S. W. Theron: "INA ’ΩΣΙΝ ’ΕΝ. A multifaceted approach to an important thrust in the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes a Johannine passage in the light of its own macro- and microcontexts, and in the light of the explicit statements made by the author or circle in which the text is said to have originated. The place of John 17 in the overall structure and thought pattern of the gospel is reviewed before finally analyzing John 17 on the one hand as part of the theological treatise, and on the other as purported prayer of Jesus – with special attention being given to the central thrust of the prayer: “that they be one”.

In a methodological “aside” Lightfoot (1972:vi) has a point well-taken in repeating a maxim that “this gospel is so complete and coherent in itself that for the careful student it will be found to answer all the questions which it raises, so far as such questions are answerable”. The present paper purposes basic utilization of the overall literary structure of the fourth gospel, of its thought forms, of its vocabulary in investigating the request for unity in John 17. The results of these several approaches have been integrated into a report on the repeated petition of Jesus in verses 11 and 20-3, “that they be one”, a petition that has “for better and for worse” found various echoes in ecumenical Christian thinking.

1 “THAT THEY BE ONE” AS RELATED TO THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL
1.0 After due allowance for the difficulty of John 14:31 and the wide — often contradictory — variety of solutions offered, most commentators would agree that John 17 constitutes a majestic high-point in, or summary of, the overall structure and thematic development of our gospel (cf. Schnackenburg 1968: ad loc). John 17 being the immediate context of the repeated petition for unity, certain macroaspects of our theme need to be considered.

1.1 John 17 as structural climax to both chapters 13-16, and chapters 1-16
Cues of form and content substantiate the widely recognised macro-
structural units of chapters 1-12, 13-17 and 18-20, with chapter 21 appended. In certain arrangements (cf. Brown 1982) chapters 1-12 are seen as a unit on a collection of "signs" with their respective applicatory discourses, with chapters 13-20 as a unit on the glorification of Jesus by way of the cross and resurrection. As far as historical content is concerned the passover supper with its discussions (chaps. 13-17) constitutes a unit with the passion proper (chaps. 18-20); as far as structural markers are concerned, however, 13-17 are more closely related to chapters 1-12: for example ἔρημος having a most significant word count in John 1-17, does not occur in chapters 18ff.; and ἀμαρτία portraying a yet more significant count in chapters 1-17, only occurs once in 18-21, and that in referring to the expected death of a disciple (21:19). Other crucial Johannine terms and expressions point to the same conclusion that John 17 (together with the previous two chaps.) has more formal affinity with chapters 1-12, than with chaps. 18-21.

Again, most of the key-words in John 17 echo and finalize themes and concepts advanced and developed in the foregoing "Book of signs" and "Farewell discourses": identity and interrelationship of the Father and the Son, including possessions, authority and their joint activity of giving; glorification as crucifixion and resurrection; the relation between the Father-Son solidarity and the analogous connection between the Father and the Son and "the children of God" or Christian community; the Son's mission. Placed as a theological and liturgical climax to chapters 1-12 and 13-16 (against Bultmann 1959), John 17 rounds the more profoundly theological sections of our gospel; but as far as the narrative of the gospel is concerned, John 17 (together with chaps. 13-16) majestically introduces the passion finale (chap. 18ff.) which seems in John to constitute a historical denouement of the foregoing theological composition.

This climactic chapter however is, as far as genre is concerned, a sublime prayer having as significant parallel the prayer in the closing pericopae of the "Book of signs", a prayer (as in Jn. 17) addressed to the Father in the climactic Johannine "hour" and requesting a "glory" related to the death and resurrection of the son of man (Jn. 12:20-36).

1.2 Important occurrences of the "oneness" motif in the macrostructure preceding John 13-17

1.2.0 In the "Book of signs" and following "Farewell address" two intricately related aspects of the "oneness" motif are evident: the oneness and solidarity of the Father and the Son, and dependent on this divine oneness, the solidarity of the Christian community.
1.2.1 The oneness of the Father and the Son
This motif permeates the whole of Johannine Christology. Formally however the references are mainly to concepts such as love, will, work, mission (i.e. being sent) and sonship of Jesus, and how these relate to the oneness of the Father and the Son; in this respect the many "I am" pronouncements also play an important role.

Only in one case we have the formal pronouncement: ἐγώ εσμεν (Jn. 10:30), which is to find its double echo in Jn. 17:11, 22.

1.2.2 The oneness of the community
As in the case of the motif of divine unity, inferences as to oneness of the community may be noted in Christ's absolute demand of faith in him by his disciples, in the inferred absoluteness and uniqueness of a disciple's relationship to the Messiah who gives the water of life (chap. 4), to the bread of life (chap. 6) and the light of the world (chap. 8), to the good Shepherd (chap. 10) and to the resurrection and the life (chap. 11).

In two cases however, we have explicit mention of the oneness of the Messianic community: once in the reported discourse of Jesus, and once in the theological commentary of the evangelist or redactor (cf. Jn. 10; 11:46-53).

In the double-barrelled figure of the good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1-6, 7-18) the disciples are explicitly referred to as "the sheep" of "the sheepfold" belonging to "the good Shepherd", as τα ἰδια πρόβατα (10:3, cf. v. 12), as "all my own sheep" (v. 4). The shepherd and the sheep have the communal foes or difficulties (robbers, strangers, hirelings, wolves), but are bound together by the loving care and sacrificial provision of the shepherd, and the unwavering attachment of the sheep to the shepherd.

This solidarity is however underscored by the explicit statement of Jesus, "Other sheep I have also. They are not of this fold. I must lead them too and they shall heed my voice and they shall be one flock (sc. and I will be the) one shepherd" (10:16).

Important in this regard is the following commentary in 10:19 that these words of Jesus caused "schism" amongst the Jews (cf. 7:43; 9:16), that is a difference of opinion, no unusual phenomenon in Jewry; in this case however, the rest of the chapter draws the line between the "many" who reject Christ in unbelief (10:22-39) and the "many" who believed in Him (10:40-2), a line underscored by the repeated reference to "the fear of the Jews or Jewish authorities" and
A MULTIFACETED APPROACH


In 11:46-53 we have a report on Sanhedrin proceedings. In the eyes of our evangelist this event is of great importance: here the legal process against Jesus is initiated, but from the mouth of the same High Priest who berates the ignorance of his colleagues, a messianic prophecy is uttered in total ignorance of its significance (11:49, cf. 18:14)! The expediency of the death of Jesus is moreover explained in an editorial note: "... (expediency) not for the people only, but in order also to gather into one (εἰς ἑν) the children of God who have been scattered" (11:52). This remark suggests as in chapter 10 that the unbelieving Jews are not "the people" or the "children of God" (cf. 8:31-59), and again as in chapter 10 that a certain section of the "children of God" were (probably still at the time of writing – note the perfect tense) separated from the "fold" and in need of being "gathered into the oneness" of the community of those who have received, or believed in Jesus, and who by virtue of the "birth from above" are "children of God" (cf. Jn. 1:12).

1.3 The "oneness" motif in John 13-16

Chapters 13-16 contain no explicit reference to the "oneness" motif. Negatively the forces endangering unity are enumerated: the betrayer (13:2, 18-30), the renouncer (13:36-8), the hating world (12:18-27), the soon to be dispersed disciples themselves (16:32).

In the petition for community "oneness" however, the clauses referring to the relationship between the Father and the Son, and ἐν clauses on the effect of the community "oneness" on the world beat out a refrain of sub-concepts that qualify the prayer for "oneness". There is much reference to these sub-concepts in the immediate context of John 17, namely the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son (14:9-14, et al.), the persuading of the world concerning Jesus and his mission (13:35); the interaction of the mutual love of the Father and the Son with the community (15:9-10), and so on.

These sub-concepts (e.g. mutual love in 15:9-10) often follow a Johannine thought pattern of an intimate relationship between the Father and the Son which includes reciprocal movements of glorifying, living, loving, knowing, giving and doing – movements which are also shared with the believing community of the children of God.
2 “THAT THEY BE ONE” AS RELATED TO THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN 17

2.0 Approaches to John 17
From the previous discussion it should be evident that John 17 is an integral part of the total theological development of the foregoing chapters. Space prohibits a full discussion of these details. In my preparation for this paper I have in this respect relied on the discourse analysis developed, used and locally circulated by Professor F. J. Botha (s.a.). In the present sub-section his outline and analysis are generally followed as basis for discussion of the structure of John 17. As in the case of paraenetic material, however (vide analysis in Theron 1984:19-26), a purported prayer may also be analysed with respect to its own form. Following the basic approach of this paper, the analysis of the prayer will be limited to elements found within the prayer itself.

2.1 Structural markers and divisions in John 17

2.1.0 General markers denoting the unity of John 17
John 17 is set aside as a unit by the editorial narrative framework (vide 17:1; 18:1). A series of formal markers furthermore run the whole length of the prayer, underlining the unity of this closely knit section, but also pointing to the various sub-sections of the whole. Important general markers are as follows (time and space prohibit a full report on the exhaustive analysis that underlies this paper): “Father”, “Son” and “those given” with their respective pronouns (which content-wise are consistently utilized in the previously outlined manner: “The Father gives to the Son and the Son gives to the given” i.e. to the disciples given Him by the Father); the lavish use of διδῶμι (some seventeen times) and the calculated placing of terms like “glory/glorification” (eight occurrences), γινώσκω and ἀποστέλλω (seven times each).

The effect of a rounded whole is further accentuated by the cyclic composition of 17:1-5 with its fivefold utilization of the marker glory/glorify and its reoccurrence in sections 1B, II B and finally in III (vide infra on section numbering and further detail).

2.1.1 The structural divisions of John 17
2.1.1.0 Following the arguments and cues in the consulted works, but especially the pericopal grouping in Botha (s.a.) this prayer seems to follow an informal but definite structure as suggested infra (against
the valid attempt of Loisy et al to find a formal versification, although the following suggested outline is in keeping with the suggested outline of Loisy, cf. Brown 1982:749).

According to formal structural cues and prayer aspects of the text, the following outline may be suggested:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. INTRODUCTORY (17:1b-11a) . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA . . . PETITION (17:1b-5) for the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB . . . GROUNDING OF PETITION IA (17:6-11a):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB/1. Revelation and recognition of the Father's emissary to and by believers (17:6-8),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB/2. The present relation between the Son and his own mutually, and their relation to the &quot;world&quot; (17:9-11a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MAIN PETITION (17:11b-23):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA. FOR THE TWELVE (17:11b-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA/1. (positively) to be kept in unity (v. 11b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA/2. on the ground of past and present situation of the Son and his own (17:12-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA/3. (negatively) to be kept from evil (17:15-16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA/4. (positively) to be sanctified and sent into the world (17:17-19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB. FOR LATER BELIEVERS (17:20-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB/1. to be kept in unity that the world may believe in the Father's emissary (17:20-1);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIB/2. to be kept in unity that the world may believe in the Father's emissary of love (17:22-3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CONCLUDING (17:24-6) . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIA . . . PETITION (17:24) for believers to share the glory and eternal love of the Son,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIIB. grounded on their recognition of the Father's emissary and love (17:25-6).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1.1 Reasons for, and contents of the suggested divisions
IA is an introductory, cyclic pericope embodying the first twin petition for the glorification of the Son. The cyclic nature of the pericope is marked by the opening and rounding utilization of the vocative "Father" and the term "glory"/"glorification" (twice in v. 1 and twice in vv. 4 and 5). This effect is heightened by the imperative form of the verb in verses 1 and 5 — in this way the prayer is introduced by petition marked by vocative and imperative, rounded in the same
manner, and underlined by the parallel "hour" in verse 1 and "now" in verse 5.

As far as content is concerned, the first request for the glorification mutually of the Father and Son has its point of reference in the crucifixion, but includes in its scope the giving of "eternal life" to "that which was given the Son by the Father" and that by means of the credal recognition of "the only true God and Him whom Thou hast sent: Jesus Christ". In this manner our introductory petition has introduced markers and concepts that will find further elaboration: the interaction between the Father, the Son and the "given" community; spiritual recognition of the Son as the "emissary" of the Father; the prayer pattern of a petition succeeded by ἵνα and χαθώμε clause which either extend and/or ground the basic petition.

The second request for the glorification of the Son refers to his exaltation to pre-cosmic glory on the ground of his having glorified the Father in the completion of his God-given mundane task (in anticipation of 19:30).

IB grounds (or sets the scene for) the main petition that has to follow in section IIA and B. IB/1 picks up the theme from IA of the revelation of the Son to the "given" community and their "recognition" of Him as the Father's "emissary"; whereas IB/2 elaborates the intimate relationship between the Father, the Son and the "given" community, and their relationship to the world. The Son's petition is for his confessing community (IB/1), who together with their Lord are contrasted with the non-believing "world".

IIA is marked as a twin unit (and a twin petition) by the introductory vocative with characteristic aorist imperative following: Πάτερ ἄγε, τῷ ἡμῖν. The verb is repeated thrice (in vv. 11b, 12, 15), the first and last mention being petitions for the safeguarding of the community in its God-related unity, the other again introducing the life situation of the community just prior to the crucifixion, marked by the "then" of the Son's earthly guardianship (v. 12) and the "now" of the changing situation of the Son and the community: the impending exaltation of the Son and the further sojourn of the community in the hostile world, a world basically hostile to the Son.

The second term of the introductory vocative, namely "holy" keeps IIA/4 closely tied to the previous petition and its grounding (17:11b-16): in three finely structured couplets (characterized respectively by "truth", "sent" and "sanctify") the "holy" Father is now besought to
"sanctify truly" and to "send" into the world this community, for whom the Son has "sanctified" himself, even unto the death of the cross, yes, to whom the Father had "sent" Him in the first place (cf. 10:36).

The suggested relation between the divine protection of the community and its unity on the one hand, and the mission of the community to continue the mission of the Son, on the other, is to be spelled out more fully in IIB.

IIB is marked by the constant repetition and elaboration of the imbedded petition in IIA: ἵνα ἐστίν ὑμῖν ῥοξ in which the mission of the Son is again underscored— at a later stage IIB will be analyzed more elaborately.

III is an apt conclusion to the prayer. As in IA we have the double vocative "Father", but marking here two sub-sections: 17:24 and 25-6. The first sub-section is a petition for the glorification of the Son as exaltation as in IA (17:5) thus rounding the whole prayer, but this exaltation now includes the community, finalizing the "eternal life" given in 17:3. IIIA, however, is linked in its final phrase to both the previous IIB (v. 23), and to IIIB (v. 26) by the utilization of the Johannine concept of "love" which has been strangely absent from the rest of the prayer, but which was used in introducing the last table conversation of Jesus (cf. 13:1). IIIB is, however, internally structured around the markers and concepts of "knowing" or recognizing the credal truth of the Son as the emissary of the Father, and of the "making known" of the Divine Name "in order that the love, wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, yes, that I may be in them" (v. 26) — an imbedded petition, even as its parallel in IIB (v. 23).

In this manner section III not only rounds the "glory discourses" and the prayer as a whole, but also summarizes some of the important facets of the petitions and grounding contained in the prayer.

2.1.1.2 Summary of the main movements of the prayer (petitions have been framed, grounding of petitions double-framed)
IA (vv. 1-5) & IB (vv. 6-11a) & IIA (vv. 11b-19) & IIB (vv. 20-3) & IIA/B (vv. 24-6) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glory (Death)</th>
<th>Revelation recog by emissary</th>
<th>Divinely based &amp; protected unity</th>
<th>Divinely based unity with missio-implication</th>
<th>Glory of Son &amp; community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life as recogn &amp; confess of God &amp; emissary</td>
<td>Present position of Son &amp; community in world: glorified in them</td>
<td>Situation of Son &amp; community: then &amp; now</td>
<td>Glory: divinely based unity with missio-implication</td>
<td>Recog of God’s emissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory as completed work of Son</td>
<td>Protection from evil</td>
<td>Sanctified &amp; sent even as the Son</td>
<td>Incl. love</td>
<td>- love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory (resurrection/restoration)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 

a. IIA, IIB, and III each contain an invocation of the Father, with IA containing two.

b. IA is dominantly petition, IB grounding, IIA petition including grounding, IIB petition with IIB grounding.

c. Petition is marked by the aorist imperative in IA (vv. 1, 5), in IIA (vv. 11b, 15, 17). Other explicit markings are ἐρωτάω in IIB (v. 9, a preliminary notice of the impending petition in IIA), in IIA (v. 15) and in IIB (v. 20), and ὑλεῖω in IIIA (v. 24).

d. Imbedded petition or elaborated petition generally follows a ἰνα, ἄρθρως, ἰνα pattern of clauses (vv. 2-3; 20-3), but at times the single ἰνα clause as in verses 19 and 26. In these cases it is difficult to differentiate between elaborated petition and grounding.

2.1.2 Relation between sub-section IIA (17:11b-19) and IIB (17:20-3). Formally, these two sub-sections are related by the imbedded petition in 17:11b that is to be the basic wording in the constantly refraining petitions of IIB:

When, however, the petition of IIA (v. 11b) is rephrased in 17:15 the petition is imbedded in a ἰνα clause following the petition marker ἐρωτάω, which will be repeated in the opening phrases of IIB (at 17:20). This bridge effect is heightened by the form and content of 17:17-19 where the salvific dedication and mission of the Son (to be repeated at
17:21, 23) become the basis for the dedication and mission of the initial community. The answer to this petition in verses 17-19 is presupposed in the immediately following petition for those who are to believe in the Son through the very words of those first disciples.

On comparing furthermore, the prayer elements of IIA and IIB further perspectives come to view. In IIA we have basically two well-developed petitions:

- to be kept in unity, but from evil (17:11b, 15);
- to be sanctified and sent (17:17-19).

Imbedded in the first petition however we have a copious grounding describing the salvation-historical situation, a situation suggested by the Johannian “hour” of arrival in 17:1, the “now” of 17:5 and the less elaborate situation description in IB (17:9-11). In IIB, however, a series of petitions follow that develop elaborately the imbedded petition in 17:11b, without any further reference to the life situation.

This evidence together with other cues (the continuity of markers throughout the whole prayer, the use of the term ἐνότω to introduce both IIA and IIB at 17:9-11a, and then its use in both IIA and IIB – vide supra) would seem to suggest that IIA and IIB are intended as two complementary aspects of the same petition, linked by the closing petition in IIA that the mission of the Son be continued by his disciples (17:18) and the introduction to IIB, the petition in IIB being an elaborate development of its concise prototype, “That they be one as we (sc. are one)” – 17:11b. In this way IIA and IIB mutually complement each other both as to petition and grounding.

3 “THAT THEY BE ONE” – AN ELABORATE DEVELOPMENT IN 17:20-3 OF ITS SIMPLE prototype IN 17:11b

3.0 Structured text of section IIB (17:20-3), deviating from that of Botha (s.a.).
20) οὐ περὶ τούτων δὲ ἐρωτῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν εἰς ἐμὲ,

ины пантеς ἐν ὤσιν,

χάγω ἐν σοί,

21) ἴνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ὤσιν ( ),

ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ, δότε σὺ με ἀπέστειλας.

22) χάγω τὴν δόξαν...

ἡν δέδωκάς μοι...

ины ὤσιν ἐν

χάγω ἐν αὐτοῖς,

23) ἱμεῖς ἐν ( );

ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς

ины ὤσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἐν;

ины γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος

δότε, σὺ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἡγάπησας αὐτοῦς καθὼς ἐμὲ ἡγάπησας.
3.1 Climactic unity of section IIB (17:20-3)

3.1.0 Reminiscent of Hebrew poetry this prayer (especially 17:20-3) is characterized by intricate parallelisms evidenced by the structured text (supra) — a possible pointer to its Palestinian origin. The following table seeks to visualize some important elements (both formal and material) utilized in this climactic parallelism which consists of two similar sub-sections (17:20-1; 22-3) each containing an introduction followed by a series of clauses introduced by the conjunctions יְנַא, כָּחֹֽדָוָּג, יִנַא, יִנַא, יְנַא. Furthermore structural markers, thought content and prayer elements add to the parallelism.

3.1.1 Table of parallelistic elements in section IIB (17:20-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>Prior context I-II A</th>
<th>Sect IIB 1 (vv. 20-1)</th>
<th>Sect IIB 2 (vv. 22-3)</th>
<th>Later context IIIA-B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of conjunctions</td>
<td>I K I (17:1-2)</td>
<td>I K I</td>
<td>I K I</td>
<td>I O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition intro by: I . . .</td>
<td>ωσιν ἐν</td>
<td>πάντες ἐν</td>
<td>ωσιν ἐν</td>
<td>ωσιν ἐν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUNDING: a) intro by K . . .</td>
<td>ημείτης</td>
<td>&quot;we&quot; elab. vide infra</td>
<td>&quot;we&quot; elab. vide infra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) &quot;we&quot; in terms of: F-S/C vide infra</td>
<td>F-S/C (17:6)</td>
<td>F in S</td>
<td>S in C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) intro by Yνα δ ἡσιομος</td>
<td>mission(S) delegated to C (v. 18)</td>
<td>Πιστεύης δτι συ με απέστειλας</td>
<td>γινώσκη δτι συ με απέστειλας</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) with ref to Divine Love.</td>
<td>no previous ref</td>
<td>no ref</td>
<td>F for C</td>
<td>F for S (v. 24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.2 Climactic elaboration of petition for unity of the eschatological community.

"That they be one" (17:11b) was contained in the petition in IIA (17:11b-19), it now re-appears as the main petition of section IIB, occurring four times: twice in IIB 1 (vv. 20-1); twice in IIB 2 (vv. 22-23):
in symmetrical arrangement this phrase occupies the first two $\iota\nu\alpha$ clauses of each sub-section.

In the beginning of IIB 1 (vs. 20) $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\zeta$ is added with a change of word order bringing “all” and “one” into juxtaposition, emphasizing the unity of the apostolic and post-apostolic communities. In the beginning of IIB 2 (v. 22) the phrasing of verse 11b is followed.

The second occurrence in each sub-section is more elaborate, adding to the thrust of the climactic parallelism. In verse 21 the emphasis is on the qualitative need of the post-apostolic community (“they too”) to have the same basis of unity as that of their predecessors: $\iota\nu$ is substituted by $\iota\nu \iota\mu\iota\nu$, which will find further elaboration in the $\iota\nu\alpha$ clauses – vide infra. In the second occurrence in IIB 2, and therefore the final occurrence in this parallelism, the petition finds further elaboration in the phrase “that they be consummated into one”, pointing to the divine origin and eschatological quality of the unity of the community – unity not to be orchestrated from below, but prayed for most fervently because God Himself accomplishes this end.

With the final arrival of the eschatological hour, in which the Son’s earthly mission has been completed (cf. 17:4; 19:30), in which the final revelation has been given to, and received by the community, the Son most fervently prays that this finished work for the community, be matched by an equivalent result in the community, a spiritual and confessional unity based on their living relationship with the Father and the Son, because knowing the only true God (such credal statements are typical in Jewish prayers), and his final emissary and representative, is eternal life (cf. 17:3).

The fervency of this petition is underscored by its repetition and climactic elaboration, but also by the $\iota\nu\alpha \cdot \chi\alpha\theta\omega\zeta \cdot \iota\nu\alpha$ construction, in which the prayer moves from petition to grounding and then back to the more elaborate petition. Attention should now be paid to the grounding.

3.1.3 Climactic elaboration of the grounding of the petition for the unity of the community.

In section IIA (17:11b-19) the impending change in the life situation of the Son and his community is the main ground for the petition to the Father to take over the responsibility for the safety and unity of the community, and to equip that community to take over the mission of the Son to the world.
In section II B however the passing reference ἠνακωσιοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ in 17:11 b is repeated and amplified as the theological and existential ground for the urgent petition for unity. Formally this grounding is contained in the two ἵνα clauses (on the unique relationship between the Father and Son, and the community), and in the two sets of ἵνα and ὅτι clauses that round each sub-section (referring to the confession and mission of the community).

1. "Triquetric" relation between the Father and the Son, and between the Son and the community as theological and existential basis of the petition for unity.

Suggested by the petition "that they be (one) in us", 17:21 and 17:23 spell out in intricate parallelism the intimate relation between the Father and the Son, and between the Son (and the Father) and the community. This typical Johannine construct may be illustrated by means of the following triangular or triquetric diagram.

1. Father gives to Son: glory, authority, task, mission, Name, Word, community

2. Son reciprocates giving to Father: glory in completing task for and in the community

3. Son gives to elect community: Name, word, life, glory

4. The community reciprocates by giving to the Father and to the Son: recognition, faith, confession and glory of Son's accomplished task in community and the world.
The unity that the Son prays for, is a unity that has the dynamic relation and unity between the Father and the Son as both its ideal and its existential basis. In the first sub-section the ἐξστρατευόμενος – clause draws attention to the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son “in whom” the community finds its unity (v. 21), in the second sub-section reference is to the indwelling Son who is (in complete fellowship with the Father) in his community as basis of the unity in the community. In a sense these clauses may be considered as further imbedded petitions: “May the community be so indwelt by us, so intimately related to the Father and the Son that its unity and safety be vouchsafed”.

This dynamic relationship between the post-easter Son and the community will be reiterated in the last clause of the prayer: “... yes, that I may be in them.”

2 Effective world mission as further and final grounding of the petition for unity of the community.

In the closing clauses of both sub-sections the prayer brings to a high-point the much repeated Johannine concept of the unique apostleship of Jesus Christ – this aspect of the relation between the Father and the Son recurs explicitly more than forty times, six times in this prayer. The Son’s dynamic (“triquetric”) relationship to the community also includes the sharing of his authoritative mission with the community. His mission is the salvation-historical, theological and existential basis of the mission of the community in and to the hostile world. In 17:17-19 (cf. 20:21) this mission is delegated to the apostolic community on the basis of this “triquetric” relationship – now in 17:21 and 23 the success of the community’s mission is related to this same “triquetrically” dynamic unity of that community: the community that is one because of their confessional and existential solidarity with the work of the Father and the Son (especially his earthly work), will influence the world (to whom the Son was sent) to believingly recognize his unique mission based on his unique relation to the Father.

As the climax to the parallelism of 17:20-23, the second sub-section not only includes reference to an oft-repeated confessional phrase, “Thou hast sent Me” (cf. 17:3), but finally characterizes the “triquetric” relationship as one of divine love: the effect of the spiritual solidarity of the community with the Father and the Son will be the world’s recognition of God’s love for the community based on the lov-
ing relationship between the Father and the Son. This “triquetric” relationship of love for and in the community, finds its final refrain in the closing phrases of both IIIA (v. 24) and IIIB (v. 26).

The unique love mission of Jesus now delegated to his community on the “triquetric” basis, is however in the “Book of signs” starkly contrasted with the hostile “official missions” from Jerusalem, pointing no doubt to the well-known life situation of Jesus, but also to a similar situation in the Johannine community as has been suggested previously. The answer to the hostile “world” is the community’s confessional and existential solidarity with the love mission of the Son.

3.2 The differentiated function of sub-sections IIB 1 (17:20-1) and IIB 2 (17:22-23).
For the sake or brevity and clarity the several aspects of each sub-section have been highlighted in the previous discussion. One further remark however would seem necessary.

Although the strong parallelism overshadows the whole of IIB, a closer look at the formal markings of prayer elements points to IIB 1 as being dominantly petition, clearly marked by ἐρωτάω.

Sub-section IIB 2, however, is a separate syntactic unit introduced by a statement which, by its formal markers of “giving” and “glory”, picks up the thread characteristic of the “grounding” aspects of the petition, namely the fulfilled earthly ministry of the Son. We have noted, however, that the content of the petition in IIB 1, is identical to the purpose of the Son “having given his glory” to the community in IIB 2. The thought pattern is evident: what the Son prays for in IIB 1, is what He lived and died for in IIB2, an apt climax and summary of John 1-17, but looking ahead prophetically to the final chapters of the gospel.

4 CLOSING REMARKS
Formally this paper has sought to illustrate the possibility and utility of approaching a pericope from as many angles as have been suggested by the text itself. This seems to be especially necessary in cases – as with this gospel – where the author’s basic concepts and line of reasoning explicitly pervade the whole work.

Formally, John 17 is a well-structured prayer, bringing to a climax many theological and salvation-historical aspects of the previous chapters. Within this structure the petition for unity and its grounding
is an important element, underlined by the symmetrical but climactic parallelism in which it has been moulded.

As to content, this prayer is not for unity per se, but for that specific unity that grows from a dynamic, confessional solidarity with the salvific mission of the Son of God.

Provisional pointers as to the life situation in which the prayer itself is set, and the later situation in which the author finds himself, have been noted. Their further exploitation (including verification or repudiation) falls outside the scope of this short paper.

WORKS CONSULTED


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