gospel 1, 283, speaks of the 'chain of sources of life'.

members of the family. The metaphorical nature of the family imagery mainly lies in the substitution of God and Jesus, with Father and Son, and in the interaction within the verb 'life' through which the chain imagery is completed.

(c) Terse expressions of *family unity* is typical of the Fourth Gospel. For instance in 14:19-20 it is directly linked to having life: "Ἐτι μικρὸν καὶ ὁ κόσμος με οὐκέτι θεωρεῖ, ὑμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτε με, ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε. ²⁰ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ γνώσεσθε ὑμεῖς ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μου καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν ἐμοὶ καγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν. Jesus promises that He will not leave the disciples as orphans (verse 18), but that He will return to them. They will 'see'⁶⁵ or experience Him because they live as He lives. They share the same mode of existence.⁶⁶ This enables the positive relationship between them and Jesus. This is followed in verses 20-21 by other strong family images, namely the unity between the members of the family. This is expressed in 'be in'-formulas (*Immanenzformeln* - Schnackenburg).⁶⁷ Jesus is in the Father,⁶⁸ the believers are in Jesus, and Jesus is in them. They must obey His commandments, and then they will experience the love of the Father and the Son. This participation in the fulness of the family of God, is possible because the person lives as Jesus lives (14:19). Because there is life, there is family participation.⁶⁹ Life is a prerequisite for being part of the family, because having this new existence, the believer is now in a position to act and relate within the family.

3.2.2.2 Education

The family imagery in 5:17-23 is established in verse 17, by referring to an intimate relationship between Father and Son,⁷⁰ which is then developed per-

⁶⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John 3*, London 1982, 78.

⁶⁶ Schnackenburg, *Gospel 3*, 79, observes: 'The disciples share in Jesus' living communion with the Father'.

⁶⁷ Cf. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John 2*, London 1972, 602-603; 646.

⁶⁸ Cf. Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 479-480.

⁶⁹ The importance of the family for the individual in antiquity is clear from the remark by Seneca (*De Providentia II. 4ff*): 'Now parents do not stop taking thought for their prodigal children, but in pity for their unhappy state ... the prodigals' only hope is in their parents, and if they fail them, they will lack the very necessities of life'. (Cf. also J.W. Roberts, *City of Socrates. An introduction to classical Athens*, London 1984, 62).

⁷⁰ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids 1991, 249, emphasizes the unique relationship between the Son and the Father. The identification of God as Jesus'

tinently in verses 19-23. The Jews understood the remark of Jesus (5:17) correctly: Jesus implies a direct and indeed intimate family relationship with God, whom He calls his Father (καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε ἐαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ - verse 18). That is why they objected that He was making Himself τὸν θεὸν ἴσον. They did not claim that He makes Himself God, but *like* God.⁷¹ This implies that according to them Jesus 'transgressed' into the transcendent realm, which belongs to God alone.⁷² He did this by calling God his Father (family relationship). A wellknown universal relationship, namely between a father and a son is thus employed to explain the relationship between God and Jesus. The metaphorical distance within this analogy is created by the use of θεός by the Jews.⁷³

A pertinent question is whether Jesus can, or may, do what God does, whom He identifies as his Father. Jesus gives his answer and motivation by giving an account of the Father educating his Son, so that his Son can do what the Father does.⁷⁴ This also implies that the Son will receive the ability to give life, as the Father gives life (verse 21).

Educational practices used within ancient families, are metaphorically used in 5:17-23, to develop and explain the relationship between Jesus and his Father. Within an ancient family the passing on of customs that represented, as well as expressed the 'character' of that particular family, formed a cornerstone of the communal system. Both mothers and fathers - or people appointed by them - were

individual Father is notable. *Carson*, Gospel, 250, seems to deny that 'Son' could function within the family imagery, because it is a standard Christological expression. However, this argument is not convincing, since it denies that the essential connotation of Son should be understood within a family context and, to my mind, overemphasizes the use of *Son* as a dogmatic designation.

⁷¹ Cf. *R. Schnackenburg*, The Gospel according to St John 2, London 1980, 103, and *Barrett*, Gospel, 256, for further discussion.

⁷² According to *Carson*, Gospel, 249, in the Jews' opinion, Jesus was '... challenging the fundamental distinction between the holy, infinite God, and finite, fallen human beings'.

⁷³ The Jews are representatives of a strict monotheistic view of God in this Gospel - they would thus exclude any possibility of an intimate pre-existent relationship between the man, Jesus, and God. The implicit reader knows well that the ordinary human aspect differs from the spiritual (3:6) and that God is Spirit (4:24).

⁷⁴ This notion is widely acknowledged as being based on the practice of a son learning his father's trade, from his father. Cf. *Carson*, Gospel, 250.

responsible for educating children,⁷⁵ *inter alia* according to the customs of the family. 'The parental role was vital to the development of a child's character'.⁷⁶ Philo reminded that a true father will not give instruction to his son, that is foreign to virtue.⁷⁷ Because of the group orientation of ancient people their personalities,⁷⁸ were largely determined by group dynamics.⁷⁹ The following observation should be noted: Ancient Mediterranean people functioned according to, and their identity was defined in terms of, community principles or *oikos*. Their identity was not individually determined like that of people in modern Western cultures.⁸⁰ Loyalty, respect and responsibility towards his or her community and its traditions were (naturally⁸¹) part of a person's self-definition.⁸² Philo reasoned that it was a matter

⁷⁵ Tacitus in his *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 28-29 emphasizes the thorough education which the parent should give his child.

⁷⁶ *Dixon*, Roman, 118. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Book II.xxvi.2-4*) for instance describes the power that the father had over the child in the Roman situation. These rights of the father to punish a disobedient child included imprisoning him, or even putting his child to death, although the latter was not common at all, as *Dixon*, Roman, 47-48, points out. Hadrian, for instance, exiled a father who killed his son.

⁷⁷ *De Specialibus Legibus II.236*. The way in which education took place was a well discussed topic in ancient literature. Themes such as punishment, admonition, exhortation, discipline etc. were debated. Cf. Plutarch (*Moralia 8f.*); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae XX.13,3*); Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae IV.260-264*); Quintilianus (*Institutio Oratoria I.iii.13-14*); Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus II.240-241*); *Dixon*, Roman, 118.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Malina - Neyrey*, Honor, 67-96. *R.W. Robinson*, Corporate personality in ancient Israel. Edinburgh 1981, 44, emphasizes that the Hebrew, and consequently Christian, morality is what it is, because of what he calls the 'principle of corporate personality'.

⁷⁹ *Robinson*, Corporate, 30, observes about ancient Israel: 'The group possesses a consciousness which is distributed amongst its individual members ...' He also applies this to Christianity (p.44).

⁸⁰ Cf. *Malina - Neyrey*, Honor, 72ff.

⁸¹ As Epictetus (*Arrian's Discourses, Book II.xxii.15*) states: 'Human nature is to love nothing so much as one's own interests: this is father and brother and kinsman and country and God'. Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus II.239f*) argues that it is not necessary to make laws which enforce filial affection. It is rather an imperative instinct. Cicero (*De Finibus III.xix*) explains the Stoic opinion that nature creates in parents an affection and love for their children. This is the 'core' of what a social community should be.

⁸² Philo (*Quod Deus sit Immutabilis 17*). In terms of people living in the Ancient Near East 1000 years BC, people during the times of Christ could seem quite individually orientated. However, compared to modern European standards, the latter were still pretty

of honour and glory to ensure the practice of good customs.⁸³ Cicero praised Appius who maintained absolute command of his household and protected '... the customs and discipline of his forefathers ...'.⁸⁴ The individual member usually found his or her self-definition within the framework of the behaviour and identity of other members of the family, especially the socially more important members, for example the father or eldest brother. Consequently they took their decisions in the interest of the group,⁸⁵ since individuals were seen to represent the group.⁸⁶

Consequently, in John 5:17-30 the specific facet of education as familial imagery is metaphorically activated. The Father shows Jesus everything He does. Jesus sees and hears and only acts accordingly because he does not seek to fulfill his own will, but the will of his Father, the One who has sent him (cf. 7:15-16).⁸⁷

Thus the *content* of the 'education process' is defined not only in terms of the healing of the lame, but specially in terms of the giving of life (5:20-21) and exercising judgement (5:22,29-30); (life and judgement are the inverse of each other in this Gospel). Jesus gives life like his Father does (cf. the parallel in 5:21), because the Father has imparted life to him to have in himself (5:26). That Jesus can dispense life to whom he wishes (5:21), emphasises the reality of Jesus' sharing of the power and knowledge of the Father (cf. also 3:34-35). In the same way Jesus judges in absolute accordance with the judgement of the Father (5:30), so much so, that John can state that the Father does not judge any more (5:22). The educational process does not only exist in mediating knowledge, but power and the authority to do things are also mediated. John 3:35 affirms that the Father gives everything into the hand of Jesus; that is why Jesus can give life. Life is therefore a gift from the Father through Jesus to those who believe and belong to the Father.

The metaphorization (moving between literal and figurative levels) is clear. As a human parent would educate his child, the Father educates the Son. It should, however, be remembered that in this metaphorical application there are both

much group orientated. Cf. *Roberts*, City, 62; *Malina - Neyrey*, Honor, 73; *Dixon*, Roman, 149.

⁸³ *Quod Deus sit Immutabilis III.17-18.*

⁸⁴ *De Senectute XI.37.*

⁸⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae XX.13,3*).

⁸⁶ *Malina - Neyrey*, Honor, 73-74.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Brown*, Gospel 1, 218, and *Barrett*, Gospel, 259-260, for discussions about a youth learning his trade from his father. Both refer to the work of Dodd.

similarities and differences. *Showing* and *giving* qualitatively differ in the realm 'above' from that in the realm 'below'.

Verses 18-23 presents a metaphorical account of a child being educated by his father. This is applied analogously to the situation which pertains to God and Jesus. By substituting 'the Son' with Jesus and 'the Father' with God, the analogous pattern starts to unfold. To say in metaphoric terms that the 'authoritative Person from above'⁸⁸, is Father, is to indeed imply that certain qualities which were commonplace to the human idea of father in antiquity were linked to the 'Person from above'. These qualities are *specified* in that context (specification is frequently employed in metaphorization), for example working, loving, showing, giving, being honoured, sending. To state it in another way, being the Father enables him to do these things. The same applies to the use of the word 'Son'. When the human Jesus is called 'Son', certain possibilities open up. What is common for human 'sons' become possible for him. He can therefore work like, and according to the will of, the Father, see, hear, speak, receive honour like the Father, being sent by the Father, etc. In this sense one can speak of metaphorical interaction. Schematically it could be portrayed as follows:

<i>Literal imagery:</i>	<i>Metaphorical application:</i>
<p>A father loves his son and shows him everything. He also shows him how to do what only he as father can do. The son of course will do exactly what he sees the father doing. People will therefore honour the son like they honour the father</p>	<p>The Father is substituted with 'God' and the son with 'Jesus'. God has shown Jesus everything He does as God, because He loves the Son. (The metaphorical interaction of 'showed', i.e. how and when, stays a mystery in the Gospel, except that it seems to refer to before the incarnation). The deeds of the Father are described in terms of giving life and eschatological judgement. (Both these actions are metaphors). Jesus does only what the Father does, which reflects that Jesus is indeed from God. Therefore, it should be clear that He is God's Son, which has been acknowledged by paying honour to the Son. (This becomes one of the central themes in the Gospel)</p>

⁸⁸ Note that the term *θεός* is not exclusively used of the Father. It is also used of Jesus (1:1,18; 20:28) and in another context, of everybody who receives the word of God (10:34). In this context (verse 18) 'God' is however used to refer to the Father.

What takes place between Jesus, his disciples and the world, are also partly described in terms of education. Jesus is called διδάσκαλος in general, but also specifically of the disciples (1:38; 3:2; 11:28; 13:13,14; 20:16). Especially Chapters 13-17 should be seen in this light. When Jesus leaves, the *Paraclete* takes over that role. The *Paraclete* convicts the world (16:8), but teaches the disciples (14:26).⁸⁹ When Jesus goes away, the teaching is taken over by the *Paraclete*. It was common in those days that a father would send his children to somebody (a teacher) to be taught. Education was however the responsibility of the father, whether he did it himself, or whether he made use of another teacher.

3.2.2.3 Sustaining life

Jesus (and the Father) also provides what is necessary to *sustain life*, namely food and drink. In Chapter 6 the multiplication of the bread is narrated first, followed by the bread-of-life discourse.⁹⁰ The issue of food/bread is drawn into the centre of the discussion by Jesus' remark in 6:26 that the Jews followed Him because they received food from Him. In verse 27 ordinary perishable food is contrasted to food of eternal quality.⁹¹ The eating the latter kind of food leads to eternal life, something which is incongruent to natural experience, and requires metaphorical application.

A key metaphor in the Gospel is found in 6:35, namely ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, which is also repeated in verse 48.⁹² This surface metaphor has ἐγώ as tenor and ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς as vehicle. The vehicle is however a genitive metaphor⁹³

⁸⁹ Schnackenburg, Gospel 3, 83. Bultmann, Evangelium, 485, stresses that the work of the *Paraclete* is to guide the disciples by actualizing the eschatological teaching of Jesus for their lives.

⁹⁰ Bultmann, Evangelium, 161, characterises the multiplication of the food as a 'symbolisches Bild für den Gedanken der Offenbarungsrede'.

⁹¹ Koester, Symbolism, 95; Cf. Bultmann, Evangelium, 164-166 and Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 43-44, for the ecology of ideas relating to food in the ancient world.

⁹² Koester, Symbolism, 96. Cf. Bultmann, Evangelium, 164-167; Barrett, Gospel, 292, for a discussion on the 'Offenbarungs-Formeln'.

⁹³ Cf. C. Brooke-Rose, A grammar of metaphor, London 1958, 146, on genitive metaphors. In the genitive construction 'the metaphoric term belongs to, or comes from or out of, or is to be found in, or is attributed to, some person or thing or abstraction'. Care should however be taken with the interpretation of genitive metaphors, since they can be multidimensional. The context should lead one in the interpretation of these metaphors. In Gräbe's, Aspekte, 29, discussion of genitive metaphors she points out that there are genitive

which might be understood as: 'the life (tenor) is bread (vehicle)'. The relation between life and bread should be determined. Essentially there are two possibilities: 'Bread gives life' and 'the bread itself lives', the latter being the more problematic possibility. However, since the copulative metaphor involves Jesus as person, bread is personified and can therefore be interpreted as having life itself. In interpreting a genitive metaphor like this one, the context plays an important role. Two related expressions in this context is of importance: (a) ὁ γὰρ ἄρτος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ζωὴν διδούς τῷ κόσμῳ (6:33; cf. also 6:27), and (b) ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς (6:51). In 6:33 it is stated that the bread gives life, while the copulative metaphor in 6:51 describes the bread as 'living'.⁹⁴ Both having life and giving life are contextually linked to bread, which is again metaphorically linked to Jesus. Bread in the context of Chapter 6 is portrayed as something which people need to stay alive, although ordinary bread (including the manna) does not have the power to sustain life in the face of death (verses 49, 58). The Bread from heaven can and will do this (verses 50, 58).⁹⁵ The point of analogy therefore seems to be 'the ability to sustain life'.⁹⁶ Bread is needed for life, also for eternal life. The Bread of life should however be able to sustain its eaters even in the face of death. There is earthly bread and there is heavenly bread, now linked by way of analogy. The similarity lies in the ability to sustain life; the dissimilarity lies in the lack of the ordinary bread to sustain life in the presence of death, while the Bread of life sustains life eternally. The eater of this Bread will live for ever (verse 58).

Jesus as Bread functions as sustainer of life. As an ordinary person needs bread for life, the person who wants to sustain eternal life, needs Jesus. He functions as '*the Bread*' in this respect. Apart from that, Jesus also lives himself. 'Er gibt das

metaphors where the genitive term may function as tenor itself within the genitive construction. *Brooke-Rose*, *Grammar*, 148, says this occurs with pure attribution, 'which is a split of one idea into two, a thing or person or personification and an object attributed to it'. *Gräbe*, *Aspekte*, 29, points out that the attribute is not completely identical with the term it is linked to, but it represents it in that respect which is common to both the terms. *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 168, calls it a '*Gen. qual.*' which boils down to the same.

⁹⁴ *Barrett*, *Gospel*, 297, sees it as a synonym of the expression in 6:35.

⁹⁵ *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 168.

⁹⁶ *Barrett*, *Gospel*, 286, emphasizes the fact the the Bread 'produces eternal life in the believer'. The important point is, however, that it does not only produce it, but also sustains it.

Lebensbrot also, indem er es ist'.⁹⁷ He has life in Himself (6:57). Verse 57 explains how it is possible for Jesus to have life in himself, but also how He can mediate this life to believers. Jesus lives because of the Father (διὰ τὸν πατέρα) and the believers live because of Jesus (δι' ἐμέ).

The metaphorical interpretation of 'eating' should also be noted. Consistent with the imagery of eating, the Bread of Life should also be eaten (cf. 6:50, 51, 53, 56, 57, 58). This is a submerged metaphor: the Bread (= Jesus) should be eaten; 'eaten' is the focus and the rest of the sentence the frame. There should be some metaphorical interaction between 'Jesus' and 'to eat'. Again help comes from the context. In the sentence (6:47), preceding the 'I am the bread' saying in 6:48, Jesus states: he who believes has eternal life (ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον - cf. also 6:29, 35, 40). In 6:58 (cf. also 6:50, 53-54) he says: He who eats the bread will live for ever (ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζήσκει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). The parallel between these two expressions is beyond question. Metaphorically eating can be substituted for believing.⁹⁸ Faith leading to eternal life is also stated explicitly in 6:40 and 47. Other expressions which also form part of this parallel, such as 'coming to Jesus' (6:35 - ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ) and 'seeing Jesus' (6:40 - πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν), belong to the same semantic field as 'faith' in John.

Drink is also necessary for eternal life. The narrative about the Samaritan women (Chapter 4) shows that Jesus supplies living water. Within the narrative the reference to 'living water' (ὕδωρ ζῶν) has an obvious, but also a hidden, meaning, as is indicated by the misunderstanding of the woman in verse 11.⁹⁹ She understood Jesus to be referring to running water. She viewed the events from an earthly perspective, while Jesus was referring to a heavenly perspective. While verse 11 presents the woman's perspective, verse 14 presents the heavenly perspective of Jesus. It is done by means of a complex metaphor which consists of three parts:¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 168.

⁹⁸ Koester, *Symbolism*, 99. Barrett, *Gospel*, 297, explains that this imagery provides a vivid picture of what it means to receive Christ by faith. The metaphorical circumlocutions found in 6:53-58, which identify the flesh of Jesus with food, and which commands that this flesh should be eaten, is not discussed here, since it does not relate directly to the discussion on eternal life.

⁹⁹ Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 132, maintains that: 'Die Erkenntnis ist also eine Erkenntnis gegen den Augenschein; sie muß den Anstoß der σάρξ überwinden'. Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 1, 428; Brown, *Gospel* 1, 170; Barrett, *Gospel*, 233-234.

¹⁰⁰ Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 1, 428. Due to space the dynamics of metaphor in this instance cannot be discussed in detail.

(i) Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst (οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα); (ii) The water I give him will become in him a spring of water (τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγή ὕδατος); (iii) Water welling up to eternal life (ὕδατος ἀλλὰ ἀλλομένου εἰς ζῶην αἰώνιον).

The metaphorical nature of this water is established when it is said that the one who drinks this water will *never* thirst. This is incongruent and points to metaphorization. Water, drinking, as well as thirst, are suspended metaphors related to the imagery of water. What is the water? What is thirsting and drinking referring to? Looking at the context, thirst evidently refers to *spiritual need*. Jesus steers the discussion to spiritual matters of worship and the expected messiah (4:16-26), and at the end the narrative ends with the Samaritans who acknowledged Jesus as the Saviour of the world (4:42). Thirst, as the focus of the metaphor, may be substituted by 'spiritual need'.

'Water' (as vehicle) remains a suspended metaphor. Although it is never directly said, the tenor might be Jesus.¹⁰¹ For instance, the woman asks for water (verse 15) and Jesus introduces himself as the Messiah (verse 26). Jesus can indeed give Himself. If Jesus is metaphorized as 'water', it implies that drinking this water refers to getting into a relationship with Jesus by means of acknowledging Him or by believing in Him (cf. 4:39, 41, 42).¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ So *Schnackenburg*, Gospel 1, 427-428. *Brown*, Gospel 1, 178, does not consider this possibility. He argues that living water either refers to Jesus' teachings (as *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 132), or to the Spirit. Cf. also *Koester*, *Symbolism*, 171-172. Another possibility for the tenor might be 'salvation'. Jesus gives salvation to the Samaritans (4:42). However, the reference to eternal life in 14 (which also refers to salvation) makes this possibility less likely.

¹⁰² There are several references to *drink* in the Gospel. In Chapter 6, where the Father supplies food, drink is also mentioned several times (verses 35, 53-56). *Schnackenburg*, Gospel 2, 44-45, relates it to the water from the rock in the wilderness. In 6:35 a combined metaphor is found in which the one aspect is completely submerged. Jesus is identified as the bread of life. Whoever comes to Him will never go hungry; *but* that person will also never be *thirsty*. How can bread quench thirst? The implication is either (a) that the bread serves as a generic metaphor for a 'meal', which includes drink, or (b) that an unmentioned metaphor must be supplied to the context (i.e. 'I am the water/drink of life'). The latter seems to be the better option, since it is formulated explicitly later on in Chapter 6 (verse 55). The metaphor is not made explicit, apparently because the context, about the multiplication of the bread and the discussion about the manna, has made bread the bone of contention in this passage. The Father will, however, supply whatever the people living in his family need to eat and drink.

The first metaphorical phrase will then read as follows: He who believes in Jesus will never have any spiritual needs. *Substitution* plays an important part in unravelling this complex metaphor.

The imagery of drinking water relates to an ordinary everyday aspect which was necessary for sustaining life.¹⁰³ It was part of the daily routine to fetch water. The one who supplies water in the family of God is Jesus. He is the water and his presence becomes the well. In his presence the needs of the family are fulfilled for ever. Just as an earthly family needs water, water is needed for spiritual life. Jesus supplies that water, but is also that water.

Within the universal family imagery, supplying food and drink, fulfills an important role as part of the larger metaphorical network. What ordinary food is to an earthly person this food and drink are to spiritual persons. It stills the hunger and quenches the thirst for ever. The *difference* is however that the way in which quenching takes place differs substantially from the usual way. This is therefore the dynamics of metaphors (based on interaction within the literal and figurative application of the verb).

3.2.2.4 *Protecting* and *caring* for his family, were important responsibilities of a father in the ancient Mediterranean world.¹⁰⁴ Apart from that, members of a wider group also had the obligation to be loyal and help and protect one another.¹⁰⁵ Every member within the community was bound to act according to the 'character' of the community to defend the honour of the community.¹⁰⁶ This 'character', as

¹⁰³ 'Water is to natural life as living water is to eternal life' (*Brown*, Gospel 1, 178).

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle (*Politica* I.1259b) compares fatherly rule with kingly rule - the father, like the king, should both care and protect.

¹⁰⁵ This idea was widely accepted. Cf. *De Vaux*, Ancient, 21, on the ancient Jewish situation and *Roberts*, City, 63, on the Homeric situation. In Homeric society, a good man was the man who could preserve or even augment his family, and who was useful to them. It is important to remember that Homer was used as primary tool of education in the ancient Greek society. Cf. also Mk 3:25 par.; *Derech Erez Zuta* 5; Epictetus (*Arrian's Discourses*, Book II.x.8-9); Cicero (*De Officiis* I.xvii).

¹⁰⁶ In *Apion* II.209f an evaluation is given of the importance of acting according to the 'character' of a family. When strangers approach a family, the family should protect its own customs, but should also be open to the stranger: 'To all who desire to come and live under the *same laws* with us he gives a gracious welcome, holding that it is not family ties alone which constitute relationships, but *agreement in the principles of conduct*'. (Italics - JvdW). *Dixon*, Roman, 110, reminds us that: 'The maintenance of social standing and family honor

expressed by the customs and traditions of the family, was regarded highly, as something to be protected and desired.¹⁰⁷

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus protects those whom God has given Him, by the authority of the Father (17:12). Jesus will lose none of them (6:39; 18:9), and nobody can snatch them out of the hand of Jesus, just as nobody can snatch them out of the hand of the Father (10:28-29). The believers are under the protection of Jesus, while He is physically with them. But when He is about to return to his Father, he prays that his Father does this Himself (17:11).¹⁰⁸ These are those whom the Father has given to Jesus (17:11), in other words, those who belong to the Son and the Father. They need protection against the opposition (the 'other' family - 8:44), and the 'Evil One' (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ - 17:15) in the world (17:14-16).¹⁰⁹ This protection will ensure the unity within the family (17:11).¹¹⁰

According to 10:28 Jesus gives eternal life to his sheep, those who listen to His voice and who follow Him. There is a strong emphasis on the relationship between Jesus and his disciples (10:28) and even between Jesus and the Father. In this context family concepts are found in 10:25 and 10:29-30. Jesus acts as shepherd because He acts on behalf of the Father (10:25). The *protection* Jesus gives, concerns the protection the Father will give to those who belong to Jesus;¹¹¹ καγὼ δίδωμι αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ οὐχ ἀρπάσει τις αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς μου. καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται ἀρπάζειν ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ πατρὸς.

In 10:24-30 concepts about family life (focusing on protection), concepts about life and concepts about sheep farming (focusing on intimate relations), flow together. Having life, means to be under the protection of the Father of the shepherd.

was a function of children ... Roman sons and daughters literally bore the family name and could bring glory or discredit on it by their behavior'.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.72ff). In 1 Macc 1:54-58; 2:15-28; 4:36-43 Mattathias confirms his and his sons' loyalty towards the ways of their fathers. Dixon, Roman, 111, points out that Roman children inherited the '... family name and honor and the obligations that go with them - the continuation of the family cult ... the maintenance of the family traditions ...'.

¹⁰⁸ It is in any case stressed in the 17:12 and 6:39 that Jesus protected them on his Father's authority.

¹⁰⁹ Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 383-385.

¹¹⁰ Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 3, 180-181; R. Kysar, John, Minneapolis 1986, 167.

¹¹¹ Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 2, 306-307.

Such a person shall never perish, because he has life. Life is therefore described as the way in which a person becomes part of the protected. Being protected is as a result of having a Father who protects what belongs to Him.

Language of protection is salient, and is used within contexts where family imagery plays an important role. The Father is asked to protect his own. No explicit reason is given why He should do it. The implicit family convention, however, supplies the reason: it is the task or duty of the Father, as it is the task and duty of any earthly father also. The analogy between the literal and figurative realities is clear, as well as the contribution of the language of protection to the network of family imagery.

3.2.2.5 The facet of *service* receives attention in, for instance, 12:25-26: ὁ φιλῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολλύει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν. ἐὰν ἐμοὶ τις διακονῆ, ἐμοὶ ἀκολουθείτω. The reference to eternal life in 12:25 falls in a section which contextually refers to the death of Jesus.¹¹² It is part of a reflection or application of the imagery of the seed (12:24). The idea of seed which must first die to produce fruit was common in the ancient times. The message metaphorically taken from this is that suffering, and self-sacrifice has a purpose. It will lead to something better.

The latter message is applied to the loyalty of the disciples towards Jesus. They must relinquish their own 'earthly lives' (ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ - 12:25) in order to preserve it for eternity.¹¹³ Jesus himself has done this. Giving up your life implies serving and following Jesus (12:26),¹¹⁴ irrespective of the earthly cost, even when that cost is death.¹¹⁵ He suffered and died for a good purpose.¹¹⁶ The disciples must do the same. The Father will honour such a person. The fruit which a servant of Jesus will receive, is described in terms of receiving eternal life and honour from the Father. To act like Jesus (12:26) endows to honour in the presence of the Father.

¹¹² Cf. the references to Jesus' death in 12:24,27, 28, 32, 33,34.

¹¹³ *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 325-326; *Brown*, *Gospel* 1, 473-474.

¹¹⁴ *Carson*, *Gospel*, 439, points out that hatred here should be understood in the Semitic sense of fundamental preference. Hating means not placing yourself and your own interests first. Self-interest should play no part at all.

¹¹⁵ *Kysar*, *John*, 195-196.

¹¹⁶ *Bultmann*, *Evangelium*, 326; *Carson*, *Gospel*, 438.

To summarize, family language is yet again linked to language of life. The metaphor of the seed becomes the way in which self-sacrificing service of Jesus is motivated. Such service will be honoured by the Father.

Although the life imagery forms an integral part of the larger metaphorical network, it functions independently. Several other images are linked to the metaphor of life and thus become part of the larger metaphorical network.¹¹⁷ It gives an integrated picture of somebody who *lives*. This description of what happens when you have eternal life, fits like a hand in a glove, into the universal metaphor of a family member. By being linked to life in this way, the ideas contained in the other images become part of the larger picture which leads to a more universal and integrated imagery.

3.2.3 Other related metaphors which form part of the family imagery

3.2.3.1 *Father-Son-child* language is common in the Gospel, although references to Father and Son occur much more frequently. In 20:17 (πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἶπε αὐτοῖς □ ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν) the family relationship between the Father, Jesus and the other children is stressed. That these concepts are familial and actually establish a family imagery need no further argumentation.

3.2.3.2 *Doing what your (F)father requires (family ethics based on obedience)*

Having being born into a family in the ancient Mediterranean world, indeed created certain social expectations, as was discussed earlier. Receiving something

¹¹⁷ The following can serve as example: * Life and light are linked = the existence in God's family (life) has ethical consequences (light). * Life and the dying seed are linked = eternal life should be understood as self-sacrifice, especially of your earthly interests. It should exist in obedient service. * Life, bread and water are linked = Jesus supplies the spiritual needs for sustaining eternal life. * Life, the way and the Word are linked = Life is obtained by obtaining knowledge of Jesus. The mission of Jesus is to bring this revelation and life to this world. * Life and harvest are linked = Bringing in believers means to make them part of the community who lives eternally. * Life and resurrection are linked = life is seen as the eschatological resurrection from death which introduces a new existence. * Life and birth are linked = birth leads to life. Without birth there can be no life. * Life and the gate are linked = Jesus is the only source of life. * Life and shepherd are linked = Jesus will protect the sheep. * Life and knowledge of the Father and Son are linked = life exists in intimate knowledge of the members of the family. * Life and the work of the Spirit are linked = Life begins and is continued in the presence and working of the Spirit.

from somebody, obliged the 'receiver' to respond accordingly and fittingly towards the 'giver'. The 'gifts' of life as well as the care taken by the parents in rearing a child, was usually taken seriously.¹¹⁸ Because parents cared for their children and gave them what they needed; indeed, especially having given them life at birth, the children were thus obliged to return these gestures, by being responsive and obedient,¹¹⁹ and thus honouring their parents.¹²⁰ In denying or ignoring this obligation the child indeed acted against his 'social nature',¹²¹ and was consequently viewed in a negative way. This seemed to have been typical in ancient Mediterranean thought. From another perspective it may be said that the existence of both the family and even the city or state, was dependent on the correct ethical conduct of its members. In this sense the correct ethical conduct was an important way of keeping the social order intact.

This way of motivating ethical conduct, clearly reflects the family conventions of those times. The child, by receiving and accepting the care and help from his parents, is placed in a position where he is actually bound to return these 'benefactions' by obeying and honouring his parents. It was not something voluntary.¹²² For the child it was a social and in many cases a religious obligation,¹²³ to 'repay' his parents for the benefits he has experienced from their hands. Traditions were of course transmitted by the father or head of the family who had received it from his

¹¹⁸ Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae* IV. 289); Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* II.243).

¹¹⁹ As Gilbertson, Way, 44, formulated it: 'The principal duties of the children in this home were obedience and reverence'. Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae* IV.260-264) clearly links the honor due to the parents to the loving care the parents have shown the children.

¹²⁰ Philo (*Quod Deus sit Immutabilis* III.17-18) says that it implies honour and glory, to honour your parents or to preserve good customs.

¹²¹ Dio Chrysostom (*Twelfth Discourse* 42) observed that 'the goodwill and desire to serve which the offspring feel toward their parents is ... present in them, untaught, as a gift of nature and as an result of acts of kindness received ...' Cicero (*De Officiis* I.xvii). Schrenk, Pater, 950.

¹²² The result of the authority of the father in the house 'war die widerspruchlose kindliche Gehorsamspflicht; sie beinhaltete die dauernde, unbedingte Unterordnung unter den Willen des *pater fam.* ... und unter seine Disziplinarmaßnahmen'. Gielen, Tradition, 147 (note 182); Bund, Pater, 546; Lassen, Family, 249. Malina - Neyrey, Honor, 29, link the responsibility of the children to obey the father with the honor and shame of the family.

¹²³ Cf. Keil, Manual, 177. The parents were (often) regarded as God's agents who had to care for the child. (Philo, *De Decalogo* 120). By showing honour to them honour was paid to God and vice versa. (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* IV.262f). In Dio Chrysostom (*Thirty-sixth Discourse* and in *The first discourse on Kingship*). (Christ, Romans, 10).

predecessor and so on.¹²⁴ A loyal and loving child should indeed completely focus on acting according to these traditions and remember his identity.¹²⁵ He would harbour no thought of acting contrary to his identity, and thus harming his family or disgracing them. A 'good man' was therefore defined in terms of his ability to preserve and be useful to his *oikos*.¹²⁶ He was the one who acted according to the will of the father, and thus reflected in his actions the 'character' or 'traditions' of his family.¹²⁷

Jesus contended in an argument with the Jews that the latter did what they had heard from their father (8:38 - ἃ ἐγὼ ἐώρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ λαλῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἃ ἠκούσατε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ποιεῖτε. Cf. also 8:41). This convention that the child does what the father requires (e.g. according to family adherence), forms the basis for the bigger forensic argument in Chapter 8. In 8:29 Jesus states that He does what pleases the Father. If the Jews, on the other hand, were really children of either Abraham (8:39-40), or God (8:41-42), they would have done what their alleged fathers, Abraham or God, would have done; both these 'fathers' are positively inclined towards Jesus (8:56 and 8:42 respectively). By their negative response the Jews illustrated practically, that they actually have a different father than what Jesus has (8:44). This family adherence exactly typifies the actions of Jesus; He does what his Father does (5:17; 8:29). Those who are from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), will obey God (8:47) and will take the revelation of Jesus seriously (8:31), something that the Jews did not do. The actions and will of God, the Father, are determinative for the 'character' and 'life style' of the children of God. Jesus is the

¹²⁴ 'Vorbildcharakter' as *Gielen*, Tradition, 147, calls it. *Roberts*, City, 157, also emphasizes the responsibility of the father to pass on the traditions at least as strongly as he had inherited it. Cf. also *Josephus (Antiquitates Judaicae I.68-69)*; *Plutarch (Moralia 14a)*.

¹²⁵ God as father is, of course, the original source. Cf. also *John 5:19*. A striking description of this practice is given by *Josephus (Antiquitates Judaicae I.68-69)*: 'He [=Seth] after being brought up and attaining to years of discretion, cultivated virtue, excelled in it himself, and left descendants who imitated his ways. These being all of virtuous character, inhabited the same country ...' (*Roberts*, City, 157).

¹²⁶ *Roberts*, City, 63.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Mt 13:55-56* where it is implied: 'like father, like son'. Cf. also *Lassen*, Family, 249; *Schrot*, Familia, 512; *Bund*, Pater, 546. *Epictetus (Dissertations II.10,7)* states: 'To be a son is to regard all one's possessions as the property of the father, to obey the father in all things, never to blame him before anyone, to support him with all one's power'. Cf. also *Josephus (Antiquitates Judaicae I.222)* where the 'devoted filial obedience' of Isaac is highly praised.

revealer of the will of God, which implies that his example should be followed, if a person wants obedience to God. Thus John is quite explicit concerning the example to be followed in the family; metaphorically with the role models of God, Jesus and the Spirit.

The *unity* between Father and Son is used in 17:11, 21-23 as the pattern for the *unity among the children of God*.¹²⁸ That is why the familial realities of God's family are also true of them, such as: receiving honour (17:22); being protected by the Father (17:11); having the joy of the Son (17:13); being hated by the world (17:14); being sent by the Son and leading others to faith (17:18 and 17:20 respectively); being devoted to the truth (17:19); being an example to the world (17:21,23); being loved by *the* Son (17:23); being with the Son and seeing his glory (17:24).¹²⁹ These are family responsibilities of the child of God, on account of his unity with the Father and with the Son.¹³⁰ This unity is expressed in terms of experiencing the realities of the family of God. *Oneness* is a definite characteristic of the family on which the dynamics of family life are based. Because they have eternal life (like the Father and the Son), this unity between Jesus and the believers will remain (6:56-57). The implications such a unity implies can be seen from 15:1-8; these should be expressed by concrete actions.

The link between family conventions and what is expected on ethical level from members of a family, is evident. In the Gospel this forms part of the universal metaphoric network. It links up with, and in fact expands the family imagery in this Gospel. The convention that family members act alike and that the father determines what these actions should be like are clearly portrayed. This convention by analogy applies to the spiritual family of God as well.

3.2.3.3 *Familial love as general disposition among members of God's family*

Terminology about love in the Gospel of John involves different relationships, that is Father loves Son, *vice versa*; Father loves disciples (brothers), *vice versa*; Son loves disciples (brothers), *vice versa*; disciples love each other; love among each other; Father loves creation. Love describes an intimate and loyal relation both on emotional and on practical levels (the analogical similarity with general love), but the nature of this relationship between man and God, and Father and Son

¹²⁸ Barrett, Gospel, 508, 512.

¹²⁹ Bultmann, Evangelium, 392-393.

¹³⁰ Schnackenburg, Gospel 3, 191.

is dissimilar, in the sense that it functions within the divine sphere. It for instance becomes a relationships with an unseen Partner(s) and requires faith to function (1:18; 14:16-20).

(a) *The love between the Father and the Son*

That the Father loves the Son and *vice versa* is explicitly stated within family contexts. As can be seen from contexts such as: 3:35, 5:20, 10:17-18 and 17:23-26, the love of the Father causes Him to show and give Jesus everything; also what only God can do: giving life and judgement and (in 10:17-18) even having power over his own life and death. The Father's love is expressed by the gifts He gives. The love of the Father for the Son is given as the example of the love of the Son for his own in 15:9. The love of the Son in turn becomes the example to the believers (μείνατε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῆ ἐμῆ). Love originates from the Father,¹³¹ flows to the Son, and from the Son to the other children. This love of the Father should be the example of what should happen between the members of the family. This implies that the love of God 'may be said to characterize Jesus' entire ministry'.¹³²

Jesus' love for the Father is stated as the obverse side of the coin of the love of the Father for the Son in 14:31.¹³³ The love of the Son is shown in His obedience to the Father.¹³⁴ (Cf. also 15:10). Jesus accepts the Father's love as well as its obligations and obediently allows it to determine the outcome of his life, as example to others¹³⁵. The literal imagery here envisages a child receiving definite active love from his father. He accepts this and lives obediently according to, and in line with,

¹³¹ *W. Günther - H.-G. Link*, 'Love', in: *R. Brown* (ed), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 2, Exeter 1976, 538-547, here 546, describe it as 'the archetype of all love'.

¹³² *D.M. Smith*, *The theology of the Gospel of John*, Cambridge 1996, 148; *Stauffer*, ἀγαπάω, 52; *J. Gnllka*, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Freiburg 1994, 258.

¹³³ The frequency of references in the Gospel to the Son who loves his Father is notably lower than the number of references to the Father loving the Son (*Stauffer*, ἀγαπάω, 52).

¹³⁴ The love of the Father and the Son is displayed differently: The Father shows and gives the Son everything, the Son loves the Father by obeying Him fully (*Carson*, *Gospel*, 251; *J.A. du Rand*, *Entolê in die Johannesevangelie en -Briewe* (NTWSA, S1), Pretoria 1981, 364-365.

¹³⁵ *Carson*, *Gospel*, 520, emphasizes obedience. Cf. *J.G. van der Watt*, 'Julle moet mekaar liefhê': Etiek in die Johannesevangelie, in: *Scriptura* S9a (1992) 74-96, here 82.

what he has received.¹³⁶ This was commonly the case in the ancient Mediterranean world.

(b) *The Father loves the believers (children)*¹³⁷ and vice versa

The love of the Father is expressed through a conditional clause in 14:23: ἐάν τις ... If the believers love the Son and do what He requires, the Father will love them (cf. 14:21).¹³⁸ But if they do not love the Son, they will not accept what He says (14:24 - in 14:21 the same is said in different words). Obedience again seems to form the basis on which love operates. If the believers stay obedient to what Jesus says, they stay obedient to the Father (14:24). Then they deserve and will receive the love of the Father.¹³⁹

It should be noted that the functioning of love, is qualified by obedience, in other words, within the conventions of the family. The Father must be obeyed which implies that He is loved. A willing acceptance of the implications of family relations, implies loyalty and acceptance of responsibility. It is a combination of will and action.

It is somewhat surprising that there are no direct statements to the effect that the believers should love the Father.¹⁴⁰ It is stated that they should love the Son, which implies that they do also love the Father.¹⁴¹ The negative statement in 5:42 indicates that those who do not accept Jesus do not have the 'love of God in them' (τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). Although τοῦ θεοῦ might be either a subjective or objective genitive, in this instance the objective genitive is to be preferred: God is the One who is loved. 5:42 then means that these people do not love God, which is shown by them not accepting Jesus. The love for God is illustrated by behaving positively towards Jesus. This love for the Father exists on

¹³⁶ *Du Rand, Entolé, 345-346.*

¹³⁷ The interpretation of 17:23 might also fall in this category. The ἡγάπησας αὐτοὺς might refer to God loving the world, or to God loving the believers (so *Carson, Gospel, 569*). Since the previous phrase refers to God sending his Son, this might positively support an interpretation that this love refers to the world as in 3:16.

¹³⁸ *D.F. Tolmie, Jesus' farewell to the disciples. John 13:1-17:26 in narratological perspective, Leiden 1995, 208.*

¹³⁹ Cf. also 16:27.

¹⁴⁰ In 1 John this is stated directly (1 John 2:5; 3:17; 4:10,12,16,19,20,21; 5:1-3).

¹⁴¹ Cf. the section on the believers that love the Son.

account of love for Jesus. The way in which the love of God is illustrated, in and through his Son (17:26), becomes the guideline for the believer. 'Only those who have been loved can love'.¹⁴²

(c) *The Son loves the believers (his own/brothers) and vice versa*

This is expressed very pertinently in 13:1: ἀγαπήσας τοὺς ἰδίους τοὺς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτοὺς. This passage refers to service of exceptional nature, where the Teacher and Lord washes the feet of the followers. This passage possibly refers to the events of the cross.¹⁴³ This service is both the result, as well as the example¹⁴⁴ of Jesus' love (13:15). The love of Jesus, therefore, exists in actively bestowing 'gifts', just as his Father. Here the elements of loyalty and responsibility as part of an action of the will are connected to love.¹⁴⁵

In 14:21 Jesus declares his loyal love towards a person who is doing what He demands and in that way reciprocates his love for Jesus (14:21). Once again, love is expressed in terms of obedience.¹⁴⁶ Obedience implies love, and love implies obedience. Love, obedience and actions go together. Jesus loves those who stand in a relationship of loving obedience to Him. His love will reveal itself in the revelation of Himself. What this means is described in 14:23. Jesus and the Father will make their home with him. This is clearly a familial expression. Love is expressed in sharing a home (a metaphor that will be discussed later).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² *W. Schrage*, *The ethics of the New Testament*, Edinburgh 1996, 300; cf. also *S. Schulz*, *Neutestamentliche Ethik*, Zürich 1987, 489; *Günther - Link*, *Love*, 546.

¹⁴³ *Barrett*, *Gospel*, 436; *Gnilka*, *Theologie*, 259; *J.L. Houlden*, *Ethics and the New Testament*, London 1973, 37.

¹⁴⁴ *Berger*, *Formgeschichte*, 28, accentuates the element of repetition in an example. He says that 'es sich trotz Verschiedenheit in Zeit und Personen (Betroffenen) um einen strikt gleichartigen Vorgang handelt. Zentral ist daher die Kategorie der *Wiederholung*. c) Dem entspricht, daß sich bei Beispielen eine Tendenz zur Reihung zeigt: Das gleichartige Handeln/Geschehen kann öfter wiederholt werden'. What Jesus did, must be repeated by his disciples.

¹⁴⁵ *Schrage*, *Ethics*, 307, correctly identifies Chapter 13 as an important chapter in describing the concept of love in the Gospel: '... the love displayed by Jesus is not only the basis for love within the community, it is also paradigmatic of its nature and manner'.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *Carson*, *Gospel*, 503.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. also 15:9-12.

From a metaphorical perspective, love as action and the exemplary function of the love of the Son and the Father, are relevant aspects.

'If God were your Father, you would love me' (εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ - 8:42). With this reprimand, the love of the believers for the Son is solidly placed within a family context. Loving the Son implies having God as Father and being part of the family. Loving the Son also means to keep the commands of the Son (3:19 as the obverse; 14:15, 23).¹⁴⁸ The believers are taken up in a dynamic relation with the Father and Son (14:23) and are required to act obediently according to the requirements of this relationship (3:19-20).¹⁴⁹ Reciprocal love is central.¹⁵⁰ Here we also find the pattern of love as an action of will, which is expressed in loyalty and acceptance of responsibility.

(d) *The believers (brothers) love each other*¹⁵¹

The Son commands believers to love one another according to the example He has set (13:34; 15:12,17). 'The love demanded finds not only its norm and measure but also its basis and possibility solely in Jesus' love'.¹⁵² This love will identify them as his disciples (13:35). Their identity will be determined by their love. 'Als die von Jesus Geliebten sind sie zur Liebe untereinander berufen'.¹⁵³ In 13:1-17 Jesus sets an example of love (13:15) by washing his disciples' feet, and He exemplifies real love by comparing it to death for (on behalf of) a friend in 15:13. This should be the nature of their love for one another.¹⁵⁴ A member of a family should act according to the pattern which identifies that family. This pattern Jesus has portrayed. Stauffer aptly states that the Father is the *source*, and Jesus the *example*,

¹⁴⁸ The last conversation between Jesus and Peter follows the same pattern (21:15-17). Peter confesses his love for Jesus and Jesus gives him a command to execute.

¹⁴⁹ As *J. Roloff*, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament*, Göttingen 1993, 301, formulates that: 'Jesus lieben heißt, sein Gebot der geschwisterlichen Liebe innerhalb der Jüngergemeinschaft zu erfüllen.'

¹⁵⁰ *Tolmie*, *Farewell*, 212.

¹⁵¹ It is of probable significance that the references to the believers who should love one another are limited to the second half of the Gospel (from Chapter 13 onwards).

¹⁵² *Schrage*, *Ethics*, 301.

¹⁵³ *Roloff*, *Kirche*, 302; cf. *H.-D. Wendland*, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments*, Göttingen 1975, 112; *Smith*, *Theology*, 146-147.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Van der Watt*, *Etiq*, 83-88.

of love to the believer.¹⁵⁵ This accentuates that love is a central element in the establishment of the unity in the family.¹⁵⁶

(e) Reciprocal love in the family

Although the interrelatedness of love within family relationship was mentioned several times in the above discussions, it should especially be noted how the love of the Father for the Son is returned by the Son, in obedience to the Father. The Father's love again exemplifies the Son's love for his own (15:9). The love of the Son for his own is returned in the same way as the Son has returned the love of the Father. The one who loves the Son will again be loved by the Father just as the Father loves the Son (14:21 and 17:23). Such a person will exist in an intimate relationship with the Father and the Son (14:21,23). He will remain in the love of the Son as the Son stayed in the love of the Father (15:9-10).¹⁵⁷

These observations illustrate the network of relationships that exist within the family of God. The basis for the functioning of these relationships is reciprocal love. The believer is drawn into this network of love, which functions as 'key term for the bond of community'.¹⁵⁸ It is the 'law of its (the heavenly family) life'.¹⁵⁹ Love can only be love if it is expressed in obedient actions. The living relationship with the members of the family of God constitutes the basis of the conduct (ethics) of the believer. Houlden correctly maintains that sayings about love are not primary ethical commands, but that they concern existential situations of eternal life that the believer received from God.¹⁶⁰ The essence of love at the beginning does not differ from what it is at the end.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ E. Stauffer, 'Αγαπάω, in G. Kittel (ed), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1, Grand Rapids 1974, 21-55, here 53.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Smith, *Theology*, 144-145, who calls it the 'key to unity'; Schulz, *Ethik*, 490.

¹⁵⁷ Barrett, *Gospel*, 215.

¹⁵⁸ Houlden, *Ethics*, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Stauffer, 'Αγαπάω, 53.

¹⁶⁰ Houlden, *Ethics*, 38.

¹⁶¹ Van der Watt, *Etiiek*, 81.

(f) In summary

It was argued that a network of love is woven in the Gospel between the various members of the family of God.¹⁶² Although this love is expressed in a different way by each member of the family (e.g. the Father, the Son and the children), love is the way in which the members of the group receive and show their own identity. The Father is the determining factor,¹⁶³ while obedience is the strongest way to illustrate love to the rest of the family. Love and actions cannot be separated.

This whole complex of ideas related to the idea of love within a family, is metaphorically applied to the relationship between the Father, the Son and the believers. In many ways this love is in many ways like ordinary love, but because it is love for God (who is unseen) it also differs from ordinary everyday love. Since there are elements that are the same and there are elements that differ, and there are two realities (the literal and the figurative), interaction takes place within the verb 'love'. When God substitutes 'Father' and Jesus 'Son', in the expression 'The Father loves the Son', interaction takes place between what ordinary humans know as love and the divine love that exists within the Godhead. Elements such as an intimate relationship which is expressed by means of actions are realized within the Godhead, but this is exactly where the difference also lies. This is not a relationship which is known by ordinary people; it is divine. It was mentioned in the discussion of 5:17-23 that the mystery of the relationship and actions within the Godhead, remains. Love can be seen as the actualizing of God in this world.¹⁶⁴

The function of this complex of ideas linked to love forms a part of the larger imagery of family life. It is an important part, but not the only part in the complete picture of the family imagery used in the Gospel. It should therefore also be seen as part of the universal metaphorical imagery of family life, which the author of the Gospel uses to explain to his readers what happens when a person accepts Jesus. The interpersonal relations thus also influence the way in which love is

¹⁶² Cf. *Van der Watt*, *Etiq*, 106-117, for a description of the integration of love into the theology of John.

¹⁶³ *Wendland*, *Ethik*, 111, formulates it tersely by saying: 'Das neue Sein ist Liebe. Die Liebe ist eine einzige, göttliche Wirklichkeit ... die von Gott durch Christus zu den Seinigen und von einem Bruder zum anderen strömt. Als Liebende stehen die Glieder der christlichen Gemeinde im Geschehen der göttlichen Liebe'.

¹⁶⁴ *Stauffer*, ἀγαπάω, 53.

expressed. The person in the higher position usually 'gives'; while the person in the lower position usually obeys the person in the higher position. When the Son stands before the Father, the Father gives and the Son obeys. When the Son stands before the believers, it is the Son that gives and the believers that obey. The interpersonal relationship determine the 'face' of that love in each case. This also applies to God's love for the world. It is love with a 'missionary face'.

Love implies activity.¹⁶⁵ The activity is, however activity to the advantage of the Father and his family, even if this implies that believers should shift their interests aside. Jesus also did that when He died for us. This implies willing obedience and is expressed in 'loyalty' and 'acceptance of responsibility'. The nature of love in John's Gospel is '... not an emotion or an effect, not a theory or an idea, but simply living for others'.¹⁶⁶ This is confirmed by looking at the obverse of love, namely hate. In passages like 15:18-16:4a, hate is also expressed in terms of actions.¹⁶⁷ Schrage¹⁶⁸ also points out that hate expresses identity within a family.

3.2.3.4 Knowledge as part of familial conventions in the Gospel

Although γινώσκω and οἶδα are used frequently in the Fourth Gospel,¹⁶⁹ the theme of 'knowledge' within the family is not developed strongly.¹⁷⁰ It does play a role, but is not developed into a central theme within the family imagery.

(a) Christians knowing the Father and the Son

According to 17:1-3 living eternally in God's family implies to know God and Jesus.¹⁷¹ What does that imply? Carson (1991:556) correctly observes that

¹⁶⁵ Van der Watt, *Etiek*, 83-87.

¹⁶⁶ W. Schrage, *Ethics*, 318.

¹⁶⁷ Tolmie, *Farewell*, 213-214.

¹⁶⁸ Schrage, *Ethics*, 318.

¹⁶⁹ Sixty and ninety seven occurrences respectively. Cf. Barrett, *Gospel*, 81-82, for a brief discussion of knowledge and salvation in the Gospel.

¹⁷⁰ This in specific reference to the Father knowing Jesus, or Jesus knowing the disciples, or *vice versa*: in other words, the '*Gegenseitigkeitsverhältnis*' as Bultmann, *Evangelium*, 290, defines it.

¹⁷¹ Carson, *Gospel*, 556, points out that this is a common idea in many religions not to even mention the Old Testament (Jer 31:34; Hos 4:6; Hab 2:14). The two trees in the garden of Eden are the trees of life and of knowledge (Gn 2:9). This is a unique combination in the LXX. Brown, *Gospel* 2, 753, also discusses some Old Testament information in this regard.

knowledge implies more than mere intellectual knowledge;¹⁷² it 'entails fellowship, trust, personal relationship, faith'.¹⁷³ When one realizes that this reference occurs within a strong family context, then the nature of this knowledge can be defined more precisely. It is knowing (objectively and subjectively) God and Jesus like members of a family (8:19). This broadly implies acceptance of who they are; what their positions in the relation are; how the believer or child should react towards them, and so on. It also implies that the child will know his position in the family because he knows the Father and the Son¹⁷⁴ as well as their relationship to one another (vv.7-8),¹⁷⁵ and can therefore stand in communion with them.¹⁷⁶ Seen thus it also becomes clear why 'life' and 'knowledge' are so easily related.¹⁷⁷ Life means to be able to exist, act, feel, relate etc. in the world where you live and to know the other members in the family. When Chapter 17 is read from this perspective, then references to typical familial elements such as: care and protection (v. 11,12,15), love (v.23) unity (vv.11,21,22), obedience (vv.7-8), origin (v.14), mission (v.18), etc. can be better understood, considering that members of a family know each other. As 17:7-8 indicates clearly, the disciples 'know', which entails cognition as well as relationship.

(b) The Son knowing the Father and vice versa

The Son knows the Father, and therefore He is obedient to the word of the Father (8:55; cf. 17:25).¹⁷⁸ Knowing the Father means to move into the realm of interpersonal relationships. This reciprocal knowledge between Father and Son, is

¹⁷² Schnackenburg, Gospel 1, 172, explains: "'Knowing God" has the ... OT meaning of "having communion with God"'. Brown, Gospel 2, 752.

¹⁷³ Knowledge '... is therefore objective and at the same time a personal relation' (Barrett, Gospel, 504).

¹⁷⁴ The negative side of this is that the unbelievers or opponents of Jesus, do not know the Father (8:19,28,55; 15:21; 16:3; 17:25). They are not aware of Him and do not recognize his presence or actions, not even in his Son (8:19).

¹⁷⁵ Barrett, Gospel, 514-515, argues that the disciples do not know God as the Son knows Him. They can only know God through the Son. That is the only saving knowledge known by John. Cf. also Bultmann, Evangelium, 291, 378.

¹⁷⁶ Schnackenburg, Gospel 1, 172.

¹⁷⁷ Barrett, Gospel, 503, points out that 'life' and 'knowledge' are often related in Hebrew and Hellenistic thinking.

¹⁷⁸ W. Loader, The Christology of the Fourth Gospel, Frankfurt 1989, 49, sees this as part of the basic christological pattern of the Gospel.

made explicit in 10:15.¹⁷⁹ It serves as an example and motivation for the reciprocal knowledge between Jesus and those who belong to Him.¹⁸⁰ This implies mutual determination,¹⁸¹ on the basis of a personal relationship (such as the shepherd and his sheep who are in a personal relationship).¹⁸²

The Father also knows the Son as the Son knows the Father (10:15). The idea of the Father knowing the Son is, however, not explicated. But because the Father taught him everything (5:20) and gave him everything (3:34-35; 17:2), the relationship between Father and Son, as well as intimate (not mystical¹⁸³) knowledge, is implied.

(c) *The Son knowing his own*

In 10:14-15 the reciprocal knowledge between the Father and the Son, serves as an example (original model and reason),¹⁸⁴ for the reciprocal knowledge between Jesus and his own. Because of this knowledge, they recognize Jesus and follow Him (10:27).¹⁸⁵ This is also the knowledge that motivates the shepherd to lay down his life for his sheep.

¹⁷⁹ Barrett, Gospel, 514, remarks: 'There exists a unique reciprocal knowledge between the Father and the Son'. It should indeed be distinguished from the mediated knowledge of the Father which the disciples have.

¹⁸⁰ Barrett, Gospel, 376, points out that Norden wants to see this expression within the context of 'oriental-Hellenistic mysticism'. However the context speaks against a sort of deification. Rather an interpersonal and moral relationship is intended. The idea of the remark in 17:3 being gnostic is opposed by Barrett, Gospel, 81-82; Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 298 and Brown, Gospel 2, 752. Bultmann, Evangelium, 290-291, mentions that this type of language indeed reminds one of mysticism and gnosticism, but argues that that revelatory character of the knowledge in John distinguishes it from typical mystical or gnostic ideas.

¹⁸¹ Barrett, Gospel, 476.

¹⁸² Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 297, is of the opinion that knowledge should be understood in '... an O.T.-Semitic sense, a personal bond, a knowing that leads on to communion'. That is why the expression of reciprocal love is taken beyond the framework of the imagery itself.

¹⁸³ Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 298.

¹⁸⁴ Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 297.

¹⁸⁵ Schnackenburg, Gospel 2, 297, sees this as a relationship of friendship and intimacy.

(d) In summary

Although 'knowledge' plays a minor role within the family imagery in the Gospel, it does constitute an element within the global family imagery. As is the case with love, knowledge is also reciprocal and leads to obedience of the Father's will. The believer who received eternal life, is placed in a position to know God. He can experience God in the full sense of the word, as Father of the family. As metaphor within the larger family imagery, 'knowledge' mainly functions in an interactive way. Knowledge differs on literal and figurative levels, in that God and Jesus (figurative) cannot be known in the same way as a human child knows his or her father (literal).

3.2.3.5 *Communication* between the Father, the Son and the children in the family also receives attention in the Fourth Gospel. Communication and social interaction between a father and a son in ancient Mediterranean societies usually took place quite unrestrainedly,¹⁸⁶ due to the strong social fabric of the family.¹⁸⁷ Aristotle described the father-child relation as one of the three basic relationships.¹⁸⁸ Normally the father accompanied his son to different meetings or appointments. As part of the son's education, he also worked alongside his father. Although there is seeming evidence, that the contact between father and sons was in certain respects restricted, the opportunities for contact were ample.¹⁸⁹ A boy could normally approach his father rather freely.¹⁹⁰

Jesus is sure that the Father will always hear his prayers (11:41-42; cf. also 11:22) and therefore He indeed communicates with the Father (Chapter 17; 14:16). *Jesus* prays for Lazarus (11:41-42, but also for his disciples (16:26 and 17:1-26). In both these cases *Jesus* asks for their welfare according to the will and glory of

¹⁸⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* VII.66,5 explains '... conferring together about what was just and fair like brothers with brothers or children with their parents in a well-governed family, they settled their arguments by persuasion and reason'. This remark illustrates the communicational interaction which existed within the family. Cf. also Mt 7:9-11; Luk 15:11-12. Dixon, Roman, 131.

¹⁸⁷ Cicero (*De Finibus III.xix*) points out that love comes naturally for those whom one has given birth to.

¹⁸⁸ *Politica I.1253b*.

¹⁸⁹ Gielen, Tradition, 135-147.

¹⁹⁰ Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaicae I.222*) very positively describes the tender and loving relationship which existed between Isaac and his father.

the Father.¹⁹¹ What is the Father's, is His also (17:10). In his prayers Jesus does not only presuppose a sound and intimate relation between Him and his Father (17:11, 20-23),¹⁹² but also acknowledges the priority of the Father.¹⁹³ That is why he asks of the Father (17:9,15,20). Family imagery seems to form the background of the communication between Father and Son in the Gospel according to John.

References to the prayers of the *disciples* are mainly made in the last Farewell Discourse (14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23-26). These prayers should always be done in the name of Jesus (14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23,24,26), or while staying in Him and allowing his word to stay in the believer (15:7). This indicates the nature of prayer. It should be done within the sphere of what Jesus represents and what his authority allows.¹⁹⁴ It is not a free for all prayer, but is in agreement with what is required from somebody who is subjected to the authority of Jesus.¹⁹⁵ Direct references to the Father and the Father's love, imbue these contexts with familial nature, especially if it is borne in mind that the issue here is free and direct communication. This endorses the conclusion, that the 'prayer sections' in John should also be seen as part of the larger universal family imagery.

3.2.3.6 *House and property in family context*

In 14:2-3 imagery is found of Jesus going to the house of his Father to prepare a place for his own. Then He will return,¹⁹⁶ to fetch them so that they can be where He is.¹⁹⁷ This account forms a complex metaphor circle. House and rooms are submerged metaphors. In a case like this, the context should provide evidence to interpret the metaphor and supply a tenor. The most obvious explanation is to link it to heaven,¹⁹⁸ but heaven is also vague and metaphorical. The context does not

¹⁹¹ *Schnackenburg*, Gospel 2, 339.

¹⁹² *Bultmann*, Evangelium, 312.

¹⁹³ *Barrett*, Gospel, 403.

¹⁹⁴ *Barrett*, Gospel, 475.

¹⁹⁵ *Schnackenburg*, Gospel 3, 102, highlights the openness of Christians to the Father.

¹⁹⁶ *Carson*, Gospel, 488-489, discusses the different possibilities of Jesus' return, mentioned in the rest of the chapter, i.e. His return through the Spirit; His return after his resurrection, or His eschatological return.

¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately the different ways of understanding this imagery theologically cannot receive attention at this stage. *Brown*, Gospel 2, 625, reminds us that these two verses are extremely difficult to interpret.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *Brown*, Gospel 2, 625; *Schnackenburg*, Gospel 3, 60-61; *Carson*, Gospel, 489.

supply clear tenors. The question is whether these individual metaphors in the account should all be 'metaphorized' individually, or whether they communicate together as a narrative unit to convey an unitary message which does not depend on the detailed 'metaphorization' of 'house' and 'rooms', etc. Nevertheless, whether taken individually or not, the message from this passage is still clear.

The unitary proposal appears to be the better one, and has support from the context when one realizes that the ensuing context does not *focus* on the house or rooms as such, but on the description of the *way* to this house (14:6-7). Thus the Father is the tenor of the house and the imagery of house in the context should be downplayed with the focus rather falling on the relationship with the Master, the Father, of the house. 'Communion with God is a permanent and universal possibility'.¹⁹⁹ This would mean that the imagery of the house should not be interpreted in detail, looking for the submerged tenors, but rather functions as an account (in this case with narrative qualities) which communicates as a whole to convey (a) specific idea(s). From a figurative point of view, this account functions like a parable in which the different elements function together to convey (a) message(s). Not every detail should be interpreted metaphorically.²⁰⁰

The theme of *property* is also of significance. What the Father possesses, also belongs to the Son (16:15; 17:10). The Father has given everything into his hand (3:35; 17:7), and gave Him authority over all people (17:2). He has also given the believers to Jesus (6:37; 17:6,9,24). Thus what belongs to the Father, also belongs to the Son, although the Father holds the primary place in this relationship. He gives and allocates, while the Son receives and protects (6:37).

If this reflects something of the way in which ancient societies operated, then these references should be linked to the larger universal family imagery, as an

¹⁹⁹ Barrett, Gospel, 457. Schnackenburg, Gospel 3, 61; Brown, Gospel 2, 625.

²⁰⁰ Two other 'dwelling accounts' should receive brief attention: (i) John 1:14 reads: Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. It is possible that the reference of ἐσκήνωσεν is to Jesus pitching a tent (in modern terms: moved in) which probably alludes to the tabernacle in the desert (Carson, Gospel, 127). Ἐσκήνωσεν forms the focus in this metaphor. It refers to a place for dwelling. The literal reference might therefore simply be to dwell or to come and stay. (ii) Then there is the reference to the position of a slave as compared to that of a son within a father's house. This brief allusion illustrates the truth that a slave does not stay forever, which is then used in Jesus' argumentation. In this account no further dynamics of metaphor are supposed to be sought for.

expansion of the description of the broad network of what takes place within a family.

4. Conclusion

It was indicated that an essential imagery which John uses in this Gospel, is the family imagery. It is paradigmatically developed in a complex way, throughout the entire Gospel. Different elements of family imagery are activated in different contexts in the Gospel of John, in order to communicate the message.²⁰¹

Because John develops the family imagery in a complex way, an integrated 'figurative world' is created which is metaphorically related to the earthly world. Events that usually take place in the lives of ordinary people here on earth, such as: birth, living one's life, eating, drinking, talking, obeying, fearing or protecting, etc., are *analogically* used to 'project' a figurative world, which is then used to explain the spiritual dynamics relating to the relationship between God and man.

The parallel between the two worlds is clear. Smaller elements work together in creating a larger complex reality. Just as a earthly person is born into this world, a person is also born into the spiritual world. To participate in this world, a person has to have the ability to participate and experience the realities of this world, for example he or she has to have life. The same applies to the spiritual world. Once a person is alive, the person can participate in the reality he or she is born into. This implies: one eats (Chapter 6) and drinks (Chapter 4) as well. One has a Father (God) and a family (the Son and believers). Love means loyalty to your family whom you know. Communication therefore takes place within the household and the children listen to the Father. Education takes place (Chapter 5) and that within the confines of a house, etc.

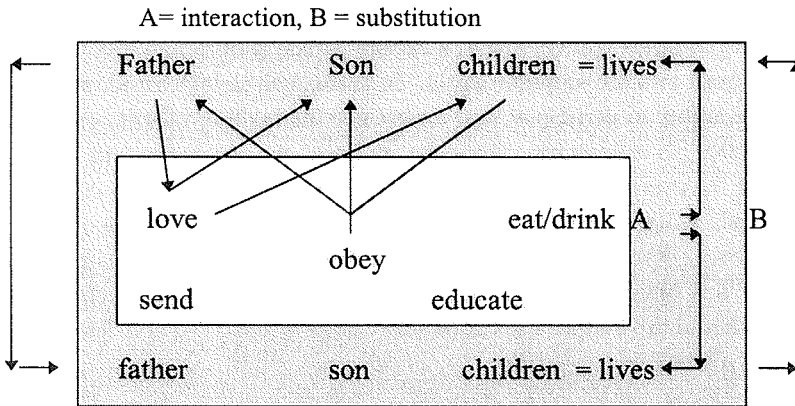
If one looks at these portrayals, a complete picture (imagery) of an ancient family is elicited, in which certain central features are activated. The different metaphors form part of a larger macro imagery in the Gospel, and should be interpreted within the boundaries of this imagery. This creates an interpretative (hermeneutical) circle, in which the smaller parts contribute to the larger imagery and the larger imagery serves as background for the better understanding of the smaller parts. (A network is established). This leads, *inter alia*, to a closer specifi-

²⁰¹ There are also other images which are activated, for instance 'light' and 'forensic imagery'. These images are not activated in isolation, but are connected by the context to the family imagery. Due to scarcity of space this broader metaphor ring is not discussed here.

cation of individual metaphors. The metaphors do not function as general and unspecified metaphors, but as metaphors within the context of a specific imagery. In this circular 'movement' the central and peripheral elements of the larger imagery should be kept in mind. Birth-life, and the Father-Son language, form the substrate of the imagery, which is then developed by way of smaller related areas. This forms a network throughout the entire Gospel.

Since John knows that family conventions are rather fixed, and that people will react by saying: 'Yes, it is so', it serves as effective mechanism to explain the spiritual dynamics, even though they are figurative. The implicit presupposition is that what happens on earth, can serve as 'analogy' for what happens on the spiritual level. In this way the two realities are linked.

Two realities are related on basis of analogy. The following is a schematic illustration and does not reflect every detail. It merely conveys the formation of the imagery, and how the network functions as a unit.



The 'birth-life' language forms the core of the imagery.²⁰² By being born as child of God (1:12-13), the person is able to participate in the spiritual world of God (3:1-8). That implies that a person has eternal life (3:15-16 *et. al.*) which enables him or her to experience eternal life in all its dimensions. Because the

²⁰² 'Birth' and 'life' do not only occur within the same contexts (1:1-18; 3:1-21; cf. also 8:12ff), but they are also linked thematically. In 11:25-26 the idea of resurrection (which is appropriate in the context of the Lazarus event) is related to life. This is, however, not the primary description of how a person receives life. In John birth leads to life. The one is necessary for the other.

person has life, he or she can and must eat, drink; has a father and family (brothers - 20:17); lives in love (15:9-10,12) and service (12:25); is protected by the Father and the Son (10:28-30; 17:11-12); knows the other members of the family; is educated and is consequently obedient to the rules of the family as the Father has given them. This is possible because the person lives. The other central element in the family imagery is the use of terms such as Father and Son, children (1:12) and eventually brothers (20:17). Apart from that the family imagery is expanded by means of references to the house of the Father (14:2-3, 23), property (16:15), proper communication (11:41-42; 14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:23-26).

One can say that John presents the intended reader with a 'family history'. The whereabouts of the Father and the Son are described, and the purpose of the mission of the Son is to gather those who belong to the Father. They have to be gathered in order to participate in eternal life with the Father. Eventually, they also will experience the glory of the Son, in the house of the Father.

Although the different elements work together in forming a larger imagery, the micro elements also function metaphorically on macro level.²⁰³

(a) As was the case with the imagery of the vine (Chapter 15) and the sheep (Chapter 10), *substitution* of elements plays an important role. This is a *sine qua non*. Two realities are compared in a complex way, by using a large number of elements. To metaphorize, elements in the spiritual reality are substituted. A believer becomes a 'child' and God becomes the 'Father' by means of metaphorical substitution. When that happens, the family imagery is activated.

(b) *Interaction* on micro level is also found, mainly within verbs. Examples are the teaching of the Son by the Father, loving, obeying or eating.

(c) Short *narratives* are also present where an illustration is given, or story is told to communicate a specific point. This is the case with the references to 'house' in Chapter 14. This comes close to a parable, and not every detail should be interpreted metaphorically, but the story should be seen as a unit. This corresponds to what was found in both the imageries of the sheep (10:12-13) and the vine (15:6).

(d) Formally, there are also different *types* of metaphors, namely: submerged metaphors (for instance the bread - 6:50-58), suspended metaphors (1:12-13),

²⁰³ To obviate repetition, I refrain from discussing all the instances of the various metaphors.

copulative surface metaphors (for instance 'words which are spirit and life' in 6:63), and genitive metaphors. This highlights the sophisticated way in which John applies techniques of metaphor. He uses a wide variety of different types of metaphors in an effective way for different reasons.

Two remarks apropos: (a) John works in a refined way with his metaphors, and makes use of a wide variety of possibilities available to him to create and employ metaphors. (b) He employs his imagery in a calculated way. He chooses from the imagery which he needs for communicating the message.

Clearly, the way in which John uses his metaphors in specific contexts (e.g. Chapters 10 and 15) is also the way in which he uses it on macro level. The same dynamics of metaphor apply. This means that the different themes related to family imagery should be read together theologically, as part of a larger imagery. This may serve as an important cohesive factor in formulating the theology of John.