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Timothy J. M. Ling

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The Judaeen Poor and the Fourth Gospel

Judaeen society in the first century did not conform to the stereotypical 'Mediterranean honour culture', in that it lacked a significant gentile population and was dominated by a powerful religious elite. Timothy Ling argues that this demands a new social-scientific approach to the Gospel and Letters of John that moves away from the accepted 'sectarian' interpretation. He attributes their distinctiveness instead to their roots in Jesus' Judaeen ministry, as contrasted with the Galilean ministry, which has attracted much recent study. In particular, Ling contends that the numerous references to 'the poor' in the New Testament can be better understood in the context of the 'alternative' ideologies found among pietistic religious groups practising asceticism, renunciation, and other forms of 'virtuoso religion' in first-century Judaea. In doing so, he mounts a convincing challenge to the current dominant reading of the Gospel of John as a product of early Christian sectarianism.

TIMOTHY J. M. LING is Ministry Development Officer for the Canterbury Diocese of the Church of England.

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PREFACE

This study is a revised version of my Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the University of Kent in 2003. The thesis was the result of three years' research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board of the British Academy; I am grateful to the Research Board for the opportunity and the financial support.

Its origins may be located in the inspirational and passionate teaching of the Revd Dr Eric Franklin and Dr Brian Capper, who opened up the New Testament world for me and set me on my course. I am particularly grateful for the occasion on which Brian passed me a battered copy of Michael Hill's *The Religious Order: A Study of Virtuoso Religion*, and started me thinking about 'a sect within the church'.

The process of developing the ideas contained in this study has been greatly assisted by a number of opportunities to present and discuss seminar papers: at the British New Testament Conference, in the Johannine Literature Seminar (2000), the Hermeneutics Seminar (2001), and the Synoptics Seminar (2002); also, at a Symposium hosted by St Andrews University on Anthropology and Biblical Studies (2004). I am grateful to all those who contributed to these discussions.

The revision of the thesis for publication has also been assisted by the comments and criticisms of my examiners, Professor Chris Rowland and the Revd Dr Jeremy Law, and by Dr John Court, the chair of my panel. The shortfalls in the work naturally remain my own.

Finally, I must acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from friends and family. Thank you, Andy and Lucy, Andrew and Elisabeth, Denisa, Nathan and Esther, John, Denis and Chris, John and Olive, and especially my wife Ruth and children Joseph and Beth, for making this journey with me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
AAA	American Anthropological Association
ABD	D. N. Freedman, ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (6 vols.; London: Doubleday, 1992)
<i>ABQ</i>	<i>American Baptist Quarterly</i>
<i>AmEth</i>	<i>American Ethnologist</i>
<i>ANT</i>	L. E. Vaage and V. L. Wimbush, eds., <i>Asceticism and the New Testament</i> (London: Routledge, 1999)
<i>AntRev</i>	<i>Antioch Review</i>
<i>ApL</i>	<i>Applied Linguistics</i>
<i>AQ</i>	<i>Anthropological Quarterly</i>
<i>ARA</i>	<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>
<i>ASR</i>	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BK</i>	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CA</i>	<i>Current Anthropology</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CHJ</i>	W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, and J. Sturdy, eds., <i>The Cambridge History of Judaism</i> , (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
<i>CritA</i>	<i>Critique of Anthropology</i>
<i>CSSH</i>	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>DJG</i>	J. Green, S. McKnight, and I. Howard, eds., <i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992)
<i>DNTB</i>	C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter, eds., <i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000)
<i>DPL</i>	G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin, eds., <i>Dictionary of Paul and his Letters</i> (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993)

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<i>ESCA</i>	A. Barnard and J. Spencer, eds., <i>Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology</i> (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EthEu</i>	<i>Ethnologia Europaea</i>
<i>FI</i>	<i>Feminist Issues</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HJPAJC</i>	G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Black, <i>The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ</i> (rev. edn; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–87)
<i>HO</i>	<i>Human Organisation</i>
<i>HTKNT</i>	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
<i>HWW</i>	P. S. Pantel, ed., <i>History of Women in the West</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)
<i>IDB</i>	G.A. Buttrick, ed., <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962)
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IJSCC</i>	<i>International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	G. W. Bromiley, ed., <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988)
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRel</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTS</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Supplement Series
<i>JSSR</i>	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MAS</i>	<i>Modern Asian Studies</i>
<i>Neo</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NICNT</i>	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NovTest</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>OCD</i>	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, eds., <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
<i>Rel</i>	<i>Religion</i>
<i>RelTh</i>	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RIDA</i>	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>

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<i>SA</i>	<i>Sociological Analysis</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
<i>SBAZ</i>	Studien zur Biblischen Archäologie und Zeitgeschichte
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SJSJ</i>	Supplements to the <i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>SLJT</i>	<i>Saint Luke's Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SRel</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–)
<i>ThT</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>