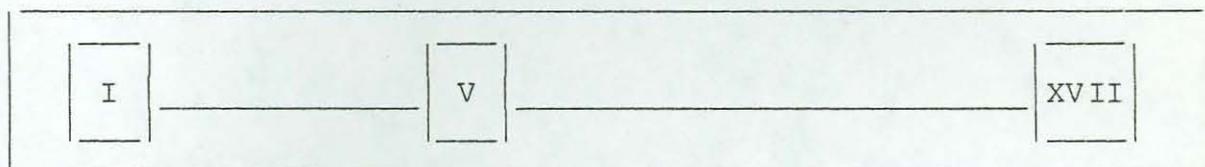


THE METATEXTUAL COMMUNICATION OF 1 PETER

1. THE METATEXTUAL THRUST OF 1 PETER

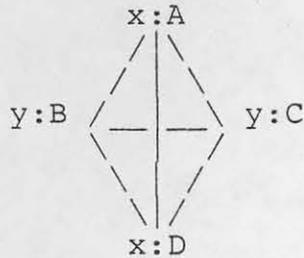
STATEMENT 23: The chronological-syntactic order and emphasis in 1 Peter have been identified in the introductory (I) and closing (XVII) pericopes. In addition to this pericope V has been identified as structurally important.



These pericopes should serve as a guide to reveal the thrust of the text to the reader. In modern translations of the Bible the short introduction to each book could be utilized more effectively to highlight these dominant pericopes. The point is that the identification of pericopes I, V and XVII as structurally important in 1 Peter is in itself a giant leap towards understanding its thrust. The golden rule that the demarcators of a macro text (i.e. the beginning and end) are usually of structural importance in most texts, is easy enough to be applied by the average reader.

STATEMENT 24: In addition to this the hierarchial structure of the semantic thrust of 1 Peter has been identified as chiasitic.

The chiasitic semantic structure of 1 Peter confirms the paradoxical semantic contrast of the "election-rejection" master symbols - especially in the highlighted oxymoron #èklektois parepidemois#. This paradoxical chiasitic thrust of 1 Peter has proved to be the redescription of the cosmologic perspective of the communicator-author in terms of the receptor-addressees, who are in the last instance the party concerned. This structure was also pragmatically confirmed.



\* INTRODUCTION (I)

A: accept God's Fatherhood and your brotherhood in Christ (amidst your suffering) (I-IV);

\* accept your status as strangers and refugees (V);

B: accept your unique lifestyle towards outsiders (even if it means suffering like Christ) (VI-IX);

C: accept your suffering under the outsiders for Christ's sake (but keep up your unique lifestyle as a brotherhood) (X-XIV);

D: accept your brotherhood and God's Fatherhood (amidst your suffering) (XV-XVI);

\* CLOSING (XVII).

STATEMENT 25: The static structure of the text pragmatics in 1 Peter was expressed in pragmatic signals as well as the alternation of assertive and appellative cola functions.

The alternation of the assertive and appellative functions occurred throughout the text. It is significant, however, that although the number of occurrences of these functions are fairly evenly distributed in 1 Peter, the precedence of the assertive function was noticed in different ways (cf II C 4.2 & 4.3; III C 2 & 3). Thus the indicative basis of the imperative is structurally manifested in 1 Peter. This is another pointer to the relief of the static thrust of the text. Interestingly enough, this assertive-appellative contrast was inextricably intertwined with the semantic contrast of "election-rejection".

STATEMENT 26: With regard to the historical dimension of the static thrust of 1 Peter different streams as well as a specific relief of tradition material were identified.

In the light of the fact that I did not analyse 1 Peter text-historically as a whole, it is difficult for me to give any indication of the horizontal interrelationship of the tradition material. With regard to the first five pericopes which



2. THE METATEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE OF 1 PETER

STATEMENT 27: The actantial structure and master symbols of 1 Peter revealed the paradoxical structure of the Christological-cosmologic perspective of 1 Peter.

TOTAL REALITY: GOD AS CREATOR WHO JUDGES

Ta: PAST

Tn: PRESENT

Tx: FUTURE

|        |                           |         |                  |         |     |
|--------|---------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-----|
|        | GOD AS FATHER             |         |                  |         |     |
|        | RADICAL                   |         |                  | RADICAL |     |
|        | GIVES PEACE IN CHRIST FOR |         |                  |         |     |
| "out-" | "insiders"                | 1:1     | "insiders"       | "out-"  |     |
|        | faith                     |         | election         |         |     |
| P      | hope                      |         | rebirth          | N       |     |
| R      | love                      |         | mercy            | O       |     |
| E      | GOD'S ELECT               |         | STRANGERS        | N       |     |
| -      |                           | C       |                  | -       |     |
| C      | +   love b%               | E       | b_honour         | +       | - C |
| H      | +   serve b%              | CONDUCT | b_witness        | +       | - H |
| R      | +                         | T       |                  | +       | - R |
| I      |                           | R       |                  |         | I   |
| S      | assurance/grace           | A       | appeal/encourage | S       |     |
| T      | glory                     | L       | rejoice          | T       |     |
| I      | blessed                   |         | be holy          | I       |     |
| A      | save                      |         | accept           | A       |     |
| N      |                           | 5:12    |                  | N       |     |
|        | AMIDST THEIR SUFFERING    |         |                  |         |     |

The analysis of 1 Peter exposed its Christological-cosmologic perspective which had theological, ecclesiological and sociological implications. The following master symbols and metaphors dominated these relationships. Christ the lord-living-word-cornerstone-example-chief-shepherd-keeper has set the addressees free, changed them, set an example for them and cares for and rules over them. It is through this resocialization that the addressees as newborn-babes-living-stones committed themselves to the master symbols of "election-rejection" based on the cross-paradox and resurrection-exaltation of Jesus Christ and came to know the reality of God the Father-Judge-Creator who has chosen them as his children-people-nation-priesthood in order to love and serve one another in spite of their experiencing of suffering-infliction-slander-discrimination from the heathen-

unbelievers-outsiders. Therefore, the identity of the insiders as "elect strangers" provides them with master symbols which were able to give ultimate meaning to their suffering by following the example of Christ in not retaliating, but honouring and witnessing to outsiders. These master symbols were Christologically motivated which revealed Christ's cosmologic perspective - that is the paradoxical experience of God as his Father and the Judge of the world which prevented him from retaliation and enabled him to suffer the cross unjustifiedly. Therefore the Christological-cosmologic perspective of 1 Peter is the Christ paradox which gives ultimate meaning (radically, centrally and totally) for the existence of the addressees in the totality of the cosmologic time order (i e past, present and future).

It is important to note how the master symbols of 1 Peter were effectively communicated by metaphors (cf Rall 1980:5) which were able to create vivid mental images in the reader. These images were able to persuade and activate receptors. The challenge facing modern interpreters of ancient texts is to use metaphors which would dynamically translate the Christological perspective of 1 Peter for new readers. Without this translation the communication of 1 Peter is obscured. This became clear in our analysis of the esoteric and dazzling array of metaphors in 1:1-2:10 (cf II B 3.2.1, 4.2.2; III B 2.4.1.1). The absolutizing of ancient metaphors and the absence of their dynamic translation indeed explains the passiveness and even false (heretic) interpretations of these ancient documents in the church today. This has important implications for the catechesis and preaching of the New Testament. I believe that the translation and transformation of the mental images of 1 Peter, for example, can create new possibilities to communicate with modern Christians.

STATEMENT 28: The Christological perspective of 1 Peter has been identified as an absolute prerequisite for the metatextual communication of the text.

The decisiveness of the Christological perspective has been identified in terms of the actantial roles referred to in 1 Peter. It was especially the qualification of the interlocutors as insiders resocialized by and believing in Christ that has set the parameters for the metatextual reception of this ancient canonized text. This was also confirmed by the esoteric metaphors and tradition material used.

This Christological redescription of the historical reality reflected in the textual world of 1 Peter, is the orientation point for the primary interlocutors and their interpretation of their historical and existential reality. Thus a historical (i e an inter- and extratextual) commitment to Jesus Christ is presupposed for the secondary reception of 1 Peter as well.

Finally, let us have a look at the strategy of identification and estrangement imposed on the Christ-committed readers of 1 Peter.

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3. THE METATEXTUAL STRATEGY OF 1 PETER

STATEMENT 29: The text type of 1 Peter is hierarchially defined as:

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TEXT TYPE: STRATEGY
*****
1) IDENTIFICATION &
   ESTRANGEMENT
*****
2) ARGUMENTATIVE-PLURIPERSONAL
   (Perspectival-persuasive &
   Group-identificative)
*****
3) EPISTOLARY
   (Poetic)
   (Pseudepigraphical)
    
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The basic strategy underlying the communication of texts is "identification and estrangement". In addition to this 1 Peter has been identified as an argumentative text (i.e. is perspectival-persuasive and group-identificative) in an epistolary form. In the light of this hierarchial structure of the text type, the authorship issue is subordinated to the perspectival orientation of the identification and estrangement processes underlying the strategy of 1 Peter.

STATEMENT 30: The argumentative text type of 1 Peter reveals its appellative-persuasive and group-identificative function. Therefore 1 Peter challenged its primary readers to identify themselves with the paradoxical-Christological perspective and to live accordingly.

The literary form which served as an ideal vehicle for the strategy of the communicator-author was the "circular letter". It was a means of long distance, authoritative-perspectival, argumentative and group-identificative communication in a one to many mode (cf III B 3.2.2 & 3.3.1). In this regard the poetic function played a supportive role in escalating and intensifying the strategical processes of identification and estrangement. The communicator-author's style-rhetorical implementation of

redundant group-identificative-emotive-cultic-liturgical metaphors and traditions as well as shock-effective-paradoxical-emotive-religious-sociological-political contrasts revealed the total onslaught of a master strategist on his addressees (cf III B 1.3.2; 2.1.3.2; 2.2.3.2; 2.4.3.2). This implies that secondary readers should acknowledge this total existential onslaught as the strategy of 1 Peter. Therefore it is a cosmologic battle between the perspectives of the text and the real readers.

STATEMENT 31: The Christological perspective holds the key to interrelate and evaluate a secondary communication of 1 Peter.

I have argued that the communication of ancient canonized texts is basically a battle between perspectives. This was confirmed in my sketch of the relational model of perspectival-orientated communication (cf statement 20) where I illustrated that the perspective determines the traditio-historical composition and relief of the New Testament and the place which 1 Peter fills; the relief of the message (i.e. the relief of salvation, history and ethics) of 1 Peter; the dialectic interrelationship of the dimensions (intratextual, historical and metatextual) and modes (i.e. syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) of 1 Peter. It is the paradoxical structure of this cosmologic-Christological perspective which dominates the totality of the communication of 1 Peter. Thus the message of 1 Peter is clearly heard in the final note of the wonderful textual symphony of 1 Peter: Peace to all of you who are in Christ! This is the keynote contracting the thrust, perspective and strategy of 1 Peter. The success of the primary and secondary reception of 1 Peter is determined in the light of the receptors preparedness to experience ultimate meaning in the cross paradox of Jesus Christ.

Eco confirms my suspicion that although textual communication is a complex syntactic-semantic-pragmatic matter on the one hand, it is also a very simple matter of the communication of "worlds" (i.e. ideologies) or "the battle between perspectives". "As far as the problem of the textual levels is concerned, one could say that there are more things in a text than are dreamt of in our text theories. But there are also 'fewer' things than are dreamt of" (Eco 1979:38).

Therefore, I have argued in this dissertation that the basic reason for the moral crisis within Christianity, is to be found in the fact that Christians have overinterpreted and forced the New Testament into the mould of an answer book to all possible questions (scientific, historical, liturgical, religious, moral, ethical, etc). The church took ancient and remote religious symbols and absolutized and eternalized a simple message into a complexity which they were unable to handle. They have overinterpreted the New Testament because of a simplistic

(fundamentalistic) approach. Likewise biblical scholars distorted the communication of the Bible by their over- and underexposure of the texts. Christianity now has to disentangle this complexity by a comprehensive and interrelated methodological approach to regain the clear and elementary Christian perspective which inspired the New Testament writings.

STATEMENT 32: Ultimately, the secondary reception of 1 Peter entails an ongoing process of identification and estrangement in terms of the Christological perspective of 1 Peter.

We have seen that the decisive pragmatic parameter with regard to the reception of 1 Peter which we deduced from our intratextual and historical analysis of the text, entails an ultimate commitment to the Christological perspective. This requires a total and existential identification, and not just an associative, sympathetic or admirational identification from the receptor-readers of 1 Peter. This identification presupposes an estrangement from alternative or non-Christological perspectives. However, without an extratextual frame of reference and a metatextual commitment to Jesus Christ, 1 Peter will fail to communicate and remain an ancient irrelevant text which is only of interest to some academic freaks.

It is the Christological-cosmologic perspective and its master symbols that 1 Peter (and the New Testament for that matter) wanted to convey, illustrate and actualize to its readers - the perspective that God revealed himself decisively (although not finally) in the cross paradox of the historical person, Jesus Christ. In his ultimate commitment to God, the Father, and his relationship towards mankind and the world, first-century Christians found "ultimate meaning" for their sojourn in this reality (cf Harvey 1967:275-89) - challenging modern readers to "do likewise, not the same" (Vorster 1984:16). Therefore I believe that the proclamation and actualization of this perspective of Christ's cross paradox is the only solution to a politicized and divided South Africa. Only the experience and ministry of the reality of God's love, forgiveness, righteousness and peace in Christ Jesus, are able to break the spiral of self-centredness, greed, violence and hatred.

This paradoxical cosmologic perspective and the expression thereof in the cross as the master symbol par excellence of the reality of God's love, forgiveness and righteousness, is enough light for us to live "in peace" - even if we do not comprehend everything and don't have the answers to many questions. Ultimately God is infinitely greater than our struggle to understand the Bible and the world we live in. Therefore the paradoxical-cosmologic-Christological perspective echoed in the symphony of 1 Peter, can also give ultimate meaning to our attempts to understand ancient texts a little bit better within a dissonant world.