



# A SYSTEMATIC CONCLUSION



## **1. Discipleship and the historical survey**

The historical survey clearly indicated that prior to the 70s there was little interest in discipleship as theme in the FG. The first substantial study of discipleship in the FG came in 1971 when Jiménez wrote his *El discípulo de Jesucristo segun el evangelio de S Juan*. This interest was expanded in the following decade with especially the monograph of Pazdan in 1982: *Discipleship as the appropriation of Eschatological Salvation in the FG*. The increased interest in this subject in the 80s was a direct result of the work done by Rudolph Bultmann, who constituted a watershed in the Johannine studies in the latter half of the 20th century. This led to more attention being paid to the situation and circumstances of the Johannine community and consequently to discipleship.

From a critical point of view, the FE's usage of μαθητής and ἀκολουθεω has not really received due credit in past research. While ἀκολουθεω was seldom used to define discipleship, μαθητής was mostly used from a theologic-philosophical perspective. Where the various characteristics of discipleship were examined emphasis was placed primarily on the 'devoted' aspect of discipleship. Various attempts to get to the heart of discipleship in the FG produced divergent results. *This historical survey clearly indicates the contributions of various scholars on this topic and the lacunas of the investigation*. It is important to note that the research also indicated that the majority of scholars agree that the FE's description of discipleship is essentially contained in the LD.

## **2. Discipleship and the disciples in the FG**

It has been indicated that the use of μαθηταὶ in the FG does not explicitly correlate with discipleship. When considering the correlation between μαθηταὶ and discipleship, it is essential to pay attention to the two levels on which the FG figures (the historical situation of Jesus and the disciples, and the historical situation of the FE). In the historical situation where Jesus acted μαθηταὶ is used in a technical sense indicating those who literally, physically followed Jesus wherever he went. In the historical situation of the FE μαθηταὶ implicitly relates to discipleship. The FE depicts the BD as the paradigm of discipleship.

The four 'disciple' texts (8:31; 12:26; 13:35; 15:8) form the link between the two historical levels, to move from a technical meaning to a deeper spiritual meaning. Both semantic meanings of μαθηταὶ, following (chs 1-12) and learning (chs 13-17), occur in the FG. Although nothing is said about the formation and composition of the disciple group their presence in the FG has clear theological significance and by implication refers to future disciples of Jesus.

Because the FE parallels the Jesus-disciples' relationship with the Father-Son relationship it implies that the mission of the disciples, which is a continuation of Jesus' mission, will be revelatory-salvific in character.

## **3. Discipleship and John the Baptist**

The Baptist played a major role in the inauguration of Jesus' ministry, which was a ministry where people followed Jesus, the revealer and teacher. The role and function of the Baptist are pictured by the FE as revealing Jesus' real identity and prepare the reader for further revelations about Jesus. Through the Baptist's narrative the reader is also called up to become a disciple of Jesus, as some of the Baptists disciples did, and informed on what is expected from the reader if he wants to follow Jesus. The revelatory and salvatory

aspects of the Baptist's ministry form an introduction which the FE develops further in the ministry of Jesus and is also expected in the ministry of the disciples.

#### **4. Discipleship and the Descend-Ascend Schema**

The DAS is used in a multiple sense to indicate several aspects. It constitutes the framework for Johannine theology, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, missiology and ecclesiology. The uniqueness of the FG is that it uses the DAS on the one hand to describe the situation of the people in this world, and on the other hand to describe the identity of Jesus. The world is depicted as a place occupied by sinful people who do not know God and are separated from God and the world 'above'. Fundamental is the description of Jesus as the one who has descended from heaven and, at the end of his mission, which constitutes a *krisis* for the whole world, reascends to the Father.

Since no one has ever seen God (θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε--1:18), there can be no direct fellowship with him, which implies salvation. But God can be known through and in the one he has sent, μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο (1:18). This Son of God has become flesh (1:14). This implies that the one who sees Jesus sees the Father (14:9; 12:45) and the one who knows him will know the Father as well, for he has already known him and see him (14:7). Thus fellowship with God can come only through fellowship with Jesus.

The DAS demonstrates the mind and will of God and indicates the divine movement between heaven and earth which, in a spatial sense, is the concrete contact and interaction between the two 'realities': heaven and earth. This dualism runs throughout the FG. It indicates Jesus' origin and destination as well as God's contact and involvement in human affairs. The 'above' comes in an audible, perceptible and experiential sense to exist in the 'below'. The DAS indicates God's love for the world and his plan to save the world which empirically concretized in the revelation of God and Jesus' identities and the salvation of the world. Jesus' mission to the world was to reveal the Father with the purpose that people should accept him. Because he was the revelation of the Father (12:49f; 14:9-11; 17:21-23) people have to accept him (1:12). It indicates that God is in control and is the one who took the initiative. It is only through Jesus that God can be known. He will also bestow on men heavenly qualities, such as joy, peace, love, light, truth and the Spirit.

The DAS constitutes the *setting* for the mission of Jesus and the disciples (the agency concept). The DAS explains and brings together the mission of Jesus and the mission of the disciples. The mission of Jesus started with the descent of the Son, while the ascent of Jesus indicates the commencement of the mission of the disciples. Jesus' departure is only temporary because he will come again to be with his disciples, but then in a different mode; through the Spirit he will dwell in them in order to continue his mission.

#### **5. Discipleship and the Agency motif**

Because discipleship (the relationship between Jesus and the disciples) is based on the Father-Son relationship and seen as the continuation of the mission of Jesus (Jesus' agency), the conclusions concerning 'Jesus' agency' in this study will be formulated in terms of discipleship. In fact, *whereas the DAS constitutes the setting for discipleship, the 'Agency' motif characterizes it.*

## 5.1 Jesus the perfect agent

In the FG Jesus is presented as the perfect agent: he is the one who came from heaven (cf 1:14,18) and who is presented as God (θεός).

A reflective explanation of the fact that Jesus came from heaven is given by the FE when he contrasts ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος with ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς (3:31). The one who 'came from above' can only be Jesus the heavenly witness and revealer (3:32), the beloved Son of the Father (3:16f,35). Jesus testifies and teaches what he knows, what he has seen and heard in the heavenly sphere in the presence of the Father (3:32). The Son is the Father's envoy plenipotentiary, his perfect spokesman and revealer (1:18).

The only texts in the FG where Jesus is presented as God are 1:1,18 and 20:28. In 1:1 the pre-existent λόγος is described as God, in 1:18 the incarnated λόγος is called the μονογενῆς θεός, and in 20:28 the risen Christ is honoured as God. Thus Jesus is called 'God' from three different points of view: before his descent from the world above (from God), before the many confessions in 1:19-51 and his ministry on earth, and at the end of his ministry, before his ascent to God.

In 1:18 it is said that the Son is at the Father's side. Therefore Jesus said that if we want to know God, it can only be through him, because *he is the only way to God* (14:6), who 'has made him known' (1:18). In both cases it is stated that the Son has 'revealed/made known' the 'Name' of the Father.

A reliable son is the best agent anyone could ever have, and the one whose credentials are most likely to be accepted. Moreover, Jesus was the μονογενῆς of the Father. Such a Son, who speaks and acts in the Father's absence and on his behalf, and claims the authority of the Father to do so, can be assumed without question to be his Father's agent.

## 5.2 A new dispensation

Despite proposals in this regard by Brown (1975) and other scholars, the FE does not use ὥρα constantly throughout the FG as referring to the crucifixion and exaltation of Jesus (7:30; 8:20; 12:26; 13:1; 17:1).<sup>1</sup> Certain occurrences of ὥρα in the FG also enlighten different perspectives which are meaningful for discipleship. It indicates a new dispensation (2:4) which concerns salvation and condemnation (cf 5:19-30) on the one hand and on the other hand characterizes a new form of worship (4:21-24). This new form of worship is in chs 13-17 defined as discipleship. The new dispensation started with the incarnation of Jesus but becomes effective with Jesus' resurrection and the giving of the Spirit.

In this new dispensation, as in the past, God is always in control (2:4; 7:3) and steers the soteriological events according to his plan and will. Jesus, conscious of God's plan, submits himself in obedience to this plan and will of God (7:30; 8:20; 13:1; 17:1).

## 5.3 Jesus' report to the Father

Jesus reports to the Father about his mission that is approaching completion. The two remaining that he had to accomplish was his crucifixion and the commissioning of his disciples to the world. Jesus, in reviewing his earthly mission, declares that he has accomplished the task the Father had assigned to him--through this he glorified the Father.

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<sup>1</sup> Although 7:30; 8:20; 12:26; 13:1; 17:1 refer explicitly to the crucifixion and exaltation of Jesus, this theme is implicitly present in the other texts.

Jesus' report includes everything he had to do on his earthly mission. He was obedient to the will of his Father, he strictly adhered to the objective of his mission: he had revealed the character of the Father (and himself as the revelation of the Father) to the men that God had given him and had granted them ζωὴν αἰώνιον. He refers to the success and results of his mission, including the fact that this divine mission will be continued through his disciples whom he will appoint as his successive agents.

Now that he has completed the work the Father had given him and is returning to the Father, he requests the Father to protect his disciples who have to remain in the world to continue his mission. Jesus also requested that his disciples could be where he is.

## 5.4 Jesus appoints his disciples as his agents

Having announced his departure and the fact that the disciples could not follow him, Jesus explains what he expects from them while he is away (chs 13-17). Everything Jesus gave his disciples centres around their commission and consecration, and emphasizes their dependence upon him.

In order to become a disciple of Jesus, one has to believe that Jesus was sent by God. Because a disciple is called upon to continue the mission of Jesus, he has to perceive Jesus' identity. This correlates with the purpose of the message of the FG (20:31) "...ἵνα πιστεύ[ε]τε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ..." By believing this a disciple acknowledges the origin of Jesus (indicated by "ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ") and the mission of Jesus (indicated by "ὁ Χριστὸς").

### 5.4.1 The continuation of Jesus' mission

*The background* against which the mission of the disciples has to be seen is that of 'agency'. Jesus, the agent of God, has completed the work the Father had given him. Because he is not from this world he is now returning to the Father where he belongs. But the revelatory-salvific work which he has started must continue since it is part of God's plan to save the world (3:16). In order for this to realize, *Jesus appointed his disciples as his agents to continue this divine mission (17:18)*. The Father's sending of Jesus then serves as the basis of Jesus' sending of the disciples.

In following Jesus through discipleship, the disciples will continue his mission. This implies that 'the agency concept' is now transferred to the disciples and made applicable to them. The parallel actually lies in the revelatory-salvific character of the mission of Jesus. Both are sent, both have a mission, both missions are divine, both have a revelatory-salvific task, and both perform this task under the guidance and power of the Spirit. Elsewhere in the FG this parallelism is found in relation to life (6:57), knowledge (10:14f), love (15:9; 17:23, and unity (17:22). Thus the Father-Son relationship is a prototype for discipleship which indicates the relationship between Jesus and the disciples.

The disciples will from now on (17:18) be the agents of Jesus (καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς) for the extension of his work. Throughout the FG Jesus' concern is directed towards the Father. The disciples are now the guardians of the revelation that Jesus received. They must continue with this mission by making Jesus known to the world. This is only possible through unity. Through their demonstration of mutual love the world will come to know who Jesus is (17:23). This implies that through these disciples the world will meet God as they experience God in Jesus.

The phrase "τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὓς ἔδωκάς μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου" (17:6) refers to the disciples of Jesus. They were part of the wicked world, but God took them out of the world and gave them to Jesus—which is functionally equivalent to the fact that Jesus chose them out of the world (15:19). They are the people who have responded to Jesus during the time of his ministry (vv 2,9,12,24). A disciple is one who can 'see now', who's knowledge about Jesus' identity is real. Only after this Passion event would their self-consciousness about discipleship become real and deliberate.

*The risen Jesus commissions his 'already appointed agents' (17:18) to continue with this divine mission:* "καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς" (20:21). It would be wrong to think of the disciples simply replacing Jesus now that he is going back to the Father. The fact that he departs does not mean that he ceases to be the 'sent one' *par excellence* (Cf 9:7). These disciples are not to engage in new work of their own creation, but are to continue the ministry of Jesus. This is also seen in the participation of the Spirit who will not teach them new things, but will remind them of what (14:26; 16:13) Jesus taught them. Jesus carries the Father's mission to a certain point and then uses the disciples to carry it to completion. A certain part of the great work is thus transferred to the disciples. In order to accomplish this, their mission must have the same character and objectives as the mission of Jesus. Therefore Jesus compares their mission with his own. Here the FE regards the mission of the Son as almost completed, and the mission of the disciples as just beginning. The only difference in this transition of the mission is that the *form* of the mission is here transferred from the incarnate Jesus to his followers (the believers). The content remains the same. It is clear that Jesus himself continues his mission through his disciples. The emphasis here is on the Greek construction "καθὼς...καὶ γὼ" which constitutes a parallelism. This is also clear from other identical constructions (15:9; 17:18). This parallelism indicates that (καθὼς) in the words and deeds of Jesus men encounter the Father who had sent him, so also (καὶ γὼ) in the words and deeds of Jesus' disciples (believers) the world should encounter God and Jesus, the Son of God. Thus the disciples of Christ do not take over the mission of Jesus; his mission continues and must be effective in their ministry (14:12-14).

The sending of the disciples completes a series of sendings throughout the Gospel. The character of the disciples as the agents of Christ becomes clearer by their commissioning by Christ himself. The mission of the disciples is compared in both 17:18 and 20:21 with the mission of Jesus. Where the objective of Jesus' mission was to reveal God to the world so that it may become saved, this will also be the character of the mission of the disciples. The sending of Jesus was motivated by the love of God in order to save the world (3:16,17). Therefore, as Christ was the key to God's redemptive plan for the world, the disciples are the continuation of that plan conceived in divine love.

The special Johannine contribution to the theology of mission is that the Father's sending of the Son serves both as the model and reason for the Son's sending of the disciples. This implies that Jesus takes the position of God and the disciples take that of Jesus. When Jesus then uses the verb "πέμπω", instead of "ἀπόσπελλω" in 20:21, it is to inform them that the historical moment for them has arrived to continue with his mission; now is the time for the disciples to proceed. The work of these disciples is to do the work (will) of him (Jesus) who sends them. Their mission is to continue with the Son's divine mission, and this requires that the Son must be present in them during this mission. Jesus says, "καὶ ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντά με" (12:45); in the same way the disciples must now show forth the presence of Jesus so that whoever sees the disciples can see Jesus who sent them (cf 13:35). Throughout the ministry of Jesus people could see the presence of

God. The same idea is stated in 13:20: “ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ λαμβάνων ἄν τινα πέμψω ἐμὲ λαμβάνει, ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ λαμβάνων λαμβάνει τὸν πέμψαντά με.” This becomes possible only through the gift of the Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of Jesus (14:26) and also sent by Jesus. The Spirit not only constitutes the presence of Jesus, but also has the task enabling the disciples to fulfil their mission.

It seems as if the Johannine community regarded themselves as a commissioned group, sent into the world to continue the divine plan of God inaugurated in Christ. Thus they see themselves as agents who are sent in the same way and for the same reason as their Lord. Throughout the FG we are aware of strong insider-outsider dichotomy--a struggle between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This relates to the purpose of the FG, the character of discipleship and the activity of the Spirit. The internal life of the Johannine community, as the FG depicts it, is just as strong as their mission consciousness. This implies that the inward movement relates to the internal solidarity, mutual love and consecration within the community. The outward movement points to the missionary task in the world around it.

With the addition of the involvement of the Spirit and the theological modification of Jesus’ mission (the modelling of the disciples’ mission on the Father-Son relationship) the FE widens the horizon to include not only the ‘Twelve’ disciples of Jesus but also those whom they represent.

## 5.5 The disciples are like Jesus who sent them

In order to determine such a relationship there are two important aspects to consider, namely, who the person *is*, and what he *does*. One can see who a person is in what he does and what he does because of who he is.

The ‘agency’ motif indicates a new spiritual union between Jesus and his disciples. With the appointment of the disciples as Jesus’ agents, the pattern of the relationship between Jesus and the Father has been duplicated in (transferred to) the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Jesus displays his relationship with his Father and sets his disciples an example to be followed.

### 5.5.1 The equality of Jesus and the disciples

Jesus was the promised messenger of God and admits that he was sent by God. The phrase ὃν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ρήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ (cf 12:49f) indicates that God himself speaks in the words of the agent. This explains why the word of witness and that to which the word bears witness are identical, because *what Jesus says is said by God* himself. The sender (τοῦ πέμψαντός με) is here completely one with the agent: there is a complete community of thought and action. Therefore, to ‘see’ the agent is to ‘see’ the sender (12:45), and to ‘hear’ the words of the agent is to ‘hear’ the words of the sender.

The disciples of Jesus became his agents and therefore have to represent him; Jesus is present in the disciples. Whoever then hears the disciples, hears Jesus whose words the disciples speak (3:34; 17:8), and whoever sees the disciples sees Jesus, and who experiences the disciples experiences Jesus (5:23; 10:37-38; 12:45; 14:9-11; 15:23). Thus, wherever the disciples are, Jesus is and *what the disciples say and do* is nothing else than *Jesus’ action*. This statement is taken even further and applied to ‘give life’ and ‘to judge’ in 20:23 (cf 3:35). This clearly shows that Jesus acts through the disciples, to give life and to judge, and that the disciples in his service only carry out and continue his work. Only the relationship between the Son (λόγος) and the Father (θεός) could satisfactorily explain this

community of activity of Jesus and the disciples. Jesus, invisible and transcendent, is now seen to act through the disciples in whom he is present. Jesus' will, his words and his deeds are accomplished in and through his disciples. Thus, through the disciples (as previously through his Son) the Father reveals his will, accomplishes what he wants to do himself. The disciples are therefore no more than the spokesmen of God (8:26; 17:8), the mediators of life-giving words to a world estranged from God.

But the fact that the Spirit has been given enables the disciples to speak the words of God as Jesus did. By his bestowal of the Spirit upon his agents, Jesus entrusted to them the fullness of salvific knowledge which they had to reveal to men. The Spirit enables the disciples to speak of that which they have seen and heard from Jesus. The disciples experienced direct knowledge through seeing and hearing Jesus. Because Jesus is in the disciples, he is where the disciples are; he is present in the disciples. This would imply that the disciples, who are the agents of Jesus, are like Jesus who sent them. This relates to the basic principle of the Jewish institution of agency which states that '*an agent is like the one who sent him*'. This relationship is applied regardless of who was the sender. Consequently, to deal with the agent was the same as dealing with the sender himself. Only those disciples who live close to Jesus can reveal him (1:18). He is also the only way to the Father and therefore no-one can come to the Father except through Jesus (14:6).

Discipleship is a way of life that is at its very heart a life of imitation, a life of emulating the life of the Master. The obedience that Jesus gave to his Father becomes the paradigm for the obedience to which the disciples of Jesus are called. His mission (and that of the disciples) conveys the revelation of God and the communication of fullness of life through his life to humanity. All who accept this revelation and the Revealer share in this life.

#### **5.5.1.1 Jesus as well as his disciples received authority**

In 3:35 the FE refers to the authority granted to Jesus by the Father and in 20:23 to the authority granted to the disciples by Jesus. Both references concern their missionary task. The authority given to the disciples enables Jesus' disciples, as in the case of Jesus, to decide about life and death and to bring about salvation or judgment. In 20:23 Jesus primarily gives his disciples the power to give life to all who belong to him, but he also gives them the power to judge those who do not respond to their teaching and revelation of Jesus. This salvation is thus not restricted to the disciples, but is meant for all those who believe.

Jesus gave them authority through which they could execute their mission. Therefore the authority given to the disciples implies an extension of the ministry of Jesus through that of the Spirit.

Authority was given to the disciples as agents of the risen Lord in order to accomplish their mission. This implies that a disciple's attitude towards the examining of sin should be interpreted in the light of Jesus' own attitude towards sin. In 9:39-41 Jesus says that he came into the world for judgment: to enable some (who are blind) to see and to cause blindness for others (those who can see). This discriminatory process relates to the purpose for which God *sent* his Son into the world. Therefore, if the disciples are commissioned just as the Son came with a mission, they must continue this discriminatory κρίσις between good and evil. From ch 17 (cf also 15:18-16:4) it became clear that the presence of the disciples in the world will create a κρίσις: on the *one hand* the presence of the disciples will cause hatred on the part of the world (17:14), but on the *other hand* it will lead others to believe (17:20). These thoughts then indicate that the dualism and

realized eschatology concepts offer the necessary background to understand the forgiveness and non-forgiving of sin. Discipleship in the life of Jesus' disciples, as discussed in this study, causes other people to judge themselves (cf 13:35): some will come to the light and receive forgiveness and a new life, while others will remain in their sin.

#### **5.5.1.2 Jesus as well as his disciples received the Spirit**

The Spirit was given to Jesus (1:32; 3:34) and to his disciples (20:22) at the beginning of their ministries to help them to perform their duties. The Spirit would enable Jesus and his disciples to act as worthy agents so that God could act through Jesus, and Christ through the disciples. The primary task of the Spirit-Paraclete was to enable the realization of the 'agency concept'.

In both cases the giving of the Spirit is mentioned first (3:34; 20:22), followed by the giving of authority (3:35; 20:23). Both Jesus and the disciples performed the deeds that God would have performed, namely to give life and to judge (5:21f; 20:23).<sup>2</sup>

These two references to the Spirit and the authority given to Jesus and the disciples clearly ratifies the Jewish principle of agency, i.e. that 'an agent is like the one who sent him'.

#### **5.5.2 The subordination of the disciples**

In this existing bond between the disciples and Jesus there is also a distinction. The sender and agent stand in an unequal relationship towards one another. When one person 'sends' another, a certain subordination is implied. Concerning the status and function of the 'one who is sent', it can be said that he is insignificant in the presence of the one who sent him. His deeds are prescribed by the one who sends because he possesses all authority. In order to be the 'agent' of the one who sends him, he must *act like* the one who sends and will lose his status and position the moment he does not act according to the commands of the one who sent him. It is in this agency-convention that the position of the disciples, as the agents who do nothing on their own but carry out their mission in obedience to their sender, becomes clear.

This principle is asserted in 13:16, where the one who is sent is not greater than the one who sends him. This subordination is seen in practices such as: a disciple seeking the will (5:30), accomplishing the work (5:36), speaking the commandment (12:49) and the word (3:34; 14:24) of the one who sent him. The disciples' teaching will not be their own, but that of Jesus (7:16), and they will proclaim what they heard from their master and sender (6:57).

Jesus is the one who taught the disciples and he will continue to remind them of these things through the Spirit. They know what is expected from them (16:30). They do nothing by themselves (5:19,30; 8:28). They will convey only what the Spirit teaches them through (12:49,50; 14:10) reminding them of everything Jesus had taught them (14:26). In fact it is Jesus, living in them, who is doing their work (14:10; 17:26). A change of identity takes place: when the disciple who is sent gets into the position of performing his task, he becomes the 'sender' for those to whom he is sent. In acting out the will of his sender he represents the 'sender' (13:20), in this case Jesus. That which people see in and experience from the disciple ('agent') is a duplicate of what they would see and experience

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<sup>2</sup> This judgment refers not to an initiated active act of judgment. The presence of Jesus and his disciples in the world would cause the *krisis*.

from Jesus (the sender) if he were there himself. Therefore it is so important for the disciples not to do their own will, but the will of Jesus, the one who sent them, otherwise they could not claim to be his agents (5:19; 7:16,17; 8:26,29,38; 9:4). Whoever accepts the disciples accepts Jesus who sent them (13:20).

The sender transfers his own rights and the property concerned to the agent. On this basis the agent might acquire the title of his sender (and be called a Christian) in order to secure the claim for himself (cf 6:39; 12:31,32; 17:6). Although the ownership is transferred from the sender to the agent, the agent still remains an agent of the sender.

### **5.5.3 The preparation and equipment of the disciples**

On the eve of his departure (a theme which often occurs in chs 14-17) Jesus discussed with his disciples in the LD his mission, in relation to their mission. It is because of their appointment as his agents and their obedience to Jesus' commands that it can be stated that the mission of the disciples and that of Jesus constitute an inseparable, interrelated whole.

Jesus is doing all he can to make sure that the disciples are prepared for the change. Therefore he concentrates on instructing and preparing them for his physical absence and their important mission -- καὶ ταῦτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (17:13) so that they, in the performance of this mission, may glorify God (15:8), may be true disciples of Jesus (8:31; 12:26; 13:35; 15:8) and may have the joy of reaping a rich harvest (ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμὴν πεπληρωμένην ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, 17:13).

With regard to the preparation and equipping of the disciples the following should be noted: (i) *Firstly*, the equipment of the disciples is complete. They receive in-service training from the best 'teacher', therefore it is not necessary for Jesus to pray for this in ch 17. The FG supplies us with 'insight' into the teaching of Jesus. We perceive Jesus through the eyes of the FE. For about three years the disciples wandered with Jesus, saw the miracles he performed and heard his incredible teaching. This teaching reached a climax and became more intense in chs 13-17.

(ii) *Secondly*, Jesus will live in his disciples. τὰ ρήματά μου (15:7) indicates the mode in which Jesus will remain in his disciples to edify and transform their lives even further. Here (15:7), as in the case of 17:8, τὰ ρήματά μου refers to the *revelation of God's character*, all the information the disciples needed in order to know God. These things must remain in the mind of the believer. The reason why Jesus does this is because the revelation which he brought centres in himself and τὰ ρήματά μου. The person and revelation of Jesus are often interwoven in the FG. Thus, when a person believes in Jesus his entire life-orientation, his life and world contemplation and his conduct are changed and directed by the revelatory words of Jesus. This in particular concerns the performative power of these words which influence the believer concretely and dynamically because they are linked to the person of Jesus. These words do what Jesus would have done for his disciples. Therefore Jesus can substitute his person with τὰ ρήματά μου (cf 15:5 and 7).

(iii) *Thirdly*, *knowledge of God* is required for this mission. True knowledge of God is tied to a particular historical revelation which demands faith and obedience. This understanding and interpretation of 'knowledge' is reflected in the FG. Knowledge (γινώσκωσιν) comes through the specific revelation in Jesus which demands a response of love and obedience on the part of those who follow him (disciples).

It is important to understand this 'knowledge' (γινώσκωσιν) not only as essentially cognitive, as a matter of intimate personal relationship; it indicates an inner apprehension and participation, and ultimately communion with God and Jesus (17:3) and partaking in the heavenly qualities (1:4, 14). It involves a life of accepting Jesus (1:12), believing in Jesus (3:16f), obedience to the teaching of Jesus (8:31), serving Jesus (12:26), loving one another (13:35), and the bearing of much fruit (15:8). This relationship is in agreement with the Hebrew use of the verb 'to know' (γινώσκωσιν) with its connotation of immediate experience and intimacy. This eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) relates 'to a correct appreciation of the Father and of Jesus'. Knowing God transforms a person's life and introduces him to a different quality of living. The only way to know God is through his revelation -- he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ whom he has sent and whose mission will now be continued through the disciples. Such a relationship comes only through faith in Jesus after hearing his words.

In Johannine theology faith is a life of commitment, of discipleship to Jesus, but this still does not mean that faith is without intellectual content. To have faith in someone or to follow the 'way of life' of someone, one has to have *inter alia* intellectual knowledge of that person. This relates to the revelation Jesus brought. According to the FE, part of this knowledge is to know that the 'one true God' is the God who is only knowable through and in his Son, Jesus Christ, so that the person who confesses the Son also confesses the 'one true God'.

This knowledge has to be interpreted from the perspective of the family metaphor. To know the Father is the basis for the believer's reception into the family of God and for his identity. Existence in the family of God comes only through knowledge. For the FE this knowledge about Jesus is realized in the present through the revelation of the Son, later through the revelation of the disciples.

(iv) *Fourthly*, a relationship exist between the consecration of the disciples (17:17) and their mission (17:18). Before they can fulfil their mission, they must be consecrated through the truth, that is, through the revealing word of Jesus and as through the Spirit of truth who is of course the Spirit.

The statement ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς (8:32; 17:17) refers to the divine gift of freedom which liberates man from the deepest slavery (of sin) of human existence and gives him a share in the freedom of the divine spirit, in the glory of the divine love. The freedom (ἐλευθερώσει) is the power of life which redeems human beings in their humanity. It is given to the believer (3:16,36) and is already at work in him if he remains in Jesus (the word of Jesus) and is truly a disciple of Jesus.

The way that Jesus' disciples (in general) has to follow on earth towards their fulfilment will take them through an even deeper revelation of God's being. They will even experience a more powerfull inclusion in communion with God who will disclose himself in his love to them and will accept them more and more into his love. The heavenly goal includes an inner growth from the part of the disciple while he is still in this world.

(v) *Fifthly*, in ch 20, there is once again a close relation between the mission of the disciples and the sending of the Spirit. It is part of the Spirit's task to prepare them and to help them to fulfil the mission of Jesus. It is clear from the LD that the work of the Spirit-Paraclete (also the consecration process) is a dynamic process. Through the Spirit Jesus will remain with the disciples and be in them for ever. The gift of the Spirit is not a religious experience

which the believers may keep to themselves. It is equipment for mission.

(vi) *Sixthly*, it is indicated that the disciples were given the same authority (20:23) that was given to Jesus by the Father (3:35). In order to accomplish their task successfully, this authority was essential.

(vii) *Seventhly*, the disciples will continue Jesus' mission in the world, but without the protection of the disciples by God this seems to be impossible. The disciples will experience hatred from the world. The world will even try to kill them. However they will also experience protection from God against the 'evil one'. They will be protected from contamination by the world and will be kept pure in their unworldly existence. The protection ἐτήρουν marks the continual training of the disciples of Jesus

(viii) *Eighthly*, when the disciples were fearful at the Last Supper when Jesus talked about departure he promised his disciples χαρὰν (16:20ff; 17:13) and εἰρήνη (16:33; 20:19,21,26) and related both to his coming back to them. Now that he has come back he grants them this peace and joy—in the Spirit they have the enduring presence of Jesus and the gift of divine that is the basis of Christian peace.

## 5.6 The mission of the disciples

The Father's sending of Jesus serves as the ground of Jesus' sending of the disciples. The FG views the mission of the disciples as being modelled on the Father/Son relationship, which is held up for all believers in Christ to imitate.

### 5.6.1 Love as Leitmotif

From the FG it is clear that God's love (ἠγάπησεν) is the motif behind the 'giving' of his τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ, the 'sending' (ἔδωκεν) is the consequence (ὥστε) of God's love, and the redemption of τὸν κόσμον the objective (ἵνα). For the believer the love of God becomes effective while for the unbeliever it turns to judgment.

A disciple should keep the 'love of God for the world' in mind when he performs his mission. This should motivate him to keep on performing his divine mission. He must realize that he has the privilege to partake in this love of God. Through his mission the world must experience this care and love of God for the world. In fact, when the world experiences the 'love of God' it will experience God.

### 5.6.2 Jesus the ὑπόδειγμα

The FE regards it as being of crucial importance that love must become concrete. Those who love Jesus will act like Jesus (cf 14:21,31; 15:10). A disciple follows in the footsteps of his master who is continuously the revelatory example. The disciple sees and experiences the essence of true love in the way of life of his master. This relationship between Jesus and his disciples (depicted as discipleship) implies that the disciples are subjected to the command of Jesus. The keeping of this command is only possible by virtue of the relationship between Jesus and the disciples. Thus the goal of a disciple's life is to follow the path mapped out by Jesus.

Jesus is the model who came to set an example to mankind (ὑπόδειγμα—loving the world). Throughout the FG this example is depicted through various motifs: the light/darkness motif (3:19-21), the shepherd motif (10:2-6, 11-18), the kernel of wheat motif (12:24-26) and the footwashing motif (13:2-11).

(i) The soteriological and ethical implications of the φαίνοι were that Jesus placed the world in a position to choose between light and darkness and to judge between what is right and what is wrong (cf also 3:19-21; 9:4f).

(ii) The second motif is that of the shepherd. The sheep follow their shepherd unconditionally. The sheep listen to the voice of their shepherd.

(iii) Jesus, after explaining this image of the kernel of wheat, applies it to his disciples (12:25f). In order to be his disciple a person has to follow Jesus by laying down his own life. This requires a priority shift, i.e. to move his own interests to the periphery and the interests of Jesus to the centre, regardless of the costs. In dedicated self-sacrificing these disciples have to serve Jesus 12:26 and one another (14:14).

(iv) It is true that Jesus is the Lord and Teacher of the disciples (13:13), but the reason why he washes the feet of his disciples is to set them an *ὑπόδειγμα* (13:15) because he wants to redefine their position and conduct. If Jesus acts like this, how should his disciples, his agents act? Jesus answers this question in 13:14: "εἰ οὖν ἐγὼ ἔνιψα ὑμῶν τοὺς πόδας ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ διδάσκαλος, καὶ ὑμεῖς ὀφείλετε ἀλλήλων νίπτειν τοὺς πόδας." It is this serving attitude and act that bind the sender and the agent and have to characterize their mission to the world (see 13:16f,20). The service of one another in humility must become the hallmark of all disciples. In other words, the revelatory-salvific mission of the disciples as the agents of Jesus is clothed in the serving attitude and acts of the disciples. These disciples are to experience the love of God in their lives. In return this love should become the foundation for all their actions.

Finally, Jesus explains in 15:13 that the ultimate point of this love, which characterizes discipleship, is that *μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῆ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ*. Even at this point Jesus sets an example by giving his life on the cross for the lost world. His giving of his life is presented as a paradigm and a call to the disciples to be ready to do the same (21:19). Jesus' reference to the 'love of friends' (15:13) gives a new identity to Christian friendship. The disciples are called φίλοι by Jesus because he has revealed to them the complete counsel of God (cf 16:12; 17:6-8). The φίλοι concept serves to clarify the meaning of the union of the disciples with Jesus. According to the FG the meaning and connotation of φίλος lies not in doing or not doing the will of God, but in the comprehension or failure to comprehend it.

### **5.6.3 A mission of revelation and salvation**

The primary way in which revelation is expressed is through 'sending': The God above is related to the world below through Christ as the one sent. According to him there is no possible way to gain knowledge of the invisible Father unless the Father sends someone with the knowledge. Because the realm of flesh has of itself no knowledge of God (3:6; 15:22-24), God had to reveal himself, otherwise it would have been impossible for man to know him and live according to the spirit. Therefore Jesus is the agent sent by the Father to reveal the Father and the things above. In himself the Revealer is nothing; he has only been sent and his life and ministry is service. He is the representative of the Father in the world and is the visible expression of the invisible Father (cf Col 1:15). *In Jesus, as the one sent by the Father, the world hears God's voice and sees God's works*. If Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God, then God must also become visible through the lives of the disciples. Discipleship concerns the exegesis of Christ for the world. The Logos is the absolute exegete of God so that ἐξηγήσατο (1:18) would mean 'to expound' or 'to set forth completely'. The only reason why the Son could ἐξηγήσατο the Father is because he is εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς. This stresses the unity, mutual love, knowledge and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. This intimate relationship makes it possible for Jesus to know and to speak about heavenly things (3:12-13).

Jesus' disciples have accepted this revelation of Jesus as the redeemer and so became children of God (1:12) and consequently partook in this new life. In order to enable other people to partake in this life of God, the disciples had to reveal the one who mediates this life and is the life itself. They had to do it through their new way of life, because they are sons of God and therefore partake in this life of God. Jesus is the life, and to partake in this life is to partake in Jesus (6:33,50,51,54,58). Through the disciples Jesus will be made known (1:18): people will see Jesus (12:45), hear about him (17:6-8) and experience him and the quality of this new life. The disciples then have to teach the world how it can become part of this life (to believe) and continue living in this life (remain in him -- 15:4-8), because living in this life ensures eternal life.

When it is said that the disciples "φᾶνερώ" Jesus, it means that the disciples will give to the world 'all the information which they will need to know God'. This also defines implicitly the way of life that characterizes the life of the disciple who perceives the revelation of God by the Son of God. Knowing God implies God living in that person, which further implies a way of life corresponding with the character of God and relating to the mission to which they will later be appointed by Jesus. This is the content of the revelation which Jesus himself received from God and which he communicated to his disciples through his words and deeds, through his entire life. Thus this way of life essentially involves revealing the character of Jesus to make known his divine glory. The disciples themselves are the revelation and the glory of Jesus, the visible manifestation of the invisible God, the only way to the Father.

A disciple's teaching, his encounter with people, yes his entire life, is placed within the all-embracing context of revelation. Through all this he brings to mankind the distant and totally other God. Discipleship is to continue with this mission of Jesus, in order to bring Jesus to the world through words, deeds and a demand for faith and love. In the life of a disciple Christ is the dwelling place of God among men (cf Jn 1:14).

The revelation brought through a disciple must be such that his words are God's words (5:19-30), he himself must be the self-expression of Jesus. He keeps the word of God (8:55) and Jesus' commands (15:10) and encourages other believers to observe the word (8:51,52; 14:23) or words (14:24), and the commands of Jesus (14:15,21; 15:10). In the disciples' work, their ministry, Jesus himself is at work; in them Jesus himself is encountered. This means, by virtue of Jesus' appointment of agents to continue his work, that just as God is at work in the ministry (mission) of Jesus, the life of the disciples must reveal that God is at work in them. Thus the character and work of God must be revealed through them. The world must see and encounter God and Jesus in the lives of the disciples.

In order to accomplish their missionary task the disciples remain in continuous union with Jesus (1:51). The agent remains one with his sender. The presence of Jesus' disciples must emphasize the visible manifestation, presence and indwelling of Jesus. This will create a κρίσις. People are confronted and placed before a choice. The natural man is not interested in accepting Jesus' witness. But when a person accepts Jesus he sets his seal on the proposition that God is true and recognizes Jesus' heavenly origin. He acknowledges the truth of the revelation of God in Jesus. The γινώσκω of Jesus indicates an intimate relationship and implies knowledge and an acceptance of the meaning of his mission; he is the one sent by God (17:8,25). The criterium that sets Jesus' disciples apart from the world is the fact that they know him while the world does not (17:25). The importance of the mission of Jesus is to bring men to the knowledge of God. But the

knowledge of God includes knowledge of God's agent.

Salvation (eternal life) then consists of coming to know God through this revelation *by* and *of* his Son and living in response to this knowledge of God (cf 17:3). Here knowledge is made possible by faith, i.e. the faith that he was sent by God (17:8,25) and that the Father speaks and acts in him, in other words, that the Father is 'visible' in him. Thus, because Jesus submits himself to the Father and because the Father works through him Jesus can claim to be the revelation of the Father. No one has ever seen God, but to see Jesus and to know Jesus is to see God and to know God, because *God-is-in-Jesus*. This justifies the statement ὁ ἑώρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα (14:9). Jesus has to be seen with the eyes of faith. Through the eyes of faith the believer can know his being and his complete bond with the Father. This bond results in his being 'in the Father' (ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ). Within the context of the FG, the supremely revealing event of God's display of himself in Jesus will be in the glorification of Jesus, his exaltation. What Jesus predicted in 8:28 has been realized: "Ὅταν ὑψώσητε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τότε γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἶμι..." In these confessions of faith Jesus is honoured as God. The confession of Thomas makes it clear that the faith expected from the Church is the divinity of Jesus. He is the only Son of God (1:18; 3:16,17), one with the Father in what he does and in being. Here the FE combines the Godhead of Jesus with the revelatory-salvific function of the Son: he is the Son of God in his Messianic ministry and Messiah to the extent that he is the Son of God.

Anyone who believes (πιστεύοντες) in Jesus will inherit eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχητε, cf 20:31b). In order to believe in Jesus, one has to perceive Jesus' identity; one has to move from the physical level to a spiritual level to accomplish this. *ἰδόντες* in correlation with πιστεύσαντες in 20:29 implies a spiritual seeing of Jesus' identity. This identity of Jesus must be exposed through the life of a disciple of Jesus. Thus through a disciple's witness and conduct Jesus must become visible. After doing this he must commit himself to this new way of life brought and accomplished by Jesus. The quality of life, in other words the life of Jesus in which the believer now partakes (3:15,16; 6:40,47), is that which is characteristic of life from the 'world above'. This is the life which God himself lives, the life of God which the Son possesses from the Father (5:26; 6:57). As in the case of Jesus the only purpose must be to give this divine life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) to men (1:4) and it is for this purpose that the Son of God has come to live among men (10:10) and that his disciples must continue his mission. To know who Jesus is and to believe in him is to live (20:31).

A new era emerges where people will have to believe in Jesus without seeing him in the flesh. Through discipleship the world will be enabled to see Jesus (cf 13:35) spiritually. Jesus has become visible through a life of discipleship.

#### **5.6.4 A mission to the world**

When Jesus prays specifically for his disciples in ch 17, it is because he is concerned about them in connection with *the continuation of his mission*. Before his return to the Father Jesus entrusts his entire mission to his disciples. If they were to fail it would render all his sacrificial work useless. If Jesus would have prayed for the κόσμος, it would only be for their salvation. The only hope for the κόσμος is that it should accept Jesus (1:12) as the Christ, the Son of God (20:21).

In the FG the noun κόσμος has various semantic meanings. When the FE uses κόσμος in a negative, dualistic-theological sense, it does not refer to the physical world in which people live. The world in this case seems to be a symbol representing the realm of unbelief, that area in which there is total rejection of the truth of God which Jesus came to reveal.

This κόσμος is opposed to another realm, the heavenly realm in which 'being' there is determined by the qualities of God. It symbolizes that way of being (of living) which is opposed to God and the divine plan of salvation. The distinction in this dualistic use of world is not basically a moral distinction between those who live 'good lives' and those who live 'bad lives'. The distinction concerns qualities that have been determined by the persons-qualities of God in the heavenly sphere ('light' against 'darkness', 'truth' against 'falseness', 'love' against 'hatred').

The objective of Jesus' mission and by implication that of the disciples, was to reach out to the κόσμος to reveal God, to reveal the qualities of the divine sphere, so that the world may quit being the world and move over to the heavenly realm, the above, the sphere of the divine to become saved. The κόσμος, particularly in the second half of the FG, is consistently identified with those who have turned against Jesus under the leadership of Satan. A strong note of hostility accompanies the FE's use of κόσμος. The coming of Jesus and the presence of the disciples have become a judgment on the world (9:39; 12:31). Jesus and his disciples cannot be of this world, for the world is incompatible with faith in Jesus and love for him (16:20; 17:14,16; 18:36). In short, the world hates Jesus and his disciples (7:7; 15:9,18-16:4,33).

To be of the world is to live in bondage and to be under the sentence of death. Hence the 'world' is diametrically opposed to the life that is offered by Jesus. In his struggle against the κόσμος, Jesus overcomes the world in his hour of passion, death, and resurrection (16:33). In 12:31 it is stated that he cast down the Prince of this world. However, the effect of this victory over the world by Christ must continue after his departure. Therefore Jesus commissions his disciples out into the world (17:18; 20:21). The purpose of this mission is to make the world believe in Jesus and come to accept his mission from the Father (17:21ff). Those who come to faith in Jesus can become disciples of Jesus, while those who refuse to believe will remain part of the world in opposition to God.

Discipleship is a mission to the world. The disciple's responsibility with regard to his conduct towards the unbeliever must realize in the bringing of the revelatory-salvific message instead of a moral lesson in terms of correct or incorrect behaviour. A disciple of Jesus must not become part of the world (17:14,16), but must become involved in the physical and spiritual lives of unbelievers (those who are excluded from the family of God) in a concrete, sensible and audible, manner. When Jesus responds to the needs of others, he does it in such a way that his relationship with the Father and his mission clearly emerge. Simultaneously his life of service becomes an example of the life of service to which he calls his followers. By the example of Jesus this would mean that a believer must give them bread (ch 6) and help the sick (chs 4,5,9). The performance of deeds must also be accompanied by witnessing as the FE indicates in the discourses that accompany the signs.

### **5.6.5 The physical and spiritual position of the disciples in the world**

Jesus asks the Father not to take his disciples from the world for they have this special mission to fulfil. The main reason why the disciples must remain in the world is that God must become visible and known through them--they continue forth with the mission of Jesus. Although they are in the world they are no longer from the world. The fact that Jesus' disciples belong to God (17:9f) is the primary reason why they should remain separated from the world; this is to put them in a specific position in the world. It is the original holiness of the Father that makes the consecration of Jesus and the disciples intelligible and possible. Those who believe in Jesus belong to the same category as Jesus,

and are therefore in contrast with the world. From the context the idea of the 'separation' and 'difference' (17:11,14) of Jesus and the disciples is strongly emphasized and must their position in the world be interpreted from this perspective.

The disciples who started to believe in Jesus no longer can be part of the world because what separates a person from the world is faith in Jesus. This contrast between a disciple of Jesus and the world, therefore, implies that the disciple should not identify and cooperate with the world, but should seek to confront it with Christ. Their acceptance of the Word (1:12) has changed the spiritual nature of the disciples to make them foreigners to the world. The word that Jesus brought them was nothing less than the truth of the revelation of God (17:17), the knowledge of which is eternal (17:3; 20:31). They are now like Jesus who οὐκ εἶμι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου.

What Jesus did for these disciples through his ministry and what he taught them in the LD can be called a sanctification and setting apart of the disciples unto God. Now the disciples need to be sanctified by the Father (and of the Spirit) in order to keep them as they are, a unity separate from the world. Jesus clearly states that just as he is not from the world, so are his disciples not from the world. Therefore, in order to accomplish their task, to continue Jesus' divine mission, they have to withdraw themselves from the world, not to become contaminated, and to prepare themselves for this enormous task.

The consecration process involves the taking on of the characteristics that characterize God's family, which relate to the characteristics of the Father and his Son, Jesus. This is necessary because it enables the disciple (the child of God) to live as a child of God. One of the duties of such a disciple of Jesus is to be revelatory-salvifically involved in the world. From the perspective of the family metaphor we must interpret the petition for consecration and the appointment of the disciples as agents of God.

Apart from the world, the disciples (Johannine community) are to live in the world as a holy community. This state of separation from the world is only possible by virtue of the revelation that Jesus communicated to the disciples and on which this state is founded. Their 'holiness' is not the result of their own quality, or their kinship of God's family. Their 'holiness' is nothing permanent, like an inherited possession: 'holiness' is only possible for these disciples through their oneness with Christ. This implies a particular way of life, of unity and love. Together with this new way of life comes a continual realization of their world-annulling way of life, a continual reminder of the word that calls them out of the world and to the truth that sets them free from the world. This truth designates and separates the disciples for their mission. In this context ἀληθεία corresponds with ἀγίασος. It is only by means of the truth that God sanctifies the disciples of Jesus. This defines the meaning of sanctification more directly as being included within the sphere of God, being penetrated with God's being and nature. Derivatively, people and things that are reserved for him are also called holy. If someone is set apart for God and his purposes, that person will do only what God wants, love what God loves and hate what God hates.

The disciples too were of the world, but now by their union with Jesus and God, and therefore by the nature of their existence, their new birth and afterwards their character and their involvement in Jesus' mission set them apart from the world and provoke hatred from the world (15:18--16:4a). This hatred will intensify when the disciples start teaching and preaching the word. Therefore Jesus explains to them that their separation of the disciples from the world puts them in a position analogous to his own during his ministry on earth.

An important aspect that the disciples have to understand is that through their mission to the world they can expect opposition because 'everyone who does evil hates the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed (3:20). Jesus wants to warn them (15:18ff) and wants them to understand the hostile reaction they can expect from the world. Because the way of life of Jesus is to be repeated in his disciples they will receive opposition and hatred from 'the world' just as he did. The response of the world to the disciples is identical to that experienced by Jesus. Thus a believer's ethical life will entail opposition and suffering inflicted by a world that does not only reject its values, but also seeks to suppress those values.

The disciples will be commanded by Jesus to continue his mission in the world, but without God's protection it seems unlikely that they will succeed. Because of their attachment and relation to Jesus, *the disciples are different from this world and therefore will experience hatred from the world*. The world will even try to kill them (cf 15:18--16:4).

This protection of the disciples of Jesus by God plays a major role in discipleship. By implication, discipleship is impossible without any protection from the Father's side. Because he is now about to depart, Jesus asks the Father to preserve and protect them in what Jesus has mediated to them. The existence of the disciples (the community), the accomplishment of their task of continuing the mission of Jesus and their success depend on their ability to preserve their purity, i.e. on preserving their nature which is not from the world but from God. In this respect then unity is an essential part of that nature. Therefore Jesus joined the petition for the oneness of the community to the petition for the preservation of purity. The disciples who obey the 'word of God' can expect protection from God. This protection will enable the disciples to live as God expects them to live and therefore they will remain part of the family of God. The disciples can also expect protection against the evil one who will try to prohibit their mission, and from the world who hates them.

Jesus also asks the Father for the Spirit (of truth) who will sanctify the disciples and who will remain permanently in them (14:17), teaching them (14:26), bearing witness to them of Jesus (15:26) and guiding them in all truth (16:13). These disciples will be separated from the world, reserved for service to God, insofar as they think and live in conformity to the truth, which is the revelation (C3.7) mediated through Jesus who is himself the truth (14:6). Nobody can be 'sanctified' or 'set apart' to continue the mission of Jesus without learning to think like God, without learning to live in conformity with his word.

Jesus, as the agent of God, makes it possible for men to be sanctified and include them the divine sphere. In order to continue with Jesus' mission, the disciples must themselves be sanctified. Because they cannot sanctify themselves, Jesus has to function as a mediator. Jesus' consecration of himself (on the cross) is the agent in the consecration of the disciples. Jesus' sacrifice will constantly inspire his disciples to maintain their separation from the world and their devotion to their mission. This is true, due to the work of the Spirit which constantly reminds the disciples of their mission.

If the consecration and sending of the disciples were related to the self-consecration of Jesus, then their mission into the world only take place after the death and resurrection of Jesus (20:21). And if their consecration in truth involved the Holy Spirit, this confirms that their mission, that true discipleship could only have taken place after the Spirit was given, which again took place after the death and resurrection of Jesus (20:22). Thus the self-consecration of Jesus must be interpreted and seen as an offering of himself for those

whom God had given to him.

Only when the consecration of Jesus has taken place can his disciples come to know the truth about Jesus, their connection with him, and what is expected from them.

### **5.6.6 The dynamic role and function of the Spirit in discipleship**

In the LD Jesus said that his departure would make it possible for the Paraclete to be sent to the disciples (16:7; cf also 14:26; 15:26) in order to assist them in achieving true discipleship. The sending of the Spirit-Paraclete thus occurred in conjunction with the post-Paschal mission of the disciples. If they were to continue the mission of Jesus, it was because the Spirit-Paraclete whom they would receive (ἐνεφύσησεν) would continue the mission of Jesus (cf 15:26f) through them. The mission of the disciples, as Jesus' mission, brings an offer of life and salvation (3:5f) to those who accept Jesus as their saviour (1:12). The gift of the Spirit is the climax of the personal relationship between Jesus and his disciples. It is in the Spirit that the presence and participation of Jesus in their work is made possible. Although Jesus' disciples will continue the divine mission, it is in fact Jesus who continues his own mission (καὶ ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου, 17:6,8,26) in a different mode (καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς, 17:26). This means that the Spirit forms the bond between Jesus, the disciples and the church.

The Spirit takes the revelation once made about God through the person of Jesus and will now mediate it through Jesus' disciples to the world. In other words, the disciples who have to continue the revelatory-salvific programme of Jesus can only continue with it through the enabling of the Spirit. Through the disciples the person and activities of Christ, God, and the Spirit must become perceptible and visible. In effect the Spirit is the medium of divine revelation--the divine messenger of revelation. He speaks only what he hears (15:26f) to bears evidence (witness) *through* the disciples. He is the medium of divine salvation. This indicates the centrality and the importance of the function of the Spirit in the functioning of discipleship and indicates that the purpose of the FG can only be attained through discipleship with the support of the Spirit.

In 17:25 Jesus declares his intention to continue (γνώρισω 17:26) to make the name of the Father known (cf 16:25; 17:6,8). This the heavenly Jesus will achieve through the Paraclete through whom he continues to be present among his disciples (and in the community).

The FE's use of πνεῦμα refers to the '*presence*' of God and to the activities of God in the world; a close association exists between the presence of God and the activities of God. With regard to the presence of God, the Spirit represents the '*power*' and '*character*' of God given to the person, Jesus. This is clear from 1:32,33 where John the Baptist witnesses to the descent of the Spirit on Jesus. The word '*Spirit*' also appears to be associated with the divine presence that results in the new life of a disciple of Jesus. Through Christ this divine presence is given to his disciples (believers) (7:39; 20:22); and through this divine presence Jesus will become visible in the lives of his disciples (13:35). As '*another Paraclete*', the Paraclete is, as it were, another Jesus. Since the Paraclete can come only once Jesus has departed, the Paraclete is the presence of Jesus. Elsewhere Jesus promises to dwell with his disciples (14:23); this promise is fulfilled in the form of the Paraclete.

The Spirit is used as the divine presence that transforms the life of the believer. This is an indication that the Spirit is linked with the revelation of God in Christ and the disciples. The revelation makes possible a new awareness of the presence of God, in the identity of Christ, which in turn transforms human existence. The transition from an '*old life*' to a '*new*

life' accorded by the Spirit is presented as a birth from "ἀνωθεν" (3:5). This metaphor suggests the way in which the new life of a disciple of Jesus (believer) emerges as a result of being embraced by the presence of God in the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. It is clear that the FG claims that the Spirit severely reorientates human life.

The disciples were only able to grasp the full meaning of what they had heard and seen after Jesus' return to the Father. This was the result of the bestowal of the Spirit, as is made clear in the important statements in 2:22; 12:16; 13:28f; 20:9. The understanding of Jesus' identity before and after his departure to the Father by his disciples is of particular importance and provides a hermeneutical key to the understanding of discipleship.

In conclusion we can say that the Paraclete has a threefold function. Firstly, the Spirit-Paraclete has to keep Jesus alive. Because Jesus is now invisibly present in his disciples through the Paraclete the only way in which the Paraclete can exercise the ministry of Jesus is through the disciples and their way of life and the way they bear witness. Secondly, he has to instruct the disciples. Thirdly, he has to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement (16:8-10).

### **5.6.7 Judgement**

Jesus did not come to judge men (3:17; 12:47), but his coming represents judgment for all men. This is brought about the fact that men become divided according to the way in which they react to the coming of Jesus (see 3:18; 8:15). Judgement is inevitably implied by the presence of Jesus (3:18-21). Similarly the presence of the disciples in the world will create a κρίσις because of their new way of life brought about by their relation with Jesus and due to the fact that the Spirit will convince people of guilt (16:8-10). The judgement experienced by some will be the result of their own decision to reject Jesus.

The FE describes the fate of a person who rejects Jesus metaphorically: he is like a branch that has been severed from the vine, he is 'thrown out' and allowed to become dry. His fate is sealed: such withered branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burnt. This description is an illustration of the judgement of the disciple who separates himself from Christ. He brings this judgement upon himself (cf 3:18, in which the passive voice and perfect tense are used).

## **5.7 Discipleship and the will of God**

Part of the fundamental structure of agency is that the one who has been sent does not yield to his own will, but to that of the sender, and does not speak and act in his own name, but represents another. This principle can be clearly observed in the life of Jesus, as will be the case in the life of his disciples: the disciples will be obedient agents who will do as Jesus had commanded them. The disciples' intention will always be to please Jesus who sent them. The life of a disciple is based on and is centred in his endeavour to do the will of Jesus so as to ensure successful accomplishment of his missionary task. The disciple's obedience towards God dominates his whole life. Separated from the will of God his existence in the world has no significance. The Father has a will (θέλημα) regarding a specific task, which is to reveal the Father and the Son and to accomplish salvation. The reason for the existence of the disciples is 'to do' this will of God and 'to complete' the work of Christ with the assistance and guidance of the Spirit.

The disciples' mission is filled with their love and obedient submission to Jesus and

presupposes their oneness of being with Jesus. Nobody can hide his origin because it is evident in his deeds. Therefore, a child of Abraham will act as a child of Abraham (8:39-41), a child of God certainly will act as a child of God (8:42,47) and a child of Satan will act like Satan (8:44). The person who's status (nature) has changed from that of a slave to that of a free man has also changed in his behaviour accordingly. A slave can only act according to the will of his master (which is sin). A free man again acts according to the custom of the family into which he has been incorporated (cf 15:13-15). Jesus' disciples are called to respond to their appointment by Jesus as his agents to complete the Father's will. This they will not perform in isolation, but as part of a community, the family of God; when in the Father's house/or part of his family, you do as the Father does because he determines the actions of the family. The phrase ἵνα ὡσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς (17:11) would mean that the unity of the disciples comprises unity in will and purpose and spiritual fellowship, just as the Father and the Son are united. Because of the disciples' attachment to Jesus, a certain quality of life is expected of them.

Therefore, the life of a person who has been redeemed by Jesus and who has decided to follow him will accord with the life of Jesus since that person will do what Jesus is--a disciple of Jesus is what God has made him. What we have here is a person-identification; the disciple identifies him completely with the person and conduct of Jesus so that he, in his conduct, demonstrates (manifests) the identity of Jesus. Thus the disciple of Jesus lives in a godly relationship dynamic that comes with high demands because of this new reality. By living in this new reality the disciple must live in obedience within the parameters put forward by God's command. The union of the disciples with Jesus is achieved through their discipleship; and the radical meaning of μαθητῆς εἶναι becomes clear as a reciprocal μέινετε ἐν ἐμοί. This union with Christ is not viewed as a static condition by the FE. Μένειν means that the believer holds on loyally to the decision once taken. Thus the loyalty that is demanded is not so much a continued being *for*, but a being *from*.

### **5.7.1 Jesus' doing of God's will corresponds with Johannine discipleship**

The character of a disciple of Jesus is very important. His way of life supports the message he carries. His words and his conduct (life) are revelatory for they determine how he is perceived by the world. The world must see Jesus as the Light, the Life, the Living Water and the personification of God's love through which salvation comes. The will of God is accomplished through a life of discipleship:

(i) μέινετε ἐν ἐμοί indicates the *basis* of Johannine discipleship. The source and origin of all action rest in being united with Jesus.

(ii) ἀγαπάτε ἀλλήλους indicates the *nature* of Johannine discipleship. Jesus' commandment to love one another can only be realized if a person remains in Jesus and experiences his love which originates from the Father.

(iii) ἐντολάς μου τηρήσητε is the *persuit* of Johannine discipleship. Obedience to the will of God is the consequence of a disciple's love for his master. Obedience is that factor which holds the relationship together.

(iv) καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε is the *purpose* of Johannine discipleship. This will glorify God. This was the objective of Jesus and should therefore also be the objective of any disciple (15:8). This intimate relationship leads to the καρπὸν φέρειν.

These characteristics (i.e. to adhere to Jesus' teaching, to love one another, to Jesus and to bear much fruit) are the special marks of discipleship, the moral implications of the response to the revelation of the name of God. Thus an important aspect of discipleship is to abide in the word of Jesus (8:31). This is different from the Pharisees' discipleship of

Moses (9:27f) and is functionally expressed in the new commandment to love one another (13:35). This will result in the bearing of fruit which will consummate in the glorification of God (15:8). Only such people will be dear to Jesus and will really serve him (cf 12:26). In conclusion we can say that *μείνῃτε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ* seems to be a fundamental aspect of discipleship which finds expression in *ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους* and *καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε*.

This entire process revolves around Jesus so that in the end his disciples can bear much fruit through the continuation of his mission. The early church, in their reflection upon the significance and meaning of the life of Jesus, learned to see in these events a continuation of the involvement of God in the world with Israel. Israel bore witness to a group of people who lived in a relationship, in a community, with God. Both Israel and Jesus show the plan of God with the world. Consequently, the early Christians, i.e. the FE, believed that by their imitation of the life of Christ, they demonstrated the continuation of God's involvement in the world. Thus the line through which God's involvement in the world took place is: Israel ---> Jesus ---> Disciples of Jesus (Spirit).

### **5.7.2 Obedience and the will of God**

Johannine discipleship in faith includes not just following in the passive sense, but also the following or observance, *τηρεῖν*, of the words of Jesus. Remaining in the word of Jesus leads to genuine discipleship. Jesus is not laying down a condition for discipleship, he merely tells them what discipleship comprises: *Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνῃτε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ μου ἔστε* (8:31). The disciple of Jesus must listen to his word (*τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ*) and absorb it (cf 6:45), hold fast to it and follow it (cf 8:15). A disciple lives entirely from his inner union with Jesus, receives from him the command to act and submit himself obediently. He has to be so filled with a sense of mission and so zealous for Jesus' interests that worldly things and needs sink into insignificance. The disciple's unity with Jesus appears in the FG as a unity of will and fellowship in work. The disciple takes up this will and work of Jesus with his whole mind, will and life.

The same obedience which Jesus reveals in yielding to the will of the Father is also expected from the disciples in respect of Jesus. When Jesus is truly obedient to the will of God, the will of God becomes his will. Thus, when believers are obedient to the will of Jesus, his will becomes their will, which means that their will agrees with the will of the Father. This would mean that Jesus commands to his disciples relate to God's will for him. God's will for them is the same as God's will for Jesus. *ἐντολή* in ch 15 is not used in an objective sense, but in the sense of a commission to be enforced. It refers to the commission which a father delegates to his son. When Jesus, in ch 15, commands his disciples to love one another, he expresses what both he and the Father expect from the believers.

Because the disciple is part of God's family he expresses the will of God since he is tuned in to the family and the will of his Father. If Jesus' words are in a person and the whole existence of that person is orientated in obedience to God, the requests of that person will correspond with the revelation brought by Jesus. This would be because Jesus' words in that person would become the words of that person.

### **5.7.3 Dependence and the will of God**

Just as Jesus was dependent of the Father to accomplish the will of the Father, the disciples are dependent on Jesus to accomplish the will of God. In 15:5 Jesus clearly states

that apart from him the disciples can do nothing. Thus, in order to fulfil their commission the disciples must remain in Jesus and Jesus in them. The phrase *καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ* (15:5) indicates the presence of the Spirit who will be in the disciple.

#### **5.7.4 The medium through which the will of God is accomplished**

Jesus commanded his disciples to love one another. This was in order to accomplish something: firstly, to identify themselves as disciples of Jesus (*ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκονται πάντες ὅτι ἐμοὶ μαθηταὶ ἐστε*, 13:35) and secondly to make Jesus known to the world so that they might believe in him (17:21-23).

The scope of this love is restricted to the circle of disciples (Christians). This does not mean, however, that they became indifferent to the world; they did not forget their mission. Under the circumstances of their time the mutual love of Christians was the most effective witness that they could bear to the world of their faithfulness to their master.

Only by loving each other can the disciples of Jesus continue to experience of Jesus' love. The love that God gives in anticipation to people constitutes a new living space in which the followers of Jesus can and should love one another as brothers in an entirely new way. The experience of the love of Jesus acts as a prerequisite and a catalyst for a love that is new and creates a new community. The love of Jesus forms the standard of comparison which is exemplified in the footwashing.

Disciples of Jesus must model their love on the love of Jesus which comprises self-sacrificing love for humanity. The fruit of being a disciple of Jesus grows from the soil of love, as a gift of the love of Jesus, and is in nature love as Jesus demonstrated it. For the FE a person's actions are determined by his love for Jesus. The self-sacrificing love of Jesus constructs the model according to which disciples strive to lead their lives: this forms a love parallelism. Jesus' disciples are easily recognizable, not by what they believe, but by the mutual love they demonstrate for one another. This love for one another is to be a reflection of their new status and experience as the children of God. In their mutual love they reflect the mutual love of the Father and the Son and imitate the love that has been shown to them. Their love for the world is shown in compassion, forbearance, evangelism and empathy.

The love possessed by the Father and the Son does not differ in nature from that possessed by the disciples. Thus we are talking here not of love as personal affection, but the existential being of the disciple for his fellow disciples which completely determines his own existence. To abide (*μένων*) in love, the demand by Jesus for all disciples, means to continue in the love received from Christ, in the state of being loved, which Christ also experienced from the Father. Through their love for one another Jesus' disciples will experience God and the love of God. God becomes a reality for those who make contact with these people, i.e. Jesus and subsequently his disciples.

The future 'making known' (*γνωρίσω*, 17:26) of God is only possible on the basis of the past revelation (*ἐγγνώρισα*, 17:26); and the past (*ἐγγνώρισα*) only becomes significant when it is continued by a future revelation (*γνωρίσω*). With and in this knowledge God bestows his love on his own, the followers of Jesus: *ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με ἐν αὐτοῖς ἦ καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς*. The experience of this love of God now becomes the determining power in the life of the disciples.

To do the will of God should be the supreme obligation of every disciple at every moment

of his life. Even in 15:10 Jesus tells his disciples that by keeping his commandments they will abide in his love, even as he, by keeping his Father's commandments, abides in the Father's love. The doing of the Father's will confirms the presence of the Spirit. The reciprocal is also true, namely that the presence of the Spirit causes the disciples to do the will of the Father. A disciple will be constantly obedient to the will of the Father and the commands of Jesus because he will never be without the Spirit.

The love that Jesus has for his followers is not only affective but also effective: it brings about salvation. This fact is expressed in the act when Jesus laid down his life for men, in order to give them life. The obligation of the disciples to love one another is the consequence of the norm of Jesus' love. This mutual love for one another challenges the world even as Jesus challenges the world, and leads men to choose the light. Therefore, as long as this mutual love for one another as shown by Jesus' disciples exists in the world, the world is still encountering Jesus. A disciple's *γινώσκειν* of God or of Jesus expresses itself accordingly in *ἀγαπᾶν*, while the obeying of the commands might be called the criterion of *γινώσκειν*.

It seems clear that 'love' is the concretizing of God. Through love for one another, God manifests himself and his love. This love has a revelatory-salvific dynamic. Through love God reveals Himself. When the world sees and experiences this they will come to faith. They will then *πιστεύειν/γινώσκειν* (17:21-23) that Jesus was sent by God. Responsive love for Christ cannot be limited to emotion. It finds expression in the obedient acts of the disciples: *Ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, τὰς ἐντολάς τὰς ἐμὰς τηρήσετε* (14:15; cf 14:21).

Thus the love of which Jesus speaks begins with the Father's love for Jesus (15:9), it then develops into Jesus' love for his friends (15:12-13), and ultimately results in the disciples' return of love for Jesus (15:14) which is further demonstrated in love for others (15:17). This pattern indicates that the nature of love at the beginning is similar to that at the end. This is an indication of a representative flow of this love from the Father through to the Son, from the Son to the disciples and from the disciples to the disciples. The love of the Father for Jesus constitutes the basis of Jesus' love for his disciples with regard to both origin and intensity. The Son loves his disciples with the same divine love the Father has for him. In the same sense then the disciples must love one another. Here we have the tendency that *love transcends borders*. In the case of the disciples love is a group-expression—a disciple's identity is determined in relation to the other disciples. In *conclusion*, as the Father loves, so must the Son and the disciples love. The love of the disciples for Jesus must therefore in no sense differ from the love of Jesus, because its nature is determined by the love of God. By implication this means that the love of the disciples is only an expression of the love of God and their deeds must compare with the deeds of Jesus' in a particular situation.

#### **5.7.5 The presence of Christ in the lives of his disciples and his visibility in the world**

The disciples received a command from Jesus that obedience to him would keep his spirit alive among them as they continue his work in this world. By the endurance of his love in the mutual love of his disciples, and by their mission into the world he became reality through them. This reality and visibility of Jesus are essential in the lives of his disciples if they are to bear fruit in which God will be glorified. This is certainly a reflection on discipleship and constitutes discipleship as not static, but a growing and developing way of life.

1) In 13:35 Jesus commanded his disciples *to love one another*. Through this mutual love

they will not only experience the presence of Jesus, but Jesus will also become visible to the world. Through their love for one another the world will recognize them as disciples of Jesus.

2) By *obeying Jesus' commands* a disciple will prove his love for Jesus. The result will be that Jesus and the Father will come to him and live in him.

3) Jesus will come and dwell in his disciples in another mode--*the Spirit*, 'another Paraclete' will constitute Jesus' presence (14:16-18).

4) Jesus will live in his disciples when they *obey his words* (8:31).

5) When a disciple follows *Jesus' example* (13:15) he will live Jesus' life. Jesus will live in him so that when someone accepts the disciples he also accepts Jesus.

All these references indicate different perspectives of Jesus' presence in his disciples which will bring about his visibility in the world. Thus his mission will be continued through his disciples. Jesus, as we have seen so far, is the mediator of the love of God for the world (3:16) and for the disciples (14:23). *But Jesus is also the constant presence of God in the community!* In this way he is able to lead his disciples to the fulfilment, the vision of his glory in the heavenly world.

### **5.7.6 The glorification of God and Christ**

The main objective of discipleship will be to glorify God (15:8), an example already set by the heavenly agent (17:4). Jesus endeavoured to do the will of God. By living according to the will of God will be glorified. The crucifixion of Jesus (first δόξα) is the cornerstone of discipleship and the revelation which results from the crucifixion is the message the disciples have to proclaim to the world: for God so loved the world that he sent the Son of God with a messianic mission to reconcile the world with God. Thus, when a person meets God through faith in Christ, he becomes born from above and so receives eternal life. He then has to follow and serve Jesus in his life through obedience. Following Jesus is to live according to the will of God, for Jesus was the personification of God's will. This then implies that *the community is the locus of the manifestation of God*. This is the heart of the Johannine view of discipleship, as is clearly stated in 17:22,23. This realizes through the manifestation of the glory of God in the lives of Jesus' followers. God is revealed, made present in the mighty deeds in history. The presence of God is glory!

This means that the manifestation of God in Jesus has now been transferred to believers. Among them God is made known, as once God was made known in mighty deeds in the OT and then in the person and work of Jesus. This implies that the revelation of God is present in the community of believers. The community of believers now take the place of and are what the mighty deeds of God in history and in Jesus were to the world. 'If the locus of revelation of God was once in Jesus, it is now among and through the community of believers. In other words we can state that a disciple displays the continuing incarnation.' Because the Spirit is active among Jesus' disciples, it is in their midst that the presence of God is to be found. The community of disciples (believers) is the place of the revelation of God, the place of divine presence. It was Jesus' intention to glorify the Father (cf 13:31f; 14:13; 17:1), but after his departure, he commissions the disciples to do this (17:10).

When Jesus is glorified on the cross he will glorify the Father (17:1) by giving eternal life. This majestic glorification of Christ reveals his person and explains why he could bring

salvation on the cross and why the example he set through his life could be imitated. This gift will beget new children for God who will honour him as their Father. Thus, what Jesus is seeking here is the recognition of his Father and the welfare of his disciples. Jesus is also glorified through his disciples (17:10) in that they accepted him, believed in him and will continue his mission on earth. The Spirit of truth will also glorify Jesus (16:14).

The aim of the glorification of Jesus and the glorification of the Father was to give ζωὴν αἰώνιον: ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν (17:3). For the Son the giving of ζωὴν αἰώνιον was the instrument for the exploitation of the glory of the Father (Jesus glorified the Father by completing the work the Father gave him to do). For Jesus the giving of eternal life was also a moment in which to be glorified. With the *inclusion* of the ζωὴν αἰώνιον theme, a close relationship is laid between the δόξα theme and ζωὴν αἰώνιον theme. Therefore, when the disciples of Jesus continue Jesus' mission they will glorify Jesus and the Father.

These two perspectives of the δόξα-motif are complementary and have far-reaching results for discipleship. In a *complementary* sense the δόξα of Jesus not only concerns the crucifixion (salvation of people), but also the revelation of the Father and the Son: the Son is revealed as Christ, the Son of God, and the Father as the one who loved the world so much that he gave his only Son to be crucified.

## 5.8 The report of the disciples:

Disciples will continuously report to the Father concerning their mission. Their reports will refer to

- whether they are still on track in their pursuit of their objective (17:4)--according to the will of God,
- new converts (17:20),
- whether their way of living has glorified God (a life of consecration) (17:1-5),
- their love for one another (17:21-23),
- their physical and spiritual position in the world (17:9-16),
- protection from the Father (17:9-16), and
- the guidance of the Spirit (14:26),
- particular needs for their mission (17:9-19). If they remain in Jesus they have the right to bring their needs to the Father, needs which concern the φέρει καρπὸν πολὺν (15:7f).

## 5.9 The consummation

In 17:6-8 the FE indicates that Jesus has made known (revealed) the character of the Father to his disciples. In 17:26 it is stated that Jesus will continue to make known the Father to his disciples. The consummation of this revelation of God's character will occur when the disciples will see the glory of Christ.

The community lives in the hope and expectation of being with Jesus where he is now in his heavenly glory (17:24). To be *'with'* Jesus, where he is, is not the same as his being *'in'* them (cf 17:20-23). Even the δόξα in 17:24 differs from that in 1:14. This δόξα is freed from the veil of the σάρξ. According to 12:26 the disciple of Jesus will even, by implication, partake in this δόξα.

But one day they shall see him as he is (1 Jn 3:2). Then the glory which all of his followers will see is his glory as God, the glory he enjoyed before his mission. It seems as if those who share, with the Son the privilege of being loved by the Father (v 23), also share in the

glory to which the Son was restored in consequence of his death/exaltation. Here the FE moves to the future eschatology of 14:2-3.

17:24 is definitely the future fulfilment of discipleship: the ultimate revelation. This Johannine view is a mature reflection on the essence of Christian hope; this should help us to understand the idea of fulfilment and consummation. Only when a follower of Jesus is obedient to Jesus' commission (of discipleship) can he expect to experience one day the δόξα of Jesus. With this expectation in mind, the disciples can fulfil the mission of Jesus. This statement by Jesus (ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγὼ κάκεινοι ὡσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ) contemplates the time of Jesus' pronouncement to Peter in 13:33,36 that he would follow him at a later stage.

## **6. Discipleship and general observations**

(i) Although the followers of Jesus are described as his μαθηταί, it is clear that in these particular four discipleship texts this predicate, 'disciple' or 'pupil,' is not used in a technical sense as is normally the case in the FG, but as a definition of a disciple's essential nature. Their association with Jesus, therefore, is not realized by possessing dogmas or knowledge, nor experiences of individual piety, but in 'pupil-hood,' in obedience to the example of their teacher. The phrase γένησθε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί defines not only obedience, but also the honour of being called to discipleship.

(ii) The DAS and agency concepts indicate that Jesus is the presence of God in this world and that the disciples corporatively are the presence of Jesus and the Spirit (and by implication God) in this world.

(iii) The 'agency motif' in the FG is the hermeneutical key to the understanding and interpretation of discipleship.

(iv) It became clear that discipleship is closely interwoven with the *loci* of the Systematic Theology. In fact, the theology, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, missiology, ecclesiology and eschatology together pictured 'discipleship' in the FG: because of *his love* for the world, God took the initiative when he sent his only *Son with a divine mission*, according to his *plan of redemption*, to come and reveal Him in order to save the world. Part of his mission was to appoint some of his followers as his agents to continue with his *mission in order to gather more people* from the world to come and worship God. All this could only be realized through the involvement of the Spirit and a life of consecration in which Jesus' disciples function corporatively to continue his mission.

(v) The investigation of discipleship in the FG was not an attempt to disprove previous attempts or try to cover the totality of this concept. This investigation only tries to indicate a neglected, but important perspective of discipleship, namely the agency perspective from which discipleship has to be interpreted.

(vi) Discipleship reaches over boundaries of time and space and is in ch 17 described in terms of different relationships. Discipleship cannot be described simplistically in terms of 'the following of Jesus,' but must be viewed in terms of different relationships as pointed out in ch 17: a disciple's relationship to the Father, Christ, Spirit-Paraclete, fellow disciples, the world and Satan.

At the beginning of this study a work-hypothesis was formulated that reads: '*Discipleship*

*in the Fourth Gospel*'. Now that the study has been completed it seems that reasonable success has been achieved. However the success of this study also has to be judged by the reader.

In this study new perspectives on and dimensions of the discipleship motif were indicated which contribute to a better understanding of discipleship. Although it is difficult to define 'discipleship in the FG' this study did make a contribution in that it provided a more effective description of discipleship. The profile drawn in this study not only constructed a picture of discipleship, but also contributed to a better understanding of the Gospel as a whole.

I sincerely hope that this study will encourage greater interest in Johannine discipleship.