CHAPTER 3
SYMBOLS, RITES AND GROUP FORMATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1 it was argued that ordinary language was not sufficient to express Jesus' experience of the direct influence that the Spirit of God exerted in his life, because this Spirit-filledness was experienced during alternate states of consciousness. Alternate states of consciousness, in turn, are not ordinary events. This I described in chapter 2. But why was it important to verbalize these experiences of Jesus? Jesus' alternate states of consciousness had a lasting effect on his life; they caused him to experience the world in a totally different manner from his contemporaries (see Davies 1995:44-65; Pilch 1998a:53-57; 2002a:106-110). Scholars (e.g., Davies 1995:171) argue that accordingly Jesus' followers participated in this Spirit-filledness after his death, and in this way formed a new movement, consisting of different groups. An individual, momentary happening, like an alternate state of consciousness, can be expressed by means of symbolic anti-language. Once this is done, it can be re-enacted by means of a rite. The earliest Jesus-followers did so by means of the rites of baptism and the Eucharist.

In the light of this, it is necessary to understand the nature of symbols and rites. After a few preliminary remarks, the first part of the discussion in this chapter will concern symbols, while the second part will explain rites. Special attention will be given to the distinction between rituals and ceremonies as the two different manifestations of rites, because the earliest baptism can be described as a ritual and the earliest Eucharist as a ceremony. In the last section of this chapter, I shall spend some time explaining certain aspects of social identity theory and institutionalization, because the rites of baptism and the Eucharist played an important part in the process of group formation among the earliest Jesus-followers. In subsequent chapters this theoretical information will be applied to the symbolic rites of baptism and the Eucharist.

3.2 SYMBOLS

3.2.1 What is a symbol?

According to Peters (1992:33) symbols function somewhat like a prism:

> ...a prism has an unusual revelatory quality. If you pick it up, focus your eyes on it, and turn it carefully until you find just the right position, then suddenly a whole rainbow of color breaks out. The prism does not create the color, of course. The colors were there all the time. It may seem under ordinary conditions that the room is bathed in white, colorless light, but the prism reveals that the whole spectrum of color is co-present. The key to knowing this is looking through the prism to see the otherwise invisible truth.

When we look through a prism, we see truths that we would otherwise miss. Peters (1992:34) adds that a symbol "is what it is, but at the same time it points beyond itself to a greater reality. In fact, this greater reality is somehow present to the symbol and efficacious through it. Symbols live because they bear us gently from this world to the next without ever leaving this world behind."

Peters' definition explains that by means of symbols it is possible to access information that would otherwise be lost – for the purpose of this study the alternate states of consciousness that Jesus experienced while he was on earth.

White (1954:252) considers that the symbol is the basic unit of all human behavior and civilization, while Jung (1988:20) explains that humans use the spoken or written word to express the meaning of what they want to convey. But language is full of symbols and signs. Examples of signs are abbreviations (such as UN). Although abbreviations are meaningless in themselves, they have acquired a recognizable meaning through common usage or deliberate intent. Signs do no more than denote the objects to which they are attached (cf Brown 1984:19). On the other hand, a symbol can be described as "...a term, a name, or

even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us" (Jung 1988:20). Hence, a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning.[1] Since symbolic ideas cannot be formulated in a way that satisfies intellect and logic, according to Jung (1988:91), they create problems for the scientific mind.

Pilch and Malina (1993:xvi-xvii) note that an object endowed with meaning and feeling is often called a "symbol". Thus, a person, thing, or event filled with socially appreciable value bears the meaningfulness characteristic of a symbol. For example, a country's flag is basically a colored cloth. When this cloth is called a flag and accepted as a symbol, it stimulates meaning and feeling that the cloth alone does not (cf Pelser 1981:268). The perception of symbols in general, as well as the interpretation of these symbols, is socially determined (see Douglas 1996:9). Pilch and Malina (1993:xvii) observe that:

> The way in which values are affixed to value objects is the process of "symbolizing," or having some person, thing, or event serve as a symbol. Symbolizing takes place by means of drawing lines over, under, around, through, into and out of persons (self, others), nature (the non-human), time, space, superhumanness (transcendence), the All, and then investing the lines thus drawn with feeling, and finally perceiving meaning in the emerging configuration.

Jung (1988:93) distinguishes between "natural" and "cultural" symbols. He describes natural symbols as deriving from the unconscious contents of the psyche, which represent an enormous number of variations on the essential archetypal images. In many cases they can be traced back to their archaic roots (to the ideas and images we find in the most ancient records and in primitive societies). Cultural symbols express "eternal truths", and are used in many religions. These symbols are transformed and developed to become the

collective images accepted by civilized societies. But they nevertheless retain much of their original numinosity or "spell".[2] These symbols cannot be ignored, even if they may seem irrelevant to some people, because they are an important part of our mental make-up and play a role in the construction of human society (Jung 1988:93; see Henderson 1988:106-107).[3]

As I mentioned in chapter 1, the social anthropologist, John Beattie (1968:69-71; cf White 1954:254-255), describes symbols in the following manner:

- Usually there is a *reason* why a particular symbol is appropriate in a specific case; there is an underlying rationale which is at least ideally discoverable, even though it may be by no means obvious, and may even be unknown to the persons who use the symbol. Sometimes the rationale is obvious, like whiteness as a symbol of purity or a serpent biting its tail as a symbol of eternity. At other times the rationale is less evident, as in the case of a flag of a particular color and design symbolizing a nation, or a totemic animal of a particular species symbolizing a clan (cf Weber 1964:39-40; Winkelman 2000:52). Different grounds exist on which a symbol's appropriateness to what is symbolized is based. There may be a real or fancied resemblance between the symbol and what is symbolized, or a historical conjunction in the individual's or the culture's past could comprise the motivation for using the specific symbol.

- Symbols commonly stand for or *imply some abstract notion;* they do not simply refer to a concrete entity or a specific event. Abstract notions – like group solidarity or power – are symbolized. Sociologically, this is the most important aspect of symbols, namely that they provide people with a means of representing abstract ideas, often ideas of great practical *importance* to themselves indirectly, ideas which it would be difficult or even impossible for them to represent to themselves directly. This statement makes it clear why the earliest baptism and Eucharist, with their

associated alternate states of consciousness, can be described as symbols. Here it must be kept in mind that the capacity for systematic analytic thinking about concepts is a product of several millennia of education and conscious philosophizing. It is a luxury unavailable in cultures whose members must devote most of their time and energy to producing the minimum necessities of daily life.

- Consequently symbols are essentially expressive; a symbol is a way of saying something important, something which is impossible or impracticable to say directly. What is expressed symbolically must be thought to be worth expressing. What is symbolized is always an object of *value*. People's attitudes to their symbols are thus rarely neutral.

This brings Beattie (1968:71) to the conclusion that symbolism is a kind of language and that it is appropriate to ask of any symbol what it means. This is precisely the aim of the present study. Anti-language is the "kind of language" that is investigated in this regard.

Symbols express values. Symbols do not only possess meanings, they also lead to social consequences (Beattie 1968:72). People who carry out institutionalized symbolic procedures or rites usually believe that by doing so they are either producing some desired state of affairs or preventing an undesired situation (Beattie 1968:202). Symbolism is the major operator in rites. All rites are organized around a core symbol or set of symbols that imparts coherence and forms its most expansive intentionality in a culture's cosmology (see Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:213-214).

From a neuropsychological perspective, Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili (1992:163) describe the symbolic process as follows:

> The symbolic process is that part of the nervous system by which the neural network mediating the whole is entrained by and to the network mediating the part; that is, the mechanism by which the neurocognitive model(s) of a noumenon is evoked by partial sensory information stimulated by the noumenon. A model may be evoked by a stimulus originating either in the outer operational environment, which excites sensory receptors at the periphery of the nervous system, or in another model within the organism's cognized environment. It is customary to call the stimulus a *symbol* ("signifier", "vehicle") and the model or models evoked by that symbol its *meaning* ("signified", "designatum"). The relationship between symbol and meaning is one of part to whole.

Perception, symbols and consciousness are closely related (Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:159-237; see Winkelman 2000:38). The symbolic process operates in cognition largely at an unconscious level. But many symbols can exist that are consciously cognized to one degree or another (by an individual or a group) as symbolic, or are internalized in ritually delineated bundles (Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:172).

According to Glicksohn (2001:354), the hypothesis relating metaphoric thinking to consciousness claims that metaphors, symbols, analogies and images are used in an attempt to depict the alternate state of consciousness experience, which is not easily translatable into words. Some makeshift mode of communication is therefore used to express the inexpressible. My hypothesis regarding the earliest baptism and Eucharist can be viewed in this light. I consider that these two symbolic rites were expressions of alternate states of consciousness, which were verbalized in anti-language. Glicksohn (2001:354) further argues that metaphoric thinking is one of the hallmarks of the experience, and is used both in an attempt to depict the experience, but more importantly to convey to the reader (or

listener), and possibly to induce in the reader, some of the qualities of that experience. This is not a makeshift mode of communication; rather, the use of metaphoric-symbolic language reflects underlying metaphoric-symbolic cognition. The alternate state of consciousness itself is experienced and described in terms of culture-specific metaphors.

By way of summary it can be remarked that a symbol conveys meaning in that a signifier points to the signified (see Cassirer 1944:31-32; Turner 1967:19; Douglas 1996:37). Theoretically argued, there is a historical *reason* why a specific symbol fits the social context. An idea which communicates *values* and provides *meaning* lies behind a contextualized rite. In chapters 4 and 5, I shall investigate the reason, value and meaning that the earliest baptism and the Eucharist possessed for the persons who participated in these symbolical rites. For some people the values which give meaning to life can be found in religion, which is embedded in a cultural system. This system is dialectically influenced by a symbolic universe, which functions as a kind of “sacred canopy” (see Berger 1967:3-51; Esler 1994:13-17).

3.2.2 Religion as a cultural sign system

3.2.2.1 Introduction

Four levels can be discerned in the evolutionary development of the symbolic process, namely primordial symbols (the simple recognition of an object); cognized symbols (metaphors, cosmograms, rites); sign systems (natural language utterances); and formal sign systems (symbolic logic, set theory) (Laughlin 1997:475; see Laughlin, McManus & d’Aquili 1992:172-187; Arden 1998:44; Korn 2002:41).

In referring to religion[4] as a cultural *sign system,* one indicates that the symbolic system of religion provides a “frame” for transmitting the information. Since the most important form of sign systems comprises spoken and written language

(see Laughlin 1997:475), the model of anti-language will provide to be helpful in understanding the *cognized symbols* (rites) of the earliest Jesus-followers.

Terming religion a *cultural* sign system constitutes a reminder that all humans are embedded within a cultural setting (see Arden 1998:44-45). Every culture colors the way its members perceive and interpret reality. Therefore, although reality is always the same, cultural interpretations of it differ (see Pilch 1988:13-14; Pilch & Malina 1993:xiii; Pilch 2000c:27; Winkelman 2000:48). Halliday (1986:203) expresses this in the following manner: “Our experience of reality is never neutral. Observing means interpreting; experience is interpreted through the patterns of knowledge and the value systems that are embodied in cultures and languages.” According to Berger (1967:3), every human society is an enterprise of world-building, and religion occupies a distinctive place in this enterprise. He avers that society is a product of people, while people are also products of society; thus society exhibits a dialectical character. In the process of world-building, a person provides stability for himself or herself, in the form of culture. Culture must be produced and reproduced, and consists of the totality of people’s products. Berger (1967:6) explains this as follows: “Man produces tools of every conceivable kind, by means of which he modifies his physical environment and bends nature to his will. Man also produces language and, on its foundation and by means of it, a towering edifice of symbols that permeate every aspect of his life.” For Berger (1967:25), religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. By sacred is meant a quality of mysterious power, something that is not human, although it is related to humans, something which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience. The cosmos posited by religion thus both transcends and includes humans. This sacred cosmos is confronted by humans as an immensely powerful reality other than themselves. Yet this reality addresses itself to humans and locates their lives in an ultimately meaningful order (Berger 1967:25-26; see Esler 1994:13-17). In Berger’s (1967:28) words, religion “implies that human order is projected into the totality of

being. Put differently, religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant".[5]

Religion, embedded in culture, can thus be described as a system of symbols. Systems of symbols generally establish powerful and enduring feelings and motivations in people by formulating conceptions of value objects and endowing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the feelings and motivations which the symbols generate are perceived to be reality (Geertz 1966:4). The system of symbols thus becomes a system of meaning and feeling, a system of socially shared meaningfulness. A cultural group comprises a group of people who share such a set of meanings and generally feel strongly about the meanings shared within that group. Symbolizing concerns constructing, maintaining, and living out such systems of meaningfulness. It is another way of describing both the social line-drawing that allows a place for everyone and everything and also the emotional and social pressure to keep them in their place. Symbolizing deals with effectively sharing, dividing, altering, and circulating the symbols that make up a group's world of meaningfulness, the symbols that enable human beings to adapt to an environment in some purposeful, meaningful and social way. Tampering with the lines that define and delimit leads to confusion and ultimately to meaninglessness (Malina 1986:1-12, 74-75; Malina 1993a:9; cf Turner [1969] 1977:94-130; Geertz 1973:3-30; Goodman 1988a:5; McVann 1988:97; 1991b:334; Pilch & Malina 1993:xvi-xvii; Douglas 1996:11; Van Staden 2001:583-584).

In the words of Theißen[6] (1999:2), religion can thus be called "…a cultural sign language which promises a gain in life by corresponding to an ultimate reality" (cf Geertz 1973:90). According to Theißen (1999:2), this cultural sign language possess a semiotic, systematic and cultural character (cf Goodman 1988a:6-7). I shall offer a short description of each of these characteristics in turn.

3.2.2.2 The semiotic character of religion

People do not merely exist in their environment; they make it habitable by fulfilling social roles, using technology and interpreting their interaction with people and objects. This interpretation pertains to the activities of science, art and religion. The transformation of the world through interpretation is a symbolic action. It is an interaction that consists of a referential relationship between a *signifier* and the *signified.* Life demonstrates a semiotic character. Signs and sign systems do not alter the signified reality, but rather people's cognitive, emotional and pragmatic relationship to signs and sign systems. The semiotic nature of life determines consciousness and transforms perceptions into patterns. Consciousness and perceptions therefore influence actions (cf Cassirer 1944:25-26; Theißen 1999:2). Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili (1992:174) term the dialogue between a symbol-model and the world (which establishes one's response to the world) "semiosis". Thus, semiosis is the process by which a symbol develops its intentionality.

The distinctive feature of a religious sign system is the combination of myths, rites and ethics (Theißen 1999:2; cf Stolz 1988b:79-147). *Myths* function on an unconscious level and manifest themselves in narrative form. Social behavior and interaction can be explained by identifying their mythical roots (cf Cassirer 1955; Malinowski 1971:11-35; Bolle 1987:261; Stolz 1988a:81-106; Theißen 1999:3, 325). A *rite* constitutes a cultural form of this social activity. Rites are recurrent patterns of behavior which interrupt everyday life. In this way the sacred becomes present in the mundane. This sacral reality represents "another reality", the mythical narrative of someone's life. Rites consist of ritual formulae (which interpret the mythical narrative) (cf Lang 1998:442; Theißen 1999:3). All forms of religious sign language, for example rites, represent a specific *ethical* consciousness (cf Theißen 1999:4). If we keep the schema of the present study in mind, we can say that the mythical narrative of Jesus' life were re-enacted by his followers, with specific ethical consequences.

3.2.2.3 The systematic character of religion

"Signs" function in relation and opposition to other signs so as to form a "system". These signs and forms of a religion constitute its "language", which is guided by rules, just as a language is governed by grammar and vocabulary (Theißen 1999:4; cf Lindbeck 1984: 33, 81, 95-96; Ritschl 1986: 147-166).

3.2.2.4 The cultural character of religion

The word "cultural" indicates that religious sign language is produced by human beings, irrespective of the dimension of religion. To confer meaning on "material elements" (such as water, bread and wine) and to organize these meanings into a system of rites (such as baptism and the Eucharist) is a social action. Such a sign system becomes effective by means of the participation of individuals in a group. Religion as a social cultural sign system is embedded in a historical context. Religions originate, disappear and mix because of the ways in which groups engage in history (cf Theißen 1999:6-7).

The religion of the early followers of Jesus as a sign system thus consisted of three elements: a *narrative* sign language which indicated how myth functioned in social life, a *prescriptive* sign language communicating values (meaning which was found by means of participation in rituals and ceremonies) and a *ritual* sign language in the form of baptism and the Eucharist.

3.3 RITES

3.3.1 What is a rite?

Berger (1967:40-41) answers this question by saying that people forget, and that they must therefore be reminded over and over again. One of the oldest and most important prerequisites for the establishment of culture is the institution of such "reminders". Religious rites have comprised a crucial instrument in this process of "reminding" (cf West 2001:126-127). Again and again a rite "makes present" to those who participate in it the fundamental definitions of reality and

their appropriate legitimations. The “action” of a rite consists of two parts – the things that have to be said and the activities that have to be done (cf Burridge & Gould 2004:134). The performance of the rite is closely linked to the reiteration of the sacred formulas that “make present” once more the names and deeds of the gods. Religious acts as well as religious legitimations (ritual and mythology) together serve to “recall” the traditional meanings embodied in the culture and its major institutions. In this manner the continuity between the present moment and the social tradition is restored, placing the experiences of the individual and the various groups of the society in the context of a history (which can be fictitious or not) that transcends them all. In its essence society can be described as a memory (which has been a religious one through most of human history) (cf Sumner 1959:60-62).

The term “rites” can be understood as a general concept that covers both *rituals* and *ceremonies* (Neyrey 1990:76). Rites are closely connected to purity. In the words of Malina (1986:21), purity concerns the socially contrived lines through time and space that human groups maintain in order to create and discover meaning (see Segal 1989:142). Once a group develops a set of lines, there are all sorts of reasons and occasions for focusing on the lines, either to cross them or to maintain and strengthen them. Social behaviors concerned with crossing lines constitute rituals, while those concerned with maintaining or strengthening purity lines comprise ceremonies. Crossing the lines between being unmarried and being married or being ill and being well, are examples of rituals – events that place their focus on the transition to a new, socially recognized state with a resulting change in role or status for the individual concerned. Examples of ceremonies include Sunday worship and Christmas – events that focus on those within a group and reinforce the lines that distinguish the members from those of other groups (Malina 1986:21-22; see Esler 2003:210-211). For the purpose of this study, baptism can consequently be termed a ritual and the Eucharist a ceremony.

To explain rituals and ceremonies, Malina (1986:139-140) uses a comparison that functions effectively. He compares social interaction to a field game, in which this interaction takes place on a field marked off by the various features of the cultural script. On the marked-off field a number of games take place simultaneously, and these games are regulated by the respective symbolic media of social interaction – power games and commitment games, inducement games and games of influence. During the course of any game there are various opportunities for a "time-out". In all instances of time-outs, whether irregular (such as for injuries or for substitutions) or regular (such as quarter and halftime breaks), certain persons are present whose role it is to call the time-out and to direct activity during such sessions. In the normal flow of social interaction, time-outs comprise periods when rites take place (cf Pilch 2004:170-171). Malina (1986:139-140; emphasis by Malina) describes this concept as follows:

> There are two general types of such time-outs. The first is the irregular break in action, called *ritual;* the second is the regular break in action, called *ceremony.* The persons who determine, call for and then preside over irregular breaks in the action are *professionals* who direct rituals, for example, physicians, dentists, or clergy. The persons who call for and preside over regular breaks in the action are *officials* who direct ceremonies, for example a father/mother presiding over a family meal, a clergyperson presiding over weekly church service, or a politician presiding over a national holiday gathering.

Malina (1986:140-142; cf Pilch 2004:171) writes that *rituals* are irregular time-outs. Just as irregular time-outs in a game are determined by situations or conditions that affect individual players or groups of players and cannot be predicted ahead of time (except perhaps statistically), so too rituals occur when situations or conditions that affect individuals or groups arise which call for a standstill in the action. The purpose of such time-outs is either to help a sidelined player to return to the action or to allow for substitution in which a player or group of players can take on a new role in the game.

Rituals that fulfil the first type of purpose (to help a sidelined player back into the action again) are called rituals of status reversal. Examples of such rituals are for a person to be declared well by a physician and discharged from a hospital or to be declared innocent by a judge and free to go home. Rituals that fulfil the second type of purpose, allowing players to take on new roles, are termed rituals of status transformation. Examples of these rituals include graduation, marriage, or ordination. In other words, rituals are interactions that express an individual or group transition into or out of the flow of social interaction in terms of the same or new social roles. Rituals of the status reversal type, such as healing interactions focused on the transition from a sick state to a healthy state, comprise rituals with the aim of reversing the present situation. Such status reversal rituals are cyclical, because they can recur – a healed person can become ill again. Rituals of the status transformation type mark a transition in an irreversible way, usually following the biologically rooted and culturally noted stages of human personal and social development, for example birth rituals or the assimilating of new members into a group. In other words, the earliest baptism can be described as a status transformation ritual.

On the other hand, *ceremonies* are regular time-outs, called for by the very quality of the social structure – irrespective of the condition of the players. Ceremonies can be predicted, because they are set by the norms of society and indicated on a calendar, in order to designate regular intervals in the life of the social group. Ceremonies do not depend upon the conditions that might befall individuals or groups in the game; they occur as predetermined by the social structure which sets the rules of the game. In other words, ceremonies confirm the social institutions that structure the dimensions of communal living, in order to strengthen the respective statuses of persons in those institutions, and thereby demonstrate their solidarity among all the persons who together realize and give concrete shape to the institution. Ceremonies always take place on a regular predefined date, like the celebration of a birthday. Rooted in some historical situation, ceremonies look to the present time of celebration and mark the current

solidarity in the group concretizing the institution. Ceremonies, thus, celebrate belonging and mark a time-out in order to enable persons to evaluate their place in the world (Malina 1986:140-142; cf Pilch 2004:172). Hence, the earliest Eucharist can be described as a ceremony.

In terms of spatial images, Malina (1986:142) indicates that ritual focuses on the beyond – on transcendence and transformation – or it focuses on transition to something else beyond the normal human limits, whether vertical, horizontal, depth, or mass, and hence beyond the individual and social body. Conversely, ceremonies focus on the inside – on immanence, inwardness, or the internal dimensions of a social and individual body.

The persons whose task it is to see people through various ritual processes, can be called limit-breaking agents, since they can assist people to transcend the limitations and boundaries that trap them, in a socially accepted and satisfying way (Malina 1986:145-146; cf Neyrey 1990:76-77). Strong group/low grid limit-breaking agents derive their influence from occupying customary limit-breaking roles which are rooted in law. Since purity lines are porous, along with legal competence there exists an extremely large proportion of illegal competence that is difficult to control. Given the porous purity boundaries, intruding illegal competence is frequently recognized as legitimate by persons exercising influence, who at times form groups around persons with legitimate (and illegal) competence (cf Holmberg 1978:128).[7] These network groups count for more than some hierarchically shaped, integrated society. Incompetence is rated in terms of legitimacy and custom, not legality and law, and the incompetent are regarded as the illegitimate, those with no sanctioning higher order norms to back their behavior. Such incompetents are normally simply ejected from the group. As a result, there were two sets of limit-breaking agents in the first-century Mediterranean world, often in conflict with each other: “One set is endowed with legal competence based on the inflated power and commitment of the political institution, while the other set wields legitimate competence based on the equally

inflated influence and inducement of the various non-political institutions of the society" (Malina 1986:146). Arguments and competition between representatives of the two sets focus on the legitimacy of each; those with legal competence point to the illegality of their challengers, while those with legitimate competence admit the legality of their components and yet question the latter's legitimacy in terms of higher order norms (Malina 1986:146; cf Lewis 1989:27-29, 157-158).

By way of summary, Neyrey (1990:76; see McVann 1991b:335; Neyrey 1991:362) lists the following distinguishing characteristics of rituals and ceremonies:

	Ritual	**Ceremony**
Frequency:	Irregular pauses	Regular pauses
Calendar:	Unpredictable, when needed	Predictable, planned
Time focus:	Present-to-future	Past-to-present
Presided over by:	Professionals	Officials
Purpose:	Status reversal; status transformation	Confirmation of roles and statuses in institutions

3.3.2 The function of rites

Beattie (1968:203-205; see Winkelman 2000:232; Choi 2003:170-171) explains that rites[8] regularly enact the state of affairs which it is hoped will be brought about. A rite is a communicative occasion – in every rite something is said as well as done (as mentioned earlier). The use of mimetic objects or situations is an appropriate way of expressing what has to be said: it is not simply that a causal connection is believed to exist between things which resemble one another and are used in a rite. For instance, a rain-making ritual often involves the simulation of rain or clouds – by pouring water or burning green herbs to make heavy smoke. The central significance of a rite is expressive, it is an end in itself; it is therefore considered worthwhile participating in, whether it is effective or not. Art functions similarly. It is a way of saying something. Its worth lies in the effectiveness with which it communicates, rather than in any result which may be

sought. This can be clearly perceived in the early baptism, where the sins of believers are washed away (see chapter 4), and especially in the Eucharist, where an all-inclusive lifestyle is acted out around the table (see chapter 5).

Beattie (1968:205-209) further explains that on the cognitive level, rites almost always embody beliefs, and these beliefs may provide acceptable explanations for events which would otherwise be incomprehensible (cf Segal 1989:137-138). But a rite is not only a way of thinking about things, it is also a way of doing things – it provides a way of coping with situations of misfortune or danger where no other means of doing so are available. On the functionalist level, rites have implications not only for their performers' state of mind, but also for other social institutions in the same society. Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili (1992:145-146) concur. For them, rites are markers and mediators of social and psychological change. Rites direct the attention of participants to objects and events of cultural significance. This direction amounts to social manipulation of intentionality. People who participate in rites commonly come to view aspects of their society, cosmology, environment, situation, and even themselves, in a new light.

Smith and Taussig (1990:97) warn that interpreters must be careful not to accord exactly the same meaning to rites throughout the world and in history. In this regard, Turner (1975:15-33) points out that in rites there exist patterns of particular social meaning for specific groups of people.[9] To him, rites reveal a basic communal structure and support the social units of the people who participate in the rite. He also places emphasis on the multidimensionality of the gestures and symbols used in rites. Particular symbols and actions in rites can mean different things, depending on their context and sequence. Smith (in Smith & Taussig 1990:97-103) agrees by saying that rites consist of elements that are "empty" of general meaning and capable of particular signals, depending on the context and character of the situation.

Smith (in Smith & Taussig 1990:100-102) has characterized rites in general[10] as exhibiting the following overlapping effects on the people involved:

- *A detection of a pattern, occurrence, or dynamic within a situation:* Rites in general are performed to call attention to something that has happened or is happening in the environment of the participants, usually something that is problematic. The rite does not solve the problem, but results in deeper thought. “It is a testing of the adequacy and applicability of traditional patterns and categories to new situations and data in the hopes of achieving rectification” (Smith 1982:100-101).

- *A perfecting of rationalizing about such observed phenomena:* Rites observe events that have become problems for people, and then explain them away or cause them to look better in a constructed setting. Rites provide “the means for demonstrating that we know what ought to have been done, what ought to have taken place. But, by the fact that it is ritual action rather than everyday action, it demonstrates that we know ‘what is the case’” (Smith 1982:63; cf Segal 1989:140-141).

- *An assertion of difference within the social body:* Just as rites perceive the events that are problematic and irreconcilable for a particular group, they also mark the differences between people within a particular social formation. Rites assert these differences in order for a social body to be able to work with them, rather than to overcome them. Living with difference is a skill that a social body needs to develop because of the inevitability of variations. The observation of difference can also lead to demarcation of those inside and those outside (see Douglas 1966:4).

d’Aquili and Newberg (1993:28; 1999:89, 99) enumerate the following characteristics of a rite:

- it is a sequence of behavior which is structured or patterned;

- it is rhythmic and repetitive (to some degree) – it tends to recur in the same or nearly the same form with some regularity;
- it acts to synchronize affective, perceptual-cognitive, and motor processes within the central nervous system of individual participants, thereby generating an alternate state of consciousness within the individual;
- and it synchronizes these processes among the various individual participants, thereby creating a strong sense of group unity.

Anthropological analyses of rites have emphasized the distinction between manifest and latent functions, of the expressed intents versus the unintended, unarticulated or unrecognized collateral effects. Because rites generally assert means-ends relations not considered functionally possible, explanations have emphasized their latent effects on psychodynamics or social behavior. But even this perspective cannot fully appreciate the technical aspects of the psychodrama of a social rite in which important personal and social therapeutic effects are achieved as intended by the rite (Winkelman 2000:233).[11]

d'Aquili and Newberg (1993:29, 99; 1999:91-93) describe the neurological functioning of rites as creating slow external rhythms that manifest a quiescent dominance, while the imposition of a rapid external rhythm represents a dominance of the arousal system. Rapid external rhythmic drivers would eventually lead to a release of hippocampal inhibition on arousal centers in the brain. This would result in an increased arousal drive via the amygdale to the cortex. This process continues until maximal arousal occurs, which leads to spillover and quiescent breakthrough. The initial quiescent breakthrough would result in a change in the activation of the hippocampus, which is strongly correlated with trance or dreamlike states. In these states there is a profound sense of internal harmony and union between external ritual participants. These states of quiescent breakthrough allow the hippocampus and the orientation association area to generate a powerful alternate state of consciousness experience. Slow rites can achieve the same effect simply and directly by

activating the quiescent drive without first going through the intense "flow" experience of the hyperarousal drive and the subsequent quiescent spillover. In both cases, however, brief alternate states of consciousness result (d'Aquili & Newberg 1999:99-100).[12] d'Aquili and Newberg (1999:100) explain this phenomenon as follows:

> However brief they may be, if these states are experienced as being profound, there obtains not only a sense of union of the...participants but also a sense of the union of opposites presented in the myth that the ritual [or ceremony] incarnates. Problems of life and death, good and evil, quest and attainment, God and human being, that are presented in mythic form, can be perceived to be resolved in the powerful unitary experience of a hyperarousal state with quiescent breakthrough or in a hyper-quiescent state directly.

Because rites are practiced in a group, they usually bring the members of that group into a sense of corporate unity. This of course was one of the main functions of the earliest baptism and especially of the Eucharist. Rites may state obligatory conditions of social life and communicate this message to participants, binding them together in a group that feels a sense of commonality. Rites also express the structure of society and the culturally ascribed meanings of the moral and natural order, providing an interpretative system that humans use to order experience and behavior (d'Aquili & Newberg 1999:95; cf Choi 2003:170-171). It is important to understand that rites involve both internal communication within the organism and external communication between the organism and its world. Thus, rites simultaneously constitute external interactions among group members or between the individual and his or her world (including the self) and internal relations among structures, all the way up and down the functional hierarchy of the individual nervous system (see Laughlin 1997:475).

One of the basic functions of rites is to transcend the immediate personal situation and to appreciate the theological macro-system perspective (Arden

1998:93). But rites also have important social consequences (see Beattie 1968:210) – they may provide a means of ordering and coordinating everyday practical activities. People tend to attach a special kind of potency to symbols and the procedures that take place during rites. These symbols are fundamentally expressive, but because of this they are often taken to be instrumentally effective as well.[13] Theißen (1999:122-123) similarly considers that rites manifest two essential functions: to structure time and to co-ordinate people. The structuring of time can clearly be seen in early Christian baptism as an initiation and status transformation rite. The co-ordination of life in communities took place mainly through sacrifices, especially where these were connected with shared meals. The earliest Eucharist is a rite of integration, which is constantly repeated and renews the cohesion of the community. Rites thus describe the place of human beings in the world[14] (see Segal 1989:138).

Having outlined the theory regarding rites (as ritual and ceremony), I shall now look in detail at ritual and ceremony as such.

3.4 RITUAL

3.4.1 Description of "ritual"

In the course of the history of humankind, a number of different adaptations to the habit have manifested themselves. Although the border between them is fluid, anthropologists have been able to recognize the following principal adaptations: hunting and gathering societies, simple horticultural societies, advanced horticultural societies, simple agrarian societies, advanced agrarian societies, and industrial societies. Each of these adaptations correlates with a different religious behavior (Goodman 1988a:17; see Goodman 1988b:25-27; Lenski et al 1991:71). The people of the first-century Mediterranean world lived in an advanced agrarian society (cf Lenski et al 1991:169-201; Malina 1993a:90-94; Van Aarde 1994b:96-99). They believed that major changes in people's lives took place by means of rituals.

Goodman (1988a:20) explains:

> Seeds, after all, become plants, only to yield seeds once more. The plant is merely another aspect of the seed. For the seeds to reveal their alternate aspect, they need to undergo the ritual of being planted in the ground. All other objects of ordinary reality have alternate aspects also, insects, stones, mountains, the wind, the heavenly bodies, and of course also humans, and in the ritual of metamorphosis, alternate between these aspects.

Rituals accompany people throughout their lives. They mark situations of crisis, such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death, with proper solemnity, functioning to facilitate the passage from one social condition to the next (Goodman 1988a:31; see Förster 2003:704-709). Turner (1973:1100) defines ritual as "a stereotyped sequence of activities, involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (cf Turner 1967:19; see Förster 2003:711). Accordingly, Goodman (1988a:31) remarks: "A ritual is a social encounter in which each participant has a well-rehearsed role to act out. It takes place within a set time span and in a limited space, and involves a predetermined set of events. Once initiated, it has to run its course to completion" (see Zuesse 1987:405; Meeks 1993:92-93; Collins 1996:218).

Arnold van Gennep ([1909] 1960) coined the term *rites de passage.*[15] According to him it describes two types of rituals: rituals that accompany the passage of a person from one social status to another in the course of life, like birth and marriage; and rituals that mark recognized points in the passage of time, like the new year and the new moon (Turner 1987:386; cf Girard 1972:425; see Myerhoff, Camino & Turner 1987:380-383; McVann 1991b:335-336; Gehlen 1998:58-63).

Baptism is likewise an initiation rite[16] or *rite de passage.* Since baptism is the ritual that will receive special attention in this study, the remainder of this section will focus on *rites de passage.* In a symbolic fashion rituals like these represent the legitimate crossing of a boundary, which brings along a new identity with new rights and responsibilities. Boundaries can be understood as fences around what is holy, protecting and guarding what is enclosed. But with all boundaries, there must be gates to permit legitimate entrance – so there are rituals that carefully define the process of who may enter and who may legitimately cross the boundaries (Neyrey 1990:87). These rituals assign people a location in cultural space and accord them a status that the other members of society recognize as proper[17] (Van Staden 2001:583; cf Eliade 1965:ix-x; McVann 1991b:333). Baptism can be seen as such an entrance ritual, whereby outsiders legitimately enter the realm of God.[18]

Certain elements allow this transition to a new status to take place effectively, namely the *initiands,* who undergo the change of role or status; the *ritual elders,* who preside over the ritual; and the *symbols* of the new world, which the initiands learn during the ritual (Van Gennep 1960:21, 65-115; McVann 1988:97; 1991a:152-153; 1991b:336; cf Winkelman 2000:234-235; see Turner 1967:94-108, 235-236).

3.4.2 Phases in status transformation rituals

3.4.2.1 Introduction

The ritual process of status transformation takes place in three phases, namely *separation* from society, *demarcation* against society and *reintegration* into society (McVann 1991b:338; cf Beattie 1968:211; Wedderburn 1987:363; see Van Staden 2001:585; Esler 2003:211). Each of these will now be described in turn.

3.4.2.2 Separation

People undergoing status transformation rituals experience separation in three ways: separation from people, place and time. Participants are separated from the ordinary rhythm of the *group.* At the point of ritual separation, the initiands and the place of initiation become "off limits" to everyone who does not have a role to play there. It is important to remove the initiands to a *place* separated from the locus of ordinary life because the experience into which they will enter is "out of the ordinary". The participants in a ritual are removed from the normal flow of *time.* They leave "secular" time and enter into a sacred "timelessness". The usual times for eating, sleeping, working, and learning are altered (McVann 1991b:338-339; cf Turner 1967:97, 223-226).

3.4.2.3 Liminality-*Communitas*

Turner (1967:99-102) describes the process of demarcation against the society as liminality-*communitas*.[19] *Liminality,*[20] the negative side of the ritual process, describes the state into which the initiands are brought by virtue of their separation from their everyday, familiar world. During this period initiands become disoriented, having been cut off from the persons, points of reference and activities which shaped their previous way of living. In a sense they "disappear" from view, or "die". They are required to abandon their previous habits, ideas and understandings of their personal identity, as well as their social relations. Their previous identities are no longer operative, but they have not yet acquired new roles and statuses. Therefore, they are "in between" and perceived to be dangerous (McVann 1991b:339; cf d'Aquili and Newberg 1993:3; see Turner 1977:95; Wedderburn 1987:367-368). The liminal stage is the heart of the process, the time of transformation, when the initiands shed an old identity and gain a new one (see Esler 2003:211). *Communitas,*[21] the positive side of the ritual process, refers to the initiands' recognition of their fundamental relation to the institution into which they are being initiated. All the distinctions between the initiands disappear and equality and unity are emphasized (McVann 1991a:153; 1991b:340; cf Winkelman 2000: 265; see Turner 1967:99-101; 1974:46).

d'Aquili and Newberg (1993:3) state that it is especially during the liminality-*communitas* phase that alternate states of consciousness are experienced. In fact, according to them, the states that can be produced during rituals (as well as ceremonies) seem to overlap with some of the alternate states of consciousness generated by various meditative practices. In their opinion it is "probably not too strong a statement to make that human ceremonial ritual provides the ordinary person access to mystical experience" (d'Aquili & Newberg 1993:4; see Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:142). In other words, the liminality-*communitas* component of ritual can be described as a portal between the sacred and the profane (see Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:213-214). In the words of Winkelman (2000:97):

> Rituals connect previously developed (socialized) intentionalities with symbols, eliciting conditioned responses that can transform structures of consciousness. Ritually induced states of consciousness contrast with the normally static and stable social life by providing a period of fluidity for transformation of social status and self-experience through liminal or transitional stages. The ritual then resolves status ambiguity by marking the social transition and by producing feelings of unity or community with the social group.

3.4.2.4 Aggregation

With the ritual process completed,[22] the initiands return to society with new roles and statuses as well as with new rights and obligations. The society acknowledges that the initiands now possess the capabilities required for their new roles. Their status in the community has been redefined (McVann 1991a:153; 1991b:340; cf Turner 1967:251-260).

3.4.3 Concluding remarks

Turner (1967:19-47) regards experience as a very important part of the ritual process (see Förster 2003:712). He proposes that the elements of ritual are clustered around two poles: the pole of moral and social order, and the sensory

pole. According to him, people engaged in a ritual are using elements of the sensory pole in order to express something located at the pole of the moral and social order (see Goodman 1988a:32).[23]

If we keep in mind that according to the model applied in this study, rituals (and ceremonies) are the symbolic re-enactment of something that is said in anti-language, it makes sense when Winkelman (2000:234) explains ritual in the following way:

> Ritual symbols are "multivocal", embedded in a system of meanings in which they have multiple referents. These multivocal symbols express and evoke a multiplicity of meanings, from general values to norms, roles, relationships, and beliefs. Ritual activities communicate important meanings to participants, including rules for social behavior. Didactic effects are found in rituals and associated activities, expressing traditional cultural knowledge and guidelines for social behavior.

Goodman (1988a:33) concurs that religious ritual is the most exalted form of human communication. In her view, what humans compose in their rituals is something like a huge canvas representing what makes them human. At the onset of the ritual, people are transported into another plane of reality. It is an orderly world, like the ordinary one, but its rules are different, and the modes of ordinary reality do not apply.[24] This was a way in which the early Jesus-groups could experience the presence of the Spirit of God in their lives as Jesus did, namely by means of alternate states of consciousness. Goodman (1988a:34-35) explains that as a dependent variable, rituals change when humans modify their interaction with the habitat. But without exception, all rituals contain a signal to indicate to the participants at which point they should make the switch to the alternate mode of perception.[25]

In chapter 4 it will be shown that the earliest baptism can be described as an initiation and status transformation ritual, since all the different stages of these

kinds of rituals can be recognized in the way early Jesus-followers allowed themselves to be baptized in order to become members of a new community.

3.5 CEREMONY

3.5.1 Description of "ceremony"

A ceremony can be defined as a highly formalized practice prescribed by custom and undertaken by a group of people (Alexander 1987:179; cf Grimes 1993:187). In conventional usage the term "ceremony" is arbitrarily interchanged with "ritual", but in current theoretical discussion the terms are increasingly distinguished.[26] In this regard, Alexander (1987:179) writes that ceremony is identified as a *type* or *mode* of ritual behavior. By "ritual behavior" he means what is understood by "rite" in this study. Thus, once again, to avoid confusion, references to "ceremony" and "ritual" in this study will throughout refer to two distinct forms of rites (as described earlier in this chapter).

Like all symbolic behavior, ceremony points to a larger framework of action. Through dramatization and other representational means, ceremony presents the values and ideologies that constitute social and cultural life. For Alexander (1987:179), "[t]he underlying motivation in the ceremonial representation of the various social and cultural constructs is the confirmation and reinforcement of those organizing frameworks that order socio-cultural life in a normative way." Turner (1992:80-84) similarly comments that where it is the function of ritual to *transform* social structure, ceremony *"indicates"* – it is expressive of social structure. This confirmatory function of ceremony accords it a conservative character. Because the intent of ceremony is to conserve the social structural state of affairs, spontaneity and disorder have no place during the course of a ceremony. Moore and Myerhoff (1977:8, 16-17) explain that as formalized behavior, ceremony is an attempt to emphasize order. They remark that through order, formality, and repetition ceremony intends to state that the social world (or a particular part thereof) is orderly, explicable, and for the moment fixed. It is

formality that allows ceremony to authenticate its message and confers permanence and legitimacy on something which is actually a social construct. Ceremony's medium is thus part of its message. But ceremony not only symbolizes or communicates that which is socially and culturally normative, it also puts into action what it symbolizes (see Alexander 1987:179-180). Grimes (1982:224) argues that linked to ceremony's corroborative and legitimating functions are the affirmation and securing of power for those who have an interest (recognized or not) in a specific ideology or social structure. He further states that because ceremony implies a distinction between the group that is symbolically asserting its power and the "other side", it can be competitive and even conflict-laden (see Alexander 1987:180).

While baptism can thus be described as a status transformation and initiation rite (a ritual), the Eucharist can be called a rite of integration (a ceremony) (see Theißen 1999:121). In fact, scholars identify not only the Eucharist, but many kinds of meals in antiquity as ceremonies rather than rituals (see e.g., Neyrey 1991:362). The reason for this is that a ritual (like baptism) effects a change in status, but a ceremony (like the Eucharist) is a "regular and predictable occurrence which confirms and legitimates people's roles and status in a community" (Pilch 1996c:95).

When we regard meals as ceremonies, Neyrey (1991:363) suggests that the following questions can be asked in order to understand what a particular ceremony means:

- when was the meal eaten;
- by whom and in whose company;
- who presided over it;
- and in which social institution did it take place?

Neyrey (1991:363) provides the following examples:

> [I]n the context of first-century social roles, a daily meal confirms the basic family unit and bolsters the respective roles of father as provider and mother as nourisher. A Passover meal confirms membership in the covenant people of Israel, even as it bolsters the role of the head of the clan who presides at the meal (Exod 12:3-4, 26-27). A Pharisee haburah meal confirms membership in the brotherhood of those who share Pharisaic ideology. Because of their important position in Israelite society, scribes expect to be seated "in the places of honor at feasts" (Luke 20:46) thus confirming their role.

3.5.2 Concluding remarks

Whereas rituals focus on crossing lines, ceremonies leave the lines of the maps of society in place, because the latter function to confirm the structures and values of society, to affirm the purity code of society, and to celebrate the orderly classification of persons, places, and things is the cosmos: "Birthdays, anniversaries, festivals, and the like, confirm the roles and statuses of individuals in the group as well as the group's collective sense of holy space and the holy time that pertains to them" (Neyrey 1990:77). Ceremonies replicate the group's basic social system, "its values, lines, classifications, and its symbolic world" (Neyrey 1991:363).

In chapter 5, it will be indicated that the earliest Eucharist can be described as a ceremony, since all the different characteristics of ceremonies can be recognized in the way Jesus' followers participated in the Eucharist as an all-inclusive meal.

3.6 THE FORMATION OF A NEW GROUP

3.6.1 Introduction

In chapter 1, I explained that the early Jesus-followers formed a new group, a fictive kinship, an anti-society, where they could live according to the ethic which

Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, rites play a fundamental role in group formation and stabilization. By means of the earliest baptism a person could become a member of this group (cf Brown 2000:24-34), while the earliest Eucharist served as the ceremony of integration for the members of the group (cf Mack 1988:80; Brown 2000:44-63). The concept of anti-society is linked to social identity, which in turn is related to the formation of factions and sects, as well as with institutionalization. In this section, I shall offer a cursory description of these concepts. The purpose of this discussion is not to provide a detailed explanation of group formation. I am merely going to describe the basic facets that could aid us to gain insight into the earliest Jesus-groups' formation of rites, associated with alternate states of consciousness.

3.6.2 Social identity theory

The distinction between insiders and outsiders constitutes a fundamental first-century Mediterranean perspective, which is shared by all New Testament authors (Malina 2002:610). Esler (2003) has set out a theory of identity that is embedded in the process of inter-group differentiation and hostility as we find it in the early days of the dispersion of the gospel around the Mediterranean. New Testament research employing notions of identity drawn from the social sciences (especially the sociology of knowledge) has highlighted that the foundational concept in any research of identity is that of *difference* as constituting identity: "...something only *is* to the extent that it is distinguished from something else" (Esler 2003:19). Esler (2003) employs social identity theory, a theoretical perspective stemming from the area of social psychology, to describe inter-group differentiation in the first-century Mediterranean world. This theory was developed by Henry Tajfel to distinguish between inter-group and interpersonal relations and also to lay the foundation for a social psychology of inter-group relations and group processes that was non-reductionist, in the sense that these phenomena were seen as possessing psychological properties distinct from those of a collectivity of individuals merely acting together (see Tajfel 1978:61-76; Brown 2000:311-315). Underlying this theory was the fundamental discovery

that merely categorizing people into groups resulted in behavior in which members of one group favored each other over members of other groups (Esler 2003:19-20).

Tajfel (1978:63, emphasis by Tajfel) defines "social identity" as "that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." The theory is especially concerned with the ways in which the members of one group seek to differentiate it from other groups so as to achieve a positive social identity (see Tajfel 1978:64-67). To Esler (2003:20), connecting this form of social identity with the "Christ-movement" in Rome, for example, means investigating the unique kind of identity which Paul proposed its individual members gained, simply by belonging to it, regardless of their ethnicity. Esler (2003:20) argues that social identity is "genuinely socio-psychological, since it covers the group experience but also interests itself in how this affects the hearts and minds of individual Christ-followers in the cognitive, emotional, and evaluative dimensions of group belonging."

According to social identity theory, a group instills its distinctive identity into individual members by way of "norms", the values that define acceptable and unacceptable attitudes in and behaviors by members of the group. Norms thus maintain and enhance group identity (Esler 2003:20-21; cf Brown 2000:56-63). Esler (2003:26) found that where people define themselves in terms of a shared category of membership, they tend to stereotype themselves in terms of this membership, and in this way enhance the sense of identity shared by in-group members, while simultaneously heightening the sense of contrast between themselves and members of the out-group.[27] When in a foreign location, people from the same village will regard each other as part of their in-group, although they might be part of the out-group to each other at home. Everybody falling outside the in-group boundaries is out-group. Dealings with out-group persons might even be hostile (cf Malina 1992:72; 2002:609-610; see chapter 1). Malina

(2002:611) describes this process as follows: “This insider/outsider division is a form of boundary drawing that constitutes a fundamental dimension of a group’s purity system, enabling a place for everyone and everything, thus creating order. To say the least, such categorization lends itself to radical ethnocentrism” (see Neyrey 1990:22-24).

If we keep social identity theory in mind, it should be easier to comprehend how and why the early Jesus-followers formed distinct groups. They distinguished themselves from the broader society to form an anti-society. This anti-society became their new in-group.

3.6.3 From faction to sect

Elliott (1995:76) refers to the groups of early Jesus-followers as a “Jewish” sect. According to him, in Jesus’ lifetime, the Jesus-movement operated as a “Jewish” faction still embedded in the structures and norms of its corporate body, the House of Israel. After the death of Jesus and under changing social conditions, the faction gradually adopted the features of a “Jewish” sect[28] (cf Wilson 1970:7; Scroggs 1975:72-91; Esler [1987] 1996:65-70; Theißen & Merz 1996:143-144; Sim 1998:110, 141). Boissevain (1974:192) describes a faction as:

> ...a coalition of persons (followers) recruited personally according to structurally diverse principles by or on behalf of a person in conflict with another person or persons, with whom they were formally united, over honour and/or control over resources. The central focus of the faction is the person who has recruited it, who may also be described as the leader.

The earliest Jesus-movement can thus be described as a *faction,* embedded within the social, economic and political institutions and culture of the House of Israel, with Jesus as its leader. Only after the death of Jesus can this movement be described as a *sect,* because during this time the faction became dissociated from the parent body, socially and ideologically (Elliott 1995:78-80; cf Theißen 1999:286-292).

The study of the sociological concept of "the sect" was pioneered by Ernst Troeltsch[29] (see especially [1931] 1950:331-343), while Robin Scroggs (1975:71-91) was the first scholar to apply this model in detail to the emergence of "Christianity". Although there is no general agreement on the range of meaning of the term "sect", for Wallis (1975:9) "a certain minimal consensus exists that the concept has to do with groups, organized around a common ideology, which in a variety of ways cut themselves off from, or erect barriers between themselves and the rest of society" (see Wilson 1961:354; 1967:14-18; 1970:7). Troeltsch (1950:333; cf Wilson 1970:7) contends that originally the word "sect" was used in a polemical and apologetic sense, since it was used to describe groups which separated themselves from the official Church and represented "inferior side-issues, one-sided phenomena, exaggerations or abbreviations of ecclesiastical Christianity." He would rather regard a sect as an "independent sociological type of Christian thought" (Troeltsch 1950:338). Although Wilson (1973:12) observes that "the sect" can no longer be understood by direct contrast with "the church", in the way that Troeltsch perceived the former, some of the characteristics that Troeltsch ascribes to sects are applicable to the early Jesus-movement, such as all-inclusiveness, the importance of the shared experience of the inner community, the fellowship of love, and the tension with regard to the outside world (cf Scroggs 1975:72-88). Wilson (1970:26-27, emphasis by Wilson) characterizes sects as follows (and he intentionally does not contrast them with the church):

> Sects are voluntary bodies. Individuals have some choice, theoretically complete choice, in subscribing to sect tenets. The very concept of *sect* implies at least division, and usually diversity, of religious belief within a given society. The votary must choose the sect, but choice is mutual – the sect receives or rejects the man. Membership is by some test of merit: the individual must be worthy of membership. The sect then has a strong sense of self-identity: who is admitted becomes "one of us". And this "us" is set over against all others, the more compellingly so because sects lay claim to special and usually exclusive access to supernatural truths. The

> sect is a body which claims complete and conscious allegiance of its members, that should transcend where it does not eclipse all other allegiances, whether to state, tribe, class or kin-group.

Wilson (1970:26-27) further asserts that because a sect understands itself as the sole possessor of true doctrine, its members see themselves as a people set apart. They also develop procedures for the expulsion of the wayward; therefore the individual members are expected to live the life of a good sectarian. Although the sect possesses an alternative set of teachings and practices from the orthodox tradition, this alternative is never a complete rejection of all elements in orthodox tradition. It is essentially a set of teachings with a different emphasis. Wilson (1970:28-35) acknowledges that this formulation is general and "ideal-typical". In actual sects we must expect that each of their specific attributes will show some variation from the formulation.[30]

In applying the above information regarding sects to the early Jesus-movement, the model of sectarianism that Esler (1994:13-14) developed (based on the work of Berger and Luckmann [1976]), may be helpful. His model shows that the development of a sect in the first-century Mediterranean world is closely related to the formation of an anti-society. According to Esler it is very common for the members of one religious movement to become dissatisfied with it and to forge a distinctive outlook which is seen as deficient in the larger institution. This process will often originate under the leadership of a particular individual regarded as invested with special insights and powers, who is able to articulate the dissatisfaction felt by the members of the group with the existing order of things and to propose an alternative path. In pre-industrial societies this often involved the reassertion of traditional values and institutions. As long as the new movement remains within the larger body it can be described as a reform movement. Over a period of time relations between the two may sour and pressure may build up, which may result in the expulsion of the new group. If such a split takes place in a religious context the group that has departed is

called a sect. At times the parent religion will be able to enlist the support of political authorities in suppressing the sect, since it is in the interests of both the dominant church and the state to maintain the status quo. The members of the sect – especially in the period directly following the separation – will be in a difficult position. Many of them may feel residual loyalty to the church or religion they have left and they may even experience pressure from their former co-religionists to return. Because of this it is essential that their leaders legitimize the new movement. They need to put in place a symbolic universe within which the new institutional order will possess identity and meaning. Esler (1994:14) explains this situation as follows:

> In a situation where there is a great degree of animosity between the old and new groups, such legitimation may involve denunciation of the mother religion and its leadership. But the denunciation is for the benefit of the members of the new group; it is not intended to be directed at the old. The precise nature of the legitimation will often depend on the traditions which were originally shared by the two and the precise circumstances of the split.

Most probably the first Jesus-movement was a reform movement of this type (Scroggs 1975:88-91). Although we do not know the precise nature of this movement, we can state that its members were distinctive, because of “a belief in the resurrection of Jesus and surely at a very early stage the experience of charismatic phenomena such as glossolalia, visions and miraculous cures, which they attributed to the presence of the Spirit among them” (Esler 1994:15). At some stage a breaking point was reached between the mother church and the new group. This action was perhaps precipitated by a very high “Christology”, given the Israelite hostility to anything which diminished the oneness of God. Esler (1994:16) points out: “In social terms however, a likely contender is the practice of table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the community, the eucharistic sharing of the one loaf and the one cup, which threatened the maintenance of Jewish ethnic identity.”

Concurring with this statement, I have already indicated that "sectarian groups often have their own rituals or activities which bind together the community while simultaneously marking them as something distinct from outsider groups" (Sim 1998:141). Elliott (1995:79, 82-83, 85) argues that when the early Jesus-followers formed their own group, there was a shift in the rituals of incorporation (baptism instead of circumcision) and solidarity (Eucharist instead of temple worship). Admission to the messianic sect, in contrast to the Israelite parent body, was open to all classes, genders and strata, including the marginalized and gentiles (e.g., Ac 10-11, 15; Rm 10:12; Gl 3:28; Col 3:11; etc.) (Elliott 1995:82, 94). In accordance with what I remarked earlier, Elliott (1995:82, 87) also indicates that the sect promoted all-inclusiveness – claiming indiscriminate access to God and equal reception of the divine Spirit (see e.g., Mt 23:8-12; Lk-Ac; Rm 12:3-8; Gl 3:28; Eph 2:11-22; Col 3:11). Elliott (1995:84) adds that the Christian sect "attempted to insulate (but not isolate) itself from the pressures of the larger society by employing a concept of fictive kinship and brotherhood along with a modification of traditional codes of purity and pollution to establish a distinctive group identity, internal cohesion and clear lines of social and moral boundaries" (see Elliott 1995:84).

The early Jesus-followers thus began to refer to themselves as a new movement, the "family of God" (Mk 3:31-35//Mt 12:46-50//Lk 8:19-21) (see chapter 1; Elliott 2002:76). Since the family played a very important role in the first-century Mediterranean world, Jesus also exhibited a positive attitude towards the family, to such a degree that he thought it an appropriate institution for defining life under the reign of God. Jesus *redefined* the identity of the family and the basis of one's membership of the family – not on blood or marriage, but on obedience to the will of God: "In Jesus' collectivist society this new surrogate family makes available to those who have renounced their natural families a form of community essential to their personal and social existence" (Elliott 2002:82; see Malina 1994:111-113).

Elliott (2002:87) describes this situation as follows:

> This new family of God was one in which all humans trusted in and relied upon God as their Father and benefactor. It was a family constituted not by ties of blood or marriage but by obedience of the heavenly Father's will. It was a family in which all who trusted in God, as did Jesus, were established and united as brothers and sisters who maintained familial solidarity by a respect for familiar order, loyalty, compassion, emotional commitment (love), truthfulness, integrity of word and deed, generosity, hospitality, and mutual aid and support – all qualities typical of the honorable family and kin group.

The Jesus-movement did not stay a sect forever. In the process of group formation, institutionalization is unavoidable.

3.6.4 Institutionalization

At a certain stage in the history of the "early church", the anti-societal characteristics of the Jesus-movement became normative for the broader society. It was not *opposed* to the broader society anymore; because of institutionalization, it *became* the "broader society".[31] This led to further consequences, because on the grounds of the post-Easter experiences of the early Jesus-followers, we are an institutionalized church today. In this section I intend to discuss the process that takes place from forming a new group[32] to institutionalization.

Jesus-groups were formed because of Jesus' charismatic authority.[33] For Holmberg (1978:139) such authority is "extra-ordinary" to an extreme degree and is opposed to traditional and rational authority, which can be termed "everyday" forms of authority (see chapter 1; Neufeld 2005:2-5). Holmberg (1978:139) describes charismatic authority as "specifically foreign to everyday routine structures, it is anti-economic, anti-organizational and highly personal. And that is why charisma in its pure form is an unstable, short-lived type of authority which

very soon becomes either traditionalized or rationalized or both." According to Holmberg (1978:179), institutionalization is a gradual process that can be traced back to the leader. Initially authority and control reside with the leader. This remains the case as long as he lives. After a short period of time a charismatic group usually develops into an institutionalized organization (cf Weber 1968:54-55; see Holmberg 1978:162-195). Weber (1968:xxi, 54-55) explains this process by pointing out that people have the desire that the charismatic blessing should be available on a permanent basis in everyday life. The death of the leader often provides the impetus for this process to begin, since decisions consequently need to be made regarding the future of the group. The leader's interest in creating a lasting community and social forces such as the "traditionalization and rationalization of the community's doctrine, cult, ethical behavior, and order of common life" (Holmberg 1978:165) also constitute factors that can trigger the institutionalization process. During the process of the institutionalization of charismatic authority the charisma loses its direct force. It can now only be accessed indirectly, by means of representatives, offices, traditions and *rituals* (Holmberg 1978:179-180; cf Horrell [1997] 1999a:331-334). The charismatic group that consisted of Jesus and his followers also underwent institutionalization (cf Davies 1995:170; Horrell 1999a:310, 313). They institutionalized their own initiation rite, baptism, and their own ceremonial communal meal, the Eucharist (Dreyer 2000:216; Van Aarde 2001a:184). In this regard the experiences of the disciples regarding Jesus' resurrection played a decisive role. Officials were now needed to preside over the ritual of baptism and the ceremony of the Eucharist. People who could claim that they had received a commission from the *resurrected Jesus* fulfilled these roles (Dreyer 2000:233, 241; see Bultmann [1921] 1995:260-316).

Weber (1968:60) avers that for charisma to be transformed into a permanent routine structure (see Horrell 1999a:312-315), its anti-economic structure must be altered. It must be adapted to a form of fiscal organization in order to provide for the needs of the group and the economic conditions necessary for raising

taxes and contributions. During the process of routinization the charismatic group "tends to develop into one of the form of every-day authority...." (Weber 1968:60; cf Holmberg 1978:162-164, 175-178).

The reason why an institutionalization process occurs is that human beings are creatures of habit – their behavior follows certain repetitive patterns. An institution exercises social control. The effect of this social control on the one hand limits the individual's freedom, but on the other hand creates a structured world for individuals (see Berger & Luckmann 1976:70-85). After the process has started, legitimation follows, when the fundamental value-systems and belief-systems that function within the institutionalized world are used to validate and explain the system (cf Weber 1968:61). The new generation receives these explanations and in the process its members are socialized into the system. Society and religion are maintained by legitimation. This is especially important in any social order where the existing arrangements are under threat either from within or from without, which may be capable of causing members to weaken in their commitment (e.g., in the "early Christian" communities). As I mentioned in chapter 1, Berger (1967:3-51; Berger & Luckmann 1976:113-118) uses the phrase "symbolic universe" to refer to the integrated totality of the various bodies of meaning and symbolism used to legitimate a social world. Where one group has recently separated from another (e.g., by becoming sectarian in relation to a mother church), the necessity for its leadership to provide legitimation to its members, to structure a symbolic universe within which their experience will have order and meaning, may become apparent. He refers to a symbolic universe in such a context as a "sacred canopy". Because this is a dialectical process, it must be kept in mind that although religious legitimations arise from human activity, once these legitimations are crystallized into complexes of meaning that become part of a religious tradition, they can attain a measure of autonomy over against this activity. They may act back upon actions in everyday life, transforming the latter, sometimes radically (see Esler 1994:13-17).

The social function of religion is thus to provide legitimation, which is instilled by rites[34] (Berger 1967:40-41; see Segal 1989:125). After initial institutionalization, cumulative institutionalization needs to follow in order that the new institution can survive, a process which Holmberg (1978:173) calls the "institutionalization of the institutionalization process". The first part of the process can be seen in institutionalized interpretations, offices and official procedures, while the second part is invisible and takes place in the processes of forming public opinion and socialization. The latter part of the process legitimates the former part. While the first level of institutionalization constitutes the natural result of interaction among people, this is not the case when it comes to higher levels of institutionalization. New institutional structures must be created, and this is usually done by the charismatic leaders and their followers, who fulfill the role of an entrepreneurial élite. Even if their intentions had only been to create a new way of living, an institutionalized structure would still be the outcome (Holmberg 1978:175; cf Berger & Luckmann 1976:145-146). It was thus unavoidable that the groups of early Jesus-followers eventually formed the institution called a "church".

3.6.5 The formation of the Jesus-community and the Christian movement

I shall conclude this section with the application of the above information to the formation of the Jesus-community and the "Christian" movement. For this purpose, I am going to offer a summary of a model developed by Malina (1995a, 2001). To understand the formation of early Jesus-movement groups, Malina (1995a:96-97; 2001:141-159) begins with three generalizations (cf Brown 2000:24-63):

- Small groups emerge because some person becomes aware of a need for change and shares this vision with others.
- Small groups develop through five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. Only in the first three stages are all the members of the group in the same phase of group socialization.
- Small groups form to support intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup or extragroup change.

Applying these points to the situation of Jesus, Malina (2001:142-143) argues:

> Since Jesus did indeed proclaim a kingdom and looked upon God as Father, proclaiming a political, political religious, and political economical theocracy to Israel, he was aware of a solution to Israel's political problems and was in the process of sharing this solution with others. Those who heard him would compare his solution with other available solutions and, if they found it feasible, would adopt it and tell others about it. It is at this point that people would be amenable to forming a small group around Jesus. If people rejected the solution, then Jesus' proclamation would be without effect.

Small group formation can thus be summarized in four words: aware, share, compare, declare. Malina (1995a:98) writes that the New Testament gives evidence of two general types of groups: Jesus-movement groups and "Christian" groups: "The fact that it is these latter that are our main evidence for Jesus movement groups would lead one to expect traces of Christian group concerns in descriptions of Jesus movement groups as well" (Malina 1995a:98). The Gospel story of the early Jesus-movement groups reflects a period before the foundation of "early Christian" groups, but that story was written down in different forms after the foundation of those "Christian" groups. Today this causes distortion in our understanding of these groups (Malina 1995a:98).

The existence of the Jesus-movement indicates that Jesus believed that a specific situation should be changed and that one person acting alone could not bring about that change. "Israel" had to "get their lives in order" ("repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"), an awareness shared with John the Baptist. Individuals joined the core group of the Jesus-movement by invitation. The need for the rise of "Christian" groups, on the other hand, can be traced back to the "experience of the risen Lord" (see Matthew's edict in 28:18-20; Luke's final vision of Jesus in Acts 1:6-11; Paul's personal insistence on having seen the risen Lord in Gl 1:16; 1 Cor 15:8; and Paul's knowledge of five hundred-plus

group members who had seen the risen Lord, recorded in 1 Cor 15:3-6) in alternate states of consciousness, which led them to believe that some specific situation should be changed. The situation here dealt with “salvation”, a cosmic rescue. And the guarantee for one’s salvation was accepting the group rooted in Jesus the Messiah (Malina 1995a:99-103). Thus, the Jesus-movement was a type of political action group, looking to societal change by God’s intervention. It thus exhibited an extra-group focus. On the other hand, the “Christian” movement comprised a type of fictive kin group, shaped by the norms of the prevailing kinship institution. The organization of the social movement set up by Jesus was based upon solidarity and loyalty towards Jesus himself and his cause, not among the recruits. But an elective association like the “Christian” movement functioned in a different way. People joined under pressure, in search of benefits for their primary kin groups (not in search of benefits for themselves alone). People joined associations like these because the larger society did not allow their kin group a space or a voice. Once persons “voluntarily” joined a group, interpersonal ties with central personages and the prestige this gave their kin group, made it morally impossible to leave without dishonor (Malina 1995a:108-109). Malina (1995a:109) describes this situation as follows:

> Christian associations formed expressive groups. They existed primarily to serve the needs of members: social, informational, support. As expressive groups they were not concerned with issues of the larger society and its societal political problems. They were not concerned at all to reform society, because they awaited the coming of Jesus with power. As expressive groups with intragroup focus, they were apolitical, choosing to foster any of various methods of evading group stigma. Thus they would eject deviants, help the individual to correct his or her faults or defects, adopt socially acceptable life-styles and the like.

For a small group to emerge the following circumstances are necessary (Malina 1995a:100-103):

- conditions favorable for change;

- accompanied by a vision for a new situation;
- coupled with a hope related to implementing that situation successfully;
- and all these factors combined in a social system that contains problem-solving groups.

Malina (1995a:100-103) concludes that in both the Jesus-community and with the "Christian" movement, all four of these dimensions must have been present; otherwise groups would not have been formed. He describes this environment as follows:

Criteria	**Jesus-movement**	**"Christian" movement**
Presence of conditions for change	A political program premised on the need for Israelites to put their lives in order, for God's imminent takeover of the country.	Not a political strategy, but of a kinship sort, "naturing through recruitment and nurturing through group attachment and support" (Malina 1995a:100).
Vision of new situation	We see Jesus' plan in his own chosen task of proclaiming and healing.	Because of the resurrection of Jesus, matters could be improved. They developed a new vision while recruiting members as fictive kin, prior to formulating a creed.
Hope of success	Jesus successfully persuaded his core group to proclaim and heal with him.	Paul's "Christian" groups witnessed a range of alternate states of consciousness, enforcing confidence in the achievement of the group's purposes. They developed confidence in their unit by active participation and realizing their objectives.
Cultural context	Groups were common and valued in Galilee and Judea, e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.	Philosophical schools and clubs were common in the Hellenistic world.

Malina (1995a:102-103) adds:

> For the Jesus faction, the purpose was to have Israelites get their lives in order as preparation for God's forthcoming takeover of the country. The goal was political. For Pauline groups, the prevailing purpose was salvation, cosmic rescue from the present situation. Pauline organizations were formed to attain God's rescue by enduring, persevering and waiting "in Christ". Paul's problem, given this purpose, was to inform people how to get "in Christ", and how to remain "in Christ". This goal is characteristic of fictive kin groups.

Malina (1995a:103-106, my emphasis) employs a model developed by Tuckman (1965:386-387, 396) for describing group-therapy, which was further corroborated by Moreland and Levine (1988:151-175), to indicate that over a period small groups develop through the following stages:

Stage	**Jesus-movement**	**"Christian" movement**
Forming: When the group is put together. (Members uncertain about belonging to group, commitment to group is low.)	Task-oriented: Had a mission to proclaim God's imminent taking over of the country, to require Israel to put its affairs in order, and to heal those in need of healing.	Not task-oriented: Social activity groups. Individuals are invited to join group, others seek affiliation. Group dependence develops.
Storming: Group joiners jockey for position and ease into interpersonal stances. (Members assertive, desire to satisfy personal needs. Commitment to the group is higher.)	Members resist working closely with one another. Conflict emerges.	Conflict breaks out, group members argue and criticize leader.

Norming: Marked by interpersonal conflict resolution in favor of mutually agreed upon patterns of behavior. (Attempt to resolve conflict by negotiating clear guidelines for group behavior.)	Exchange phase: Everyone shares ideas to improve group's level of performance.	Cohesion phase: Members feel more positive about their membership.
Performing: Participants carry out the program for which the group was assembled. (Members work together to achieve mutual goals.)	Problem-solving stage: Members work together productively.	Role-taking: Members take social roles so as to make group more rewarding to all. They work together.
Adjourning: Group members gradually disengage from task activities and social activities, in a way that reflects their efforts to cope with the approaching end of the group.	The adjournment of the Jesus-group signaled by the crucifixion of Jesus loops back to renewed norming and performing for former Jesus-faction members, around whom "Christian" fictive kin groups emerge. The trigger of this loopback comprised the experience of meeting Jesus after his death. *The ritual of baptism commanded in Matthew and described in Acts points to such a fictive kinship focus. The quality of these groups as fictive kin groups is further indicated by the main group ceremony, the common meal.*	

Malina (1995a:105) argues that from the evidence provided in the New Testament documents, the Jesus-faction moved into the *performing* stage: "The sending of the seventy (-two; Luke 10:1-20) points to enlarged activity. This implies further recruitment or forming, with subsequent storming and norming to lead to greater performing" (Malina 1995a:105). But there is little evidence of the performing stage to be found in the Pauline "Christian" groups. The problems addressed in the Pauline corpus have to do with *storming* and *norming.*

By way of summary it can therefore be asserted that the early cultic community of Jesus-followers separated themselves from the ideology of the temple cult. They formed an anti-society on the following grounds, as described by Dreyer (2000:241; emphasis by Dreyer):

> Jesus' vision of an *alternate* kingdom (as expressed in aphoristic symbols and healing activities) provided the setting for understanding God's reign and sovereignty. In this cult the values of inclusiveness and egalitarianism make it possible for the destitute and slaves to participate in the dying and rising of the cultic hero on an equal level with those of noble birth. This resulted in conflict with the customs of the emperor cult and a tense relationship with the temple and synagogical authorities.

As time went by, this anti-society became institutionalized. Rites played an important part in the institutionalization process, since it was by means of the ritual of baptism that a person could become part of this "institution" and by means of the Eucharist that group cohesion took hold.

3.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have suggested that the "telling" of the "showing" of alternate states of consciousness required symbolic language. When this symbolic language is "re-enacted", it becomes a rite. By using anti-language, alternate states of consciousness were verbalized and then "re-enacted" in the symbolic rites of the early Jesus-groups. Like all rites, these rites of the early followers of Jesus can be divided into rituals and ceremonies. Baptism was a ritual, because it was only administered to a person once and then it caused a change in the status of that person, effective for the rest of his or her life. It was also the means by which a person was initiated into a new group – the "family of God". The Eucharist was a ceremony, because baptized persons participated in the Eucharist on a regular basis to confirm their status in the group. A person who wanted to become a member of the newly founded Jesus-movement in the first century, crossed a boundary by being baptized and maintained this boundary by

regularly participating in the Eucharist. All these factors gave meaning to such a person's life, especially by means of the alternate states of consciousness that were experienced in both rites, as well as by the lasting effects these states had on their lives (see chapter 2).

In the next two chapters the ritual of baptism and the Eucharistic ceremony will be discussed in more detail.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER 3

[1] Jung (1988:20-21) believes that a symbol has a wider "unconscious" aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. He adds that because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot fully comprehend or define. This is one of the reasons why religions employ symbolic language or images. A sign is always less than the concept it represents, while a symbol stands for something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. Symbols are natural and spontaneous products. In this regard, Jung (1988:55) writes: "No genius has ever sat down with a pen or brush in his hand and said: 'Now I am going to invent a symbol.' No one can take a more or less rational thought, reached as a logical conclusion or by deliberate intent, and then give it 'symbolic' form."

[2] According to Jung (1988:93), these symbols can evoke a deep emotional response in people, and this psychic change makes them function in much the same way as prejudices.

[3] "Where they [cultural symbols] are repressed or neglected, their specific energy disappears into the unconscious with unaccountable consequences. The psychic energy that appears to have been lost in this way in fact serves to revive and intensify whatever is uppermost in the unconscious – tendencies, perhaps, that have hitherto had no chance to express themselves or at least have not been allowed an uninhibited existence in our consciousness" (Jung 1988:93). To Jung (1988:93), such tendencies form an ever-present and potentially destructive "shadow" to our conscious mind: "Modern man does not understand how much his 'rationalism' (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic 'underworld'. He has freed himself from 'superstition' (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree. His moral and spiritual tradition has disintegrated, and he is now paying the price for this break-up in world-wide disorientation and dissociation" (Jung 1988:94). Jung (1988:95) then adds that this enormous loss is compensated for by the symbols of our dreams. According to him dreams convey our original nature, but, unfortunately, they express their contents in the language of nature, which is strange and incomprehensible to us. This gives us the task of translating it into the rational words and concepts of contemporary speech, which has liberated itself from its primitive burdens, from its mystical participation with the things it describes. Today the surface of our world seems to be cleansed of all superstitious and irrational elements. But the real inner human world is not really freed from primitivity. This we can see, for example, in the number 13, that is still taboo for many people today (Jung 1988:95-96).

[4] Segal (1989:137) states that among contemporary anthropologists, few have devoted themselves more passionately to religion than Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Mary Douglas. They contend that religion functions above all to express beliefs about the place of humans in the world. For them, not only religion, but all of culture serves to express those beliefs. They regard rites as very important, because, as mental activities, rites are expressions of belief.

[5] According to Esler (1994:7-17), Berger's model exhibits one negative feature: that it is reductionist and allows no other religious phenomena, in particular, those of a transcendental nature. He says that the same human activity that produces society also produces religion, with the relation between the two products always being a dialectical one. However, I do not agree with Esler, since Berger does give attention to "other religious phenomena" in his works: *A rumor of angels: Modern society and the rediscovery of the supernatural* ([1969] 1970, especially 94-97) and *Questions of faith: A skeptical affirmation of Christianity* (2004, especially 14-30).

[6] See Lüdemann (2003:163-177) for a critical discussion of Theißen's (1999) book, *A theory of Christian religion.*

[7] As an example of this, note the groups of people wielding influence who clustered around Jesus – who himself possessed legitimate but illegal authority.

[8] I have explained that I understand rites as consisting of rituals and ceremonies. What I describe as "rites", are termed "rituals" by some scholars, and what I describe as "ceremonies", are sometimes also termed "ritual" by different scholars. To avoid confusion, I shall use the terminology "rites", "rituals" and "ceremonies" as I have explained it throughout, even though the authority I am referring to may use another term for the same concept. Lang (1998:444), for example, understands "rites" as the smallest elements in sacred actions, while he sees "ritual" as the overall event that is built up of rites.

[9] Segal (1989:143) criticizes Turner, arguing that Turner confuses the reality of a *need* for a meaningful world with the *reality* of a meaningful world (see e.g., Turner 1975:31).

[10] These theoretical developments regarding rites provide a helpful frame for understanding first-century baptism and meals. These rites do not need to be unified under one universal meaning or message, but can be perceived as consistent with both current ritual theory and first-century precedent in their ability to nourish specific and individual realities (Smith & Taussig 1990:103-106).

[11] Winkelman (2000:233) shows that rites have traditionally been conceived of as repetitive behavior for which no evidence exists to substantiate the technical or physical effects believed in by the participants. Because of this he often regards "rites" as an outsider's term, "imputing faulty causal reasoning to the participants by the analyst who dismisses the effects participants presume their rituals attain." This happens when rites are understood as acting at symbolic levels rather than at strictly technical or physical levels. A distinction needs to be made between the practical (technical) and expressive or symbolic aspects of rites. These two levels are not always separate. Symbols and rites are found even in activities that are considered to be technical: "Symbolic acts elicit associations and beliefs that transform experience, as well as physiological responses, and enhance positive expectations and commitment. Ritual techniques for altering consciousness exemplify their physiological consequences and, hence, technical effects" (Winkelman 2000:233).

[12] d'Aquili and Newberg (1993:29, 99; 1999:107) regard Christian liturgy as exemplifying slow rhythmic rites and Sufi dancing or the Umbanda of Brazil as examples of rapid rites. Activation of the arousal system by means of music and words, will engender in the participants a sense of awe. d'Aquili and Newberg say that by directing the excitation of the arousal system toward God, a sense of awe in the presence of God can be created. A rite that directs the quiescent system toward God will result in a feeling of the immense love that God has for people and of God's infinite goodness. If someone wants to establish a sense of unity with God or the universe, a liturgy that incorporates both arousal and quiescent components needs to be constructed.

[13] The bread and wine in the Eucharist can probably be seen as an example of this. In the Roman Catholic Church (contemporary as well as in the past) not only the body and blood of Christ are seen as holy, but also the bread and wine that become the body and blood of Christ.

[14] Segal (1989:138) indicates that in contrast to other scholars, Turner, Geertz, and Douglas regard rites not only as primitive phenomena. They can be contemporary as well, because as a part of religion, rites do not rival science and, therefore, are not superseded by science. Rather than explaining or controlling the world, rites describe the place of human beings in the world. By "world" they refer to the cosmos as well as society.

[15] Wedderburn (1987:363) comments that by this phrase Van Gennep denoted the special acts by which individuals progress from one stage of life to another, from one occupation to another, or form one group to another: "These special acts or rites can be subdivided into three sets of rites,

those of separation (pre-liminal), transition (liminal – Turner uses here the word 'margin'), and incorporation (post-liminal – here Turner's word is '(re)aggregation)."

[16] Another kind of initiation rite occurs where young men and women are weaned away from their parents and made members of their clan or tribe. Henderson (1988:129) describes this as follows: "...in making this break with the childhood world, the original parent archetype will be injured, and the damage must be made good by a healing process of assimilation into the life of the group....Thus the group fulfills the claims of the injured archetype and becomes a kind of second parent to which the young are first symbolically sacrificed, only to re-emerge into a new life". The initiation rite solves the problem of the power of the original archetype that can never be permanently overcome. The ritual takes the novice back to the deepest level of original mother-child identity "or ego-Self identity", thus, forcing the child to experience a symbolic death. Then the child is ceremonially rescued from this state by the rite of the new birth. Henderson (1988:130) describes this as "the first act of true consolidation of the ego with the larger group, expressed as totem, clan, or tribe, or all three combined". Whether this ritual is found in tribal groups or in more complex societies, it insists upon this rite of death and rebirth, which provides the novice with a "rite of passage" from one stage of life to the next. Henderson (1988:157) adds that there is a conflict in our lives between adventure and discipline, evil and virtue, freedom and security. But these are only phrases we use to describe an ambivalence that troubles us, and to which we never seem to be able to find an answer. But he believes that there is an answer, that there is a meeting point between containment and liberation, and that we can find it in rites of initiation. These rites can make it possible for individuals, or for groups of people, to unite the opposing forces within themselves and to achieve equilibrium in their lives. But the rites do not offer this opportunity automatically. They relate to particular phases in the life of an individual (or group), and unless they are properly understood and translated into a new way of life, the moment can pass. In Henderson's (1988:157) words: "Initiation is, essentially, a process that begins with a rite of submission, followed by a period of containment, and then by a further rite of liberation. In this way every individual can reconcile the conflicting elements of his personality: He can strike a balance that makes him truly human, and truly the master of himself."

[17] Beattie (1968:211) calls rituals like these transition rituals, which expresses the great social importance which a society attaches to changes of status among its members – the smooth working of any social system depends on everyone knowing and accepting their proper role in it.

[18] This is described in John 3:5: "...no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

[19] There are scholars who criticize Turner regarding his description of liminality-*communitas.* Förster (2003:714-715), for instance, thinks that Turner regards the symbols as more important than the people, since the initiands do not really experience freedom in the liminal phase as described by Turner, because in reality they are dependent on the grace of the ritual elders. d'Aquili and Newberg (1993:3-4) also differ from Turner: "It is easy to see why, when Turner hit upon these very real social and psychological states as explanatory concepts, he tended to emphasize their anti-structural function in human societies. While it is very true that the generation of liminality and *communitas* may blur social and individual boundaries, and thus minimize the structural aspects of a society, it is nevertheless also true that ritual may generate these states within component social entities of a single society, thereby creating an increased sense of the cohesion within various sub-groups of a society. Therefore, this process may serve to further define the boundaries between these subgroups, thereby increasing the structural aspects of the society as a whole….Thus, Victor Turner may have been a bit too quick to emphasize the anti-structural aspects of ceremonial ritual behavior." d'Aquili and Newberg point out that human ceremonial ritual is in itself a morally neutral technology, which, depending on the myth in which it is embedded and which it expresses, can either promote or minimize the structural aspects of a society and promote or minimize overall aggressive behavior (d'Aquili & Newberg 1993:4).

[20] According to d'Aquili and Newberg (1993:3) liminality can be described as a transitional or threshold state between social individuals and social roles and between various levels of social hierarchy. Liminality can be described as an event that stands between two cognized strips of experience, much as a doorway stands between two rooms (Laughlin, McManus & d'Aquili 1992:142; see chapter 2). For Malina (1986:56) "[l]iminality is an emotional high, the feeling one gets when one is free from social constraints or when one is between or above the lines comprising stable society."

[21] Turner (1977:96) comments that he prefers the Latin term *communitas* to "community", to be able to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an "area of common living".

[22] Before aggregation can take place, certain status transformation rites require a form of *ritual confrontation* which needs to end successfully in order for the initiands to gain public recognition. They are tested to see whether they have acquired the skills necessary for the new roles they are going to fulfill and to apprise whether they are committed to the charge laid upon them (McVann 1991b:350; cf Turner 1977:100-102; Girard 1972:147-149, 179-180, 409-462).

[23] If we apply this analysis to the ritual of baptism, it suggests that the water would belong to the sensory pole, and washing away sins would be its counterpart at the pole of moral and social order (Goodman 1988a:32).

[24] Goodman (1988a:33-34) adds that we can see a contemporary example of this in the story of the Last Supper and the salvation myth which are compressed into the brief span of a mass, and the sumptuous meal into a thin wafer and a sip of wine (cf Crossan 1998:444).

[25] Once again Goodman (1988a:35) explains this by means of a contemporary example. She notes that in the Catholic Churches before the Second Ecumenical Council, there was an abundance of such signals: the semidarkness of the older buildings, the flickering candlelight, the fragrance of incense, the hymns, the repetitious prayers, and the kneeling. Even the telltale break was there, preceding the "transformation" of the bread and the wine into the true body and blood of Christ, a step into the alternate reality that should by rights be experienced in trance. But this experience is no longer expected. The trend in the majority of Christian denominations today is toward *thinking about* religion instead.

[26] Certain scholars refer to ceremony as relating to secular affairs, as opposed to ritual which has to do with religious or sacred situations. But in theoretical studies regarding ceremony and ritual this distinction is not carried through consistently (see Alexander 1987:179, 181-183). On the contrary, Theißen (1999:121) considers that although religious myth is enacted in rites, rites do not need a religious character. The profane, everyday life is also full of rites. But then again even secularized ceremonies often possess a religious aura. A strict distinction between secular and religious activity is problematic in any case, since historical phenomena do not exhibit the same exact boundaries found in theoretical categories (Alexander 1987:181-182).

[27] According to Esler (2003:195), in Romans 5-8 we have a very clear example of the origins and nature of the new in-group identity in Christ (within the framework of social identity).

[28] See Elliott (1995:75-95) for a detailed discussion of the shift from faction to sect in the early Jesus-movement, as well as definitions of specific terminology, critique and other studies done on the subject.

[29] Wilson (1970:22; 1973:11) points out that Troeltsch took, as his basic data, information about sects from medieval and modern Christendom. He understood sects as being in contrast with the church. Although this scheme has been criticized, especially for its limited conception of sects, its restricted view of the church, and also for the implication that sects as such depend on the church

towards which they are antithetical, it is, according to Wilson, still useful (cf Woodhead & Heelas 2000:40).

[30] In this regard, Wilson (1970:35) writes: "The danger of sociology is that its constructs may easily be mistaken for summary statements of reality, for formulae in terms of which the world is to be grasped." By emphasizing that the empirical data is richer than the categories, he points out that we need to remind ourselves that the categories are merely convenient ways of handling large amounts of data that fit approximately. The specific cultural and historical circumstances can render our typifications false in detail (cf Wilson 1967:1-4).

[31] It is interesting that Wilson (1970:17) notes that although religions usually begin as sects, once they are established they are intolerant of new sects (cf Neufeld 2005:15).

[32] According to Malina (1995a:96) a group can be defined as any number of persons who come together for some purpose, while a gathering of unrelated people can be termed a collectivity. Halliday (1986:14), on the other hand, views a group as a simple structure, a set of participants among whom there are no special relations, while he perceives a society as not consisting of participants, but of relations, and these relations define social roles (cf Brown 2000:2-4).

[33] Weber (1968:48) applies the word "charisma" to an individual who is set apart from ordinary persons and is treated as endowed with "superhuman" or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These powers are not accessible to the ordinary person, since they are regarded as of divine origin, and on the basis of such powers the individual is considered as a leader. "This means that the 'natural' leaders – in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress – have been neither officeholders nor incumbents of an 'occupation' in the present sense of the word..." (Weber 1968:18). One example Weber (1968:19, 49) cites, is the shaman (we can also include Jesus in this classification) (see chapter 2). Weber (1968:50) further explains that the group that is subject to charismatic authority is based on an emotional form of communal relationship: "The administrative staff of a charismatic leader does not consist of 'officials'; at least its members are not technically trained. It is not chosen on the basis of social privilege nor from the point of view of domestic or personal dependency. It is rather chosen in terms of the charismatic quality of its members. The prophet has his disciples; the warlord his selected henchmen; the leader, generally, his followers" (Weber 1968:50). There is no "appointment" or "dismissal", no career, promotion, hierarchy, salary; only a call (Weber 1968:50-51). The genuine prophet or true leader preaches, creates, or demands new obligations. Like Jesus who spoke in opposition to the Scribes and Pharisees: "It is written..., but I say unto you...." Weber (1968:51-52) says that in the pure type of charisma, these new obligations are imposed on the authority of revelation by oracles, or of the leader's own will, and are recognized by the followers of the charismatic person, because they come from such a source. Charismatic authority is a revolutionary force which repudiates the past. In contrast to traditional authority it is irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules.

[34] Holmberg (1978:171) refers to this process as the fourth level of legitimation. Berger and Luckmann (1976:112-118) also point out that legitimation occurs on different levels. The first level of legitimation is part of the vocabulary, the second level consists of simple wisdom, the third level displays theories that validate the institution and the fourth level consists of symbolic universes, which Berger and Luckmann (1976:112-118) describe as "...bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality", while Holmberg (1978:171) adds that a symbolic universe is "an all-embracing frame of reference".