

Sensitivity towards the reaction of outsiders as ethical motivation in early Christian paraenesis

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Early Christian documents contain many indications of a sensitivity towards the presence of non-Christians in their environment, a sensitivity which increased as the expectation of an imminent end receded. This study concentrated on those paraenetic texts which maintain that Christians, in the shaping of their lifestyle, should reckon with the reaction of outsiders. Two trajectories, a negative as well as a positive one, were identified. Subsequently the double perlocutionary aim of these 'outsider sayings' was scrutinised. A final word summarised the hermeneutic implications of these sayings for today. Since in many societies the credibility of the gospel message is under pressure, exemplary living is a *sine qua non*.

Introduction

As the Christian message moved from its original Jewish home into Gentile surroundings, the first Christians became increasingly conscious of their non-Christian environment. They were obliged to responsibly position themselves and their ethos as Christians within this environment. As a result, early Christian documents and especially the paraenetic texts, contain many indications of a sensitivity towards the presence of non-Christians and of the individual, social and political responsibilities expected of believers. Already in the very first early Christian document that we possess, namely Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, this sensitivity is apparent, as Paul urges his addressees:

put your pride in leading an orderly life, minding your own business and working with your own hands, as we directed you, so that your conduct may be becomingly *in the eyes of the outsiders* (πρὸς τοὺς ἕξω), and you may not be dependent on anyone. (1 Th 4:11–12)

At the other end of the early Christian period, this sensitivity found its classical expression in 2 *Clement* 13.

A second factor came into play: The delay of the parousia. As the expectation of an imminent end receded, Christian leaders increasingly realised that they had to advise their constituencies about the realities of living for a prolonged period within various societal structures. Understandably, therefore, admonitions on the necessity to reckon with the reactions of outsiders increased substantially, as is evident from the later early Christian documents. In this article, I shall refrain from addressing the much broader issue of the ethical responsibility of early Christians towards their societies. Instead, I shall concentrate on those texts where the reaction of outsiders are specifically in focus and applied as ethical motivation.

In the last decades, much attention has been given to the concept of 'the others' or 'the outsiders' in the early Christian period, especially from a social scientific perspective.¹ In fact, 'insiders', 'outsiders', 'the others', as well as 'identity' have become buzzwords in biblical studies. At the same time, the reference to the outsiders and insiders shift continuously. Janus-like it changes, depending on the perspective applied. From an early Christian perspective the followers of Jesus Christ normally regarded themselves as insiders, and the non-followers or non-believers as outsiders or others.² This will also be the perspective of this study. I shall focus on those early Christian texts which maintain that Christians, in the shaping of their lifestyle, should reckon with the reaction of outsiders. For the sake of brevity and convenience I shall henceforth speak of these ethical statements as the 'outsider sayings'.

In his ground-breaking study of the nature of New Testament paraenesis, Martin Dibelius ([1921] 1964) took the position that the ethical injunctions, since they derived to a considerable extent

1. To mention only a very few: Elliott (1981 [esp. 78–84]); Neusner and Frerichs (1985); Kopas (1993); LaHurd (1997); Stolz (2001); Richard (2004); Pietersen (2004); Schwarz (2006); Ascough (2007); Crook and Harland (2007); Horrell (2007); Dunning (2009).

2. The mentioned shifting of reference according to the vantage point applied should throughout be kept in mind. For instance, the early Christians could, from a different perspective, also describe themselves as 'others'. It is fascinating to observe how early Christian documents such as 1 Peter, Hebrews, the *Epistle to Diognetus* etc. apply the notion of otherness in order to define Christian identity – see in this regard especially Dunning (2009).

from the 'volkstümlichen Ethik des Altertums', are more or less timeless and a-contextual.³ As a general characterisation, however, this is not entirely correct. Although not all paraenetic utterances in the New Testament are equally contextually embedded, many, if not most of them have some contextual connotation.⁴ At the same time – and this is the important truth in the position of Dibelius – ethical injunctions, whatever their contingent situation, usually tend towards the typical and universal. In this study I shall concentrate on the latter. Without ignoring the specific literary and situational, that is, the contingent aspects, I shall endeavour to extrapolate some basic themes or trends relating to the ethical sensitivity of early Christian writers to the reactions of outsiders.⁵ Firstly, I shall pay attention to the most prominent terms for those outside the Christian fold, yet without restricting myself to these. Secondly, I shall explore the main trajectories emerging from the outsider sayings. And finally the perlocutionary goal of these sayings will come into focus.

Some prominent terms used for non-Christians

Οἱ ἔξω/ἔξωθεν

Naturally, the oldest use of οἱ ἔξω and οἱ ἔξωθεν⁶ would be references to people finding themselves literally outside of a defined physical area, for example, a city or a country. Instances of such references abound and they need not be documented here. We are concerned with the *figurative* use of these phrases, referring to those persons who find themselves outside of a distinct grouping.⁷ Xenophon (*Hellenica* Book 2 ch. 4 sect. 1, line 3) uses οἱ ἔξω for those not being on the Lacedaemonian city roll. In his *De Vita Pythagorica* (ch. 35 sect. 252, line 11), Iamblicus uses οἱ ἔξω in referring to non-Pythagoreans. In the prologue to *Sirach*, the hope is expressed that the book may, via its readers, also benefit οἱ ἔκτος.⁸ Gregorius Thaumaturgus (*Orig. Orat. Pan* sect. 10, lines 15–16) depicts the pagan philosophers as τοὺς ἔξω φιλοσόφους.⁹ In the New Testament, οἱ ἔξω refers to those not belonging to the Jesus followers: Mark 4:11; 1 Corinthians 5:12–13; Colossians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:12. In 2 *Clement* 13:1, οἱ ἔξω is supplemented by ἄνθρωποι (ἀρέσκειν ... καὶ τοῖς ἔξω ἀνθρώποις), which would be the fuller form of the phrase. For this investigation, Colossians 4:5;¹⁰ 1 Thessalonians 4:12, as well as 2 *Clement* 13:1–4, are of special importance.

3. See especially Dibelius ([1921] 1964:18–23); Dibelius ([1933] 1966:239–241). He states: 'Die Regeln und Weisungen ... haben nicht aktuelle sondern usuelle Bedeutung' (239).

4. For example, contrary to a widespread belief, even the Pauline instructions regarding the charismata in Romans 12:3–8, are embedded in a problematic situation amongst the Roman Christians – see Du Toit (2010:4).

5. Ground-breaking publications in this regard were those of Van Swigchem (1955) and Van Unnik ([1964] 1980); cf. also Lippert (1968) and Du Toit (1981).

6. Οἱ ἔξω and οἱ ἔξωθεν are synonyms, as in Josephus *Antiq* 15, 314 and 316.

7. I am not convinced by Van Unnik's surmise (1980:309, n. 6) that this term originates from the political sphere.

8. Ἐκτός being a variant of ἔξω. The precise reference of οἱ ἔκτος here is uncertain. It may indicate lay people in contrast to the scribal community (Behm 1935:572) or people outside the Jewish community (Garland 2003:190, n. 3).

9. Behm (1935:572) provides some examples from rabbinic literature.

10. In Colossians 4:5–6 the reaction of outsiders is not specifically mentioned, but it is clearly implied.

Οἱ ἔξωθεν is used by Thucydides (Book 5, ch. 57, sect. 2, line 3) in referring to non-allied forces, whilst Josephus uses it for non-Jews (*Bell Jud* 4, 179; *Antiq* 15, 316). In the New Testament, it occurs only in 1 Timothy 3:7.¹¹

Οἱ ἄνθρωποι

In the New Testament, the general public, which naturally includes those people who do not belong to the Christian in-group, are often designated as the ἄνθρωποι. Some important texts dealing with the ethos expected of Christians towards the ἄνθρωποι are Matthew 5:16; Romans 12:17–18; 14:18; Philippians 4:5; 1 Timothy 2:1–4; 1 Peter 2:15. Of these, Matthew 5:16 and 1 Peter 2:15 are of special relevance to this investigation.

Οἱ λοιποί

Οἱ λοιποί occurs fairly often in the New Testament, but only in a few instances is it used to contrast outsiders to disciples or believers: Ephesians 2:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 5:6.¹² In these texts the attitude and lifestyle of non-Christians are contrasted to those typical of or expected from Christians. The perlocutionary goal of the comparison is to remind believers that they should radically dissociate themselves from their previous behaviour as non-believers. The influence of the lifestyle of Christians on the 'others' is not in view.

Τὰ ἔθνη

Τὰ ἔθνη occurs prolifically in early Christian literature, but less often in paraenetic contexts. In Matthew 6:32 par Luke 12:30; Ephesians 4:17 and 1 Thessalonians 4:5 we find the same kind of inwardly directed comparison between believers and non-believers as in the section Οἱ λοιποί. However, Romans 2:24 (cit. from Isai 52:5;¹³), 1 Peter 2:12; 4:4; 2 Peter 2:2; Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians* 8:2 and 2 *Clement* 13:1–4 are relevant to this investigation.

Varia

Other formulations that refer to outsiders or include them are πᾶς and πάντες (ἄνθρωποι) (2 Cor 3:2–3; Gl 6:10; Phlp 4:5; 1 Th 5:15; 1 Tm 2:1, 2, 4; Tt 3:2; 1 Pt 3:15). Ἰδιῶται in 1 Corinthians 14:23 designates outsiders, but in 1 Corinthians 14:16 ἰδιώτης most probably refers to a person who finds himself or herself 'in the role of the novice when someone prays in a tongue' (Garland 2003:641). Even passives may imply non-Christian reaction as in Romans 14:16, 1 Peter 3:16 and Titus 2:5.¹⁴ In this context, Romans 14:16, 1 Peter 3:15–16 and Titus 2:5 require our attention.

The two main trajectories emerging from the outsider sayings

The moral instructions contained in the outsider sayings presuppose that those outside the Christian fold possess a

11. However, it appears as a *varia lectio* in Mark 4:11. Cf. also Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort ad Graec* 10 (PCC [Migne] 6:261A): οἱ ἔξωθεν τῆς ἡμετέρας θεοσεβείας.

12. Cf. also Luke 8:10. The parallel in Mark 4:11 has οἱ ἔξω.

13. Cf. also 2 Peter 2:2, echoing Isaiah 52:5 (or perhaps Rm 2:24?).

14. For a further discussion, *vide infra*.

natural capacity to evaluate the positive or negative quality of human conduct. This constitutes a norm on the basis of which a decision is made about the inner quality of the Christian faith.¹⁵ We shall first look at admonitions regarding negative reactions to the unworthy conduct of Christians.

The negative trajectory

Βλασφημία/βλασφημέω

In Romans 2:17–24, Paul dwells on the nature of Jewish transgression. As a result of Israel's disobedience to the law of God, he is dishonoured (διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις – 2:23). Adapting Isaiah 52:5 to his own context, Paul then further spells out the result of the disobedience of the Jewish people: the Name of God is defamed by the Gentiles (βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν – Rm 2:24).¹⁶ God Himself comes into disrepute. 'Israel, whose special vocation it was to sanctify God's Name by its obedience' (Cranfield 1975:171), and thereby draw the Gentiles to Jahwe, actually effected the opposite. Instead of a centripetal movement towards Zion, the Gentiles are driven away.

This βλασφημία motif recurs in various forms and contexts in early Christian paraenesis. In Romans 14, Paul deals with inner-Christian relationships. In 14:16, the 'strong' believers are urged to behave sensitively towards their 'weak' brothers in order to avoid that 'your good (ὁμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν) be reviled (μὴ βλασφημεῖσθω).' Within the broader context of Romans, the 'good' which believers possess would be more than just the freedom of the strong. It would include the gospel itself (Cranfield 1975:717; Dunn 1988:831; Schreiner 1998:727). Disregard for the feelings of the weak would not only discredit the ethos of the strong; it would also defame the gospel as such.

The Pastoral letters show a special sensitivity towards the reaction of outsiders. In 1 Timothy 6:1, slaves are instructed to regard their masters with respect 'so that the name of God and the teaching (διδασκαλία) may not be slandered (μὴ βλασφημῆται). Likewise the young wives should fulfil their roles in an exemplary way 'so that the word of God may not be slandered (μὴ βλασφημῆται)' (1 Tim 2:5).

1 Peter displays the same sensitivity. The addressees are a minority group living in an abusive, suspicious non-Christian society (cf. esp. Elliott 1981:59–100; Richard 2004:412–414). For the Christian cause it is of critical importance that Christians should behave correctly. However, in 1 Peter 4:4 the unexpected happens. The pagans react negatively to the blameless behaviour of their former associates in immoral activities. Envy, and perhaps also a guilty conscience, seem to have provided them with some bizarre motivation for reviling, (cf. βλασφημοῦντες) even a positive lifestyle.

15.Cf. also Brox (1979:113). Wohlenberg stated aptly that also non-Christians 'auf Grund ihres Gewissens eine starke Empfindung für das besitzen und bekunden, was sittlich gut und böse ist' (1915:215). However, it was Malherbe who drew attention to the many similarities between Christian and pagan morality. See especially Malherbe (2000:229–230, 233, 243–260, 303–306).

16.In Ezekiel (36:20–23) this theme is further developed. The nations had lofty expectations of the people of Jahwe, but through their sins Israel profaned his holy Name.

James 2:7 does not function within a paraenetic context, but the same motif is apparent: the addressees are told that the misconduct of the rich causes the defamation (cf. βλασφημοῦσιν) of 'the good Name which was invoked over you.' We find the same in 2 Peter 2: Many will follow the licentious ways of the false prophets and because of them 'the way of truth will be slandered (βλασφημηθήσεται).'

According to 1 Clement 47:6–7, the report of the unworthy conduct of the Corinthian congregation (sedition against their presbyters) has reached not only the Roman believers but also those of different persuasion (τοὺς ἑτεροκλινεῖς ὑπάρχοντας ἀφ' ἡμῶν) with the result 'that blasphemies (βλασφημίας) are brought upon the Name of the Lord.'

However, it is in 2 Clement 13 that the βλασφημία theme reaches its climax. Here it is repeated no less than six times. When the lifestyle of Christians belie the high standard expected of them and which they preach themselves, the outsiders (cf. τοῖς ἕξω ἀνθρώποις) turn to slandering 'the Name'. The reason for this is their disillusionment. The Gentiles were led to have high expectations of the Christian ethos. But when they notice the discrepancy between Christian preaching and conduct they react vehemently:

For the Gentiles, when they hear the words of God, marvel at their beauty and greatness. When they then discover that our works are not worthy of the words we speak, they henceforth turn to slander (εἰς βλασφημίαν), saying that it is a myth and delusion. For when they hear from us that God says: 'You do not have credit if you love those that love you; but you will have credit if you love your enemies and those who hate you' – when they hear these things, they marvel at their surpassing goodness. But when they see that we not only do not love those who hate us, but even those who love us, they ridicule us and the Name is slandered (βλασφημεῖται τὸ ὄνομα). (2 Clement 13:3–4)

I conclude this part of my presentation with Ignatius' *Letter to the Trallians* 8:2. The author calls upon his addressees 'to give no occasion (μὴ ἀφορμὰς διδοῦτε) to the Gentiles, lest by reason of a few foolish men the godly multitude (the church) may be slandered (βλασφημεῖται).' Then follows a citation¹⁷ referring to the defamation of God's Name (τὸ ὄνομά μου ... βλασφημεῖται).

We were able to follow a significant number of statements centering around the βλασφημία theme, which took its cue from Isaiah 52:7 and occurred from Paul¹⁸ through the latter part of the first century up to the first decades of the second century. Despite contextual and other variations, the basic tenet remains the same: if Christians do not live up to rightful expectations it has critical consequences. These are spelt out to cover a broad spectrum, namely (1) the Name of God,¹⁹ (2)

17.The origin of this quotation, which also appears in 2 Clement 13:2 and elsewhere, is unknown – Donfried (1974:53, 86–88); Gregory and Tuckett (2005:281). Van Unnik ([1964] 1980:312–314) discusses the various early Christian occurrences of this enigmatic indictment at length and finally concludes that it must have originated from a 'prophetic-apocalyptic' writing which was 'in vielem dem Henochbuch gleichartig' ([1964] 1980:314).

18.There is no indication of literary dependence on Paul. We should rather reckon with a broad common Christian tradition which originated with Isaiah 52:7, and for which Paul, as Christian author, may or may not have acted as catalyst.

19.Donfried (1974:154–159) impressively argues that 'the Name' in 2 Clement 13 actually refers to Jesus Christ, who is regarded as fully on a par with God. However, in the light of the foregoing tradition which consistently referred to God, a final conclusion is difficult.

the gospel, (3) Christian teaching and (4) the church, in short, the Christian cause in its totality, is not only discredited in the eyes of non-believers but also elicits their contempt. Words are not enough. The gospel message should be exemplified and validated by an exemplary lifestyle. Otherwise Christian belief can no longer claim credibility and respect.

λοιδορία, καταλαλέω, ἐπιρράζω, εἰς ὀνειδισμόν ἐμπίπτω, φαῦλον λέγω

In much the same spirit as Titus 2:5, 1 Timothy 5:14 urges the young women to marry, raise children and manage a household in order not to give the enemy occasion for reviling (λοιδορίας χάριν). *Καταλαλέω* occurs twice in 1 Peter (2:12 & 3:16). The first verse refers to hostile pagan neighbours who slander (καταλαλοῦσιν) the addressees as 'wrongdoers', and the latter simply mentions that the addressees are 'being slandered' (cf. καταλαλεῖσθε) and 'reviled' (cf. ἐπιρράζοντες).²⁰ 1 Timothy 3:7 visualises that a good reputation will counter an elder's 'falling into disgrace' (cf. εἰς ὀνειδισμόν ἐμπίπτει). According to Titus 2:7–8, the young men should set an example of positive conduct so that 'the opponent may be put to shame since he has nothing bad to say (μηδὲν ἔχων λέγειν ... φαῦλον) about us.' These formulations will be minor variations on the βλασφημία theme.

The positive trajectory

This trajectory focusses on the (envisaged) positive reaction of outsiders to an exemplary Christian lifestyle.

The glorification of God

This theme, which appears in Matthew 5:16 and 1 Peter 2:12, is the positive collorary to the blasphemy motif discussed above. Here we do not have a definite Old Testament point of departure. The *Testament of Naphtali* 8:4 contains a striking parallel:

If you work that which is good, my children,
both men and angels will bless you
and God will be glorified through you among the Gentiles
and the devil will flee from you
and the wild beasts will fear you
and the Lord will love you
and the angels will cleave to you. (Translation by Hollander & De Jonge 1985:317)

However, there exist so many uncertainties around the development history of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,²¹ that the nature of the relationship between Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12 and the glorification motif in the *Testament of Naphtali* is unclear. We shall first give attention to Matthew 5:16.

Matthew 5:16: Matthew 5:13–16, which is the result of intensive redactional activity on the part of Matthew,²² is much more than a mere transition from the beatitudes to the major passage Matthew 5:17–48. It is in fact a *nexus* passage

20. For an overview of the forms of hostility to which the addressees of 1 Peter were exposed, see Elliott (1981:79–81).

21. Cf. the extensive overview in Hollander and De Jonge (1985:10–83).

22. Gundry (1982:75–78); Luz (1985:219–220).

which harks back to 5:11–12 and prepares for 5:17–48. The poetic pattern of the beatitudes changes at verse 11, and the beneficiaries are now unexpectedly directly addressed (cf. the second person plural). This implies that the Jesus followers of verses 11–12 are the same as the ὑμεῖς of verses 12 and 14. The people insulted and persecuted and falsely spoken of, precisely these are the salt of the earth et cetera (cf. Luz 1985:219–221). At the same time, 5:13–16 forms the programmatic heading for the whole of 5:17–48. It is in fact a concise characterisation of the function of the Jesus followers (the church) – cf. the doubly foregrounded ὑμεῖς (vv. 13 & 14) – in the world, the nature of which is then spelled out at length in 5:17–48.²³

Three metaphors come into play: salt, light and a city on the hill. The light metaphor finds its climax in 5:16, where it is concretised as the καλὰ ἔργα which the Jesus followers should perform and on account of which the οἱ ἄνθρωποι will glorify (δοξάσωσιν) God. In these four verses the importance of exemplary Christian living is impressively highlighted. Typical of Matthew's stress on δικαιοσύνη, as the day-to-day obedience to and fulfilment of the will of God, the calling of the Jesus followers in the world is here pictured as a 'Christianity of being', a 'lived proclamation'. The ὑμεῖς is certainly not only directed to the Matthaean church; the references to the 'earth' and the 'world' (cf. also the ἄνθρωποι) indicate that this 'mission'²⁴ by the deed' is the task of the Christian church at large. And the purpose of this mission is formulated as the glory of God. Luz correctly says: 'Es gibt nur wenige Texte im Neuen Testament, wo die Ehre Gottes so deutlich Zielpunkt des gesamten christlichen Handelns ist' (1985:225).

1 Peter 2:12: This verse shows substantial verbal and other similarities with Matthew 5:16: καλὰ ἔργα, δοξάζω, the second person plural; οἱ ἄνθρωποι is replaced by τὰ ἔθνη, ὁράω by ἐποπτεύω and ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν κτλ by ὁ θεός; in both, Christian ethos within a hostile environment is at issue.²⁵ Whether this correspondence is due to a common tradition (Brox 1979:114) or literary dependence on the part of 1 Peter (Luz 1985:220) is not easy to decide and anyway not of consequence here.²⁶

Interestingly enough, the positive and negative trajectories converge in 1 Peter 2:12. The scenario is that the non-Christian neighbours experience the Christian minority as an irritating *corpus alienum* in their midst which formerly took part in their public, social and syncretistic religious activities, but are now refusing to compromise; they are different and act differently. The reaction of the non-Christians is to revile the Christians as criminals or wrongdoers (cf. *κακοποιῶν*). The

23. See Du Toit (1966:203–204). Zahn (1910:301) even called 5:16 the *summa* of the sermon on the mount. Luz (1985:219), referring to Zahn, depicts 5:16 as some kind of title to 5:17–48. However, this verse should not be isolated. The whole of 5:13–16 functions in this way, although verse 16 forms its climax. 6:1 echoes 5:16, and rectifies a possible misinterpretation of the 'good works' (cf. Luz 1985:219).

24. I use the terms 'mission' and 'missionary' in the traditional sense of the endeavour to win non-Christians over to the Christian faith.

25. Also the concrete manifestation of the hostility (cf. 'to speak evil' [Mt 5:11] and 'to slander as wrongdoers' [1 Pt 2:12]), show a striking similarity. However, 1 Peter does not mention persecution.

26. The correspondence is so striking that I am inclined to agree with Luz; compare also Matthew 5:10 and 1 Peter 3:14; 4:14.

latter are in fact suffering verbal abuse, defamation, charges of antisocial behaviour and social ostracism. However, if the addressees would persist with 'good works', as the author urges them to do, those who are observing (ἐποπτεύοντες)²⁷ their honourable conduct will eventually realise their mistake and turn to praising God. The participial qualification ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς most probably refers to God's merciful visitation (Brox 1979:115). Honourable conduct implies that Christians should not shirk their sociopolitical responsibilities, but perform these in a praiseworthy manner. In 2:16–17 their ethos as 'servants of God' is summarised as honouring all fellow humans, loving the Christian brotherhood, revering God and honouring the public authority (τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε) (2:16–17) (cf. Richard 2004:419–420).

Silencing the critics – putting them to shame

According to 1 Peter 2:15, the exemplary conduct of Christians will eventually result in silencing the opponents: 'For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence (cf. φησοῦν) the ignorance of foolish people.' In 3:15–16 there is a similar injunction: when Christians give an account of their faith to those who enquire about it, they should do it 'with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame (καταισχυνθῶσιν) when they revile your good conduct in Christ.'

We find more or less the same tenor in Titus 2:8, but here the Christian message (λόγος) is in view: it should be 'sound and beyond criticism (cf. ὑγιῆ ἀκατάγνωστον) so that your opposition may become ashamed (ἐντραπή), having nothing bad to say about us.' However, it would be wrong, within this context, to contrast the right teaching of verse 7 and the sound message of verse 8 with the καλὰ ἔργα of which Timothy should be an example (τύπος) 'in every way.'²⁸ Right teaching and preaching are here seen as part of the καλὰ ἔργα! Thus the opposition should be confronted by an integrated example, consisting of the one gospel lived and spoken, and thus be put to shame.

Gaining the respect of outsiders or having a good reputation

1 Thessalonians 4:12 goes somewhat further: a positive lifestyle could even gain the *respect* of outsiders. Paul addresses a concrete problem in the congregation of Thessalonica. Some members were acting disorderly, meddling in other people's affairs, surrendering themselves to idleness and consequently became dependent on others (4:11–12). This exposed not only themselves but the whole congregation to criticism from the outsiders. They are therefore exhorted to lead an orderly life (ἡσυχάζειν), stick to their own affairs (πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια) and start working again (ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν ὑμῶν) 'so that your conduct may be becomingly in the eyes of the outsiders.' This will gain the respect of their neighbours. The *New International Version* accordingly translates: 'so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders' (cf. also the *Revised English Bible*).

27. Goppelt (1978:160) correctly interprets the present participle as 'ein länger andauerndes, reflektierendes Beobachten.'

28. I agree with Holz (1980:221) that it makes much more sense to regard περι πάντα as part of the paraenesis to Titus.

1 Timothy 3:7 requires of an overseer that he should have 'a good reputation with the outsiders.' From the context, the concern is clear that an overseer should have proven himself over a prolonged period as a stable person, as a man of integrity. A *parvenu* could easily, not only disgrace himself, but also the congregation.

'Adorning' the teaching of God

This appealing metaphor appears in Titus 2:10 in connection with the behaviour required of Christian slaves. Although the outsiders are not specifically mentioned,²⁹ they are implied. Titus 2:9–10 reminds us of the New Testament Haustafel, but does not really fit into the typical scheme (Holtz 1980:216). Addressing the slaves, they are exhorted to be submissive to their masters, to please them without 'back-talking' (cf. μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας) or pilfering and to show that they can be fully trusted 'in order that they can adorn (ἵνα κοσμῶσιν) the teaching of God our Saviour in every way.' By their positive behaviour the slaves should make the gospel attractive to those outside.

'Winning' the outsiders for the faith

The verb κερδαίνω functions several times in 1 Corinthians 9:19–22 (cf. Mt 18:15) as a missionary term.³⁰ It appears with reference to the 'winning' of an outsider in the remarkable statement of 1 Peter 3:1–2:

In the same way, wives, be submissive to your husbands so that, if some of them do not believe the word, they may be won over (κερδηθήσονται) without a word (ἄνευ λόγου) by the way you [*lit. the wives*] live, when they observe your reverent and pure conduct.

Nowhere in the New Testament is belief in the persuasive power of an exemplary lifestyle expressed more forcefully than here. The ongoing debate around the rights of women concentrates so heavily on the position of women that the persuasive force of a wife's exemplary lifestyle in this text is often overlooked.

The perlocutionary aim of the outsider sayings

Studies of early Christians paraenetic texts, referring to the reaction of outsiders, are inclined to read a missionary focus into each and every of these injunctions. However, caution is advised. As we have seen in sections Οἱ λοιποὶ and Τὰ ἔθνη above, texts which contrast the lifestyle of believers with that of non-believers are usually directed inwardly, aimed at reinforcing the ethical quality of congregational life and thus the cohesion, identity and good reputation of the believing community. We should therefore reckon with the possibility that at least some of the outsider sayings which we discussed above, have an inwardly directed thrust. At the same time we should ask whether a strict either/or approach does justice to the inherent nature of these sayings. A real quality congregational and individual ethos would, in the nature of

29. See also 1 Timothy 2:9–10, where the adornment of Christian wives consists of their 'good works'.

30. See Schlier (1967:672).

things, also be attractive to outsiders. This would explain why it is often so difficult or even impossible to decide whether a specific injunction has a 'centrifugal' or a 'centripetal' thrust, or in fact covers both. In the latter case, one possibility may be articulated explicitly whilst the other remains implicit, and vice versa. It would therefore be wise to distinguish only between, say, a *primary* centrifugal or missionary focus on the one hand and a *primary* centripetal or inward focus on the other.

Injunctions with a primary inward thrust

In moral admonishments with a primary inward thrust the projected reaction of outsiders is intended as a persuasive device to strengthen the moral commitment of the addressees. In these instances, apologetic considerations may also come into play. I shall present only a few examples of this kind of paraenesis.

We first turn to the prominent outsider passage of 2 *Clement* 13. Van Unnik ([1964] 1980:310) emphatically denied that this passage has a missionary purpose. He is probably correct in the sense that these ethical exhortations certainly have a primary inward focus. 2 *Clement* is directed towards clarifying and improving inner-congregational matters (Donfried 1974: 98–181). It is in fact a strong call to repentance (cf. esp. 8; 9:8; 13:1; 16:1; 17:1; 19:1), and focusses strongly on improving the ethos of believers. The confession of Christians should consist, not in their words, but in their *works* (3:4 and 4:3). 2 *Clement* 17:1 does mention that Christians 'have received commands ... to tear men away from idols', but the focus falls on what follows: 'how much more is it wrong that a soul that knows God already should perish!' This inward directedness is also dominant in 13:1ff. The really sensitive point seems to be that the church members do not only disobey God's command that they should love their enemies, *they do not even love one other* (13:4). The focus clearly is on undergirding the ethos of the addressees. On the other hand, it would overstrain the limits of the linguistic process to categorically deny that some missionary undertone may have been communicated. The concern for the honour of 'the Name' amongst the outsiders may have done exactly this.

Colossians 4:5–6 and 1 Peter 3:15 probably belong to the same category. Eduard Schweizer (1976:173–174), like many before him (e.g. Van Swigchem 1955:126–128), has no hesitation in interpreting the Colossians' passage from a missionary perspective. Conducting themselves with 'wisdom towards outsiders' and answering everyone graciously form part of the missionary responsibility of Christians. Already Van Unnik ([1964] 1980:315–316) criticised this interpretation. The focus is on ethics and not on missionary activity. Michael Wolter (1993:211–213) agrees with this and even labels the missionary reading as *eisegesis*. However, both reckon with an apologetic slant in the paraenesis. In my opinion, a close reading of this passage confirms this. The focus is on exemplary conduct which gives a positive account of the Christian faith. However, once again a possible missionary undertone cannot categorically be ruled out. The same holds

true of 1 Peter 3:15. Significantly, this passage even uses the word *ἀπολογία*.

Injunctions with a primary missionary thrust

Some of the outsider sayings in this study have a decidedly missionary thrust. Naturally they deal with the moral behaviour expected of Christians, but they highlight the envisaged missionary effect of such exemplary conduct.

The missionary thrust of Matthew 5:16 is abundantly clear. The goal of the 'good works' is that the outsiders will come to praise God. Ulrich Luz unhesitatingly states: '*Die Werke der Christen haben missionarische Funktion*' (1985:225). In the closely related 1 Peter 2:12, the glorification of God is equally accentuated, but not everyone would agree that this verse has a missionary intention. The interpretation of the phrase *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς* is the bone of contention. Is this 'day of visitation' an occasion of grace (e.g. taking place in the personal lives of the non-Christians) or one of judgement (e.g. on judgement day)? Balch (1981:87), following Van Unnik, points out that 1 Enoch 62–63 describes the gentiles glorifying God at the judgement, but nevertheless being condemned, and concludes that he can find no reference to the conversion of pagans. However, this is a one-sided view. In Luke 19:44, *καὶρὸς τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς* is used in the sense of a gracious visitation by God and *ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς* could easily have the same positive meaning.³¹ If we compare 1 Peter 2:12 with 3:1–2 it becomes clear that we basically have the same train of thought: recommended conduct (*ἀναστροφῆ*) – the non-Christians who are watching (*ἐποπτεύοντες/ἐποπτεύσαντες*) – a positive result. In 1 Peter 3:1 this result is formulated as the 'winning' of the husbands. In 2:12 the result will be similar – the conversion of those who previously slandered the addressees. Even if the 'day of visitation' would be judgement day it would imply that the gentiles, as those who have already been converted, will at that day glorify God.³²

'Winning' the outsider (1 Pt 3:1–2)³³ and 'adorning' the Christian teaching (Tt 2:10) will also have a missionary edge.³⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:12 is uncertain. Malherbe (2000:259), for instance, is convinced that 'Paul is simply urging his readers to a certain behaviour in the concrete context in which they live.' There is no indication here that Christian conduct has an 'evangelical thrust' [*ibidem*]. On the other hand, one may ask whether 'gaining the respect' of outsiders is not moving in a missionary direction. There is, at any rate, an apologetic note present. In fact, most, if not all, of the outsider

31. Cf. the well-balanced presentation by Beyer (1960:603–604).

32. See also the positions of Goppelt (1978:161–162); Brox (1979:113–115), both being, in the main, positive.

33. Cf. also 1 Corinthians 7:16.

34. Ignatius' *Letter to the Ephesians* 10:1 falls in the same category: 'Pray unceasingly for the other people – for there is in them [or: for them] a hope of repentance – that they may find God. Let them therefore learn from you [or: become your disciples] on account of your works.'

sayings which we have discussed in this paper contain an apologetic element. And apologetics often reflect a missionary concern.³⁵

Conclusion

In many modern countries the Christian message has become discredited. In post-apartheid South Africa, for instance, the gospel on the lips of White South Africans is distrusted. In the rest of Africa, South America and Western countries other factors contribute to the negative perceptions. The most effective way to counter this negativity is by means of what can be called 'indirect proclamation',³⁶ which means that Christians should preach the gospel through exemplary living. By our integrity, by our living the gospel, by our humble, loving, selfless service, 'the others' could possibly be convinced. In 2 Corinthians 2:2–3, Paul pictures Christians as a letter of recommendation 'known and read by all'. Should Christians through the ethical quality of their lives become such a letter, this world could become a better place for all. *Vita pii evangelium populi.*

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35. It is a grave misconception to regard Christian apologetics as intended exclusively to reassure and strengthen insiders. Friedrich Schleiermacher's famous apology for Christianity, as he understood it, was after all not directed to adherents of the Christian faith, but to its 'educated despisers' (cf. the title of his work: *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* – see Schleiermacher 1899).

36. See in this regard especially Klauck (2005).

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