Part I

Introductory Discussions

and

Problems Facing the Believers

Chapter 1. Introductory Discussions

The introductory discussions with regard to authorship, date, etc., are by no means an exhaustive study. Due to the commonality of such discussions and questions this chapter is not going to examine every aspect of introductory subject matter. Such subject matter can be researched using the relevant introductions and commentaries. It is not the focus of this dissertation to fully discuss these issues but the purpose of the introductory discussions are rather:

a.   To position the reader of this dissertation in an acceptable setting.

b.   To provide background information that is needed for the understanding of the content and setting.

c.   To provide alternatives from which readers can make up their own minds.

d.   To examine whether or not these issues influence the topics under discussion and if so, how.

1.1   The Occasion of the Letter

If a newspaper publishes an article in which it warns women of the crime levels in South Africa in the year two thousand it is automatically assumed by the readers that the article refers to crimes such as rape, smash and grab, hi-jackings, etc. If however, the article is read a hundred years later by some archeologist who lives in a peaceful society he would hardly be able to be specific as to the nature of the assumed crime. In fact, readers who do not have the same society in common might possibly not even know what is meant by "smash and grab" and it would have to be explained that it referred to supposed beggars who smash the windows of cars to grab a handbag on the passenger seat of the vehicle. Similarly, it is very important for this study to fill readers in on the setting of the book so that they would know

what "smash and grab", for example, means. Therefore, the occasion of the letter is presented to help the reader understand the problems and solutions that are going to be presented later on.

In first Peter 1:1 we read:

Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας,

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,"(Revised Standard Version)

In this text we read that the letter is addressed to the "exiles of the dispersion". There seems to be a debate as to the reference of the term "διασπορᾶς". The difficulty is caused by the nature of the genitive (without an article). It may be partitive in reference to Jews or conversely epexegetical or qualitatively pointing to all Christians. If not seen in a tautological manner and taken together "παρεπιδήμοις", could well refer to the land in which the recipients are strangers while the latter "διασπορᾶς" might point to the land (heaven) which is their genuine home in contrast to the mentioned provinces. Arichea takes the meaning to be referring to primarily the gentile Christians.[29] This assumption is based on the description of the addressees as "living in a worthless manner" (1:18)[30], former ignorance of God (1:14) and

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[29] Arichea (1980:1).

[30] It would seem, as Warden (1986:34) suggests, that the reference to "your foolish behaviour delivered by fathers" (Young's Literal Translation) should be associated with passages like 2:10 which deals with the background of Peter's readers.

according to Arichea persons not knowing God's mercy (2:10).[31] The deduction is thus made that these attributes refer to gentile Christians. On the other hand, Arichea himself states that Peter was a "missionary primarily to Jewish Christians",[32] which he then substantiates with Gal 2:7-9. But conversely to the attributes that Arichea mentions, 2:9 describes the addressees as a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people ..." (Revised Standard Version). The latter description could hardly be applicable to gentile Christians.

Due to the apparent contradiction the question should be asked whether these attributes should be taken figuratively (emblematically) or literally. In reference to Peter's salutation it is not clear whether the dispersion away from the homeland is understood in a physical or a spiritual sense.[33] Literally speaking the terms "διασπορᾶς, διασπορά, διασπορὴ" is used in the LXX[34] referring to the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles.[35] But these terms could also refer to the place in which the dispersed are found.[36] Figuratively speaking the meaning may have referred to Christians who live in dispersion in this world opposed to their heavenly home

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[31] Arichea (1980:1)

[32] Arichea (1980:2).

[33] Perkins (1985:776-778).

[34] Peter makes extensive use of the Old Testament (specifically the LXX). Peter uses explicit and implicit quotations of the Old Testament (1:16, 24-25; 2:6-8; 3:10-12; 4:8, 18; 5:5)(Schutter 1989:35-37). According to Schutter Peter makes use of the Old Testament approximately 46 times either by way of quotations or allusions that are unequivocal in their appeal to Old Testamentic materials (Schutter 1989:35-37). Schutter (1989:35-43) has a detailed discussion of the biblical sources of first Peter.

[35] Dt. 28:25; 30:4; Ps. 146:2; second Macc. 1:27; Is. 49:6; Jer. 41:17; Neh. 1:9; Jo. 7:35.

[36] Jdth. 5:19; Test. Ash. 7:2; Jas 1:1.

(James 1:1), in which case it could include both Jews and / or Gentiles.

T. Martin emphasizes that the διασπορά[37] takes the centre stage when it comes to the metaphors that Peter makes use of.[38] The διασπορά metaphor has basically two general images that emanate from it.

Firstly, we find the image of the Christian life metaphorically typified as an "eschatological journey". This journey commences at the new birth and leads to salvation that is to be revealed ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ (1:3-5). One of the main concerns the author has, is about the hearers' conduct while on this journey. If we consider this concern in the light of the persecution, one cannot help but ask whether this concern is truly theological / ethical / relational with God or whether it is a practical concern to avoid or lessen the alienation and defamation.

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[37] διασπορά is found only once outside of Jewish literature (Plutarch characterizes Epicurus' dissolution of the soul as a "διασπορά into emptiness and atoms" (Plutarch, Moralia 1105A) which means that it qualifies as early-Jewish terminology rather than Greco-Roman legal language about citizenship. διασπορά could well be in reference to Christians in the vast district mentioned in the salutation. In eleven of the twelve occurrences of the term in the LXX it is a technical term referring to the dispersion of the Jews (Schmidt 1964:99). In the New Testament John (7:35) uses διασπορά in the literal sense of the Jewish diaspora. But in James 1:1 and in first Peter 1:1 the word is used metaphorically in reference to Christians, as virtually all modern commentators note, such as Bechtler (1996:96); Brox (1989:57); Goppelt (1978:64-66); Kelly (1969:40,41); Troy Martin (1992:45,144); Michaels (1988:6,8,9); Selwyn (1947:118,119); and others.

[38] Martin, T. (1992:144-161).

Secondly, we find the fear of assimilation into a pagan environment. A subsequent byproduct of assimilation would be the defection of God's people back to paganism.[39] The διασπορά metaphor thus serves the purpose of reminding them that they are to remain foreign and dispersed. If διασπορά is not seen metaphorically, the term for Peter's audience would have reference to religious, geographical and social realities.[40]

In the salutation we read that the letter is destined for more than one location. In the absence of mass production it would be reasonable to deduce that this was an epistle.[41] It would therefore be very difficult even for the author to pinpoint the exact audience. It would be safe to argue that the audience would consist of a varied cross section of the society at large. In Gal 2:7 we read that Peter preached to the Jews while in Acts (10:9-16; 44-48) we are told that Peter brought the message to the Gentiles. Thus it can be concluded that it is not only possible but likely that the book was aimed at Jews and Gentiles and as a result would reach both groups of Christians.

The churches mentioned in the provinces were known to accommodate both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews living in these areas would certainly be known to be dispersed. Similarly the Gentiles that have proselytised could also be known as dispersed in a spiritual sense. Thus the geographical context does not really shed any light on the readers referred to by "διασπορά". The content of Peter, however, contains many quotations from and references to the Old

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[39] Campbell (1995:27)

[40] Elliott (1990:46)

[41] Many scholars agree with Campbell (1995:28) when he writes in connection with first Peter that the: "major literary genre is epistolary". He later writes that: "the document is a genuine letter, not a baptismal homily or liturgy in an epistolary frame" (Campbell 1995:38). See the discussion on the genre of first Peter elsewhere in this study.

Testament. It would therefore be plausible to deduce that the readers might be Jews rather than Gentiles. Furthermore, the term "διασπορά" is a term with which the Jews are well acquainted. The question could well be asked whether the Gentiles would identify themselves with the, although Greek, "Jewish" term "διασπορά". And would the Gentiles classify themselves as "dispersed" whilst living in the mentioned provinces? Because of the above mentioned difficulties it is possible to reach the conclusion that Peter carefully included both Jewish and Gentile Christians in his letter of encouragement to the churches of Asia Minor. It is stated that it is a "virtual certainty" that these communities had mixed congregations that included both Jews and gentiles.[42]

The question of the meaning of "διασπορᾶς" in the book of Peter could be of paramount importance since the answer could reveal whether the book is addressed to Jewish or Gentile Christians.[43] The key is found in that the book is about Christianhood in stead of Jew or non-Jewish race related questions. The answer to the above mentioned question is not supplied by the meaning of "διασπορᾶς", since there would be Jews and Gentiles in both cases. Consequently the meaning of "διασπορᾶς" in reference to Christianhood is of no consequence to this particular study. If "διασπορᾶς" refers to the Jews and Peter is writing about Christianhood, then he writes on remaining a Christian to the Christian Jews. Similarly, concerning the Gentiles, he writes on remaining Christian to the Gentiles.[44] There are other

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[42] Bechtler (1996:134).

[43] One must note that there is as of yet no consensus on the major themes of first Peter or on how its different motifs relate to each other (Kendall 1984:1). This dissertation is not declaring that remaining a Christian is the major theme of first Peter. It is however investigating this theme within the book. See the discussion on the themes of Peter further on in this dissertation.

[44] Even within both groups (Jews and Gentiles) first Peter addresses two kinds of

theories postulating that certain parts of Peter refer to proselytes (1:3-4:11) and other parts to established believers (4:12-5:11). However, there does not seem to be any missiological statements in the book bar wives to their husband. Even then they are to proselytize through their actions and not words. The deduction can consequently be made that Peter is concerned with mainly remaining a Christian. The question of becoming a Christian is not addressed.

Social sciences cast another perspective on this issue. It classifies the readers of Peter as people who are culturally and politically excluded. Their conversion to Christ has exacerbated the dishonour attributed to them by society. Thus they have become rejected. παροίκους και παρεπιδήμους then has to do with their status in society as a result of being Christian. It is written that: "the encouragement of the recipients in their apparent dishonor (sic) is of central concern to Peter".[45] Therefore, certain scholars[46] come to the conclusion that παροίκους και παρεπιδήμους in first Peter 2:11 may well have reference to the contest of honour.[47] Because of their dishonour they could not take part in public debates (at least not on the level they used to). The reason for this is explained later on. Therefore the only

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recipients: active recipients and passive ones. The former are Christians who are too abrasive in their relationship towards society while the latter are believers who assimilate too readily in society in order to avoid suffering (Campbell 1995:32). Both these kinds of recipients are not the ideal, hence Peter attempts to walk a tight rope in finding a balance between the two. It would appear at this stage as if non-believers are not addressed in first Peter. That would imply that Peter is more concerned about remaining Christian in general than about becoming Christian for this particular audience.

[45] Campbell (1995:138-139).

[46] Campbell (1995:138-139).

[47] The dynamic of honour and shame in the first century Mediterranean world as well as the contest for such is discussed latter on in this dissertation.

other mechanism that they had to their disposal to claim honour was good behaviour. The fact that Peter urged his readers to behave substantiates the postulation that Campbell makes as to the reference to the honour contest. Peter envisages some kind of public recognition[48] or exoneration from the governors or their agents when they see the Christian's good behaviour. It would then appear as if Peter certainly has the honour / shame paradigm in mind when he writes.

A certainty regarding the recipients is their location. Their location implied that Christians were living in a pagan society since the majority of the inhabitancy remained pagan. There also seemed to be a fair amount of hostility and persecution towards Christians (1:5-9; 4:12-19) which confirmed the non-Christian status of the society. Since Peter urged Christians to be faithful towards the government (2:17,18) it might imply disloyalty. This attitude towards the government might lead one to conclude that the government could also be a possible source of the persecution. It would therefore seem that this book has primarily pastoral concerns.[49]

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[48]   Public recognition by the powers that be is one of the ways of attaining honour. Their good behaviour thus becomes a means to rectify their status as well as to bring glory to God. The secondary reasoning is that good works will be seen as working for the public good / order in which case the official commendations that Peter anticipates will silence the ignorant criticisms of their accusers. At the same time the accusers will be exposed as ignorant and thus shamed, while Christians will be shown as credible, hence honourable.   If the magistrates start refusing to hear charges against Christians, it would result in shameful disregard to the accusers. This would be an action that brings dishonour to the accusers and at the same time brings honour to Christians. This anticipation also therefore anticipates the reversal of shame to honour for the Christian.

[49]   Schutter (1989:4).

It seems that the metaphors Peter employs has been discussed academically. The following will serve as an example[50] of such a discussion on some of the major metaphorical themes in first Peter:

a. The οἶκος - cluster of metaphors.

These metaphors serve a twofold typification, firstly, Christians as the household of God and secondly as the elect of God (1:14-2:10). The household imagery suggests the formation of a new family - the Christian family. Although they are rejected by society they are elected by God and accepted into the new family. Those born into that house ought to love one another[51], because this new birth ought to lead to a new life of love. This love should grow increasingly deep.[52] The first allusion to the new birth into God's family appears in 1:3,14,23. But there is also a second allusion in 2:1-10. Here the notion of new birth into God's family is further developed into one of the οἶκος - cluster of metaphors. Recapitulating, Peter says that his audience constitutes the children and therefore the members of the household / people of God. Their marginalization by society contributed to the establishment and strengthening of the

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[50] Martin Troy (1992:144-161).

[51] Campbell (1995:107).

[52] Campbell (1995:108). Growth is anticipated since Peter refers to the new converts as spiritual new born babies. Their diet also pre-empted growth and development onto something more solid. For infants to be fed on milk is a Christian topic (first Cor. 3:1-4; Heb. 5:11-14; Clement of Alexandria - The Instructor; Ante-Nicene Fathers 2:220-221). For further discussion on this topic see Selwyn (1949:154-155, 308-310). The image of putting off sins and that of desiring a mother's milk is nowhere else combined in the New Testament. The idea of putting off "the old self" and putting on "the new self" carry with them the idea of rebirth (Eph. 4:22-24; first Cor. 3:14; Heb. 5:11-14).

οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ (2:5). This is so because their marginalization forced their transfer from the brotherhood / community / society into the house of God. Without this kind of treatment some people might have taken longer to make the final decision. In conclusion then the major premise of the οἶκος - cluster of metaphors is that newborn infants long for milk. The minor premise is that you are like newborn infants. Therefore Peter draws the conclusion that Christians are to long for pure, spiritual milk so that by it they may grow into salvation.[53]

b.   The παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους - cluster of metaphors (2:11-3:12).

There is a debate as to the metaphorical nature and application of these terms. We find a few scholars[54] stating that these two words are in fact not metaphorical but rather literal in reference to the Jews living in another country.[55] Then there is the theory that these terms must be seen vis-à-vis the Christian's heavenly citizenship in contrast to their earthly "alienness" and "strangeness" (1:17; 2:11).[56] The mentioned provinces then is not their home, but they are merely resident there whilst they await their homecoming in the eschatos. This position on the

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[53] Campbell (1995:115).

[54] Elliott (1981).

[55] Elliott's (1981:47) primary problem stems from his starting point which is his translation of the words παρεπιδήμοι (1:1; 2:11); παροικία (1:17); and πάροικος (2:11) which he translated as "visiting strangers", "alien residence", and "resident aliens" respectively. His basic thought is that the recipients were social outcasts prior to their conversion to Christianity. Their conversion to Christianity only added more ostracization and persecution than before.

[56] Beare (1970:135). Beare is also cited by Elliott (1990:42).

meaning[57] of παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους is refuted.[58] These terms according to Elliott has a twofold application.

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[57] Elliott (1990:42-44).

[58] Elliott's refuting makes use of a fivefold argument:

a. These words maintain political and social connotations in contemporary literature of first Peter.

b. This metaphorical application excludes literal and figurative meanings which are suspect especially since these terms describe both religious and social circumstances which appear in first Peter.

c. The physical, social alienation and conflict in the epistle is consistent with the treatment that literal resident aliens and visiting strangers in Asia Minor could expect.

d. A clear sociological and not a cosmological conflict is described in first Peter.

e. The bad deeds Christians are asked to refrain from are not simply those of this world, but are rather the vices of the unbelieving society around them. Hence good conduct is required in accordance to God's will (2:12; 4:1-6) (Elliott 1990:42-44; Campbell 1995:30-31). These five points (especially point 3) necessitate the audience to be Jewish whilst the majority of scholars believe that they were Gentile. If the readers were in fact Gentile then these words have to be metaphoric.

Nonetheless there is no reason why παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους could not be used in a perspectival foreshortened manner, in which case this application can be made as the second fulfilment whilst the first fulfilment could well be literal and immediate. As a matter of fact the existence of such a strong eschatological emphasis makes this scenario likely.

Firstly, παροίκους could be seen in a general sense to denote:

"strangers, foreigners, aliens, people who are not at home, or who lack native roots, in the language, customs, culture, or political, social, and religious allegiances of the people among whom they dwell".[59]

The παροίκους was therefore the displaced and dislocated people. And secondly, there is a political and legal sense.[60]

Then there is a third application to which most scholars agree stating that these terms refer to non-citizenship. παροίκους καί παρεπιδήμους would then point to a certain class of people seen in the illumination of the honour and shame classification of a hierarchal status. This view would necessitate a perspective from the non-Christians. The result of being a παροίκους (non-citizenship) is that one cannot fully participate in social challenges as an equal with natives or with those aliens who have become fully integrated into the new culture. The word alien basically meant that you were a guest in a host country. As such your rights were limited. You were obligated to submit to your hosts. Seen in the honour and shame context this obligation means to honour everyone (πάντας τιμήσατε)(2:17). If you had to honour others (and specifically everyone) it meant that you were placed below all of them, and resident aliens therefore had a dishonourable status. The παροίκ- group of words is used by Peter as terminology of shame.[61] It is stated that παροίκους are legally and socially

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[59] *Elliott (1990:24).*

[60] *Elliott's definition (Elliott 1990:25) is sourced from Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Martin Anton Schmidt (1967:5.842).*

[61] *Campbell (1995:97).*

distinguished from superior full citizens.[62]   The παροίκους were seen as inferior transient strangers.   παροίκους is defined by some[63] as a term of non-citizenship rather than geographic displacement.   It is written that the παροίκοι were:

"Eine Bevölkerungsschicht, die nicht dem Vollbürgertum zugerechnet wird, aber

auch nicht zu den Fremden gehört, sondern zwischen diesen beiden Gegensätzen

in der Mitte steht".[64]

In the New Testament (outside of first Peter) this word-group occurs six times, four of which quote or allude to the LXX concept of the patriarchal or Israelite παροίκος existence.[65]   By metaphorical extension then this term relates to any condition of alienness and hostility in which God's people may find themselves.   In conclusion then, παροίκος were not simply legal designations for resident aliens but denoted a recognized social stratum that included both native and non-native residents who were not full citizens and so did not possess the rights of citizenship.[66]

The other word-group παρεπιδήμ- is found five times in the LXX and the New Testament.[67] In Gen. 23:4 and Ps. 38:13 παρεπιδήμος occurs in conjunction with παροίκος just as we find in first Peter 2:11.   In the first text Abraham's foreignness vis-à-vis the Tittites are alluded

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[62]   Schaefer (1949:1698).

[63]   Schaefer (1949:1698).

[64]   Schaefer (1949:1698).

[65]   Schmidt and Schmidt (1967:851-853).

[66]   Feldmeier (1992:15, 206,207); Tàrrech (1980:101-107).

[67]   1 X Gen.; 1 X Ps., 1 X Heb.; 2 X First Peter.

to.[68]   In the second text we find a metaphorical use.[69]   Hebrews 11:13-16 uses these terms allegorically.   In Peter these terms are figures of speech, metaphors by which a situation of social alienness is characterized.[70]   The conclusion to the debate could well be summarised by the following quotation:

"Rather, the words πάροικοι, παροικία, παρεπίδημοι, and διασπορά are used metaphorically by 1 (sic) Peter to designate the ambiguous socioreligious situation of its gentile Christian addressees in terms of the LXX people of God".[71]

Peter's writing is an attempt to change this perspective to a new evaluation of the Christian seen in the light of God's perspective.   The Father's favourable verdict for the πάροικοι means that their disadvantage (dishonourable status) does not need to be regretted, for God's vindication elevates them.[72]   By utilizing the term πάροικοι the author also creates an "us" and "them" scenario.   This separates Christians from the non-Christians.   Christians are then πάροικοι in this world but citizens of heaven.   Taken to the logical conclusion this might possibly imply that the non-Christian would be πάροικοι at the parousia.   If this is so, it would constitute a reversal of strangerhood.

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[68]   In Lev 25:23 we find an almost identical construction in the Hebrew but this text is translated slightly differently (Schmidt 1967:848).

[69]   Bechtler (1996:102).

[70]   Achtemeier (1989).

[71]   Bechtler (1996:134).

[72]   Malina and Neyrey (1991:49-50).

c.   The παθήματα - cluster of metaphors (3:13-5:11).

This metaphor depicts Christians as sufferers[73] of the dispersion. Although the situation seems hopeless the author maintains that Christians will receive vindication and honour. We are still to elaborate on this theme later on.

The occasion of the letter then is that Christians found themselves in an unfavourable position both with society at large and with the authorities. The fact of the matter is that they were enduring hardship.[74]   This motivated the author to encourage the believers to remain Christians. We will later examine just how he did this.

1.2   The Setting

The study of the setting is important to our topic since it tells us where the readers are. This sheds light on the character of the readers and their situation. Certain scholars[75] believe that the letter has a rural character. Elliott also cites as correlative detail the absence of slave

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[73] There seems to be a widely held view that the type of suffering consists of slander, defamation and general ostracism. The same view also perceives the source of this suffering to be society at large. The suffering itself is seen by some only in the context of the honour / shame contest. Campbell (1995:189) for instance writes: "the unjust treatment of verbal abuse is a major source of shame for the hearers of 1 (sic) Peter". It will suffice to state that this is not the only view and that this topic will be under discussion later on.

[74] The type of hardship that they suffered will be discussed at length at a latter stage. For now it will suffice to say that both society and the authorities were involved in handing out the suffering.

[75] Elliott (1981:69).

owners. But then again a slave would not have been a slave if he did not have an owner. Certainly they worked for owners and thus their owners were presupposed. A more logical argument to explain their absence would rather be that their owners were not Christian and therefore they were not addressed. This is substantiated by Peter's wish that their (slaves and specifically wives) owners / husbands could be won over, implying that they were not Christian. If one is consistent and takes Elliott's argument one step further, then the absence of the husbands would also mean that the wives were not married. Peter's salutation does include the words "scattered throughout" (New International Version) and mentions provinces rather than cities. However,:

a. Persecution, courts, elders: which point to church organization, and the metaphors - flock and family in reference to a church family, really suit an urban setting better than a rural setting.

b. The words "scattered throughout" does not necessarily refer to a literal scattering. In fact, most modern scholars are contra-Elliott on this point since he is one of only a few who takes this term literally. The whole book of first Peter is so saturated with metaphors that it is entirely possible for this to be one as well.[76] Peter is not particularly rich in "rural metaphors".

c. The fact that this letter is an epistle implies that it was sent to all the places mentioned in the salutation. Because of the broad area involved it seems logical to mention the provinces rather than the cities.

d. If the audience is made up of both Jews and Gentiles (regardless the ratio) it is more likely for such a combination to be found together in the cities rather than in rural areas.

e. Peter's address on the dress-code of women is also more likely to be an occurrence in

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[76] See discussion on the terms διασπορά, παροίκοι και παρεπιδήμοι elsewhere in this dissertation.

cities.

f. *It is pointed out that "agrarian metaphors are stock-in-trade for the most urbanized Roman authors and their urbanized auditors".[77]*

g. *The reason for the suffering is amongst other things a threat to the social order and a withdrawal on the part of Christians from certain social activities.[78] Surely such threats were more visible in cities, and it is even questionable whether these social activities occurred out in the country. Roman religious and civil life were so interconnected that it is to be expected that non-participation in religious and civil life was seen by the larger society as antisocial behaviour.[79]*

h. *In Pliny's letter he speaks of vast numbers of Christians which presume an urban setting.*

i. *The metaphors that are called "obvious rural metaphors"[80] do not seem to be that obvious. When Peter speaks about the lions stalking its prey (5:8) it might very well imply an urban setting as lions were more likely to be seen in the arenas located in large urban centres.[81]*

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[77] *Danker (1983:87).*

[78] *Bechtler (1996:106).*

[79] *Schutter (1989:11); Goodman (1994:105).*

[80] *Elliott (1981:63).*

[81] *Even the so called agricultural aspect of 1:23-25 might not necessarily be agricultural since it is more reproductive (Bechtler 1996:85) than agricultural, and it has its source directly from Isa. 40 (Danker 1983:87).*

The letter supplies no account as to whether its intended recipients were urban or rural or both.[82] One has to make certain deductions based on probabilities and likelihoods. However, it is the contention of this study that the letter was predominantly directed at urban readers. This deduction fits in well with the conclusion reached later on the source and nature of persecution.

1.3   Urban Readers

If we look at the crime situation in South Africa in the year two thousand, we once again find that knowledge of who the addressees are and where they live is very important. The newspaper mentioned earlier would refer to the crimes mentioned at that stage in reference to urban readers. However, if rural farmers were addressed, these crimes would not come to mind, but rather farm murders. And so we find that both who and where the readers are, determines directly how the letter should be interpreted. It is for this reason that the time is taken to discuss this topic.

It is suggested that the readers of first Peter are predominantly urban residents. Texts like 5:9 speak of "your brotherhood throughout the world". The residents of urban cultures[83] will be

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[82] Bechtler (1996:86).

[83] The population of these cities was indeed diverse. As such one would expect to find a conglomerate of cultures. Nonetheless, subcultures also developed. Examples of such would certainly be rural and urban subcultures. We also detect this phenomenon today where certain regions have a different subculture than other regions although their cultural make-up is diverse. Warden (1986:19) writes that: "the urban centers (sic) ... shared a culture which extended for many hundreds of years into the past". It is in this sense that we speak of a shared culture in the midst of diversity.

concerned about, and conscious of the world-wide fellowship of believers since trade and cultural contact with the outside world is customary for urban residents.[84] It is written that: "communication between the cities was constant".[85] Certain words and concepts in first Peter allude to an urban setting. The author refers to his readers as παρεπίδημοι (1:1; 2:11) and as πάροικοι (2:11). Furthermore, there is reference to the time of his readers as their παρικίας (1:17). Although these terms stem from the LXX, in which they had a different meaning, it was in the Greek cities that the term πάροικοι came to designate a certain class of people.[86] Elliott subscribes to the view that the word πάροικοι in conjunction with παρεπίδημοι refers to the actual social and legal status of the readers of Peter, as can be seen from his writing:

> "the actual social condition of the addressees as resident aliens and strangers
> is the stimulus for the encouragement that they remain so for religious and
> moral reasons".[87]

Certain scholars[88] do not perceive of a situation whereby Christians are awaiting their heavenly home but rather view their new home as that of their social family - the οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ

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[84] Scholars who agree with the suggestion that the readers of first Peter were urban residents are for instance Goldstein (1975:107,108); Warden (1986:16,17).

[85] Warden (1986:19).

[86] The connotation of the city is not far fetched since we have examples of such connotations. In Heb. 11:9 Abraham is said to have: "... sojourned (παρῴκησεν) in the land of promise". But in verse 10 we are reminded of the πόλιν which he looked forward to. For a discussion on the meaning of πάροικοι see Schmidt and Schmidt (1967:842).

[87] Elliott (1981:42).

[88] Elliot (1981:130).

(4:17).[89]   Other views indicate that these two words suggest that Peter ventures to bring his readers to the understanding that their trials and sufferings are temporary. This is illustrated by their temporary residence on earth which is only passing.[90]   It is true that Peter employs a strong eschatological theme, but he does so using other arguments. In fact, it would be very difficult to link Peter's eschatological themes with the use of the two words in question.

1.4   Addressees

The question of where the addressees lived has now been dealt with. But a study to whom exactly the epistle is addressed is still needed.   This information discloses what type of encouragement the author needs to supply. We need to know whether the readers are rich or poor, exalted or lowly in society and the likes, since the author uses their situation in his solution.   Before we can study the reversal of roles as the author's reasoning for remaining Christian we need to know what their starting point is.

An important discussion when it comes to the addressees is that of Elliott's _Home for the Homeless_,[91] who sees the addressees of first Peter as resident aliens - literally.[92]   He does state

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[89]   The New International Version translates 4:17 as "the family of God" in contrast to "the house of God".   Some other versions translate this verse as "the household of God" (Revise Standard Version).   The New International Version's translation collaborates with what Elliott suggests.

[90]   Warden (1986:18).

[91]   Elliott (1981:79).

[92]   Achtemeier (1989:207-236) does not agree with Elliott and states that the terms παροίκοι και παρεπιδήμοι are used metaphorically in first Peter rather than literally as Elliott proposes. As such Achtemeier (1989:207-236) does not view the recipients as literal

that as such they are social outsiders compounded with the fact that they furthermore became religious outsiders upon their conversion.[93] A completed study[94] on the παροίκ- group of words finds a broad range of usages. In its literal sense, παροίκος could designate a neighbour, an entire colony or settlement, a resident alien, a stranger, or, more technically, a non-citizen. The question is: what would qualify as reason to classify one as a non-citizen? Immediately one thinks of people from other countries, but what about the slaves? They did not qualify as citizens irrespective of where they were born. Thus the classification as non-citizen not only has to do with origin but also with societal class. The point is also made that when this word denotes an alien, a stranger, or a non-citizen it was from the standpoint of society, a second-class person.[95] The key element in first Peter's strategy is the _Fremde_ motif as one scholar[96] puts it. The word is also used in reference to human-divine relationships. To

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resident aliens but characterizes them in terms of the alien residence of God's chosen people, Israel, in diaspora. However, this would seem unlikely as the majority of Peter's addressees seem to be converted Gentiles in contrast to Jews. Instead of adhering to the views of Elliott and Achtemeier I would rather support the view that παροίκοι και παρεπιδήμοι refers to political status and standing in society just as the term _sinner_ in the synoptic gospels does not refer to someone who has sinned but to a certain class of persons. Troy Martin (1992:266) for example, incorrectly argues that the Petrine Christians were on a journey through a hostile land, while the book clearly addresses a community, a family, house of God, etc, that points to residing people. If they were in fact in transit then surely the answer would have just been to hurry up instead of endurance, the rebuilding of a complete new identity and theologizing about honour and shame.

[93] Elliott (1981:79).

[94] Feldmeier (1992:12).

[95] Feldmeier (1992:21).

[96] Feldmeier (1992:188).

Philo and at Qumran strangerhood signified belonging to the people of God and as such was an honorific self-designation[97]. The use in first Peter is independent to Old Testamentic or other uses since it is used as a positive identification that can provide contemporary Christians with their own new identity;[98] an identity that up to then had not existed and therefore he could not use it in the same sense as others have. In conclusion then the stranger terminology of the letter does not refer Christians to a heavenly commonwealth but rather to an earthly community of those whose strangerhood is the expression of both their divine election and their responsibility in the world.[99] The juxtaposition of ἐκλεκτοῖς and παρεπιδήμοις appears to be unique in biblical literature.[100] This juxtaposition affirms for the readers that they are God's chosen and at the same time informs them that being God's chosen entail an alien existence in society.[101] The strong allusion to the LXX portrays that Peter's audience is the people of God. To their Gentile communities they are indeed strange both in their behaviour as well as in what they don't do, - in their beliefs and non-beliefs. Certain scholars[102] believe that the addressees were marginalised. Whether this was due to their strangeness or whether

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[97] For a discussion on Philo's and Qumran's view of strangerhood study Feldmeier (1992:72-74).

[98] Feldmeier (1992:95,96).

[99] Feldmeier (1992:103,104).

[100] Michaels (1988:6).

[101] For a more detailed discussion on the "chosenness" of Peter's readers and what that entails refer to Best (1971:70); Feldmeier (1992:104, 176,177); Furnish (1975:4)(although Furnish relates to alienness in terms of temporary sojourning in this world); Michaels (1988:6,7).

[102] Bechtler (1996:160).

the strangeness was caused by their marginalization seems to be unclear.[103]

The conclusion could possibly be reached that Christians were strange to society because they thought differently on religious matters. Peter later uses this difference to reverse the roles between society and the Christian community. This is one of the reversals that Peter postulates as reason for remaining Christian.

1.5   The Date of the Letter

The date is very important in the topic under discussion since it determines and limits the situation of Christians with regards to suffering which is one of the major themes of first Peter. It appears from the letter as though they are facing hardship. It is rather more difficult to assess the true extent and nature of the hardship. The determination of the date of the letter would help in this quest. This dissertation deals with the cultural value of honour and shame as well as with the influence of Roman government and society on Christians. A date is required to justify that the mentioned value was in fact prevalent amongst the addressees, and also in order to placed the value in a time frame that falls within Roman rule. Since different Roman rulers had different attitudes toward Christians we also preferably need to know which Roman ruler was at the helm when first Peter was written. As Peter's solution has largely to do with the reversal and change of their mind set, the date would also pin point their initial mind set.

The authorship and date are closely interrelated as the date of writing determines the authorship and vice versa.[104] If one accepts Peter as the author then a date after Nero is

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[103]   Bechtler (1996:160).

[104]   Dixon (1989:19).

rejected, since it is suggested that he died in Nero's reign which is 64-68 AD.[105] If Peter wrote the book then a date in the early sixties is necessitated. Conversely Peter could not have written the book if it is dated after 70 AD. The earlier the date of the book the more the possibility exists of genuineness. The use of the cryptogram "Babylon" could serve as a terminus ad quem since this term for Rome[106] does not seem to have entered apocalyptic discourse until after the fall of Jerusalem.[107] There is also a second terminus ad quem in the form of reference of Polycarp's letter to the Philippians dated 110-115.[108] The general character of the book coupled

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[105] The time of Peter's death is no forgone conclusion. In fact, there is no proof that Peter died during Nero's reign. We only have tradition to substantiate that claim. There are scholars who dispute these dates for Peter's death and even proclaim that Peter lived beyond the Neronian period. For such scholars see Ramsay (1893:283); Michaels (1988). But for the most part scholars are in agreement that Peter died before the date of 70 AD and during Nero's reign. For such scholars see Bauckham (1992:539-595); Cullmann (1962:71-157); Goppelt (1978:9-14); O'Connor (1969:61-89); Perkins (1994:146); Thiede (1988:190,191).

[106] Babylon is almost unanimously interpreted as Rome by twentieth century scholars. Statements confirming this can be found in Goppelt (1978:65-66); Brox (1979:41-43); Filson (1955:403); Fischer (1978:207); Moule (1956:8-9). Interpretations linking Babylon to physical Babylon on the Euphrates river can only be found from scholars of the previous century like Erasmus, Calvin, Bengel, Lightfoot and Alford (Manley 1944:142). Reference is also made to the Babylon in Egypt by Leclerc, Mill, Pearson, Calovius, Pott, Burton and Gresswell (Manley 1944:142).

[107] Apocalyptic usage of Babylon in a Cryptogrammatical manner can be cited from Rev. 14:8. The fall of Jerusalem is primarily dated at 70 AD. Also see Bechtler (1996:54).

[108] For a discussion on this terminus ad quem see Bechtler (1996:61). Harrison (1936:15,16; 183-206; 267,268) dates Polycarp's letter even later at 135 AD. Also see Koester (1957:122,123). But his arguments are doubtful and most scholars support the date given in

with the presence of persecution reflects the "Sitz im Leben" of the second or third generation Christians rather than that of a first generation.[109] The most central issue in determining the date has been the question of persecution. A date after 70 AD. is consequently favoured. Conversely tradition serves as a terminus a quo when it states that Peter was a martyr in the time of persecution in AD. 64 by Nero.[110] However, there is no Biblical evidence to substantiate this claim. Since first Peter is not really[111] dated before 62 AD. we may assume that, that date serves as a terminus a quo. The situation under Nero was probably limited to Rome[112] and

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the text above. Also see Schoedel (1967:4, 23-26; 1992:390).

[109] Arguments to this effect can be found from Best (1969:95-113); Blevins (1982:401-413); Rousseau (1986:6). Others equate the persecution with Nero (sixties) which would force the date to before 70. See Rousseau (1986:8) who discusses these options and Winbery (1982:9). Scholars favouring a date before 70 are Winbery (1982:10); Holmer (1978:14-15); Schweizer (1973:11); Selwyn (1947:56-63).

[110] In my mind there seems to be incongruence in all the scholars' arguments when it comes to the date of first Peter. The scholars who date Peter later than Nero all state that the suffering and persecution is of an unofficial, social nature. Everyone knows that Nero introduced official persecution. Either the scholars need to decide on an earlier date whilst accepting the unofficial nature of the persecution or they must decide on a later date accepting the official nature of the persecution, because persecution was unofficial before Nero but certainly very official after him.

[111] The exception to this is the date of 58 AD. and 64 AD. given by Bigg (1901:87). Examples of people who support a date before 70 AD. are Grudem (1988:63,64); Guthrie (1970:796); Selwyn (1947:62); Spicq (1966:26).

[112] Dixon (1989:26).

has therefore no bearing on the persecution addressed in first Peter.[113] The next critical period of investigation is that of Domitian in 81-96 AD. This period is favoured due to the occurrence of the cryptogram "Babylon" in 5:13.[114] Others claimed that the persecution of Christians under Domitian was much too limited to have had a bearing on first Peter, as was the case of the Neronian persecution.[115] The last period of investigation is that of Trajan in 98-117 AD. which has a rather unique relevance because of the revelations in the letter of Pliny, who was governor in Bithynia and Pontus in 111 AD.[116] These periods of investigations would be of no consequence if one does not accept as presupposition the official status of the persecution. Van Unnik rejects the official nature of the persecution due to the following reasons[117]:

a.   First Peter 5:9 indicates that the situation of the recipients is similar to that of most Christians anywhere.

b.   The reference to state officials in 2:13,14 suggests a positive feeling toward the existing

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[113]   An exception to this view is Robinson (1976:160,161) who believes that Neronian persecution resulted in the authoring of a circular letter for the churches in Asia Minor, hence the first book of Peter. The fact that Peter was imprisoned in Rome certainly substantiates that Neronian persecution at the very least influenced his message and perception.

[114]   Kümmel (1975:425,426); Blevins (1982:403).

[115]   Wand (1934:15,16); Beare (1970:32).

[116]   Beare (1970:33) is convinced that the situation described in the letter of Pliny had direct concern to the situation mentioned in first Peter. The contra view is held by Wand (1934:15,16) and Guthrie (1970:782).

[117]   It needs to be noted here that the nature of the persecution will be discussed at a later stage. The mention of the nature of the persecution is only made here because of its profound influence on the dating of the epistle.

government.[118]

c.   The sufferings described are more like social pressures than pogroms (Van Unnik 1962:762).[119]

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[118] I cannot agree with Van Unnik on this point as will be expounded on at a later stage. The disagreement stems from the following:

a.   Peter's appeal to the recipients to subject themselves to the authorities seems to be as a result of this not happening and not to convey a positive pathos towards the authorities.

b.   Peter appeals on the authority of the Lord as motive for subjection and not the authority of the Emperor or government. If sentiment towards the government was in deed positive then surely Peter could have appealed on the government's sentiment / authority.

c.   As will be discussed later the choice of the Greek word for institution κτίσει is rather odd when used of human creations, and conveys the idea that these institutions resort under God.

d.   Conditionality for submission seems to be the fairness of these officials in as much as they should punish those who do wrong but also praise those who do right. If officials punish believers for being Christian instead of for a crime, they are not accomplishing what they were sent to do in the first place.

e.   The fairness of the officials described in this passage stands in stark contrast to those who judge unjustly / impartially (1:17; 4:17) and in the rest of the letter.

[119] The nature and source of the persecution is also under discussion later on. But, I have to raise an objection to Van Unnik's view here as well. It is believed that the contrary is substantiated in this dissertation.

In agreement with Van Unnik (although for other reasons) Best[120] also comes to the conclusion that an investigation of the persecutions offer no help in determining the date. However, there are different arguments.[121] Others[122] determined the date of composition to range between 73 and 92 AD.

Another quest in the date saga of first Peter has concentrated on ecclesiastical development. On this basis Bigg has suggested a date between 58-64 AD. for the following reasons:

a.   Firstly, the epistle of first Peter could not have been written before the second missionary journey of Paul.

b.   Secondly, the book could not have been written after Paul's letter to Rome and Colossae.

c.   Enough time needs to be granted for the development of the Christian communities.

d.   Growth of the Christian communities experienced opposition even before the Neronian outbreak.[123]

In Kelly's commentary on the epistle, dated in 1969, he too considered a date prior to 64 A.D, mainly citing the following as his reasons:[124]

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[120] Best (1971:42).

[121] To see different arguments on this matter see Goppelt (1978:56-64), although he also subscribes to the thought of non-official persecution.

[122] Elliott (1981:59-87).

[123] Bigg (1902:9).

[124] To view his reasons on the dating of first Peter consult his commentary at: Kelly (1969:30).

a. It is apparent that most of the recipients were recent converts, which suggests an earlier period in the expansion of Christianity in that region.

b. The type of church order depicted involves a simple structure based on the chronological age of individuals.

c. The theology employed in the letter seems to be primitive.

c.1 The first display of primitive theology can be detected in the Trinitarian formula in 1:2.

c.2 Secondly, the servant-Christology found in 2:21-25 also exposes primitive theology.

d. There is more of an immediate tone in the eschatology which anticipates the final revelation of Christ soon. This tone affected their ethics. Both this eschatological tone and their ethics point to an earlier period.

On the contrary, Best argued for a much later period in opting for 80-100 AD. He derives at this date utilizing the following criteria:

a. The church needed to be established for it to be considered a threat to society. A new, young church would not have bothered society since there was a multitude of religions.

b. There is a lack of Jewish / Gentile friction within this Christian community. This was a serious problem which plagued the church in earlier times. This lack of friction shows more maturity on the part of the believers. A fair amount of time must have passed for them to sort out such friction and to mature as Christians.

c. When considering that the audience was predominantly Gentile the extensive use of the Old Testament required sufficient time for their indoctrination.

d. The structure of the social code in 2:13-3:7 reveals the sophistication of a later period.

e. The doctrine of the Spirit already had the complacency of a creed rather than the

enthusiasm of one (Peter) who experienced Pentecost.[125]

One scholar[126] adds to the scholars of the later period the contention that there must have been enough time for the development of the label "Christian" to be spread into Asia Minor and to become popularized and / or hated depending on the perspective.

No matter in which direction the investigation undertakes to determine a conclusive date there seems to be plausible evidence to support both earlier and later dates. As of yet there is no consensus or even a conclusion on the date mystery of first Peter. This leaves the authorship, situation and paradigm wide open to various possibilities.

1.6   The Authorship of the Letter

Since the letter was written for their encouragement (5:12) in the face of persecution, it would have been comprehensively more effective if the author had himself gone through some kind of persecution, and better still if he was also suffering whilst writing the letter. For the letter to be meaningful the audience needed to identify with the author and his situation needed to identify with theirs. The identity of the author would also help pin point the exact nature of the situation they were to deal with. Because the author changes roles and attitudes he needed to be someone whom the readers held in high regard. It is because of these reasons that the question of authorship is discussed.

There are a few theories regarding the authorship of first Peter. Firstly, there is the theory that Peter, the apostle, wrote the letter. Peter is Simon, the son of John. He was a Galilean

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[125] Best (1971:45-48; 63,64).

[126] Elliott (1981:85).

fisherman who accepted the call from Jesus. He was known by the alias, Cephas (Aramaic) or Peter (Greek). As with most Biblical books there are those who support and those who appose the authenticity of first Peter.[127] External evidence certainly points to Peter as the author since Irenaeus mentions Peter in conjunction with first Peter.[128] On the other hand external evidence does not carry much wait due to the problematic occurrence of pseudonymity. Since there is a lack of polemical and apologetical terminology so commonly found in pseudonym letters, these objections seem suspect. Secondly, people theorize about some kind of association with Silvanus. Thirdly, first Peter is declared a pseudonymous writing.[129] Lastly there are also those who believe in the existence of a Petrine school which compiled the letter.

Certain questions arise concerning Petrine authorship:

a.   The Greek literary skills of the author surpasses someone whose native language was Aramaic. Some authors rate these skills as "rivalling Paul's".[130]

b.   The improbability for a fisherman to be skilled in the rhetoric of the schools count against the probable marginal literacy of Peter.[131]

c.   For someone to use the Greek language and the Greek Bible so masterfully is

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[127] Guthrie (1970:773-790) contributes on behalf of the authenticity of first Peter while Kümmel (1972:421-424) opposes it. Heralding more recent defence of the authenticity are Robinson (1976:150-169) and Neugebaure (1979:61-86). Scepticism is voiced by Vielhauer (1975); Perrin (1974); Köster (1982); Sylva (1980); Elliott (1981); Munro (1983) and Brown (1983).

[128] Schutter (1989:4).

[129] Dixon (1989:20).

[130] Schutter (1989:5); Bechtler (1996:54).

[131] Bechtler (1996:54).

problematic for someone who used Hebrew and the Targum.

d.   *Reference is made in a honorific manner to Peter's name. It is felt that Peter would have used Σίμων rather than Πέτρος. This usage casts a shadow over the authenticity when this is done in self-reference.[132] Others[133] see no problem with the self-praise in 5:12 as he argued that 1:1,2 and 5:12-14 were later additions to a sermon of Silvanus.*

e.   *The letter alludes autobiographical information.*

f.   *The terminology is often reminiscent of Paul's,[134] while Peter publically states that Paul is difficult to understand (second Peter 3:15,16).[135] Not only is the terminology reminiscent of Paul's but also Peter's theology which seems almost to be dependant on Paul (Kümmel 1975:29-34).*

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[132] *Paul also makes use of his changed name as Acts 13:9 indicates that his name was Saul. Yet, when Paul does this it is not viewed as being honorific. Silvanus does the same thing as his name was Silas. Why it is seen as being honorific when Peter refers to himself in this way does appear rather strange.*

[133] *Bornemann (1919-20:143-165).*

[134] *Schutter (1989:5-6).*

[135] *This argument is based on Scripture from second Peter (second Peter 3:16). The authorship of second Peter is not at issue here. The dissimilarity between first and second Peter is well acknowledged. For this argument to succeed, the presupposition that first and second Peter were authored by the same person needs to be true. However, this is doubted, especially since this very argument is in favour on non-Petrine authorship. Furthermore, this reference does not say that Peter (or the author of second Peter) finds Paul difficult to understand, but rather makes reference to the difficulty that ignorant and unstable people would have in understanding Paul. This could also infer that this is not the case with stable, knowledgeable people.*

g.   It is also doubted whether Peter had any contact with the addressees.[136]

h.   The letter lacks reference to any personal relationship with the earthly Jesus.[137] Since Peter was part of the inner, personal group of Jesus this is rather strange.

Conversely, the self proclaimed amanuensis can be postulated to ward off the above said objections. Certainly that would account for the literary objections, the use of the Greek Bible, the use of Πέτρος and the absence of autobiographical information. This would also make pseudonymity so much more difficult to appear authentic in biblical times since the scribe would be available for verification. One of the first people to suggest an amanuensis theory was Bigg.[138] Three possibilities were proposed:

a.   Peter dictated the letter in Aramaic which Silvanus translated into Greek.

b.   Peter dictated the letter in Greek which Silvanus corrected as he wrote.

c.   Peter gave Silvanus the freedom to express Peter's ideas subject to Peter's final approval.[139]

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[136] Rousseau (1986:6). For a discussion on the arguments against Petrine authorship see the following, although it must be noted that most authors only supply a few objections and that those mentioned above are representative of all of their views Schutter (1989:5,6); Feldmeier (1992:193-198); Beare (1970:43-50); Best (1971:49-51); Brox (1979:43-51); Goppelt (1978:48-50); Kümmel (1973:423,424). All of the above mentioned authors are of the opinion that the book of first Peter is pseudepigraphic. Schutter accepts the pseudepigraphy hypothesis rather cautiously.

[137] Kümmel (1975:29-34).

[138] Bigg (1902:6).

[139] The complete discussion can be perused at Bigg (1902:6).

The critics discount amanuensis arguing that:

a. *Silvanus was Palestinian.[140] Some scholars for example[141], as a result of Silvanus's Palestinianship, doubts whether Silvanus was better in the thought and language of hellenistic culture than Peter was.[142]*

b. *There are also questions regarding the involvement of Silvanus. Does his involvement include simply the bearing of the document? Or was he the secretary who merely wrote down what was dictated? Or was he a co-author?*

c. *Some[143] would suggest that Silvanus was not the author of the letter but rather the bearer. Others[144] collaborate this suggestion by arguing that διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν ... ἔγραπψα (5:12) indicates that Silvanus was not the secretary at all but rather the bearer of the letter.[145]*

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[140] *Silvanus is mentioned four times in the New Testament (second Cor. 1:19; first Thess. 1:1,2, second Thess. 1:1, first Peter 5:12.). This figure however could increase if one takes into account that Silvanus is the same person who Luke calls Silas in Acts. This should however not influence the authenticity of Silvanus's work since his work corresponds to that of Paul. Should this fact be a concern then it should also be a concern pertaining to the other letters which he was authoring in co-operation with Paul and Timothy. The fact that he is mentioned as working with Paul should strengthen the argument of Silvanus's authenticity as scribe to Peter.*

[141] *Beare (1970:212,213).*

[142] *Selwyn (1947:9-17).*

[143] *Michaels (1988:lxii).*

[144] *Robinson (1976:167-169); Chase (1898:3.790) [reprinted in 1988].*

[145] *For parallels, see Acts 15:23; Elliott (1992:277); Kümmel (1973:424). Goppelt*

One can also cite counter-arguments in favour of Petrine authorship. Just to provide a few ideas of such counter-arguments the following are presented:

a. The origin of the cryptogram "Babylon" is not necessarily found only in post-seventy literature but it could also have been used earlier just as Daniel's earlier reference to the Seleucid Empire.[146]

b. The resemblances to Paul's writings could well be explained with the existence of a common early-Christian tradition. Since the book of Romans bears an earlier date it cannot be excluded that Peter read Romans and thus Paul permeated Peter's book.[147] Kümmel's argument of Paulinisms is thus countered by Selwyn[148] attributing the Paulinisms to the use of common material.[149]

(1978:369-371) argues against this view. Robinson's and Chase's reading of 5:12 does, however, not preclude Silvanus from being the book's amanuensis as well as being the book's bearer.

[146] Theide (1986:222-224) shows that Babylon was used metaphorically by the Roman dramatist Terence (160 BC) and also by the Roman stirist Petronius (61 AD).

[147] To expound on this thought see Boismard (1966:1449); Dalton (1989:87); Davids (1990:5,6); Elliott (1992:276); Goppelt (1978:49); Guthrie (1970:785-786); Robinson (1976:166); Thurén (1990:33).

[148] Selwyn (1981:19-24).

[149] For further arguments in favour of Petrine authorship see Reicke (1964:71,72) who sees no reference to Empirical sacrifices in Peter and thus dates the book in Peter the apostle's lifetime. Also see Dixon (1989:20-26).

c.   Apart from the suggested amanuensis[150] Peter's leadership in Antioch and Rome strongly implies competency with the Greek language.[151]

d.   As would be expected Peter would make use of the LXX in view of his Greek audience.[152]

e.   Concerning the usage of Πέτρος, one might very well expect Peter to use the same name in his writing as the name that the recipients used for him. If the people in the mentioned churches (1:1) called him Πέτρος then surely he would have used Πέτρος in his writing to them.

f.   The suggestion that Peter makes no reference to events proving that he is the same Peter that walked with the earthly Jesus is not entirely true since there are numerous veiled allusions to such events (1:8; 2:23; 5:1).[153] Martin and Gundry[154] agree that first Peter is "peppered with frequent allusions to dominical sayings and incidents …".[155]

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[150] Just about all scholars who defend Petrine authorship utilize amanuensis to do so. One of the only exceptions is Grudem (1988:24, 32,33).

[151] Kelly (1969:31,32), although supporting amanuensis set out to prove that Peter's Greek could not have been quite as bad as some have claimed. Also see Guthrie (1970:778); Robinson (1976:167); Spicq (1966:21-23); Grudem (1988:26-30).

[152] Guthrie (1970:778); Robinson (1976:166).

[153] Dalton (1989:87); Robinson (1976:164,165); Selwyn (1947:27-33); Stibbs and Walls (1959:33-35).

[154] Gundry (1966-1967:336-350).

[155] Martin (1978:331). Take note that Best (1969-1970:95-113) responded negatively to Gundry's initial article. Their debate continued as Gundry (1974:211-232) answered Best's objections in "Further Verba on Verba Christi in First Peter". This represented an interesting play on words as Gundry's first article was entitled "Verba Christi in 1 (sic) Peter".

g.   Guthrie[156] points out that Peter was certainly not illiterate.   In fact, being Galilean implied bilinguality.   Furthermore, it would be unreasonable to infer that his Greek did not improve substantially after thirty years of ministry to possibly Greek-speaking areas.[157]

The author of Peter is also viewed by some scholars[158] as a presbyter or presbyters (πρεσβυτέρων) of the second or third generation Christians in Rome.   Yet others are not willing to go so far as to describe Peter as a pseudonymous presbyter as can be seen in the following quotation:

> "Die Namen Petrus und Silvanus sind, misst man sie an der traditions-geschichtlichen Struktur des Briefes, all Wahrscheinlichkeit nach kein Postulat pseudonymer Schriftstellerei, das lediglich eine formale Autoritaet vorweisen wollte.   Der Brief wended auf all Faelle tradition an, guer die diese beiden Namen als Sigel stehen koennen.   Moeglicherweise hat man in Rom gewusst, dass diese Tradition massgeblich durch diese beiden Lehrer (Petrus und Silvanus) gepraegt war, und sie deshalb unter ihrem Namen weitergegeben".[159]

The theory of pseudonymity seems to be the more popular one.   The following is written with regards to pseudonymity:

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[156]   Gundry (1970:778).

[157]   In reference to Peter's Greek ability or lack thereof see Moulton and Howard (1979:25,26) which deals with the grammar of New Testament Greek.

[158]   Brox (1979:41,46,228).

[159]   Goppelt (1978:69).

"This is the most obvious alternative to Petrine authorship and the earliest critics of the traditional view automatically assumed it".[160]

Beare[161] published the first commentary[162] in English based on this theory. He discounted any apostolic or Silvanine contributions attributing the authorship to an unknown presbyter from the area to which the letter is addressed.[163] Although this theory enjoyed popularity it was also discounted by people like Robinson. In his refute of the pseudonym theory he cited the usual arguments associated with pseudonymity, but added two more perspectives:

a.   He questioned the common acceptance of the book.

b.   He addressed the problem of motive. There appears to be no theological controversy requiring the authority of an apostle in order to be resolved.[164] The question is simply this: why attach the book to Peter which contains Pauline theology, and terminology, and why mention Paul's associates, addressed to what we could possibly call Pauline churches that were merely undergoing some kind of persecution?[165] Would the book not have been more credible bearing the name of Paul rather than taking the risk that the "truth" about the pseudonymity of the book might become known? These and other

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[160] Guthrie (1970:786).

[161] Beare (1970:vii).

[162] Beare's commentary received mixed reviews (Dixon 1989:23). Elliott (1976:244) was one of the scholars to conclude that he considered Beare's treatment of Petrine authorship to be neglectful of recent Petrine scholarship.

[163] Beare (1970:43-50).

[164] Robinson (1976:164, 186-188).

[165] Robinson (1976:164, 186-188).

questions show that the motive does not make sense.

Other scholars[166] postulate a scenario where the letter is merely based on a Petrine tradition.[167] Thus there was a Petrine school which was responsible for the letter.[168] This scenario uses the objections to Petrine authorship to substantiate the Petrine school theory. Arguments for this postulation are:

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[166] Best (1971:60-63); Blevins (1982:401-413).

[167] Furthermore, it is stated that this Petrine tradition is one of literary dependence, especially upon the Pauline corpus, thus the literary similarity. This would make the author no more than an editor or compiler of Petrine or Pauline traditions (Kendall 1984:5). It was as early as 1781 that Semler proposed that first Peter had imitated the Pauline epistles (Shimada 1966:19). One author comments that first Peter is "a slavish copy of the Pauline writings" (Jülicher 1904:211). Others supporting this view are Holtzmann (1885:487-490); Barnett (1941:51). Conversly, research has shown that first Peter was not only dependent on Pauline materials but that there are also similarities between first Peter and James, Hebrews and first Clement. Examples typifying this are: James 1:2,12 (Joy in suffering); James 1:1 (The metaphor of diaspora); Heb. 11:13 (The blood of sprinkling); etc.

At the end of the second world war the above mentioned theory was challenged with studies based on the principles of Formgeschichte. Selwyn (1981:365-466) was among the first to question the dependence theory.

[168] Generally, in the above mentioned cases (compilations) the opening paragraphs are viewed in isolation. It is only occasionally connected to succeeding materials (Kendal 1984:4,5). In this case however the relationship between the part and the whole has significant consequences for the interpretation of each part. There is therefore a modern consensus that the epistle must be viewed as a unified document (Kendal 1984:4,5).

a.   Community authorship best explain the similarities and dissimilarities in first Peter and second Peter.

b.   The liturgical elements in these letters point to a worshipping community.

c.   The combined use of the Old Testament, dominical logia, early church traditions and pseudepigraphical literature favours community design.

It can further be noted that there is a host of other theories which have been forwarded to solve the authorship question.[169] After a lengthy discussion on this topic it was concluded, as many scholars do, that: "1 (sic) Peter is a pseudonymous letter that originated in Rome sometime during the period 75-105".[170] This view of Bechtler represents the view of the majority of modern scholars on first Peter's authorship. Nevertheless, there is little reason to doubt that the book is Peter's own. Unlike second Peter, first Peter was generally known and accepted in the church from the early second century on.[171] After an examination on the question of authorship it appears as if one major investigation was neglected, namely that of exegesis. Exegesis goes a long way to prove that the author must have known Jesus personally and very well. The book makes extended use of the sayings of Jesus[172].

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[169] Kendall (1984:10-18).

[170] Bechtler (1996:264).

[171] Michaels (1988:xxxii).

[172] Comparisons of such sayings found in Peter include: Matt. 5:10, Luke 6:22 <> first Peter 3:14; Matt. 5:11 <> first Peter 4:14a; Matt. 5:12 <> first Peter 1:8, 4:13; Matt. 5:16 <> first Peter 2:12; Luke 6:28 <> first Peter 3:9, 16; Luke 6:32-34 <> first Peter 2:19-20. Michaels (1988:xli) writes that "the 'impartiality' of the allusions suggests that Peter is drawing not on the finished gospels but on pre-Synoptic tradition". The "pre-Synoptic tradition" is attributed to the Q material according to Michaels (1988:xli). Yet it could also be attributed to the possibility that Peter knew Jesus and witnessed these sayings. Michaels (1988) constantly

The authorship of the epistle is rather important to this study due to the following:

a. The authorship is closely linked to the date of the book. Together the authorship and date determine the situation in the book. They play a major role on the source and form of suffering experienced in first Peter. Certainly that has a bearing on the interpretation of the book.

b. The authenticity of the book depends much on the author. The second book of Peter has been screwed in controversy for many years. That debate has to a certain extent at least been blown over onto first Peter. It would be helpful in this matter if the apostle Peter was indeed the author.

c. Due to the suffering in first Peter the message would be more meaningful coming from someone who had himself gone through such suffering.

d. The apostle Peter had experienced many major reversals[173] in his own life which contributed to his and his reader's understanding of the book.

The past experiences of the apostle Peter[174] would certainly qualify him to identify and empathize with his readers. Since he had remained a Christian through troublous times he could encourage them to do the same.

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mentions the use of Jesus' sayings in his exegetical comments on first Peter.

[173] Examples of such reversals are: from denial to apostleship, from a hero walking on water to a helpless sinking man, from chopping off an ear to accepting suffering himself, etc.

[174] Regardless of who the real author was, for the sake of simplicity, this dissertation refers to the author as Peter. That does not necessarily imply that the apostle Peter is the real author.

1.7   Unity

The unity or disunity of the book would contribute positively or negatively to both the authorship and date hypotheses. If the possible disunity of the book were known to the readers it would have affected its success rate in the sense that empathy, encouragement and the reversal of roles within the book would not have been so heartfelt and genuine.

Before discussing the unity of first Peter we need to clarify what we mean with the term unity. Does unity apply to a book if all the parts share a common author? Is the book a unit if it were composed at one stage as a liturgy or a sermon, and then had an epistolary appendix added at some later stage by the same author? Is it a unit if it incorporates rather lengthy statements from traditional materials? Does unity refer to authorship at all? Does unity refer to a theme?

Various arguments have also been raised unconvincingly against the literary unity of first Peter. Grouped they fall within four categories:

a.   The linguistic and literary phenomena of the text does not support the coherence of first Peter.[175]

b.   There is a lack of epistolary characteristics.[176]

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[175] Preisker postulates this argument by stating that first Peter consists of a series of self-contained units which give the impression of non-coherence (Windisch 1951). Beare points out that there are stylistic contrasts between 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:14 (Beare 1970:26).

[176] There is no significant relationship between the epistolary framework (1:1-2 and 5:12-14) and the main body of first Peter. This statement has been questioned by Kendall 1984:24-29.

c.   The presence of baptismal motifs presupposes a baptismal setting for the document.[77]

d.   Peter presupposes two different situations as well as the existence of a literary break after the doxology in 4:11.[78]

Perdelwitz[79] regards first Peter as a genuine epistle superficially appended to a sermon whose composition was unrelated. The logical conclusion that this view necessitates is that the book had to have been two different documents at some stage during its compilation. Contrary to Perdelwitz's view, those who have held that first Peter is in large part a homily / liturgy are by no means declaring that the document as it now stands is a composite of unrelated works. Bornemann, for example, in essence viewed the whole as a sermon while Preisker relegated 4:12-5:11 to a distinctive, somewhat different stage of the same liturgical procedure. Preisker came to this conclusion by noting differences in the emphasis on suffering between 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:11.[80] The following questions and concerns gave rise to the inquiry of Petrine (first Peter) unity:

a.   There seems to be a need to account for the baptismal references in 1:3-4:11.

b.   The presence of the doxology in 4:11 is an indication of disunity.

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[77] These baptismal motifs can be seen in the reference to baptism in 3:21; the use of γαγεννάω (1:3,23); the readers are addressed as ἀρτιγέννητος (2:2); the recurrence of νῦν (1:12; 2:10; 2:25; 3:21); and ἄρτι (1:6,8; 2:2); and the use of various creedal statements which would be suitable for a baptismal occasion (1:20;2:21-25; 3:18-22). That these elements require a baptismal setting however, is hard to substantiate (Kendall 1984:29).

[78] Kendall (1984:21-40).

[79] Perdelwitz (1911:16).

[80] For a discussion on the differences in emphasis on suffering between 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5 see Dixon (1989:31).

c.   The more intense and immediate nature of the persecutions described in 4:12-19 and 5:9,10 suggests different instances of writing.

However, the presence of baptismal references could well be explained by the importance with which baptism was viewed as an initiatory rite in the thought of the early church.[181] Secondly, the presence of the doxology in 4:11 does not necessarily require that one document end at this point and that another begins.[182] The stylistic differences between 1:3-4:11 and 4:12ff are not part of the discussion here.[183] Notwithstanding, the admonition to submit to human ordinance in 2:13 might imply that the readers had hitherto not always submitted. Non-submittance to social pressure would have resulted in conflict with the state which would have been more intense. Coupled with non-submittance we also have records of accusations. If there were social frictions already, to whom would society accuse Christians? Accusations to government about Christians would lead to more intense and immediate persecution. In 2:12 and 3:16 there is reference to those who καταλαλέω Christians. Kittel[184] suggests that the word conveys the idea of accusing someone where the connotation is that the accusations are false or exaggerated. In these passages (2:12; 3:16) two messages surface: firstly, that the accusations are false, and secondly, that the readers are familiar with these accusations and charges. Accusations and charges are more official than complaints and rumours. Hence, more intense

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[181] Warden (1986:30,42).

[182] Doxologies are not rare in the New Testament, see Selwyn (1947:220). As a matter of fact, Westcott enumerates about sixteen in Hebrews alone (Warden 1986:42). Of all the instances of doxologies in the whole of the New Testament they are only utilized three times to conclude epistles (Rom. 16:27; Jude 25; second Peter 3:18)(Selwyn 1947:220).

[183] Considering the brevity of the text involved it is not surprising that arguments are mostly subjective and not substantive.

[184] Kittel (1968:3).

persecution.

Despite the differing theories on offer, modern research has reached a general consensus[185] that the evidence which can be drawn from first Peter suggests its literary coherence.[186] The striking recollections[187] in first Peter 4:12-5:14 of 1:1-4:11 strongly suggest that the book forms one unit. In fact it speaks for the integrity of the entire letter.[188]

In conclusion then, it can be deduced, as some scholars[189] do, that first "Peter is in its entirety one epistle written on one occasion and addressed to communities which were experiencing actual trials and persecutions".[190] It is hard to imagine that the theme of the reversal of roles which is interwoven through every aspect of the book could have been constructed so eloquently in a disunited book.

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[185] This consensus is documented in the following survey articles Martin (1962); Elliott (1976); Sylva (1980); Cothenet (1980); Neugebauer (1980).

[186] Kendal (1984:19).

[187] Examples of such recollections are: suffering as slander (4:14 <> 2:12; 3:16); just and unjust suffering (4:15-16 <> 2:19-20; 3:14); suffering according to the will of God (4:19 <> 3:17); the blessedness of the righteous sufferer (4:14 <> 3:14); joy in suffering (4:13 <> 1:6,8). The motif of the house of God also reappears in 4:17 <> 2:5. Lastly the notion of the judgement of the disobedient is also recollected (4:17 <> 2:7-8; 2:19-20).   For further information on this topic see Campbell (1995:278-279).

[188] Campbell (1995:278).

[189] Warden (1986:44, 238).

[190] Moffatt (1914:342-344).

1.8   Genre and Theme

We embark on our study of the genre of first Peter with Adolf von Harnack[191] who in 1897 postulated the thesis that the book was not a letter at all but rather a sermon (homiletischer Aufsatz).   To account for the multitude of perspectives with which suffering is discussed, Richard Perdelwits[192] expounded on Harnack's thesis. Perdelwitz argued that the particles νῦν (1:12; 2:10,25; 3:21) and ἄρτι (1:6,8) suggested the immediate setting of a declaratory statement.   He concluded that first Peter was a sermon with two parts consisting of a baptismal homily[193], and secondly an epistolary and hortatory section.[194] The baptismal homily was supposedly directed to Christian converts who had hitherto belonged to mystery cults. This section was then embedded in an epistolary, hortatory framework.[195]   Barring certain modifications this thesis was widely accepted from 1911 until 1930 by Streeter, Windisch, Beare

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[191] von Harnack (1897:451).

[192] To read the comments which expound on von Harnack's thesis see Perdelwits (1911:16-19,26).

[193] Perdelwitz found explicit references to baptism in 1:3,23; 3:21 and several other implicit references, for example 2:1,2. On account of these "baptismal" references he concluded that the section 1:3-4:11 originally had been a baptismal homily and that this homily displayed several points of kinship with the mystery cults. The next logical step was to draw parallels between baptism and the rites of Isis, Attis, Mithras which he did. He then suggested that the converts might originally have been devotees of Cybele (1911). Perdelwitz was supported by Streeter (1929:128-130).

[194] Dixon (1989:31).

[195] Dixon (1989:31).

and others.[196]   Following these authors others expanded on the above said thesis and yet others made new suggestions.[197]   In 1946 the work of Selwyn appeared in the form of a commentary on first Peter taking a different approach.   Selwyn's comments on the genre of first Peter can be abridged by stating that the document is an encyclical letter written by Silvanus, the purpose of which was to encourage Christians in their time of trial.

The turning[198] point in Petrine study came with the publication of Lohse's work in the same year (1954) as that of Cross's[199].   His[200] disagreement with previous scholars concerned the

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[196]   Windisch (1930:76,77,82); Beare (1970:27); Adam (1952:20,21); Bornemann (1919:143-165); Hauck (1949:36); Beasley-Murray (1962:252).

[197]   Bornemann (1919,1920:146) even went further than Perdelwitz in maintaining that essentially all of first Peter had been a baptismal discourse. Priesker (1951:156-162) expanded Perdelwitz's work arguing that another section should be added, that of 1:3-5:11 being an entire liturgy. He also argued that the term "baptismal homily" was to be substituted with a better designation for the document which became first Peter, namely, "baptismal liturgy" (Priesker 1951:156-162).   He advanced the hypothesis that Silvanus, a second or third generation Christian, compiled the liturgy, added the brief opening and closing verses, and subsequently dispatched the document as a letter to Christians in Asia Minor who had known the apostle Peter (Priesker 1951:156-162).   Boismard (1956:182-208; 1957:161-183) disagreed stating that the liturgy consists of various fragments. Cross (1954:22) devised a total new theory that the suffering in Peter could be equated to liturgical language of the Easter service near Passover time instead of physical suffering. Similar views were expressed by Leaney (1967:8,15,16) and Strobel (1958:210-219).

[198]   Bechtler (1996:5) is of the opinion that this constituted the turning point on this discussion.

[199]   Cross understood first Peter 1:3-4:11 to be an abbreviated, incomplete text of the

stylistic aporias that these scholars attributed to baptismal liturgies and the fact that baptismal references are restricted to only 1:3-2:10. Lohse judged first Peter to be an occasional letter, the purpose of which was to strengthen and comfort the mentioned congregations in the midst of slander (3:16; 4:3,4,14), court appearances (4:15-16) and the challenging of their faith and hope (3:15). This concept led to the disfavour of the baptismal - homiletical theories by most scholars in favour of the literary integrity and the genuine epistolary and paraenetic character of first Peter. However, there were still some scholars who continued to hold to some form of the baptismal - homily theory.[201] Since the main theme of Peter was no longer considered to be baptism (which was now considered incidental) it was replaced by conduct - the conduct of Christians in the midst of suffering[202] which had a tremendous bearing on their

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liturgy followed by the presiding official. He believed to have found a clue for the specific season of the year for which the liturgical statement of the document was designed in the frequent occurrences of the words πάσχω and πάθημα. Cross (1954:15) penned:

> "It seems as if the writer of 1 (sic) Peter has used the word πάσχω, in relation
> to the suffering of Christ and those which Christians have to bear, as a sort
> of Ariadne thread for his whole work".

[200] Lohse (1954:68-89).

[201] Beare (1970:27; 220-226); Boismard (1956:182-208; 1957:161-183); Martin, R (1962:40); Reicke (1964:74).

[202] Hill (1976:181-189) agrees with Lohse on this new theme of the book of first Peter. But just what exactly this suffering entails remains unanswered by Hill. This uncertainty can be perceived in the following quote from Hill (1976:183) when he states that the author of first Peter:

> "is concerned with the results of an intensification of the virtually continuous

being and remaining Christian.

The next landscape in the Petrine genre debate was shaped by Leonhard Goppelt[203] who in his commentary on first Peter dated in 1978 depicted a twofold theme, viz. Christian existence in the midst of non-Christian society and secondly suffering.[204] Goppelt believed the first book of Peter to be a circular letter that responded to the situation of its addressees in three stages:

a.   The social alienation stems from the nature of Christian life which could also be defined as the eschatological existence of the people of God or the οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ. Christ's death and resurrection affect this new life in such a way that they were no longer in sync with society, hence alienation. The tangible effect of the new life could be seen in their hope, faith and sibling love (1:1-2:10).

b.   Society demanded participation in the institutions of society. Peter's response prepares and encourages them to endure suffering due to their non-participation (2:11-4:11). As dual example Christ's suffering is firstly invoked as atonement and secondly as

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harrying of Christians by the local opponents which could lead to suspicion, denial of civil rights, arrests, imprisonment and even death".

Here Hill equates suffering with harrying that could lead to ... In other words it had not gotten to suspicion, denial of civil rights, arrests, imprisonment and death yet. So what does Peter have in mind when he talks about "fiery trials", "suffering", etc? The quote certainly indicates the problems that needed to be faced in remaining a Christian.

[203] Goppelt (1978:18,19).

[204] The major perspectives and themes of Goppelt's commentary of first Peter appeared two years prior to 1978 in Goppelt's writings: Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Volume 2) and The Variety and Unity of the Apostolic witness to Christ (161-178).

prototype for their suffering in society (2:21; 3:18).

c.   *The last stage of Peter's response confirms that their suffering at the hands of society is not only unavoidable, but expresses concrete participation in the sufferings of Christ (4:12-5:14).*[205]

Goppelt was not to have the last say as another major commentary appeared on the scene merely a year later (1979) this time by Norbert Brox. Brox concluded that the theme was hope or as he put it, hope in salvation as the certain future of Christians (3:15).[206] *Brox's logic is illustrated in his view that the one who suffers walks in the steps of Christ who also experienced injustice and hostility, and the one who follows in Christ's footsteps will ultimately arrive at Christ's final destination which is glory.*[207]

In 1981 two important studies on first Peter appeared, viz. David Balch's work and that of John Elliott. Balch's work is primarily on "the origin and function of the code of household ethics found in 1 (sic) Peter" which he concludes to be Aristotle's topos about household management.[208] *Household management included then, domestic relationships necessary to the stability of the house and, ultimately, of the city. Due to this slant Balch finds Peter's epistle to be apologetic since Peter instructs slaves and wives to play the social roles assigned to them by Aristotle in order to silence the criticisms of the Gentiles.*

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[205]   *Goppelt (1978:20-21; 114; 153; 201-206).*

[206]   *Brox (1979:16).*

[207]   *Brox (1979:254,257).*

[208]   *Balch (1981:2).*

Those who advocate the position that first Peter is a baptismal rite have failed to account for:

a.   *Any mechanism used and,*

b.   *Any motivation for a liturgical statement becoming an epistle.*[209]

Moule, Thornton and Hill have successfully criticized the thesis that a baptismal homily / liturgy is the essential component of first Peter. In conclusion then, the majority of modern scholars agree that first Peter is a letter instead of the previously held view that it was a baptismal homily.[210] *Troy Martin calls Peter's book a paraenetical letter.*[211] *Warden*[212] *also confirms that the literary nature of first Peter takes the form of an epistle.*[213]

There are many things that we do not know about the book of first Peter, but the one thing that seems certain is that the audience was not confronted with a theological or doctrinal conflict thus limiting the theme to other thoughts.[214] *The most obvious theme of the letter must be suffering, or rather how to cope in the midst of suffering. The word-group* πάσχειν *(to suffer) and its derivatives occur more frequently in first Peter than in any other book in the*

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[209] *For a discussion of arguments stating that first Peter cannot be classified as a baptismal homily see Best (1971:27).*

[210] *Bechtler (1996:25,26).*

[211] *Troy Martin (1992:81-134).*

[212] *Warden (1986:23,34).*

[213] *This view surfaced from as early as 1955 in the person of Moule (1955:6) who stated that the book is genuinely epistolary and written with specific communities in mind.*

[214] *Bechtler (1996:29).*

New Testament.[215] It is therefore not surprising that people like Hall concluded that "suffering is the overriding concern of the book ...".[216] There are others who postulate additional themes, like Frederich,[217] who suggests as theme Christ's obedience as a model for the Christian to follow.[218] The last recommendation that we are going to mention in this dissertation as theme of first Peter, is hope.[219] The author himself makes a statement as to the theme of the book in 5:12b. Dixon paraphrased the author's assertion succinctly when he wrote: "... this is the costly grace of God. Live by it at all costs!".[220]

Although the suggestions from various scholars regarding the above mentioned themes are diverse they are still not exhaustive. I would like to suggest another theme, namely: The reversal of roles as the reasoning for remaining Christian in the face of hardship. This theme includes the previous mentioned theme of suffering but goes beyond that. Peter does not only write about what they are going through. He also submits a solution. Without any solution his epistle would barely have grounds for existence. Part of the solution, as will be presented later on, is the creation of a new perspective on themselves and their situation. This new perspective teaches them how to evaluate themselves and their situation differently.

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[215] For a discussion on the meaning of the πάσχειν word-group see Moulton and Geden (1963:778).

[216] Hall (1976:137). Also see Lohse (1954:42).

[217] Frederich (1975:26,27).

[218] Other scholars who also use obedience as their suggestion of the theme of first Peter, although with different slants are Best (1971:71); Kelly (1969:43,44).

[219] For a discussion on the theme of hope in first Peter see Piper (1980:212-231).

[220] Dixon (1989:38).

1.9 Purpose

The purpose of first Peter is intertwined with the theme of persecution and hence the solution of the reversal of roles. The following purposes of the book emerge:

a.   Peter himself declares the purpose of his writing in 5:12 as encouragement to stand in the grace of God. In other words, to remain in the grace of God or to remain Christian.

b.   To serve as a reminder of the significance of their baptism.

c.   To inform them of God's protecting power in the face of trials (1:3-6; 1:22,23; 5:10).

d.   To bear an eschatological promise to the believers and at the same time to reveal a warning to non-believers (1:13, 17; 2:12; 4:5-7, 13, 19; 5:4).

e.   To encourage his readers to follow in the example of Christ (2:4,5, 21-23; 3:17,18).

f.   To persuade them to live virtuous lives in order that they can stand without reproach before the non-believers (4:1,2).

g.   To proclaim that the end is near (4:7).

h.   To counsel them to place their hope and confidence in God in the midst of difficulties (1:21).

Each of the above mentioned purposes is intertwined with the reversal of roles (these themes will be discussed at length later on. We are therefore only making the connection here). Peter encourages his readers to remain Christians with the use of the theme of reversal. Baptism is a public reversal of roles in the sense that participants bid their previous lives farewell in favour for their new lives.[221] God's protecting power also makes them change places with the

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[221] Baptism symbolizes inter alia, a new life. This can be seen in Rom. 6:4 which says:

non-believers as they will be bestowed with glory and the non-believers with shame. Since Christians are currently shamed by society this constitutes a rather apt reversal. The eschatological promise also bids a reversal as the eschatology means hope to Christians but damnation to society. Society currently damns Christians and this too represents a pertinent reversal. There are numerous reversals hidden in the example of Christ such as the reversal: from shame to glory. Virtuous lives will also result in the reversal of honour since their good behaviour will shame the accusers.

In this chapter we looked at introductory issues to place ourselves and Peter's readers in the right context. After this has been done, and before the above mentioned reversals together with Peter's solutions are discussed, the problems the readers are experiencing need to be explored.

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may <u>live a new life</u>" (New International Version).