

THE FUNCTION OF THE PETRINE EPISTLES **IN CANON AND COMMUNITY**

Ian P. van Tonder

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1. INTRODUCTION

The need to adopt a different approach to the study of the Petrine Epistles arises from the shortcomings of the traditional historical critical interpretations of these texts. The latter approach, with its focus on the issue of authenticity, has resulted in the alienation of 1 and 2 Peter - what with 2 Peter typically considered to be pseudonymous and 1 Peter's authenticity hanging in the balance. To further exacerbate the situation, such an approach also succeeds in alienating itself from the church which established the canon by assuming it to have been naïve in its acceptance of pseudepigraphical documents.

The approach which is to be utilized in this study is canonical criticism. The fact that it is not restricted to the simple analysis of the original meaning behind a text, allows it to deal with our problem above concerning the need to arrive at an understanding of how the Petrine Epistles could be understood by the canonizers to have been authentic.

To begin with, it will be necessary to dedicate a sizeable portion of our study to the issue of the canonical critical methodology. The need for this arises from the nature of the history of the development of the canonical-critical methodology. Until recently, it has been solely applied to the study of the Old Testament. In addition to this, a certain amount of disagreement still persists between canonical critics on key issues pertaining to hermeneutical authority and methodology.

In view of this situation, we will first undertake to discuss individually, the hermeneutical assumptions and methodologies of B.S. Childs, J.A. Sanders, J.D.G. Dunn, and R.W. Wall and E.E. Lemcio. At the conclusion of this discussion we will endeavour to arrive at a suitable methodology to specifically address the issue of the canonical function of the Petrine Epistles.

2. METHODOLOGY: CANONICAL CRITICISM

2.1. Brevard S. Childs

2.1.1. The shortcomings of Historical Criticism

The context in which Childs first developed his 'canon approach', and the context to which all his subsequent work has been addressed is that of the Biblical Theology movement. For Childs the major fault of the Biblical Theology movement is its close alliance with the historical critical methodology. His position is summarized in his first major work *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (1970):

"...to propose a form of Biblical Theology that takes as its primary task the disciplined theological reflection of the Bible in the context of the canon. The crisis in the discipline has come about by a failure to clarify the major task of Biblical Theology. As a result, Biblical scholars exert most of their energy on historical, literary, and philological problems which, while valid in themselves, have not provided the scholarly Biblical research of the sort the church sorely needs" (Childs 1970:122).

It is this critique of the Biblical Theology methodology which underscores all of Childs' subsequent dialogues with historical criticism. He accuses the latter of imprisoning the Bible within "a context of the historical past"; thereby permitting the Bible to function *merely* illustratively for the church instead of normatively (Childs 1970:100f.). An analogy which Childs uses in regard to the exegetical situation which has resulted from the historical critical movement refers to it having set "up an iron curtain between the past and the present" (1970:141f.). To those historical critics who claim that it is both possible and legitimate to transcend this 'curtain' and derive meaning from the reconstructed original intentions of the author for the contemporary Christian community, Childs responds by accusing them of failing to acknowledge the normative status which the early church specifically ascribed to its composite body of religious literature (cf. Sheppard 1974:13; Spina 1982:179; Lemcio 1992:31). In other words, Childs argues that the historical-critical approach to the Bible is contrary to the traditional hermeneutical approach of the church. According to Childs, the traditional hermeneutical approach of the church - or 'scholarly Biblical research of the sort the church sorely needs' - involves the gleaning of the biblical texts for theological 'ideas'; 'ideas' which could function normatively for the Christian community. This is exactly what historical critics are accused of failing to do. With their emphasis on the illustrative function of the Bible, they have "failed to penetrate the theological depths of the text" (Spina 1982:166). As Childs puts it, "The most serious objection is that the real task of doing exegesis as a theological discipline has been lost" (Childs 1970:142). Thus, Childs sees his approach as, in a sense, rectifying a past wrong which led to the abandonment of the search for the theological sense of the canonical texts. Even where historical critics have focused on the theological message of a biblical text they have been incapable, due to the restrictions of historical criticism, of deriving the full theological message. The theological ideas which Childs seeks are not only to be found in the original (theological) intention of the text's

author as historical criticism might propose, but also in the redactional material which has been added by later Christian communities prior to a text's canonization. Hence, Childs' championing of the hermeneutical significance of the 'final form' of the biblical text. His justification for this is: since both the church and the synagogue have always used the canonical texts in their present form, as well as the fact that it appears that they will never do otherwise, this is the form of the text which the scholar should focus on (cf. Brett 1991:3). In addition to this Childs claims that to make one's hermeneutical starting point the final form of a text, is to avoid the highly speculative endeavours of historical critics in their attempts to reconstruct original historical texts and contexts. In order to counter the past restrictive focus of historical criticism on an author's original intention, Childs customarily focuses on the redactional layers of a text - or what he refers to as a text's 'canonical shape':

"The usual critical method of biblical exegesis is, first, to seek to restore an original historical setting by stripping away those very elements which constitute the canonical shape" (Childs 1979:79).

By 'canonical shaping', Childs means the activities of the New Testament writers in their reinterpretation and reapplication of past traditions in their works, as well as the actions of subsequent redactors of these works (Childs 1984:12). Thus for Childs' approach, hermeneutical significance is ascribed to those parts of the biblical texts which the historical critical methodology seeks to discard.

In his later work *The New Testament as Canon*, Childs' critique of historical criticism remains basically the same. What has changed, is that attitude towards it has become less negative¹. He takes up the position which had been adopted by literary critics at this stage concerning the contention that historical criticism is not the only 'correct' approach to interpreting a biblical text. And, consequentially his justification for his position also takes on a greater theoretical sophistication: he argues that historical criticism rests on "the assumption of a uniformly historical-referential reading of the biblical text", an assumption which is contradicted by the fact that "the Bible bears witness to a multidimensional theological reality which cannot be measured solely on the basis of such a correspondence theory of truth" (Childs 1984:35f.). Hence, Childs' approach has become more receptive to the idea of the utilization of a variety of hermeneutical approaches. At the same time, however, he still maintains his earlier critique of the historical critical agenda, and he seeks to distinguish his approach from the recent literary, or synchronic, approaches:

¹ Despite his often vehement criticism of the historical critical methodology, which has led some scholars to assume that he rejects it entirely, Childs shows an underlying awareness of the (secondary) usefulness of the historical critical agenda, even in his 1970 work: "There is the full necessity for taking seriously the original context of every Biblical passage" (Childs 1970:113).

"[the historical critical approach] has not done justice in interpreting the New Testament in its function as authoritative, canonical literature of both an historical and a contemporary Christian community of faith and practice. A special dynamic issues from its canonical function which is not exhausted by either literary or historical analysis, but calls for a theological description of its shape and function.... what is needed is a new vision of the biblical text which does justice not only to the demands of a thoroughly post-Enlightenment age, but also to the confessional stance of the Christian faith for which the sacred scriptures provide a true and faithful vehicle for understanding the will of God. To assert that the Christian stands in a special relation to these writings is not to disavow the legitimacy of numerous other approaches to the text, both within and without a stance of faith" (Childs 1984:35f.).

2.1.2. The hermeneutical significance of 'canon'

Central to Childs' approach is his concept of 'canon'. His specific use of the term 'canon' only arose clearly in his study entitled *The New Testament as Canon* (1984). Prior to this he was content to use the term 'scripture', as seen in his earlier study *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (1979). From this it is apparent that Childs tends to assimilate the two terms². This tendency in Childs is also evidenced by his adoption of a 'broader' definition of canon - in relation to canon historians whose definition is guided purely by historical data on the second through fourth century events leading to the formation of the New Testament canon:

"I have broadened the term canon to express both the process and effect of this transmitting of religious tradition by a community of faith toward a certain end in all its various aspects" (Childs 1984:26).

What Childs is, in effect, arguing is that the compilation and subsequent transmission of the New Testament writings in the first century (and the pre-exilic period for the Old Testament), is also to be considered as part of the canonization process - "the concept of canon was not a late, ecclesiastical ordering which was basically foreign to the material itself,...canon-consciousness lay deep within the formation of the literature" (Childs 1992:70 f.). In his efforts to substantiate these claims for, what he refers to as a 'canon consciousness' or 'canonical intentionality', active within the original compilation and transmission of the canonical texts, Childs has highlighted certain characteristic traits within the canonical texts which are considered to corroborate this idea. With regard to the Old Testament canon, he notes the normative status taken on by the originally historically contingent traditions, for the specific purpose of ensuring their universal applicability:

² Childs adoption of the term 'canon' is probably as a result of its association with official ecclesiastical authority - the designation 'scripture' still lacking that level of authoritativeness.

"The growth of Israel's canon consciousness can be clearly detected when the words of a prophet which were directed to a specific group in a particular historical situation were recognized as having an authority apart from their original use, and were preserved for their own integrity (cf. Isa. 8:16f.). The heart of the canonical process lay in transmitting and ordering the authoritative tradition in a form which was compatible to function as scripture for a generation which had not participated in the original events of revelation. The ordering of the tradition for this new function involved a profoundly hermeneutical activity, the effects of which are now built into the structure of the canonical text" (Childs 1979:60).

In the New Testament, this 'universalizing' trait of the transmitters of authoritative tradition is seen in the Gospel writers' re-application of the Jesus *Logia*. The differences in detail between the gospel accounts, indicates the writers' kerygmatic agenda - as opposed to a simple concern for the preservation of an "archive of historical records" (Childs 1984:13f.). This kerygmatic agenda on the part of the gospel writers - in which the authoritative Jesus tradition is interpreted for present and future generations who were not eyewitnesses to the earlier - is seen by Childs to constitute a 'canonical consciousness' (Childs 1984:23f.). When it comes the redaction of the New Testament writings themselves, by later tradents, Childs cites the universalizing effects of the redaction of the Pauline Epistles. For example, in Romans the omission of the words 'in Rome' (1:7 and 15) in certain Greek and Latin manuscripts, as well as the textual variants with regard to the place of the doxology (Rom. 16:25-7) and the ending of the Epistle, can be seen as evidence for a 'universalized' or 'catholicised' recension of Romans. And, in the oldest manuscripts containing Ephesians, the absence of a geographical destination (cf Eph. 1:1) - which could not have been the case in the original letter - point to the same tendency. Finally, an example which is retained in our received form of 1 Corinthians, concerns the awkward clause 'together with all...' (1:2b), which has the effect of making the address more ecumenical (cf. Metzger 1987:264f.). Childs concludes:

"...the function of canonical shaping was often precisely to loosen the text from any one given historical setting, and to transcend the original addressee. The very fact that the canonical editors tended to hide their own footprints, largely concealing their own historical identity, offers a warrant against this [historical critical] model of historical reconstruction.... The Pauline letters, in spite of the high level of historical particularity which has been retained, have generally been edited in a conscious effort to render these occasional writings into a normative collection for universal application within the community of faith" (Childs 1984:23f.).

Another area where Childs tends to diverge from canon historians in their understanding of the canonization process, concerns the primary motives of the canonizers. According to Childs, canon historians have tended to focus on socio-political and technological factors (such as the threat of heterodoxy, and the development of the codex, etc.), rather than the more theologically-related factors:

"The term ['canonical'] also serves to focus attention on the theological forces at work in its composition rather than seeking the process largely controlled by general laws of folklore, by socio-political factors, or by scribal conventions" (Childs

1992:70f.).

The hermeneutical significance of this difference in focus, between Childs and the canon historians (or historical critics), is seen in the latter's disregard for canonical authority in favour of the authority of the original intentions of the authors of the canonical writings. In other words, historical critics through their interpretation of a biblical text in isolation from the other canonical writings, deny the integrity of the early church in its use and collection of its religious literature. Childs proposes a shift in the locus of hermeneutical authority to the Christian community which has received the canon as authoritative - authoritative interpretation rests with the Christian community (which is inclusive of the canonizing church up to today and beyond), and not with the originally intended meaning of a canonical writing's author. What this means for the interpretation of the biblical texts is that they are to be interpreted in the light of their greater literary context, which encompasses all (and only) the texts of the canon. Childs refers to this literary context as the 'canonical context'. The fundamental proposition associated with a focus on 'canonical context' is that a biblical text's structure and position within the canon serves as an indication of how it is to be interpreted:

"One of the main endeavours of my introductions was to describe the manner by which the hermeneutical concerns of the tradents left their mark on the literature. The material was shaped in order to provide means for its continuing appropriation by its subsequent hearers. Guidelines were given which rendered the material compatible with its future actualization. For example, in the Old Testament the book of Deuteronomy, which arose historically in the late monarchical period of Israel's history, was assigned a particular canonical function as interpreter of the law by its structure and position within the Pentateuch... Or again, in the New Testament the Gospel of Luke was separated from Acts with which it was originally formed, and given a new context and role within the fourfold Gospel collection..." (Childs 1992:71).

From Childs' statement we see that for his approach, a text's original historical context is only to be considered useful for gaining an understanding of the hermeneutical significance of the recontextualization process. By juxtaposing the two contexts (the 'historical context' and the 'canonical context') one is able to come to an understanding of how the canonizing church intended a particular text is to be understood by subsequent Christian community which has inherited the collection. Thus, the intended meaning of the original author of the text, or its original historical context, is in effect granted little, or no, interpretative significance. This, in effect, also means that the canonical exegete need not concern him/herself with any thorough "historical repristination of the sacred traditions" lying behind the text (Sheppard 1974:12-13); a task which remains the predominant focus of Old Testament scholars today.

A further proposition of Childs with regard to the interpretation of the New Testament writings in relation to their 'canonical context', concerns their diverse theological outlooks. In the consideration of the theological relationships between the canonical texts, the diversity of theological positions which they encompass are an indication of the canon's catholic or ecumenical 'ethos'. What this means is that each biblical text is ascribed with relatively

equal standing in relation to the others. Hence, in the instance of the location of 'incompatible' theological viewpoints within the confines of the canon - say, for instance, the difference between James and Galatians (or generally the Pauline Epistles) on the issues of the 'law' and 'justification by faith' - the 'integrity' (Childs 1984:442) of each book's theological position is affirmed:

"The canon...provided a context for the...[biblical texts], but did not attempt a final formulation of its message. It marked the arena in which each new generation of believers stood and sought to understand afresh the nature of the faith. It did not establish one doctrinal position, but often balanced several or fixed the limits within which Christians might rightly disagree" (Childs 1984:28).

The significance of such an approach which seeks to focus on the relationship between the diverse theologies within the canon in a more literary sense, is realized when considered in the light of the contentions of the advocates of a history of religion approach (*Religionsgeschichte*). These scholars have customarily focused solely on the historical aspect of the diverse theologies represented in the canon. Such an approach is marked by claims of the theological incompatibility of certain of the New Testament texts³. The underlying cause for Childs' dissatisfaction with the history of religions perspective concerns, what he perceives to be its sanctioning of the canon-within-the-canon approach (*sachkritik*). Ernst Käsemann, considered to be a leading exponent of the canon-within-the-canon approach, addresses the 'problem' of the theological diversity of the New Testament by calling for a "discerning [of] the spirits" (1964:104). He argues that a hermeneutical key to the entire canon should be established for the purpose of enabling authoritative theological propositions to be derived from the New Testament's - if contradictory theological perspectives are considered authoritative, then nothing is 'authoritative'! Käsemann's hermeneutical key (or *sachmitte*) turns out to be the justification of the sinner preached by both Paul and Jesus. This principle leads Käsemann to locate certain New Testament books which are "irreconcilable" with the "freedom" of Jesus implicit in the principle. These books are labelled with the term "early Catholicism": "Early catholicism means that transition from earliest Christianity to the so-called ancient Church, which is completed with the disappearance of the imminent expectation." (Käsemann 1969:236f.). This 'negative' estimation of some of the New Testament writings (such as the Pastorals and some of the Catholic Epistles) results in their being stripped of their authority as Scripture, and they consigned to the secondary role of representing a contrast to the canon within the canon (cf. Wainwright 1975:558-559; Thielman 1983:400).

In response to the canon-within-the-canon school Childs seeks to - as we have already noted above - affirm the 'individual integrity' of all of the canonical books (Childs 1984:442). All the canonical writings are proposed as a means to gauge what is to be considered authoritative interpretation; or what Childs refers to elsewhere, as the role of canon as a

³ James Dunn is one such scholar - others being Walter Bauer and Helmut Koester - who has recently undertaken such a study in his book *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1977).

'rule-of-faith' (Childs 1992:724):

"The appeal to the theological resources of the whole Christian canon serves as a major check against ideologies which often have some biblical rootage, but are made to function in such a way as to obviate large parts of the New Testament's message" (Childs 1984:42).

2.1.3. Methodology

From the above discussion, it is clear that the key to interpreting the biblical texts for today - that is, the canon approach's methodology - is the establishment of their 'canonical shape': referring to the condition of a text subsequent to both its historical development (that is, the changes it undergoes in its tradition and redactional history) and its new contextual position within the canon ('canonical context'). In summary of our discussion above, these changes to a text's constitution as well as its literary context are considered to be hermeneutically significant by the canon exegete on the grounds that they were undertaken for theological purposes; received as religiously authoritative and; were undertaken in such a way as to maintain a normative function for subsequent generations of believers within a community of faith (Childs 1992:70). Childs' arrival at this methodology was a prolonged affair which involved the testing of specific methodological tools - some of which were rejected at an early stage in the development of his approach. In what follows we will briefly consider the development of his methodology up to the point of its application in the field of New Testament study.

In his initial work *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, Childs' methodology remains undeveloped. He offers two specific methodological models for his brand of biblical theology - both of the approaches suggested, however, are no longer central features of Childs' later work. Firstly, he proposes:

"One approach for avoiding the dangers of abstraction in Biblical Theology... is to begin with specific Old Testament passages which are quoted within the New Testament....Of course, there are several obvious objections to this proposed method of using quotations to determine the rubrics of Biblical Theology" (Childs 1970:114f.).

And, a second option proposed by Childs is the consideration of commentaries by interpreters such as Calvin, Augustine, Calmet, Adam Clarke, J.J.S. Perowne, Luther, M. Poole, Chrysostom, etc., which pre-date the enlightenment (Childs 1970:144ff.):

"...it is of prime importance to regain an exegetical tradition that has always existed in the church and that has been largely misunderstood because of the rise of the historicalcritical study of the Bible. Precritical interpretation of the Bible has much of great value to offer the modern Biblical theologian. It is either arrogance or ignorance to suggest that a completely new start is necessary. Much of what has been characterized as 'precritical' is in fact highly sophisticated theological exposition that has been faulted by applying totally inappropriate historicalcritical canons" (Childs

1970:143).

Such a focus on a history-of-interpretation approach is noted by Childs for the possibility it opens up for establishing a *continuity* of interpretation (Childs 1970:145). In his next comprehensive work, *Exodus*, Childs' methodology took on a greater clarity. Exodus is divided into 24 parts; each section being dealt with in the same manner:

- (i) translation of the Hebrew text and discussion of syntactical problems relevant to exegesis.
- (ii) form-critical and tradition-historical analysis - where possible related to the text's final form.
- (iii) the Old Testament context (the core of the commentary).
- (iv) the New Testament context - how respective passages have been seen in the light of Christ.
- (v) the history of exegesis - relating to particular passages.
- (vi) 'theological reflections' - an attempt to appropriate meaning from the text for the contemporary church.

Interestingly, concerning the first two sections, which have a strong historical-critical flavour, Childs notes that their subordinate character is indicated by their having been printed in smaller type, and that "students, pastors, and Sunday school teachers can disregard the first two sections without missing the main thrust of the commentary" (Childs 1974:xiv-xvi).

In his next book, *The Old Testament as Scripture*, he begins each chapter with a section on 'historical-critical problems' in which he summarizes literary-critical, form-critical, and traditio-historical work on each of the Old Testament writings. At the end of each chapter he offers a bibliography on the history of the exegesis of that book since its canonization, without any further discussion - unlike in the instance of his commentary on Exodus. Childs' reason for not developing the history of interpretation methodological element in this work is that "the topic [of the history of interpretation] is so immense as to exceed the boundaries suitable for an Introduction" (Childs 1979:82). Also of note in this work is the emergence of Childs' idea of the canon as a whole serving as a check to its constituent parts:

"Attention to the canon establishes certain parameters within which the tradition was placed. The canonical shaping serves not so much to establish a given meaning to a particular passage as to chart the boundaries within which the exegetical task is to be carried out" (Childs 1979:83).

In his next book, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, Childs attempted to apply his canon approach to the field of New Testament. In this ambitious work, he is restricted to addressing only two issues in his consideration of each of the New Testament books. Firstly he provides a description of 'The Modern Critical Debate' for each of the books, followed by a short discussion of their canonical function/shape. In his methodological introduction to the book he does however outline a more explicit canonical methodology (Childs 1984:48ff.). He states that the overall goal of the canon approach is to be located in the establishment of a text's 'canonical shape'. Two avenues of analysis are located in this respect: (i) understanding the originally intended meaning of a text's author for the purpose of assessing

its canonical function/shaping and; (ii) analysing the hermeneutical significance of a text's 'canonical context'.

(i) Suggested procedures for establishing authorial intention include considering a text's prescript and conclusion where the author often clearly states the purpose for his/her writing of the document. Conversely, "the effect of a lack of a prescript on the reading of an epistle can give important leads on how the letter now functions (e.g. Hebrews)" (Childs 1984:79). Superscriptions, despite having been added during the final stages of canonization, "frequently give a valuable clue on how the church first heard the message (cf. Hebrews, Revelation)" (Childs 1984:79). And, finally, the reconstruction of a text's original historical context is suggested as a means of locating instances in the text where tradents (both the New Testament writers themselves, and later redactors) have expanded a tradition or text's meaning beyond the scope of the earlier/original addressees.

(ii) Issues which arise for Childs when considering the 'canonical context' of the New Testament texts revolve around the physical effects of canonization on the individual books (such as material being dropped, added, or separated), and their hermeneutical consequences, as well as intertextual relationships which are established (on the theological level) through their collection into one corpus. Examples of these phenomena which are cited by Childs are the longer ending of Mark functioning to harmonize it with the other gospels; the Pastorals and the Pauline corpus; the splitting of Luke-Acts; the relation of Galatians and James; and the issue of the harmony of the four gospels (Childs 1984:52f.).

2.1.4. Critiques of Childs

The nature of Childs' critique of historical criticism has meant that he has not been short of critics. Those totally against his approach are Barr and Whybray⁴. A major critique of Childs is that while he may consider the historical-critical endeavour of reconstructing a text's original meaning to be highly speculative, his own approach is also given over to subjective speculation. Barr argues that: "The basic fault...is that Childs reads into the minds of the redactors and canonizers his own passionate hermeneutical interest" (Barr 1983:113; cf. McDonald 1988:33; Spina 1982:183). An example of the speculative nature of Childs' approach is highlighted by Brett who argues that Childs' canonical interpretation has no historical basis:

"What is distinctive about the canonical approach is that it provides fresh interpretations of the final form of scripture, interpretations that are relatively independent of any author, editor or reader in any past situation" (Brett 1991:7).

⁴ Whybray attacks Childs' position using highly emotive language; for example he refers to canonical criticism as a "dangerous method of interpretation which ought to be resisted" (Whybray 1981:30). Spina correctly accuses Whybray of totally misunderstanding Childs' position (Spina 1982:181).

In support of this contention, Barr argues that the hermeneutical approach of the early church did not include a consideration of 'whole' books but rather - for the sake of practicality - pericopes (Barr 1983:91). Carroll has also questioned the historical basis of Childs' concept of 'canonical context' for the early church (Carroll 1980a:76-77; 1980b:290). At best, other scholars are only willing to concede a post-Reformation scenario for his hermeneutical approach:

"He focuses on one form of stabilized Scripture, and what he calls its inner theological dialectic and conversation, and dissociates it from history altogether. That is, I do not see any really clear evidence that what he claims is canonical context functioned as such in any believing community until perhaps the Reformation" (Sanders 1980:188).

Another example of one of Childs' historically questionable presuppositions concerning the canonizing church is his belief that since the church affirmed the authority of the 'final form' of the biblical texts through the act of their canonization, all subsequent interpretation should concern itself with this form of the text. In opposition to this, McDonald argues on the basis of the canonizing church's appeal to the criterion of 'apostolicity' in its decisions as to which texts were canonical, that the primitivist ethos of the historical critical approach is supported by the hermeneutical aspirations of the early church:

"Childs does not face the question of why modern exegetes should ignore the earliest form of a text if they can with some assurance arrive at it. Clearly, the Christian communities of the patristic era did not accept themselves as the *canonical community*, but instead sought to build their faith on what was believed to have been tradition and writings from the earliest Christian community. Since the appeal to such witnesses was made by the very community that handed us our 'received text,' why should the Church not be interested in pursuing the earliest and most authentic (apostolic) witness to the Christ event, especially if we can come closer to it today than the churches of the fourth and fifth centuries did?" (McDonald 1988:30f.).

It would appear that the only adequate response to the above critiques would have to involve a thorough appeal to the evidence of the canonization process. For instance, in opposition to Barr and Carroll it could be argued that the fact that the order of texts within the canon, especially the order of different collections of texts such as the Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles, was, generally speaking, not uniform with respect to the 'canons' of the Western and Eastern churches, would indicate that the interpretation of whole books and collections in relation to one another was important to the canonizing church. And, concerning the critique of McDonald, we could challenge his assumption that it was the criterion of 'apostolicity' which was most important for the canonizing church in its assessment of the canonicity of its scriptures: what about the other criteria, such as 'orthodoxy' and especially church usage. In fact, most of the contents of the New Testament canon had been established prior to any rigorous consideration of any criteria for canonicity by the church, which would indicate that the church's use of the criteria for canonicity served

a more secondary function of justifying what had already been accepted⁵. Unfortunately, a concerted appeal to the historical data of the canonization of the New Testament is something which Childs has been unwillingly to make.

Another critique of Childs, which is related to that above concerning his subjective presuppositions with regard to the early church's hermeneutics, revolves around his failure to acknowledge the christological way in which the early church (and all subsequent generations) interpreted its Old Testament. Childs remains bound, in this instance, to the position of historical critics who presuppose that the Old Testament, which chronologically preceded the New Testament, can not be interpreted in the light of the latter. The significance of this oversight, on the part of Childs, is that it contradicts the crucial argument used initially by him to justify his canon approach - concerning his approach being much closer to that used in the church since the canonization of its scriptures. Barr highlights this crucial contradiction in Childs' position:

"In the earlier works of the series Childs seemed to emphasize the idea that the Old Testament was *Christian* scripture. The aim of his commentary on Exodus was 'to interpret...as canonical scripture within the theological discipline of the Christian church' [p.xiii]. That commentary has sections on the treatment of the passages in the New Testament and others that offer 'theological reflection on the text within the context of the Christian canon' [p.xvi].... It is surprising, therefore, when one passes to the *Introduction*, which is much the fullest expression of canonical criticism thus far, to find how little this sort of insight has been developed. The New Testament, in fact, is comparatively little mentioned; even the concluding chapter on 'The Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Bible' is devoted primarily to the question of the Christian Old Testament and its identity, in view of differing views of its extent and definition. Little or nothing is to be heard of the incarnate Christ as a personality inhabiting the Books of Joshua or of Haggai. The discussion seems to stress the kinship of Judaism and Christianity in that the Old Testament is shared by them both. But this, while true, is of minor significance in comparison with the fact that the Christian canon contains also the New Testament, the content of which creates a great gulf between the two religions" (Barr 1983:151; cf. Carroll 1980a:76-77).

Childs has sought to defend himself by responding:

"I was not writing a biblical theology but an introduction to the Hebrew scriptures...the larger task clearly needs to be done" (Childs 1984:70 - Review of Barr, *Holy Scripture, Interpretation* 38:66-70; cf. Childs 1979:72).

Of course, the question which begs answering, in the light of this response by Childs, is: why, then, did Childs entitle his book '*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*'? For the sake of accuracy, his book should have been entitled '*Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*',

⁵ In fact, McDonald notes, himself, that the criteria used by the Church were "vague and imprecise" (McDonald 1988:145).

and his reference to 'Old Testament theology' within the work, should correctly read 'theology of the Hebrew Scriptures' (cf. Brett 1991:71).

That the above contradiction in the canon approach is not merely a 'correctable' oversight on the part of Childs, is revealed by a further instance of his disregard for the historical evidence concerning the early church's Old Testament. Due to the central importance of the canon for his approach, Childs felt, in the past, compelled to adopt a specific stance concerning the issue of which textual version of the Old Testament canon is to be considered normative. The criterion which he utilizes is that the preferred text is that which is closest to the moment of canonization; hence his favouring of the Masoretic text. Childs' choice has elicited strong criticism from other scholars, including canonical critics. The basic dissatisfaction with his choice is that he disregards the fact that the Septuagint was the overwhelmingly favoured text in the early church, prior to the production of the vulgate:

"It is to read back into canonical history a post-Christian, very rabbinic form of the text. By 'very rabbinic' I mean a text unrelated to the Christian communities until comparatively late. While Jerome learned a whole lot from his Bethlehem rabbi, the Vulgate is a far cry from the MT! Focus on the MT leaves the NT, whose Scripture was the Septuagint, out in the cold for the most part" (Sanders 1980:187).

Childs is not oblivious to this fact. In response, he argues that the Masoretic text is to be preferred to that of the Septuagint on the basis of the greater stability which the former achieved. And, finally he makes the (purely speculative) claim that "the church's use of Greek and Latin translations of the Old Testament was valid in its historical context, but theologically [it] provides no grounds for calling into question the ultimate authority of the Hebrew text for church and synagogue" (Childs 1979:97ff.). In light of the above critique - as well as the fact that the textual history of the New Testament has involved a greater variety of translations - in his application of his canon approach to the New Testament Childs has not raised the issue of which version of the New Testament is to be considered normative.

A third critique which scholars have levelled against Childs' approach - relating to his focus on the kerygmatic motives behind the formation of the canon - concerns his failure to acknowledge the hermeneutical significance of the sociological forces at work in the formation of the canon (Spina 1982:182; Carroll 1980a:76). Norman K. Gottwald has more recently made this critique the basis of his dialogue with canonical criticism, in his article (1986) "Social Matrix and Canonical Shape". He argues for the need for a 'social ingredient of canonical studies' due to its present 'a-social' and 'anti-social' stance (Gottwald 1985:318). Gottwald justifies his argument through his appeal to the fundamental assumptions of sociology:

"What now does social scientific criticism have to say to canonical criticism?...To begin with, there is the question of the different positions of various social groups with respect to their preferences for and their interests in this or that canonical shaping of the literature. It is not sufficient to speak of an undifferentiated 'communal mind or will' as the stimulus to canonical process and the arbiter of canonical closure. Literature, especially canonical literature, is not disinterested. Every text has its social matrix and represents one or more social interests, whether we can easily identify

them or not. And the final act or series of acts that fix a canonical boundary and content have a social matrix and interest as well.

Childs refers to social factors in the shaping of the canon but in little more than a formal way, with little specificity, and never - as far as I can see even in his most recent work - in such a way as to grant that the very act of canonization, conceived as the ultimate religious act in a literary mode, is itself a thoroughly social act conditioned by a social locus in which this particular canon won out over other possible canons or over against resistance to canonization itself.... Without this sensitivity and method, canonical criticism may lapse into harmonization that simply accepts a communal decision to validate a collection and arrangement of literature as somehow overcoming, flattening out, and resolving all the prior and continuing socio-religious struggle in the community" (Gottwald 1985:314f.).

Childs' reply is:

"basic to the canonical process is that those responsible for the actual editing of the text did their best to obscure their own identity....Moreover, increasingly the original sociological and historical differences within the nation of Israel - Northern and Southern Kingdom, pro- and anti-monarchical parties, apocalyptic versus theocratic circles - were lost, and a religious community emerged which found its identity in terms of sacred scripture. Israel defined itself in terms of a book! The canon formed the decisive *Sitz im Leben* for the Jewish community's life, thus blurring the sociological evidence most sought after by the modern historian. When critical exegesis is made to rest on the recovery of these very sociological distinctions which have been obscured, it runs directly in the face of the canon's intention" (Childs 1979:78).

Thus Childs wishes the interpreter to respect the 'intentions' of the tradents. Gottwald's reply serves to highlight a certain element of naïveté in Childs' reasoning:

"one of the prime reasons for obscuring the identity of those who advocate authoritative decisions and interpretations is to make their judgements look unquestioned and ancient, even timeless, and certainly descended from divine authority. To overlook this psychosocial reality of ideology and mystification in religious assertions, canonical assertions included, is to deliver theology into an uncritical subjection to the unexamined self-interests of canonizers" (Gottwald 1986:321).

The importance of Gottwald's argument is that it serves as a very important critique of Childs' offhand appeals to the 'intentions' of the canonizers as involving the obscuring of sociological distinctions (cf. Childs 1979:78). If Childs wishes to locate authority for his approach in the actions and intentions of the canonizing church then he needs to be more thorough in his appeal to the historical evidence. A problem with Gottwald's position, however, is that it subscribes to the idea that hermeneutical authority resides within the realm of original intentionality - in this instance the original intentions of the canonizers (as opposed to historical criticism's focus on original authorial intention). As we noted above,

however, Childs locates hermeneutical authority in the Christian community as a whole - that is, not only the canonizing community, but also all subsequent communities. This idea is illustrated in Childs favouring of a methodological approach which takes the history of the interpretation of a text into consideration. What this means, is that Childs is able to appeal to the fundamental claim of recent literary theory that after its production, a text takes on a life of its own, independent of the author's original intentions. The same applies to the canon: the actual details of its canonization are to a large extent lost to the church. What remains is the presupposed authority of its boundaries. For the church today, interpretation begins primarily from this point. Hence, the sociological forces surrounding the production of the canon need not influence subsequent interpretation of the canon. If any forces are hermeneutically significant then they are the present sociological forces which influence the contemporary interpreter, not forces of a past milieu. In summary, since Childs' locus of hermeneutical authority does encompass the canonizing church (and its canonical intentionality) attention still needs to be paid to the critique of Gottwald. However, in view of the larger picture of the history of interpretation, to which Childs subscribes, Gottwald's critique is not as damning as he would have us believe.

2.2. James A. Sanders

2.2.1. Sanders on Childs

The origin of Sanders' approach of 'canonical criticism' was independent to that of Childs. His first published work on the subject was *Torah and Canon* (1972) which includes a chapter entitled 'A Call to Canonical Criticism'. Like Childs, he argues for a 'broader' concept of the canon and the canonical process, for the purpose of ascribing greater hermeneutical authority to a stage in the process which predates the culmination of that process. Unlike Childs, Sanders seeks to focus on an even earlier stage in the 'canonical process': the authoritative traditions prior to their canonization, and in most instances prior even to their textualization (Sanders 1976:532). While Sanders is not concerned with locating evidence for a 'canon consciousness' within the transmission process, he still proceeds to assimilate 'authoritative tradition' with 'canon':

"The canon includes the process whereby early authoritative traditions encountered ancient cultural challenges, were rendered adaptable to those challenges, and thus themselves were formed and re-formed according to the needs of the believing communities....That process itself is as canonical as the traditions that emerged out of it" (Sanders 1987:65).

This focus of Sanders on an even earlier stage in the 'canonization process', serves to place him closer to the historical-critical camp. His 'closeness' to the historical-critical camp is evidenced further by his disregard for canonical authority, or the canon's boundaries: he accuses Childs of denying the integrity of those communities which reinterpreted and transmitted the authoritative traditions prior to their stabilization in a 'final form' (Sanders 1980:190; cf. Knight 1980:145; Brett 1991:96). At the same time, however, Sanders is also critical of the historical-critical approach's emphasis on original authorial intention:

"The historian knows that more often than not traditions are received and accepted by a later generation for reasons quite different from the original intention. Canonical criticism is interested in those later reasons, especially as they are discernible in the crucial periods of intense canonical process - that process which took place precisely between *the early acceptance and repetition* in a different context of the work of some genius, *and the later time* when such canonical works received a special aura and sanctity as imposed by the believing communities" (Sanders 1984:38).

2.2.2. Sanders and historical criticism

Sanders' dialogue with historical criticism has been less conflicting, in spite of the fact that he sympathizes with many of Childs' subversive critiques. He too claims that historical criticism has locked the Bible into the past, thereby denying hermeneutical significance to redactional activities; evidenced by the labelling of such material as 'spurious', 'secondary', 'not genuine', etc. (Sanders 1980:178; 1987:139). More specifically, historical criticism has unjustifiably attached hermeneutical authority to original intentionality (based on a 'value system' of *primitivism*), thereby bypassing the ancient communities which produced and shaped the Bible denying them the authority to have done so (Sanders 1980:183; 1984:3f).

Unlike Childs, however, in addressing the issue of the relationship between canonical criticism and historical criticism Sanders has sought to argue that the former is to be understood as a progressive development of the latter:

"Canonical criticism in my view is both a subdiscipline, albeit new and developing, of biblical criticism, and the way I think we can best and most carefully and most judiciously unlock the Bible from the past into which criticism has tended to seal it and unchain it from the scholar's desk. That is, we must give it back to the current believing communities, but give it back responsibly, that is, with the scientific thoroughness of recognition of its proper *Sitz*" (Sanders 1980:187, cf. 192; cf. 1984:xvi).

As result of this stance, Sanders' approach has received greater acceptance by historical critics. In fact, even Barr is supportive and likens his own approach to that of Sanders (cf. Barr 1983:156). A further circumstance surrounding Sanders' greater acceptance amongst historical critics relates to his appeal to the basic tenets of the sociology of knowledge, which conveniently fits in with the recent sociological thrust in biblical criticism. He is able to critique the underlying assumption of historical criticism of total neutrality and objectivity, as well as its focus on individual geniuses' original intentions (Sanders 1980:178, 183).

2.2.3. Sanders' proposal

Sanders highlights certain key characteristics of canon and the canonizing process. For him a fundamental characteristic of the canonizing process is the repetition or *relecture* of multivalent authoritative traditions. The task of the canonical critic is to uncover the

'unrecorded hermeneutics of canon': in terms of his concept of '*relecture*' Sanders argues that the key to interpreting the Bible for today lies in the analysis of the manner in which authoritative traditions have come to be continually reinterpreted. By uncovering the hermeneutical methodology of the earlier traditions, the interpreter can use these methodologies as a model for the hermeneutical appropriation of the biblical texts for the contemporary church. From his findings on the 'unrecorded hermeneutics' in the Bible, Sanders develops further concepts which are seen to characterize the canon.

(i) Sanders' concept of canonical pluralism highlights the function of canon as a theological safety guard:

"Canonical criticism celebrates the *pluralism* of the Bible and stresses its self-critical dimension in the varied thrusts and statements it records. There is no program that can be constructed on the basis of the Bible which can escape the challenge of other portions of it: this is an essential part of its pluralism" (Sanders 1984:37).

(ii) Sanders' concept of 'adaptability-stability':

"The primary character of canon or authoritative tradition, whatever its quantity or extent, is its adaptability; its secondary character is its stability. This is the reason I hesitate to focus as much on the 'final literary text' as does Childs... Though the traditions attained stable literary forms at points along the way, they still were rendered adaptable to the needs of the next generation. To focus exclusively on the final full literary form is simply not what either Judaism or Christianity did. As soon as need be, they broke into the frozen text and made it relevant to the next problem faced: and for the most part they fragmented the texts in order to do so - no matter how much we moderns may regret it" (Sanders 1987:83).

Sanders seeks to de-emphasize the hermeneutical implications of textualization. This stance is important for his approach due to his primary focus, in his past work, on authoritative pre-textual, or oral, traditions which underlie the Old Testament writings. A related stance to this, which we noted above, is his proposal of an even broader definition of 'canon', than that of Childs. His utilization of the term 'adaptability-stability', rather than simply 'adaptability', however, betrays the fundamental problem of his proposal. Textualization and the stabilization of the textualization process in the form of the canon was a highly significant 'event'. The act of canonization led to the assumption on the part of later interpreters that the ancient traditions as frozen in the canon had their most authoritative form/rendering as found in the canon. And, also, a tradition would ultimately be seen by later interpreters to have had its 'origin' in the canon, not before. This issue of the extent of the hermeneutical significance of the stabilization of authoritative traditions is a matter which is raised continually in the dialogue between Sanders and Childs.

(iii) Sanders' concept of 'monotheistic pluralism': Sanders considers 'monotheism' to be the central theological proposition of the entire canon, i.e., the fundamental motive behind the *relecture* of traditions (Sanders 1987:186). Since his area of concern is the Old Testament, he nowhere explores how this idea is to be applied to the New Testament, where the figure of

Jesus verges on eclipsing the figure of God. What he does note is that throughout the Bible there is a concerted effort on the part of the authors to combat 'polytheism' - in the New Testament such 'polytheism' is to be understood figuratively:

"The principalities and powers and demons of the Hellenistic period show up in the NT as symbols of evil, disease, and disorder, but the burden of proof would fall on whoever might suggest that any NT author or thinker had ceased monotheizing and started polytheizing" (Sanders 1984:51).

Sanders even goes as far as to translate the concept into a prescription for how the contemporary believing community should act - "To monotheize is, in part, to engage in a resistance movement against a dominant mode of thinking whether in biblical antiquity or in the present" (Sanders 1984:43f.). Sanders' attempt here, to establish a type of 'canon within the canon' is problematic. Firstly, while it is possibly feasible to locate the principle of monotheizing in the Old Testament, it is not as clear when we come to the New Testament that it was a central principle in the minds of the tradents of the New Testament traditions, the New Testament writers, or the canonizers. And, secondly, from his proposal above it would appear that he falls victim to the same Old Testament bias as Childs - in fact, not only does he fail to read the Old Testament as a 'Christian' document, he also seeks to make his interpretation of the Old Testament the basis of his interpretation of the New Testament.

2.2.4. Methodology

In his proposed methodology, Sanders also favours the reconstruction of a history of interpretation: "Canonical criticism suggests that once the historical phenomenon occurs [that is, a writing is accepted as traditionally being of value], the tradition or literary work has a life of its own unencumbered by the original intentions of author or redactor, or even of the first tradents, though they must all be included in the canonical history of the tradition" (Sanders 1984:38; 1980:188). And, like Childs, Sanders also sees the particular features of his approach as being applied after the initial historical critical groundwork:

"Canonical criticism picks up with the results of tradition criticism and goes on to ask what the *function* or *authority* was of the ancient tradition in the context where cited. How was it used? Canonical criticism takes the measure of the authority that the ancient tradition exercised in the context of its use. To what use did the biblical writer put the story of the exodus when he cited it?... How did he [Amos] use it?... How did other prophets use it - not only canonical prophets but the so-called false prophets? What were the principles of interpretation and what was the faith of the so-called false prophets?" (Sanders 1972:xvii-xviii; 1984:47).

From the above evidence Sanders' approach would appear to assimilate the basic tradition criticism approach. Which raises the question: isn't he merely calling tradition criticism by a different name? In fact, Sanders on a number of occasions acknowledges his approach's

reliance on tradition criticism⁶ (Sanders 1984:17, 37). Sanders contends, however, that canonical criticism is not equivalent to tradition criticism since they differ in their respective hermeneutical goals:

"At the heart of canonical criticism will be not those introductory questions of source and unity which have so occupied the tradition critics, but rather the questions of the nature and function of the tradition cited. When a tradition is deposited in a particular situation, we must assume that it was found useful to that situation: it had a function to perform there and that is the reason it was called upon. At the heart of canonical criticism are the questions of the nature of authority and the hermeneutics by which that authority was marshalled in the situation where needed. What was the need of the community and how was it met?" (Sanders 1976:543f.).

Another important aspect of Sanders' consideration of tradition history is that it is considered by him to 'end' at the stage of the final fixation of the New Testament texts. Although the underlying principles of Sanders' approach do not preclude the study of the *relecture* of a tradition in a period subsequent to the first century church, in none of his studies does he do this. In fact Sanders even goes as far as to deny the hermeneutical significance of certain of the methodological approaches of the early church, on the basis of the 'authority' of the 'unrecorded hermeneutics' of the canon:

"[The Ultimate goal of canonical criticism is to develop] a permissible hermeneutic range that indicates what is hermeneutically fair, according to the canonical process, to use in the believing communities today in re-presenting and resignifying a biblical tradition or text to address new problems. For instance, since there is so amazingly little allegory used by *biblical* tradents (distinct from postbiblical expositors), it may be that we should decide that use of allegory today is suspect and violates the inherent constraints within canonical texts" (Sanders 1984:61f.).

Hence, Sanders can be accused of also being guilty of primitivism. He has merely extended the boundaries of the authoritative 'in-group' - not only are the hermeneutical approaches of the earliest tradents acclaimed as authoritative, but also the last tradents prior to the final fixing of the canonical texts.

2.3. Others

The need for us to have first made a comparison of Childs and Sanders arises from the fact that all 'canonical critical' approaches which have emerged since the eighties, involve a

⁶ Sanders also notes his reliance on comparative midrash, however his description of this tool reveals no clear distinction between it and tradition criticism: "Comparative midrash attempts to ferret out all passages in the Bible, and, of course, the later literature, in which an earlier tradition is called upon. Comparative midrash, as a tool of canonical criticism, listens carefully to the tradition critics at this point, insofar as the tradition critic shows interest in *how* that tradition was called on and for what purpose" (Sanders 1984:26).

dialogue with both Sanders and Childs' approaches - whether it be a complete rejection of the one over the other, or an attempt at a synthesis⁷. Our focus, in what follows, is upon the attempts made by recent aspiring 'canonical critics' to apply this 'approach' specifically to the field of New Testament study.

2.3.1. James D.G. Dunn

Dunn, with his 1982 article 'Levels of canonical authority', represents the earliest attempt to adapt canonical criticism to the study of the New Testament. He provides an important critique of both Childs' and Sanders' disregard for the influence which the New Testament inevitably has on a *canonical* interpretation - an oversight which threatens to invalidate all past canonical critical interpretation which does not account for the 'Christianized' nature of the church's Old Testament:

"Childs in his **Introduction** and Sanders give the New Testament only passing attention, even though it is prima facie obvious that a canonical interpretation or criticism of the Old Testament as Jewish Scripture will be different from a canonical interpretation or criticism of it as the Old Testament part of the Christian canon" (Dunn 1982:15).

On the issue of whose approach is to be favoured, Sanders' approach is found to be more palatable, what with its retention of a sense of the historical - reflected in its focus, not only to the final form of the biblical text but also, the earlier stages or levels of the authoritative traditions. Hence, like Sanders, Dunn adopts a broad definition of 'canon' where the term comes to be equated with both oral and textual 'normative tradition':

"[canon is] any formulation(s) or writing(s) which a community of faith treats as its rule of faith, as constitutive or normative for its self-understanding" (Dunn 1982:18).

Proceeding from his definition of 'canon', Dunn posits "no less than four broad levels of canonical authority" or stages at which biblical traditions have taken on a normative status (Dunn 1982:18):

- (i) The tradition-history level
- (ii) The final author or final composition level
- (iii) The canonical level
- (iv) The ecclesiastical level

(i) By the tradition-history level of canonical authority Dunn means the oral and written

⁷ In light of the discrepancies which we have located between the approaches of Childs and Sanders, it should be noted that the term 'canonical critic' is used in a very loose sense, for the moment, to describe any scholar who applies the term, or any similar term, to him/herself.

stages of a text's pre-history in which authoritative traditions "functioned as constitutive and normative for the self-understanding of the communities which used them" (Dunn 1982:18-20). The links to Sanders' focus are clear.

(ii) Dunn's Final author or final composition level takes on a greater complexity, in terms of what is implied for the Old and New Testaments respectively. This level refers to the intended meaning at the point when the biblical texts were put into their present shape. In terms of the Old Testament such a concern represents a radical shift from standard historical critical concerns which seek to reach back into the oral stages of a tradition's first utterance; "So for example with the Pentateuch, any reconstruction of J or E or P is better seen as part of the Pentateuch's tradition-history and exegesis at this level should be directed towards uncovering the function and meaning of these traditions in their present form and position within the Pentateuch" (Dunn 1982:21). When it comes to the New Testament, however, the gap between 'original author' and 'final author' is often not as great, in fact often they are one and the same⁸. Hence, in this instance the intended meaning of the present shape of the text is basically equivalent to the original intention of the author, "and exegesis of the canonical shape can enquire into the historical context of Matthew or 1 Corinthians from the first" (Dunn 1982:23). Unfortunately, Dunn gives no indication as to what is to be done when the meaning of the original author differs from that of the final author - what significance is to be ascribed to original authorial meaning?

(iii) The canonical level represents Dunn's attempt to include Childs' 'canonical context' - the hermeneutical significance of the literary context of canon is acknowledged:

"By canonical level I mean the level provided by the canon itself. At this level the primary context of an individual document is the larger group of documents to which it belongs and which together have been declared or are being treated as a canon of scripture. It is the level where the meaning which carries canonical authority is the meaning of the individual writing as seen within the context of the whole canon (Childs' 'canonical context')" (Dunn 1982:24).

(iv) The ecclesiastical level refers to the post-canonization stage of dogmatic theology, where further authoritative meanings were derived from the canonical texts, meanings which need not have assimilated the meanings of the other three levels. Dunn cites the example of the "role of Mary far beyond what could be achieved by exegesis of scripture" (Dunn 1982:26f.). Dunn doesn't develop this level in his subsequent discussion.

Interestingly, only the first level (i) is representative of Sanders' focus, whereas all the other three levels - (ii); (iii); (iv) - can be said to assimilate the focus of Childs. Dunn justifies his shift back in the direction of Childs on the grounds that Sanders approach is considered to be

⁸ Dunn concedes that for certain books this is not true, e.g., the Fourth Gospel (Dunn 1982:22f.). As we saw above, Childs' understanding of 'canonical shaping' assumes that there significant discrepancies between the 'original author' and the 'final author' - enough of a gap for him to devise the concept of 'canonical shape'!

inadequate as a specifically New Testament approach: where a tradition history approach to the Old Testament reveals important insights to the interpreter, the nature of the New Testament - as covering a smaller time frame and having fewer, more easily recognisable sources - ensures a lesser role for the critical tool of tradition history (Dunn 1982:16f.). Hence Dunn, in effect, has attempted a synthesis of Childs and Sanders' approaches. For him, a canonical interpretation of a biblical tradition or text involves the analysis of the meaning which was ascribed to the tradition/text at all four of the above levels or stages of its transmission. The need for the canonical interpreter to undertake such a study, is justified by Dunn on the grounds that such an approach enables one to establish a continuity of meaning with regard to the interpretations which have been applied by the tradents. Hence, as in the case of both Sanders and Childs, Dunn notes the existence of a basic 'continuity of meaning' ascribed to the authoritative traditions at all the levels (Dunn 1982:28) - a phenomenon which leads him also to propose a methodology, which involves a basic history of tradition approach.

On the issue of whether greater hermeneutical significance is to be ascribed to one of the four levels, Dunn notes that it is "impossible to attribute a particular degree of inspiration to any one level", since each level was essential for the continued transmission of the respective canonical traditions (Dunn 1982:32). However, later in his discussion he introduces the argument that one of the levels is to "be regarded as possessing primacy of canonical authority, as normative - normative for the exegete, or for contemporary faith, or indeed for all time and for all issues" (Dunn 1982:36); that level being the level of the final composition. By normative, Dunn means in the "sense of exercising a control over or check on the lines of investigation and any hypotheses or results which emerge" (Dunn 1982:36f.). Dunn's argument in favour of the normativity of the final form level relies heavily on that of Childs. Apart from appealing to Childs' chapter 3, 'the normative status of the final form of the text', in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, he adopts a central argument of Childs on the issue - the final form of the text represents the least speculative form which the modern interpreter possesses:

"It has to be the level of the final composition for the simple reason that as a rule we gain a clearer grasp of the meaning and function of any particular text at that level than at any other.... In a word, at the level of the final composition we have the best hope of ascertaining the intended meaning of the text within its most durative context" (Dunn 1982:37).

By positing the primacy of the final form of the canonical texts, Dunn's position assimilates that of Childs. When it comes to Sanders, however, Dunn's position represents an (indirect) rejection of Sanders approach which, as we noted above, de-emphasizes the hermeneutical significance of the stabilized text:

"At the level of the final author or final composition it can simply be assumed that the form put on the material at that level was so decisive and endured so successfully precisely because in that form it made a lasting and continuing impact. In each case the document was recognized to have normative authority in that form, so that substantial redaction either was thought unnecessary or did not find favour in the community of faith, and even if its material was substantially re-used by a later author

(Mark by Matthew, Jude by 2 Peter) it itself was still treasured and preserved in the form put upon it by the final hand. At this level, even more clearly than in the former, we can recognize writings functioning as the word of God, exercising a formative and normative influence on communities of faith, doing the job of 'canon'" (Dunn 1982:23f.).

A final point to note concerning Dunn is that nowhere else do we find him rigorously applying his methodological suggestions to a particular biblical text or passage; his interest in the canonical critical approach appears to have been fleeting.

2.3.2. Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemcio

Wall and Lemcio represent a more enduring attempt to adapt both Childs and Sanders' approaches, to the study of the New Testament. Their recent work (1992), *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism*, is a clear indication of this.

On the issue of the relationship between Childs and Sanders, they indicate their desire to integrate both Childs and Sanders' approaches and concerns (Wall 1992:16, 185). And with respect to their understanding of the relationship between canonical criticism and historical criticism, they reveal their favouring of Sanders' view on the matter:

"we do not claim to offer brand new techniques of biblical exegesis; rather... our project is more like a 'renewal movement' within the guild of biblical scholars, aspiring to offer fresh perspectives and new sensitivities that bring balance to purely historical or literary critical renderings of biblical texts. As we understand canonical criticism, then, our work should be posited in the larger 'post-critical' enterprise. We do *not* intend to replace or displace critical exegesis, but rather to employ its various methods as a means to a hermeneutical (and ecclesial) end" (Wall 1992:16, 189).

By asserting this they seek to "correct the impression of a few that canonical criticism is neo-fundamentalistic and inherently 'anti-critical'" (Wall 1992:16); accusations which have been directed particularly at Childs' approach in the past. Wall's reliance on Sanders is further evidenced in his adoption of terms such as 'unrecorded hermeneutics of the Bible', 'dynamic analogy' (Wall 1992:192), and 'pluralizing monotheism' (Wall 1992:25). At the same time, Wall is supportive of Childs' emphasis on the 'intertextuality' of the biblical texts on the literary as well as the theological level (Childs' concept of '*canonical context*'). In his work we find clear evidence of a constant dialogue with Childs (Wall 1992:17). Of interest to us, in this respect, is Wall's focus on the New Testament letter collection, something which Childs could only give the briefest attention to in his work *An Introduction to the New Testament as Canon* (Wall 1992:169). Also of note is his interest in the history of canon formation and its importance for the hermeneutical appropriation of texts for today:

"the factors which led the church to select and collect two corpora of letters, Pauline and non-Pauline, and then form them into a single canonical unit, yield a set of hermeneutical clues which should guide the church's interpretation of the New Testament letters" (Wall 1992:161).

Areas in which Wall and Lemcio concur with both Childs and Sanders - and, hence, areas which we might uphold as definitive for the term 'canonical criticism' - include their (i) critique of historical criticism's replacement of the 'received text' with the 'critical text' (Wall 1992:190) and; (ii) their view of the canon as providing "*its own built-in 'check and balances'*" in terms of its variety of theologies, which are "*self-correcting and mutually informing*" (Wall 1992:191, 20). The specific methodology adopted by Wall and Lemcio involves the consideration of three stages in the canonical process which serve as clues to how the Bible should be interpreted. These stages are:

- (i) A canonical text at its point of origin
- (ii) The biblical canon
- (iii) The ongoing relationship between canon and community

(i) *A canonical text at its point of origin* - refers to a 'narrow' concern for a text's meaning in its original *Sitz im Leben*, for the purpose of establishing a dis/continuity with its meaning in its canonical *Sitz im Leben*. In addition to this, Wall and Lemcio also allow for the analysis of the hermeneutics of a text's author, facilitating both an understanding of the originally intended meaning, as well as serving as a possible guide to how the text should be continued to be interpreted today - the latter notion assimilating the approach of Sanders to a certain extent (Wall 1992:17f.).

(ii) *The biblical canon stage* - involves a focus on the redactional and "canonical precipitate", which are seen to serve as interpretive pointers: phenomena such as titles, prologues, prior redactional activity, pre-canonical relationships (which could include deuterio-canonical writings), location in the New Testament canon (inter-canonical relationships between groups of texts, and the arrangement of texts within a particular collection). Wall and Lemcio ascribe these procedural concerns to Childs (Wall 1992:18f.). It must be pointed out, however, that their concerns do extend beyond those of Childs (whose approach is predominantly synchronic) into the realm of the history of canon formation - as noted above.

(iii) *The ongoing relationship between canon and community stage* - concerns the history of interpretation of a canonical text/passage in light of confessional positions (Wall 1992:23-25). This area of concern, assimilates Dunn's 'ecclesiastical level'. And like Dunn, Wall and Lemcio do not develop this aspect of interpretation very much; especially not with any consistency or clarity.

Wall and Lemcio don't specifically address the issue of which 'stage' of the canonical process is to have primacy over the other stages. What is clear from the above outline of their proposed methodological procedure, is that their focus is basically the same as that of Childs in that they show a preference for dealing with textualized tradition rather than oral tradition.

2.4. Methodological Suggestions

In view of our considerations above we are in a better position to arrive at an understanding

of what would be the most effective canonical critical approach to the Petrine Epistles.

2.4.1. A Synthesis of Sanders and Childs?

In light of our discussion above it has become apparent that Sanders and Childs differ with one another in certain significant areas. Scholars have sought to describe the major difference between Sanders and Childs, as the latter's supposed failure to consider the historical in contrast to former's willingness to do so⁹. As we have seen above, in the instance of Dunn, and Wall and Lemcio, such an opinion has led some canonical critics to claim a greater allegiance to Sanders:

"[Childs] consistently separates 'historical critical problems' and 'canonical shape' into *two different sections*, and only the second of these has any legitimate claim to exegetical distinctiveness. Indeed, one should probably distinguish canonical criticism and the canonical approach in just this way: the work of Sanders, for example, does indeed attempt to reconstruct the pre-history of the canon with historical-critical interests and tools" (Brett 1991:121; cf. 19-20; Wall 1992:142).

At face value, Brett's description is true. However, as we have noted above, Childs' approach in practice does in fact, in many instances, base its proposals on the historical evidence: he justifies his focus on the final form of the text on the grounds that even prior to the stabilization of scripture "the tradents consistently sought to hide their own footprints in order to focus attention on the canonical text" (Childs 1977:68). Brett, himself, at another point in his book, notes this tendency of Childs':

"although Childs in his part-time role as historical critic knows that the biblical books have undergone development, his preferred object of exegesis *qua* canonical interpreter is the end result of this history. He does not, therefore, need to reconstruct this process in any great detail (although, in his role as historical critic, he occasionally does diachronically reconstruct a tradition whenever there is sufficient evidence). Although this point is theoretically quite clear, in actual exegetical practice Childs is constantly swapping hermeneutical hats - even in his sections headed 'canonical shape'" (Brett 1991:68).

A further indication of the fact that the above understanding of the difference between Childs and Sanders is misleading is evidenced by the situation which has arisen in other canonical

⁹ Childs' favouring of a synchronic approach has been seized upon by scholars sympathetic to postmodernist hermeneutics who seek to emphasize the links between his canon approach and recent literary approaches. Cf. J. Barton's comparison of Childs' canon approach with 'New Criticism', [*Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984), p.208]; F. Kermode (Kermode 1987:607) and M. Brett (1991:139ff.) liken Childs' approach to that of Gadamer. Melugin likens him to Ricoeur (Melugin 1988:50f.). J. Barr offers a negative estimation of the relation between Childs approach and these literary approaches (Barr 1983:158f.).

critics' development of their methodologies. In both the cases of Dunn, and Wall and Lemcio, despite their claims to favour Sanders' methodology with its focus on the historical, their methodologies have ultimately favoured that of Childs. Dunn's tradition level is the only concession made to Sanders' approach whereas all his remaining levels (3) are representative of Childs' methodological focus. Wall's work has tended - despite its subscription to the terminology of Sanders - to dialogue more with Childs' concept of 'canonical context'. Wall's claims to identify more with Sanders' methodological focus on 'process' also represent a too simplistic diachronic-synchronic distinction between Childs and Sanders. A closer consideration of the stage of the canonization process which Wall seeks to analyse reveals an important discrepancy with respect to the stage in the canonization process which Sanders deals with: Wall focuses on the period immediate to, and including, the canonization of the New Testament writings, whereas Sanders focuses on the transmission of authoritative traditions up to the point of their textualization (as evidenced by his reliance upon the historical-critical tool of tradition history) (cf. Lemcio 1992:33). In view of this predominant focus of Wall and most other canonical critics, on the stabilized text (or 'final form' of the biblical text), it is the intention of the present study to follow suite. Consequentially, a 'narrower' definition of 'canon' is proposed which seeks to distinguish between pre-stabilized tradition and the stabilized text. Our rejection of Sanders' focus is not only to be seen in terms of our favouring of the greater hermeneutical significance of textualization. The underlying assumptions of his approach tend to be highly contradictory. Sanders' retrospective approach entails that he consider the earlier function of *only* the authoritative traditions which later came to be canonized. This means that he is led to disregard the *other* authoritative traditions of these earlier tradents, which did not make it into the canon. In so doing he falls victim to his own critique of Childs: that of denying the earlier tradents their interpretive integrity. To make matters worse for Sanders, if he chooses too consider - and gives equal hermeneutical weight to - those earlier 'non-canonical' traditions, he becomes guilty of denying canonical authority by considering authoritative traditions beyond the boundary of the canon (thereby, denying the canonizing church *its* interpretive integrity). And, if Sanders chooses this latter path, which entails denying the canonizing church its interpretive integrity, his approach, in effect, ceases to be a 'canonical' one. Hence, the inconsistencies of Sanders' approach lead us to reject it. At best, his approach can only be said to have an indirect association with the concept of 'canon' - he only considers authoritative traditions which later found their way into the canon.

2.4.2. Proposed Methodology

In view of our discussion thus far, the proposed methodology of this study involves a consideration of:

- (i) The original function of the Petrine Epistles
- (ii) The canonical function of the Petrine Epistles - the 'canonical' intention of the canonizing church in its canonization of the texts.
 - (ii.i) the canonization history of the Petrine Epistles
 - (ii.ii) the 'canonical context' of the Petrine Epistles
 - (ii.iii) the canonical portrait of Peter

The first methodological consideration of the original function of the Petrine Epistles is representative of the concerns all 'canonical critical' approaches which have been discussed above. All favoured, at least, a minimal consideration of historical critical concerns - if only to enable the interpreter to establish a dis/continuity between the original intention of the text's author and the intentions of the subsequent redactors and canonizers.

Concerning our second methodological consideration of the canonical function of the Petrine Epistles, it is to be noted that our approach is ultimately contrary to that of Childs in the sense that it remains, not only 'practically' but also 'theoretically' true to the historical. Value is placed not only in the 'canonical context' of the final form of a text, but also in the 'intention' of the canonizing church - that is, a focus on both the history of canon formation and the canonizing church's perception of the apostolic figure represented by the text. In the past Childs has indicated, in no uncertain terms, his disapproval of any attempts to reconstruct the history of the formation of the canon. For him such an endeavour represents a relapse into the 'highly speculative enterprise' of historical criticism (cf. Childs 1979:57, 67-68). And, for this reason, in his application of his approach to the study of the New Testament he has only been willing to consider the 'stage' in the canonization process which falls within the New Testament period itself (that is, the redaction history of the canonical texts). Despite Childs' objection, the necessity for us to consider the historical evidence surrounding the formation of the canon arises for the following reasons:

* In his argument, Childs is referring to the Israelite canon. When it comes to the New Testament canon the enterprise of reconstructing the canonization process is not as speculative.

* Such a focus is to be seen as an attempt to compliment the approach of Childs, since it involves an area which is of fundamental importance to his justification for his canon approach. As noted above, he has argued that his focus on the final form of the biblical texts is in full agreement with the intentions of the canonizing church's desire to overcome any original socio-historical differences. Hence, in order for Childs to support this proposal, and consequently defend his approach, it would be necessary for him to show a greater interest in

the reconstruction of the canonical process¹⁰. Another 'intention' of the canonizing church which Childs *et al* presupposes is the function of canon as theological safety-guard (cf. Sanders 1984:37).

* Gottwald's ideological critique of Childs' approach serves to highlight the need to consider the history of canon formation - if only to find out whether any 'negative' motives on the part of the canonizers have had any impact on subsequent interpretations of the canon and its texts.

* A significant feature of the post-apostolic canonization period was the major shift in the church's regard for its religious literature. In the act of canonization it separated itself from both the Jesus movement and the Apostolic church in terms of its understanding of the authority of its scripture. Hence, this context is to be considered more hermeneutically significant than the original context, since it represents the first instance of the Christian community's reception and interpretation of a closed collection of normative scripture. Furthermore, in its act of ascribing canonical authority to a selection of its scriptures, the church came closest to interpreting the canonical texts in the sense of what Childs refers to as their 'canonical context'. In other words, through a consideration of the formation of the canon the possibility arises that we might find a historical context - prior to the post-Reformation period and, hence, contra Sanders *et al* - in which the New Testament texts were interpreted in terms of their 'canonical context'. It is plausible that the canonizers, when considering which texts are canonical, asked the hermeneutical question of the relationship of the developing canon's constituent texts. Of course, we would still concede to Childs the fact that this hermeneutical context is not to be ascribed with absolute authority in terms of interpreting the canonical books for today, however, it is very important for establishing a hermeneutical continuity since it represents the starting point of the church's interpretation of the New Testament canon.

In our consideration of the canonical context of the Petrine Epistles, attention will be paid to the methodological outline of Childs, and Wall in this area; that is, the intertextual relationships between the canonical texts, as well as the relationship between the constituent collections within the canon.

A further methodological tool which is to be utilized in this study, and which has not been considered in any great detail by other canonical critics, concerns the analysis of the 'canonical portrait' of Peter. The proposal in this regard is that if we juxtapose the portrait of Peter which emerged in the first century church (i.e., as reflected in canonical and

¹⁰ Mark Brett, having made this very same point (cf. Brett 1991:153), later contradicts himself in his conclusion: "It would be preferable, I would argue, for the canonical exegetes to give up all talk of revelation and turn attention to the 'objective' content (in Popper's sense) of biblical tradition, without making any claims about the canonical process. This way forward would take the canonical approach much closer to the 'literary' approaches which eschew historical reconstruction and simply read the text as it has been handed down" (Brett 1991:164).

extracanonical material from this period) with his portrait in the subsequent centuries up to the point of the canonization of 1 and 2 Peter (i.e., Petrien tradition found in later material), we will be able to gain a better understanding of the nature of canonizing church's estimation of the material's apostolicity. In situations in which a text's apostolicity/authenticity came to be questioned in its path to the canon, such a consideration is to be considered useful in supplementing the standard canonization history evidence.

A final issue of methodological importance concerns the lack, in this study, of a general history-of-interpretation focus which extends into the twentieth century; something which all our canonical critics see as an essential means of establishing an authoritative interpretation for the church today (but which none of them have, as yet, undertaken). Such a consideration, due to its enormity, is beyond the scope of this study. Hence our contribution to the goal of interpreting the Petrine Epistles in the church today is to be seen in terms of its establishment of a interpretive foundation - it seeks to uncover the first interpretation/s of the Petrine Epistles by the Christian community at the time of their canonization.

3. THE ORIGINAL FUNCTION OF 1 AND 2 PETER

3.1. First Peter

The scholarly debate concerning the original meaning, or purpose, of 1 Peter has involved the investigation of a number of interconnected issues. All of these issues in some way or another relate to the fundamental question of the authenticity of 1 Peter. The authenticity of 1 Peter has been questioned from the earliest point in the historical- and literary-critical study of the text. Stibbs locates Cludius as the first questioner of 1 Peter's authenticity¹. His arguments were (Stibbs 1956:18):

- (i) The language and diction of the letter does not fit with what we know of Peter from Acts.
- (ii) A lack of personal detail.
- (iii) It reveals too much of a literary and theological dependence upon the Pauline Epistles (especially Romans and Ephesians) - which would indicate that the author was not Peter but a Paulinist (cf. R. Knopf; T. Zahn; R. Bultmann; E. Lohse; F.W. Beare).
- (iv) The historical situation implied is that of a period later than that of the Neronian persecution, the period to which Peter's death is usually assigned in later church tradition - Knopf favours 81-90 CE and Windisch 81 (i.e., the time of the Flavians); Beare favours the reign of Trajan and; Dibelius favours the 90's (i.e., the time of Domitian) (cf. Goppelt 1993:36-45).

Further arguments which came to be included with those of Cludius, in the twentieth century, were:

- (v) The correspondence between words and phrases in 1 Peter and the vocabulary of the pagan mysteries - revealed in the theme of 'rebirth' (1:3ff; 1:23), parallels to the *taurobolium* ritual (1:2ff), etc.; hence the author's probable association with a mystery cult (the Phrygian Magna Mater or Cybell)².
- (vi) The form-critical classification of 1 Peter as a 'sermon' - more specifically a 'baptismal sermon' - would indicate that the document's letter-form was secondary; hence, also its ascription to Peter.

(i) Due to a basic consensus between scholars concerning the difficulty of matching the good Greek of the letter with the reported unletteredness of Peter, the camp favouring the ultimate authenticity of letter has favoured a secretary hypothesis. It is proposed that Peter used a

¹ *Uransichten des Christenthums*, (Altona, 1808).

² Cf. R. Perdelwitz, *Die Mysterienreligion und das Problem des Petrusbriefes*, (Giessen, 1911); Beare rejects the *taurobolium* idea, but agrees with the author's background in a mystery religion; he adds the argument that the author lacks any concern for law - something which one would not expect from a Christian Jew (Beare 1958:16ff., 26f.). F.L. Cross also supports the idea, *1 Peter: A Paschal Liturgy*, (London: Mowbray, 1954).

'secretary' or 'amanuensis'. This role is ascribed to Silvanus who is referred to in 1 Peter 5:12³. He is considered to have had a greater involvement in the production of the letter than was customary for a secretary - which would explain the high level of Greek found in 1 Peter (Bigg 1902:5; Selwyn 1947:11; Stibbs 1956:22; Barclay 1960:169-71). The key passage in reference to Silvanus (1 Pet 5:12) is seen by Bigg as possibly being interpreted as more than just 'bearer' of the letter; his evidence comes from Dionysius of Corinth (in Eusebius *HE* 4.23.11) who speaks of the Epistle of Clement as *hēmin dia Klémentos grapheisan*, which can be translated to the effect that Clement was the mouthpiece or interpreter of the Church of Rome. Bigg argues for the same understanding of the phrase found in 1 Peter 5:12 (Bigg 1902:5; cf. Grudem 1988:23f.). Further evidence is also located in early church writers' reference to Peter's use of an 'interpreter' (cf. Papias in Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.1; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.5; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.17). In response to Bigg's proposal, the supporters of a pseudepigraphic text cite evidence indicating the common use of this phrase to designate the bearer of a letter, not its recorder (Acts 15:23; Polycarp, *Phil.* 14:1; Ignatius, *Rom.* 10:1) (Meade 1987:166).

(ii) Against the argument that 1 Peter lacks personal allusions, Bigg highlights the precarious nature of this criterion:

"If a writer declares his identity in the address only of an Epistle, as is the case in 1 Peter, the address is treated as a forged addition. If he hints in an unmistakable way who he is, as is the case in the Gospel of St. John, his words are regarded as so suspicious, and even indecent, that he must be a forger. If he does both, as is the case in 2 Peter, the evidence against him is often treated as irrefutable" (Bigg 1902:232).

In addition to this, Selwyn and others, attempt to locate a number of 'personal allusions', by comparing the text of 1 Peter with Mark's Passion, and the speeches of Peter in Acts⁴ (Selwyn 1947:31ff.; cf. Stibbs 1956:31ff.; Barclay 1960:166-68).

An issue which can be said to be related to that of personal allusions involves the stated place of compilation of the letter as 'Babylon' which is considered by most to be a figurative reference to Rome. Supporters of a pseudepigraphical 1 Peter have on occasion argued that Peter never went to Rome, hence the letter cannot be authentic. Authenticists, of course, appeal to the early church tradition which arose in the latter half of the second century that Peter was martyred at Rome during the Neronian persecution (cf. Goppelt 1993:7-15). A few scholars also appeal to the link (in ideas, vocabulary, etc.) between 1 Peter and Romans⁵

³ H. von Soden, in Holtzmann's *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, (Frei-im-Breisgau, 1891), pp.114ff., was the first to suggest Silvanus as the author, although he considered the letter to have been written after Peter's death. Moffatt disputed this in favour of the secretary hypothesis (Moffatt 1928:334).

⁴ E. Best offers a comprehensive critique of these arguments (Best 1971:51-5).

⁵ It is on the basis of this perceived dependence that supporters of a pseudepigraphical letter claim the author to have been a Paulinist, and therefore, not Peter; which would explain why this proposal lacks support among authenticists.

(which circulated in Rome), the Gospel of Mark (traditionally believed to have been composed in Rome), and *1 Clement* (Best 1971:64f.).

Arguments against Peter's presence in Rome include:

- * Acts 28:30-31 ends with Paul present in Rome but there is no mention of Peter's presence at the same location.
- * Paul's prison letters (Philippians, Colossians, etc) nowhere mention Peter.
- * 1 Peter doesn't mention Paul despite the fact that the latter would most probably have been known by the addressees, due to his earlier missionary activity in Asia Minor (Grudem 1988:36f.).

On the strength of this evidence, some authenticists do not support a Roman location for the writing's origin. Barclay argues on the basis of parallel ideas between 1 Peter and the Gospel of John, 1-3 John, and Acts' account of Paul at Ephesus, that the letter could have been compiled at Ephesus (Asia Minor) (Barclay 1960:191).

(iii) In opposition to the claim that the author of 1 Peter was a Paulinist, Bigg claims that no specifically Pauline words are to be located in our text. Also, 1 Peter is seen to exhibit more of a classical style than the Pauline texts (Bigg 1902:16). Bigg also conducts a comparison between the theological concepts found in 1 Peter and the Pauline epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Pastorals) (Bigg 1902:16-21). In this regard he concedes numerous links, however, he argues at the same time that in the area of the more significant theological concepts - such as the concept of God - 1 Peter clearly differs from Romans and 1 Corinthians (Bigg 1902:37f.). Selwyn is willing to concede strong ties between 1-2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter; which confirms his proposal that Silvanus co-authored the former letters as well (Selwyn 1947:17). Best has sought to be more level-headed in his approach. On the one hand he concedes that the author of our text knew Ephesians and Romans, "or at least" their author, due to the similarities in vocabulary. On the other hand, he claims that the presence of more Old Testament allusions in 1 Peter than in the Pauline literature would indicate that 1 Peter is not a Paulinist text (Best 1971:30-6, 47).

Another argument which is customarily brought into play by the supporters of an authentic letter, is that concerning the perceived greater, or at least equal (in relation to the Pauline Epistles), links to be found between 1 Peter and the other non-Pauline books of the New Testament. In this regard Bigg argues that despite 1 Peter and the Pauline Epistles' closeness in the sphere of 'dogma' (cf. Gal 2:6; Gal 2:15,16), "in the 'practical' sphere St. Peter stands perceptibly nearer to the evangelists [particularly the Gospel of Luke] and to the Book of Acts" (Bigg 1902:34; 23). Selwyn favours a link with Mark, especially in the area of the details of the Passion (Selwyn 1947:30). Most scholars concede the lack of links between 1 Peter and the Gospel of John, the Johannine Epistles, or Revelation (cf. Bigg 1902:22f.; Goppelt 1993:26-35). And, concerning 1 Peter's relationship to Acts, we noted above the claim of authenticists concerning the strong link between 1 Peter and Acts, particularly the passages which report the speeches of Peter. In addition to this link, others would maintain a link with Acts in other areas as well (cf. Selwyn 1947:12; 75). When it comes to the remaining canonical books there is greater agreement concerning the extent of the link. Bigg locates parallels in theological concepts between our text and Hebrews (Law and Gospel;

definition of faith) which is a clear indication that "they belong to same school of thought, which is neither Johannine nor Pauline" (Bigg 1902:21; 38f.). And, Goppelt notes their common expressions (the alien status of believers; the blood of sprinkling; the living word; Jesus as shepherd; etc.) reflecting their corresponding 'spiritual atmosphere' (Goppelt 1993:26-35). Bigg also establishes a "positive literary connexion" between 1 Peter and James, which leads to his speculation as to which of the texts used the other (Bigg 1902:22f.).

In light of the above studies of the relationship between 1 Peter and all the other New Testament books - conducted in response to the argument of the Paulinist nature of 1 Peter - a consensus has emerged to effect that all the New Testament books are considered to share a common stock of knowledge. According to Selwyn this common stock of knowledge circulated in the form of parenesis and hymnody (Selwyn 1947:17f.; cf. Stibbs 1956:43). Goppelt has, more recently, sought to emphasize this idea, adding that ultimately 1 Peter's usage of the common oral tradition was more in line with that of the non-Pauline authors. He claims that parenesis, Old Testament testimonia, christological formula, letter opening formula, etc. circulated as oral tradition in early Christian communities. In the instances that 1 Peter does utilize Pauline concepts and phraseology - such as the phrase 'in Christ' (1 Pet 3:16; 5:10, 14); the concept of dying to sin in order to live for righteousness (2:24); and the concept of participating in the sufferings of Christ followed by participation in his glory (4:13; 5:1) - Goppelt argues that these concepts were also part of the early church oral tradition and therefore do not represent a direct Pauline influence. Pauline terms and concepts are used in

"different degrees" and "divergent senses". And: "When 1 Peter speaks of the suffering of Christ and of Christians it does so, not in terms customary for Paul, i.e., 'cross' and 'crucifixion', but with a term alien for him, 'suffer'. 1 Peter never speaks of the Church as 'ecclesia', but uses metaphorical images of Old Testament origin" (Goppelt 1993:26f.).

Furthermore, Goppelt appeals to the evidence of tradition-historical analysis which indicates the letter's emergence from an independent tradition of Palestinian origin which was not solely determined by Paul (Goppelt 1993:48-52). He concludes:

"the ecclesiastical tradition in which 1 Peter arose travelled the same road of development as did the Synoptic Jesus tradition. Like the latter it came out of the Palestinian Church and was embellished in the Hellenistic Church. Belonging to this ecclesiastical tradition were also an intensive appropriation of the OT and coloration by various religious influences from the world around" (Goppelt 1993:32f.).

(iv) Arguments which have been proposed in the championing of an early dating of 1 Peter, include the emphasis on the letter's undeveloped theology; such as its simple ecclesiology - a very simple organization of the church under the leadership of elders (5:1). This is to be contrasted with the mention of deacons and bishops in the Pastorals (as well as in Ignatius' letters from the first half of the second century (Selwyn 1947:56-62; Barclay 1960:166). Also to be noted in this regard, is 1 Peter's retention of a futurist eschatology - a belief which receded in later years - cf. Ephesians, one of the latest Pauline Epistles, which doesn't mention the second coming (Barclay 1960:166).

The underlying historical context of 1 Peter, especially the evidence for a situation of persecution coupled with the author's call for obedience to the state, has allowed scholars to postulate a more specific date. Selwyn posits a date of 63 CE on the basis of the non-antagonistic teaching concerning duty toward the civil power (2:13-17): it is unlikely that a Christian could condone obedience to the state shortly after the Neronian persecution (Selwyn 1947:56-62). Barclay contends that the letter was penned shortly after the outbreak of the Neronian persecution, since the letter calls on Christians to endure suffering and be a good citizen - the author's "only defence against persecution was to show by the excellence of his citizenship that he did not deserve such treatment" (Barclay 1960:189). Other supporters of the period of the Neronian persecution include Goppelt who argues convincingly that the situation of persecution in 1 Peter falls after the Pauline period. The Pauline period was characterized by localized and particular instances of persecution, whereas 1 Peter reflects a situation in which adversity has become the normal experience for Christians throughout the Empire (5:9), and no particular accusations are required in order for public officials to become involved (4:16). Furthermore, Goppelt (along with Selwyn, Spicq, and Kelly) rejects the dating of the letter to the Domitianic persecution, on the grounds that "the letter clearly does not presuppose the criterion of action that Pliny [and Domitian] applies, namely sacrifice for the emperor", as well as the fact that the "situation introduced by the Neronian persecution is still alien for the readers and probably unexpected (4:12)". Hence, Goppelt proposes (along with Kelly and Spicq) the first half of the period 65-80 CE (Goppelt 1993:36-45).

(v) In response to the argument that 1 Peter has too much of a hellenistic flavour for it to be authentic, scholars have either sought prove a Jewish Hellenistic, or Palestinian Jewish background for the author. Bigg constructs a list of vocabulary (62) found in 1 Peter which is not found in the rest of the New Testament; many of which are then traced to the Septuagint or other Greek versions of the Old Testament (Bigg 1902:2-4). His analysis has revealed a close vocabulary link to Maccabees as well as more than eight Hebraisms in the text, however, Bigg concedes that this does not indicate that the author thought in Hebrew. His final conclusion, based on evidence of a lack of Latinisms; a more classical style than Paul, (but not as good Greek as Luke's Gospel); is that the writer was not a Greek (Bigg 1902:16). Selwyn's position on the matter, involves a favouring of a Jewish background for the author, whom he considers to have been 'deeply steeped' in Jewish traditions (Selwyn 1947:24). These Jewish traditions are exhibited in the author's Levitical conception of the Church as the new Israel and his preoccupation with the Old Testament scriptures. Furthermore, the books most quoted are the Psalms and the Proverbs (Selwyn 1947:43). On the specific issue of the links between 1 Peter and the mystery religions (proposed by Perdelwitz et al), Stibbs argues that sources for the concepts within 1 Peter can be found elsewhere with as much justification (Stibbs 1956:37f.). Subsequent to Stibbs there has been no support for the mystery religions-connection.

An issue which is also related to the ethnic background of the author of our text is that of the ethnic background of the addressees. Peter, as missionary to the Jews (Acts 15; Gal 1) would be expected to have written to Jewish-Christians. On this basis Origen, Eusebius, and the Greek Fathers generally maintained that they had been Jews. Later church writers such as Augustine, Jerome, and other Latin writers held the opposite view. Later Erasmus, Calvin,

Bengel, and Grotius supported the idea of Jewish addressees (Selwyn 1947:42). The position of Selwyn (and others, such as Schelke, Spicq, and Kelly), however, is that the addressees were predominantly Gentile. The evidence for this is located in the lack of any underlying tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians, a common feature of the Pauline period (Selwyn 1947:42-7). Interestingly, Barclay who favours an authentic letter, argues that the addressees were mainly Gentiles (Barclay 1960:173):

* The background of the addressees which the letter describes is more gentile (1:14; 4:3,4; 2:9,10), as well as the fact that there is no mention of the law.

* The use of the Greek form of Peter's name ('Petros') also shows that this letter was intended for Gentiles. When Paul speaks of Peter he calls him 'Cephas' (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Galatians 1:18; 2:9,11,14). Among his fellow Jews, Peter referred to as 'Simeon' (Acts 15:14), which is the name by which he is called in Second Peter (1:1) - "Since he uses his Greek name, it is likely that Peter was writing to Greek people".

Best, who also believes the addressees to have been primarily Gentile Christians, adds to the standard arguments his contention that: "In 3:6 the women in the community are considered to be the children of Sarah by their conversion; Jewish women would always have been such" (Best 1971:20; cf. Lohse 1981:210f.). This evidence, which leads to the concession on the part of authenticists that the addressees were predominantly Gentile Christians, does not, of course, entail that the author could only have been a Gentile. What it means, however, is that the authenticists are unable to bolster, further, the significance which might be ascribed to the perceived underlying Jewish tradition of the letter.

(vi) In its initial stages, the post-Enlightenment study of 1 Peter centred more on a literary-critical approach which sought to establish the *Sitz in Leben* of the 'text' by focusing on its structure. This approach was characterised by a virtually 'mandatory' questioning of the literary integrity of 1 Peter. The usual evidence which was forwarded as proof of 1 Peter's lack of literary unity concerned the contradictory future and present tenses applied to the theme of suffering within the text; as well as style and tone changes (outdrawn-balanced-polished as opposed to short-direct-simple) (Beare 1958:6). A. Harnack (1897), R. Perdelwitz (1911), B.H. Streeter, H. Windisch (1930), and F.W. Beare (1945) identified 1 Peter as a sermon. More specifically, Perdelwitz and Beare understood the original *Sitz im Leben* of 1:3-4:11 to be a baptismal catechesis for recent converts, which was subsequently included in a letter of comfort (Beare 1958:8). Later, H. Preisker (1951) sought to argue on form-critical grounds that the entire text of 1 Peter (1:3-5:11) reflects a baptismal service having two basic stages (1:3-4:11, involving the worship service of a group gathered for baptism; and 4:12-5:11 involving the concluding worship service of the entire church. Preisker also concluded that this original text had been edited (involving the inclusion of introductory and concluding greetings - 1:1f. and 5:12-14) for the purpose of being sent as a letter to the church in Asia Minor. F.L. Cross (1954) sought argue in addition to the above that the original *sitz im Leben* of our text was a paschal-baptismal-eucharistic service. He focuses on the predominance of the term 'suffer' (*paschó*) - emphasized more in 1 Peter than in any other New Testament document - and the motif of Passover (*pascha*) - seen in the Easter assurance (1:3-5); exodus typology (1:13; 2:9, 11); and Passover typology (1:18f) - in the text (Goppelt 1993:15-18). Cross' proposal did not find favour amongst other scholars, who retained the idea of the centrality of baptism for the text. M.E. Boismard (1961)

considered the text to contain four baptismal hymns dating to before 56-57 CE. C.F.D. Moule study (1957) represents a gradual shift away from the above ideas. He offered the argument that 1 Peter represents a conflation of two letters - 1:1-4:1 and 1:1-2:10, 4:12-5:14 (Moule 1957:1ff.). A major milestone in the debate was achieved with a consensus being reached concerning the literary integrity of 1 Peter. This trend was started with W.C. van Unnik (1942, 1956), followed by the important study of E.C. Selwyn (1947), then Lohse (1954), Stibbs (1959) and W. Barclay (1960). L. Goppelt's 1978 book (republished in 1993) *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, represents the final laying to rest of the questioning of the literary integrity of 1 Peter⁶.

As we have seen above with most of the other issues, however, a consensus of opinion seems a far way off. Hence, the overriding issue of the authenticity or pseudepigraphy of 1 Peter remains unsolved; leaving scholars in our current context, such as Best, arguing for the letter's pseudepigraphical status - and ascribing the letter's production to a 'Petrine school', etc. - and others, such as Goppelt, arguing for its authenticity. Surprisingly, despite the extensive debate on the authenticity of 1 Peter, most commentators from both camps have supported a basic understanding of the purpose of the letter as that of exhortation and encouragement to the addressees during a time of persecution - that is, the stated purpose of the letter itself (cf. 1 Peter 5:12)⁷.

Furthermore, those scholars who have argued for its pseudonymity have not felt the need to consider, in any great detail, the further issue of the intention of the author in claiming to be Peter. The fact that the letter makes no attempt to develop a portrait of Peter means that even the most obvious pseudepigraphic purpose, that of appealing to the authority of Peter, has not been considered by many. F.C. Baur proposes that the letter's pseudepigraphical function was that of establishing a compromise between Pauline and Jewish Christianity - what with it being a Paulinist document which is ascribed to Peter (Childs 1984:455). Of course, problems with this idea are that our text is no longer considered a Paulinist product; the supposed tension between Paul and Peter is disputed and; this explanation ignores the situational details (persecution) of letter. Schenke suggests, rather, that the reference to Peter in the text may be a textual error (cf. Childs 1984:455). And, Beare shrugs off the issue with the statement:

"The Christians of Asia Minor must have known that Peter was long since dead...they would recognize the pseudonym for what it was - an accepted and harmless literary device, employed by a teacher who is more concerned for the Christian content of his

⁶ He argues extensively utilizing a form-critical and tradition-historical approach (Goppelt 1993:18-35); cf. the more recent studies of Balch and Elliott, considered below, in which 1 Peter's literary integrity is presumed.

⁷ The more recent consensus on the literary integrity of 1 Peter means that the understanding of its purpose is a lot less complex than earlier perceived; although, cf. Selwyn who affirms 1 Peter's literary integrity, yet sees its function as being more catechetical - dated to the year 63 or the first half of 64, to be read at the yearly baptismal paschal celebrations (Selwyn 1947:56-62).

message than for the assertion of his own claims to authority" (Beare 1958:29).

Stibbs counters that there is no evidence that the letter was received so - what of all the later writers who assumed its authenticity? And, the Asian bishops Polycarp and Papias, would they have seen it as 'harmless'? (Stibbs 1947:21). Best, at least, has attempted to offer an explanation as to why the letter's pseudepigraphical status did not have any significant function - "the production of 1 Peter from a Petrine school is not quite the same as borrowing the authority of a greater name" (Best 1971:62). Meade, however, has disputed the idea of a Petrine school (Meade 1987:9, 178), which means that the question of the pseudepigraphical function of the letter still requires an answer. Meade answers this question with the standard claim that "attribution in 1 Peter remains an assertion of authoritative tradition" (Meade 1987:179). 1 Peter, is considered by him, to have been written shortly after Peter's death to communities which he had founded, offering a word of encouragement by appealing to the tradition of Peter:

"1 Peter...combines the tradition of Peter as witness of Christ's suffering, participant in his transfigured glory, and shepherd or fellow-elder (1 Peter 5:1-5; cf. John 21:15-23) and links them to the role of Suffering Servant who is also the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4; 2:25). Through these exemplary roles the author offers meaning and hope to the persecuted Christians of his day" (Meade 1987:192).

The fact that 1 Peter does not develop a clear portrait of the historical Peter, means that the underlying argument of Meade's position centres around the issue of the presence of a distinct Petrine tradition in 1 Peter - on the basis of its links to the Gospels (*verba Christi*) and Acts (Peter's speeches and other material) (Meade 1987:173-7). Ironically, as we have seen above, this link is disputed by the pseudepigraphy camp. This discrepancy between Meade and the majority of the pseudepigraphy camp, serves to highlight the significance of the former's contribution to the debate: pseudonymity was not a purposeless activity. In the instance of 1 Peter the key to understanding its pseudepigraphical function is to be located in the Petrine tradition which preceded it. More recent approaches to 1 Peter - that of D.L. Balch⁸ and J.H. Elliott⁹ - take its pseudepigraphical status for granted. Balch's study does not overtly concern itself with the issue of pseudepigraphical function. It focuses specifically on Household codes within the New Testament (Col. 3:18; Eph 5:21-6:9; 1 Tim. 2:18-15; 5:1-2; 6:1-2; Titus 2:1-10; 3:1); especially 1 Peter (2:11-3:12). Balch seeks to interpret the entire letter in the light of the household code. The source of the household code ethic is found by Balch to lie outside Christianity and Judaism, in "classical Greek discussions of the constitution in which the 'city' and the 'house' were hierarchically ordered" (Balch 1981:61). Balch focuses on the topos concerning household management, in which the standard three-paired structure is found (1 Peter's code excludes the father-children pairing):

⁸ *Let Wives be submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars, 1981).

⁹ *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its situation and Strategy*, (London: SCM, 1982).

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| wives - husbands | -> husbands - wives |
| children - parents | -> fathers - children |
| slaves - masters | -> masters - slaves |

Another departure point for Balch in his interpretation of 1 Peter concerns his understanding of the letter's historical context as involving the tension between Roman society and foreign, Eastern religions:

"These tensions produced stereotyped Roman criticisms of foreign religions, including criticisms of household relationships among the devotees of Isis" (Balch 1981:81).

According to Balch, 1 Peter reflects this fundamental tension between the addressees and the outside community throughout its text (cf. 1:18b; 2:15; 3:8-9; 3:15-16; 2:14; 2:19; 3:6). Hence, the function of the citing of the household code in 1 Peter is to be understood as the author's effort to "reduce the socio-political tension between society and the churches" (Balch 1981:81). A further, secondary function of the letter, which is proposed by Balch, is also seen to involve an attempt to reduce tension between Christian women and slaves (addressees), and their pagan husbands/masters (outsiders). The text reflects the scenario of women who had converted to Christianity whilst their husbands remained pagans, thereby flouting the Greco-Roman norm for a wife to take the religion of her husband. 1 Peter appeals for domestic harmony while at the same time calling for slaves and wives to remain Christians and endure the consequential suffering (1:6; 2:20; 3:17; 4:14, 16) (Balch 1981:85, 88).

Elliott, in his sociological exegesis of 1 Peter, also chooses to focus on a specific topic within the letter as a means to understand its overall purpose. His starting point is:

"a hitherto unexamined correlation of two terms which, it is hypothesized, provide the key to determining both the situation and strategy of 1 Peter. These are the two terms by which the intended audience is chiefly characterized: *paroikoi* and *oikos tou theou*. The study shall therefore revolve around an examination of these terms and their related word fields, the social realities to which they point, and the indications they provide of the integrated conception of 1 Peter and its intended socioreligious function" (Elliott 1982:13f.).

Elliott's justification for focusing on the terms *paroikos(-oi)* and *oikos (tou theou)* is twofold: they appear at key points in the structure of the document - the letter's opening salutation (1:1 and 1:17) and first unit of exhortation (2:11ff.) - as well as in "key statements regarding the identity of the addressees and their relation to society at large" (2:5 and 4:17) (Elliott 1982:23). In what follows, he sets about analysing the use of the term *paroikos* in both its past secular (Greco-Roman) and religious (the Septuagint and other Jewish literature) environments. His findings in this respect are that in both instances a 'materialist' understanding of the term is typical - its secular designation referred to a stratum within Greco-Roman society which fell between "superior full citizens" and "inferior transient strangers", and its religious designation implied "the situation and the political, legal, and social and religious conditions of living abroad as resident aliens" (Elliott 1982:24-6). The

picture of the addressees and their situation which Elliott arrives at involves displaced persons - both (i) aliens (possibly rural villagers or tenant farmers who had been relocated) permanently residing in city territories and, (ii) strangers (immigrant artisans, craftsmen, traders, merchants) temporarily visiting, the four provinces of Asia Minor. This group experienced political, legal, social, and religious limitations. Hence, the tensions reflected in 1 Peter are between natives, and displaced aliens and outsiders in their midst. (Elliott 1982:48). Like Balch, Elliott notes the trend of local hostility directed by natives towards inferior aliens and exotic religious sects. But, unlike Balch, Elliott also proposes a situation of internal tension as well. Evidence for internal division is located in the "positive encouragement of brotherly love, mutual affection and concord (1:22; 3:7,8-9; 4:8; 5:14), ungrudging hospitality (4:9), respect for internal order and authority (the subordination theme of 2:18-3:7; 5:1-5a) and mutual humility (3:8; 5:5b-7)" (Elliott 1982 78-84). Furthermore, Elliott proposes that the letter is primarily polemical, and not apologetic. According to him, all previous interpretations of 1 Peter have entailed a significant inaccuracy - what with their usual 'spiritual' or cosmological interpretation of *paroikos* - which has resulted in their failure to understand the subversive agenda of the document. This subversive agenda entails:

"the actual political and social condition of the addressees as *paroikoi* is used as an occasion to encourage their religious peculiarity and strangeness as well. In both, an exhortation to social non-conformity is coupled with a call for conformity to the will of God. In both, *paroikia* in a strange and hostile environment is portrayed not simply as a regrettable social condition but as the Christian community's divine vocation" (Elliott 1982:36).

Internal evidence depicts the addressees' (referred to as *paroikoi*) social distinctiveness (they are encouraged to be so in 1:3,14-16, 18-19; 2:11; 4:2-4) as well as their civic responsibility (2:12, 13-17; 3:15-16; 4:15-16) (Elliott 1982:67-73). Hence, the author of 1 Peter is to be understood as challenging the traditional household code with his proposal of an alternate code for the 'household of God' (cf. 4:17; 2:5; 2:9; 2:17; 5:9; 5:2) (Elliott 1982:115, 140, 231).

At the end of his study Elliott considers the issue of pseudepigraphical function. Like Best, Elliott also posits the existence of a Petrine 'circle' or 'school'. His Petrine circle is made up of the people mentioned in the letter itself (Silvanus, Mark and an unnamed Christian 'sister' - 5:12-13) (Elliott 1982:271ff.). However, unlike Best (and Meade), he still proceeds to suggest a pseudepigraphical function for the letter which possesses greater specificity than simple authoritative attribution. In the course of his appeal to the usual evidence of Acts for the continuity between 1 Peter and the historical Peter, Elliott isolates the specific theme of 'suffering' as decisive for an understanding of the letter's specific function:

"1 Peter is first and foremost the evangelical and social witness of the apostle Peter after whose suffering and martyrdom in Rome and in whose name the Petrine community then has written to the suffering Christians of Asia Minor" (Elliott 1982:273).

The problem with this suggestion, however, is that it fails to deal with the question of why the author did not, in addition to the *suffering* of Jesus, also mention the *suffering* of Peter as

martyr? Despite Elliott's attempts at greater specificity, the evidence of the letter itself - with its lack of clear personal allusions - continues to hinder a sharper historical focus with regard to its pseudepigraphical function. Clowney also offers a valuable critique of Elliott's sharply focused picture of the addressees - his most decisive argument being that the inclusive terminology of the letter counts against being addressed purely to displaced people - "Certainly no letter in the New Testament is more inclusive as it speaks of the 'people of God' (2:10), the 'house' of God (2:5), the 'brotherhood' (2:17; 5:9), the 'holy nation' (2:9)" (Clowney 1988:227f.).

3.2. Second Peter

On the issue of the authenticity of 2 Peter there is a greater willingness amongst most scholars to concede its pseudonymity. Barclay outlines the overwhelming evidence in support of this (Barclay 1960:338-40):

- (i) The portrait of Peter (1:13ff., 16ff.) reflects a traditional process at work, rather than authentic personal reminiscences of Peter. In addition to this there is a lack of any references to the historical Jesus.
- (ii) The favourable portrait of Paul would be uncharacteristic of the historical Peter.
- (iii) 2 Peter shows a literary dependence on Jude, the latter having its origin after the death of Peter - claimed by Eichhorn, Holtzmann, Weiss, Harnack, Reuss, Jühlicher, von Soden (cf. Bigg 1902:216). A relationship one would hardly expect from an apostolic epistle - "Petrine authorship is forbidden by the literary relationship with Jude" (Kümmel 1966:303).
- (iv) It has a different style and conceptualization to 1 Peter.
- (v) The letter reflects a second century date.

(i) Bigg represents one of the few scholars to maintain the authenticity of 2 Peter. He argues that the lack of references to the historical Jesus could also be an indication of the letter's early dating; and, hence, its authenticity:

"If it is difficult to understand why St. Peter does not quote the words of our Lord, it is far more difficult to explain why a forger, late in the second century, does not. The apostles, as all their letters show, did not feel bound to be constantly quoting. This habit begins with St. Clement of Rome"¹⁰ (Bigg 1902:231).

(ii) It is argued that 2 Peter's reference to Paul as 'beloved brother' in 3:15f as well as the high esteem for the Pauline writings on the part of the author, could not be written by Peter in view of the confrontational incident between the two figures at Antioch (Gal 2:11ff.). Green counters that the idea that Peter and Paul were on bad terms as a result of the Antiochene incident is far from conclusive, in view of other more positive incidents; such as Peter's support of Paul at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:7ff), and his extension of the right hand of

¹⁰ Cf. also his reply to the related critique of 1 Peter, quoted above.

fellowship to Paul (Gal 2:9) (Green 1968:28-30).

(iii) The close literary relationship between 2 Peter and Jude, is explained by authenticists as reflecting the dependence of Jude on 2 Peter - supporters of this idea being Luther, Lumby, Mansel, Plummer, Spitta, Zahn, and Bigg (cf. Bigg 1902:216-8). Another suggestion is that 2 Peter and Jude both use a common tradition (Green 1968:50-55; Childs 1984:466). Green holds that even if Jude was compiled prior to 2 Peter, Peter still can be said to have written it, on the grounds that:

* 1 Peter makes use of established traditions (possibly a baptismal catechesis or baptismal homily, definitely traditional household codes) so why not also in 2 Peter (such as a "tract against false teachers" which Jude also used, or Jude's document itself)?

* Paul also makes extensive use of traditional material (cf. 1 Cor 15:33; 8:1; 6:12a and 13a; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Cor 15:3-5).

He concludes that "the question of the relationship of 2 Peter to Jude has no bearing whatever on the authenticity of 2 Peter" (Green 1968:22f.).

(iv) The issue of the relation between 1 and 2 Peter has not been considered in any great depth, if at all, by commentators on 1 Peter¹¹. This issue, however, is very important for supporters of an authentic 2 Peter since a closer relationship with 1 Peter - the evidence for the latter's pseudepigraphy being less damning - puts the idea of the former's authenticity on a better footing. Authenticists emphasize 2 Peter's indirect reference to 1 Peter (3:1) as well as the two letters' almost identical salutations as, at least, indicative of the basic intention of 2 Peter's author to emulate 1 Peter. In view of these links between the two letters one would expect to find further evidence for their close relationship. This, however, is not the case. 1 and 2 Peter differ drastically in style: the 'iambic style' (i.e., composition in tragic metre) of 2 Peter not only represents a radical departure from 1 Peter (pure prose), it also places a question mark on the possibility of an early dating. And, in the area of their conceptual formulations, apart from a lack of common concepts, there is in the instances in which they appear to agree - such as the focus on the second coming - discrepancies in terminology: 1 Peter uses *apokalypsis* and 2 Peter *parousia* (Green 1968:19-21).

The standard argument which is given by authenticists to explain the stylistic differences between 1 and 2 Peter is that which was originally proposed by Jerome: Peter used a different secretary or amanuensis in the production of each of the two letters (*Epistle* 20). Another explanation forwarded concerns the possibility that 2 Peter may be largely dependent upon traditional oral or written material for use against heretics, hence its dissimilarity with 1 Peter

¹¹ This disregard on the part of interpreters of 1 Peter is problematic; especially when one considers the claims of scholars such as Selwyn, Elliott, etc. that 1 Peter was the product of a Petrine 'circle' or 'school'. One would think that they would at least give greater consideration to the possibility of 2 Peter's closer relationship to 1 Peter, since it is harder to imagine a Petrine school producing only one document, especially in light of the larger amount of other apocryphal Petrine literature.

(Green 1968:19). Bigg seeks to explain 2 Peter's resort to an iambic style on the basis of the author having been moved emotionally by the situation he was addressing (Bigg 1902:227f.). Of course, this does not mean that authenticists have totally given up on the idea of stylistic similarities between the two. Bigg argues that, despite the extreme differences in their use of vocabulary and phrases (Bigg 1902:225, 232), they are linked in their common "habit of verbal iteration", i.e., their repetition of words, "always in a different connexion" (Bigg 1902:7). In the area of the two letter's conceptual differences authenticists appeal to effects of differing contexts being addressed. 1 Peter was addressed to a situation of persecution, whereas 2 Peter in its addressing of the situation of the threat of heresy found Jude to be of great use. In addition to this, the differing contexts in which Peter, himself, was writing in both instances is also considered to have been influential on the nature of the two letters - especially with regard to the nature of 2 Peter as having possibly been intended as a last will and testament (Green 1968:18).

Ultimately, the authenticists are only able to appeal to a 'fundamental' link between 1 and 2 Peter - a link which might just as easily be ascribed to 2 Peter's utilization of 1 Peter¹² and the Synoptic Petrine tradition¹³. Authenticists, however, seek to emphasize a reliance of 2 Peter on 1 Peter which runs deeper than simple literary dependence. Hence, arguments such as: despite 2 Peter's lesser appeal to Old Testament ideas, both texts reflect a common usage of the same apocryphal Old Testament writings (1 Enoch and the Wisdom of Solomon) (cf. Bigg 1902:229ff.).

(v) An extensive amount of evidence has been accrued by those considering 2 Peter's date of origin to be such that it precludes its authenticity:

* *Late attestation and canonization.* It is noted that the attestation to 2 Peter is late - it was unknown in the West until the fourth century. Added to this is the evidence of the difficulty which it experienced in being admitted into the canon. These points tend to count against the authenticist claim that later church tradition supports the letter's genuineness (Childs 1984:466).

* *Indications of a delayed parousia.* The letter's setting involves the beginning of the abandonment of the hope of a second coming (3:4) and, hence, a post-apostolic dating. Authenticists argue that the mere fact that the 'mockers' referred to in the text can make such a statement is a clear indication that the belief in a future coming was still very important to the church addressed. And, in this regard it is noted that the concern for the delay of the parousia is also found in the earliest New Testament letters (cf. 1 Thess.... 4:11-18; 5:1-4 which quotes the thief analogy also cited in 2 Pet 3:10; 2 Thess... 1-2; 1 Cor 15:6,50-58). Green also claims that 2 Peter's depiction of the eschatological tension between 'now' and 'then' is an indication of a primitive eschatology (cf. 1:4,5,11) (Green 1968:25-7).

¹² Another 'fundamental' link being 2 Peter's appeal to the authority of the Jewish scriptures and the apostles (2 Pet. 1:12-21; cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

¹³ Cf. 2 Peter's reference to Peter's witnessing of the Transfiguration (1:16-18).

* *Reference to previous generations.* Concerning the references in the text to the death of the first generation of Christians (3:4), Green proposes that this reference to the decease of 'the Fathers' normally, in New Testament usage, means the Old Testament fathers (cf. Heb. 1:1; Rom. 9:5), and that it is clear from the literary context of the passage (Genesis and the flood) that this is what is meant in this instance (Green 1968:25-7).

* *Nature of the heresy combatted.* The nature of the eschatological heresy combatted (3:3ff.) indicates a post-apostolic age. Barclay identifies the heretics as antinomians, more specifically gnostics - they emphasize 'knowledge' as a means of emancipation from the claims of morality (Barclay 1960:336). The authenticists counter by emphasizing the undeveloped nature of the heresy against which the Epistle is directed; as evidenced by the fact that the 'heretics' are still part of the community addressed (they are present at fellowship meals - 2 Pet. 2:13) (Green 1968:34f.; Kelly 1969:229f.).

* *Reliance upon John's Gospel.* The reference to Peter's approaching death assimilates the reference to Jesus' prophecy in John 21:18-19; John's Gospel having a late first century dating.

* *Authoritative Pauline writings.* The reference to the letters of Paul (3:15-16) indicate that the author of 2 Peter acknowledged them as authoritative - on the same footing as the Old Testament scriptures even - which would put 2 Peter's date at least after 90 CE.

* *Characteristics of 'early Catholicism'.* The author's concern for the orthodox interpretation of scripture (1:20f.; 3:15f.) and for the apostolic tradition (e.g. 2:21; 3:2) smacks of emergent 'Catholicism' or the post-apostolic institutionalization of the early church (Kelly 1969:235).

Authenticists have responded with their own evidence counting against a post-apostolic dating:

* The absence of any allusion to persecution¹⁴, the fall of Jerusalem, or the Diaspora (Bigg 1902:237, 244).

* The absence of any suggestion of chiliasm in 2 Pet. 3:8 when quoting the very verse used by Barnabas, Justin, 2 Clement, Methodius and Irenaeus to support it - "I find this almost incredible if 2 Peter did in fact come from a second-century hand" (Green 1968:34f.).

* The absence of an interest in church organization - "one of the main preoccupations of second-century works like the *Didache* and the *Ascension of Isaiah*" (Green 1968:34f.).

Despite the arguments of the authenticists, the evidence tends to favour the pseudepigraphic status of 2 Peter. Most scholars date it at 125-140 CE (Childs 1984:467). Others are willing

¹⁴ This argument only has weight if 2 Peter 3:1 does not represent a reference to 1 Peter - the latter, clearly being directed to a situation of persecution. Very few scholars (Spitta, Zahn) have argued that the reference is to a lost letter of Peter.

to concede an earlier dating of 100-110 CE, which remains well beyond the probable date of Peter's death (Kelly 1969:237).

When it comes to the issue of the situational purpose of the letter commentators remain uncertain as to its specific function. This uncertainty stems from the vagueness of the heresy described in the letter - which is viewed as a possible indication that the letter was aimed at the combatting of heresy in general. A further factor which adds to this uncertainty concerns the absence of any clarity on the location of the addressees as well as the letter's place of compilation. Authenticists, of course, favour Asia Minor as the location of the addressees, and Rome as the place of compilation (Bigg 1902:237f.). Others, however, acknowledge the lack of evidence relating to these issues.

Due to the late dating of 2 Peter - more specifically, its status as the New Testament document with the latest dating - commentators take a much greater interest, than in the case of 1 Peter, in the implications of its pseudepigraphical function. Typically, the pseudepigraphic function of the letter is seen to involve an appeal to the authority of Peter for the purpose of justifying the emerging trend of 'early Catholicism'. One of the key proponents of this interpretation is Ernst Käsemann, who defines 'early Catholicism' as:

"that transition from earliest Christianity to the so-called ancient Church, which is completed with the disappearance of the imminent expectation" (Käsemann 1969:237).

Of course it can be legitimately claimed that in the instance of 2 Peter the author clearly believes in an imminent parousia. To this Käsemann answers, firstly, that while our text does offer a defence of an imminent parousia, its eschatology is guilty of being a "non-christologically oriented eschatology" (Käsemann 1964:183) - that is, an eschatology which "is concerned only with the hope of the triumphal entry of believers into the eternal kingdom and with the destruction of the ungodly" (Käsemann 1964:195). Hence, it probably represents the subsequent development of an earlier imminent expectation which understood the second coming primarily in terms of the figure of Jesus. And, secondly, 2 Peter's defence of an imminent parousia is only to be seen as part of its devious plan to promote other 'early Catholic' views

"The Second Epistle of Peter was written as an apologia for primitive Christian eschatology. This is what gives it meaning and actuality. If, however, it receives strikingly little attention, this attitude can only constitute a declaration that the apologia does discredit to its object. For the Second Epistle of Peter is from beginning to end a document expressing an early Catholic viewpoint and is perhaps the most dubious writing in the canon" (Käsemann 1964:169).

The other 'early Catholic' views which 2 Peter is claimed to propagate are those to do with the early church's 'crystallization of the faith into set forms' in its attempt to combat Gnosticism (cf. Dunn 1977:344) - the legitimation of the apostolic tradition (1:12; 3:2; 2:2,21; 3:15f. cf. Jude 3) as well as the transferal of the teaching authority of the tradition to the established offices of the church, to which is assigned the sole right of interpretation through its possession of the Holy Spirit (1:20f.) (Käsemann 1964:102,190,195).

A final facet of 'early Catholicism' which Käsemann has also highlighted - but not in connection with 2 Peter - is the development of a structured ecclesiology. In his description of the shift in ecclesiology which took place in early Christianity, Käsemann juxtaposes Paul and John's ecclesiology with that of the Pastorals (and Luke-Acts¹⁵); the latter being representative of 'early Catholicism'. Paul's ecclesiology (that is, as found in his 'genuine' epistles) is noted for its lack of reference to either ordination or the presbytery, and its emphasis on the charismatic dimension (Käsemann 1969:245f.). John's ecclesiology (in his Gospel), which is found to contain "no explicit idea of the Church, no doctrine of ministerial office, no developed sacramental theology", is regarded as a "remarkable counter-offensive" against the early Catholic development of a highly structured ecclesiology (Käsemann 1969:255). The Pastorals are noted for their claim to Pauline authority in the combatting of 'enthusiasm' for the purpose of justifying the ideas of ordination and apostolic succession with respect to a church structure consisting of a "monarchial bishop, surrounded by presbyters, deacons and other co-workers bound by vow" (Käsemann 1969:247). A problem with this picture of a structured ecclesiology is the fact that 2 Peter, which also represents a response to enthusiasm, does not present an extensive church structure; the only church office referred to (indirectly) is that of teacher (cf. 2:1 - *pseudodidaskaloi*). This fact serves to pose a problem for the claim that 2 Peter 1:20f. reflects a situation in which the office of prophet no longer existed: there are no clear church offices promulgated in the text as superseding the authority of the prophetic office (cf. Bigg 1902:232f.). Thus, while it may be conceded that 2 Peter evidences certain 'early Catholic' traits, the undeveloped ecclesiology in the text would prohibit any further inference that 2 Peter represents a conscious effort on the part of the author to propagate 'early Catholicism' - the ascription of Petrine authorship to the text supposedly serving as the authoritative basis for the text's institutionalization agenda.

3.3. Preliminary Conclusions

In view of the above historical-critical considerations, certain hermeneutical problems are seen to arise. Firstly, the historical-critical interpretation of the Petrine Epistles involves a separation of the two writings from the start, justified on the grounds that they are not originally from the same author. A further factor which serves to increase the separation of the two letters is the understanding of 2 Peter's function as being representative of 'early Catholic' sentiments. 1 Peter is accorded with greater hermeneutical value by canon-within-the-canon scholars, since it does not reflect any clear 'early Catholic' characteristics. Having said this, however, 1 Peter's status is still of a secondary nature due to its questionable authenticity. A possible reprieve is granted on the part of Meade who seeks to affirm an authentic (oral) Petrine tradition behind the letter. But, ultimately, the fact that it is not a Pauline letter - or even Paulinist, at the latest count - means that its hermeneutical

¹⁵ Contra Käsemann who considers Luke-Acts to be entirely 'early Catholic', Dunn argues that there no sacramentalism in Acts; hence "Luke is both early catholic and enthusiastic in outlook" (Dunn 1977:356f.).

significance is reduced even further. This leaves us with the situation of the most recent research of the letter which in no way seeks to discuss its 'theology' as a subject in its own right. Selwyn's work epitomizes the earlier trend in the study of 1 Peter where its theological message was given greater consideration. His analysis of the structure of 1 Peter, represents a thoroughly 'doctrinal' interpretation of the text (Selwyn 1947:4ff.):

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1:1-2 | "Opening salutation, embracing a Trinitarian formula". |
| 1:3-12 | "First Doctrinal Section". |
| 1:13-2:3 | "First Hortatory Section". |
| 2:4-10 | "Second Doctrinal Section" - the Church. |
| 2:11-3:12 | "Second Hortatory Section". |
| 3:13-4:19 | "Third Doctrinal Section". |
| 5:1-11 | "Third Hortatory Section". |
| 5:12-14 | "Concluding Greetings". |

Furthermore, in his commentary on 1 Peter he undertakes an extensive study of the 'Theology and Ethics of the Epistle' (Selwyn 1947:64-115). For Selwyn the central passages of the letter are "those doctrinal sections concerned with Christ's life and death and resurrection and glory and the certainty of impending Judgement, which give unity and background to the whole"¹⁶ (Selwyn 1947:31f.). Selwyn concludes that 1 Peter's theology is to a large extent undeveloped - thereby indicating the document's early dating - except for its unique understanding of Christ as model or example (4:13) which effects a link between soteriology and ethics (Selwyn 1947:20-22). It is this overlapping of the theological and the ethical, referred to as 1 Peter's 'Theology of the Christian Life', which is a common feature in other scholars' understanding of the theology of the letter (Selwyn 1947:65-68; cf. Beare 1958:37-41; etc.). Considerations of 1 Peter's theology subsequent to the 1950's tend to focus more on the letter's ecclesiology, eschatology, and doctrine of the Spirit, as a consequence of the increasing influence of the canon-within-the-canon approach under Käsemann, with its examination of all the New Testament books for traces of 'early Catholicism' (cf. Stibbs 1956:39-42; Barclay 1960:165f.; Best 1971:46ff.; etc.). Despite this shift, the general approach to 1 Peter of past scholars in many ways assimilates the approach of canonical criticism in its attempts to establish a writing's 'canonical context' (cf. Childs 1984:456). As we saw above, when it comes to the Petrine Epistles (especially 1 Peter) the approach which has been adopted involves a consideration of the relationship between 1 Peter and the other New Testament documents. Of course, as we also saw above, ultimately the primitivist presupposition of the historical critics causes them to draw different conclusions. For example, the discussions of 1 Peter's theology are customarily undertaken for the purpose of proving or disproving a Pauline dependence and possible links to the Gospels and Acts, for the ultimate goal of proving in/authenticity.

In the more recent studies of 1 Peter, of Balch and Elliott, greater attention is paid to the

¹⁶ This understanding of the theological significance of the letter's personal allusions of Peter and its imminent eschatology, of course, supports Selwyn's argument for its authenticity.

establishment of the most historically focused view to date of the letter's original *Sitz im Leben*, an endeavour which leads the interpreter (especially Elliott) to disregard the theological depths of the letter as well as the related issue of interpreting the text for the church today. This is clearly seen in Elliott's accusation of Goppelt, that he bases his observations on his motivational "desire to discover in this letter principles for contemporary Christian social action"¹⁷ (Elliott 1982:158). Such an approach also involves the questioning of previous interpretations of the text's terminology in a too 'theological' manner. Elliott locates no theological significance in the terms 'exile' and 'pilgrims'. For him, previous scholars (cf. Beare 1958:135; Kelly 1969:41, 72, 103; etc.) had the false impression that "1 Peter represents a theological message for 'pilgrims and exiles in this world' based on a contrast between present life on earth and a future life in the heavenly home"¹⁸ (Elliott 1982:42). The problem with Elliott's approach, however, is that its too sharp an historical focus tends to stretch the internal evidence of the text too far - as noted above, especially in the areas of its links to the Petrine tradition, and the *sitz im Leben* of the addressees. Rather than facilitating the arrival at a consensus position, Elliott's study has served to highlight the excesses of the primitivist agenda of historical criticism. This situation of a lack of a consensus with regard to the original *Sitz im Leben* of 1 Peter, serves to hinder, rather than contribute to, the all-important endeavour of appropriating biblical texts for the contemporary community. This idea is illustrated in the contrasting conclusions of Elliott and Balch - the former, understanding 1 Peter to be fundamentally a polemical text, and the latter an apologetic text. Historical criticism, with its location of hermeneutical authority in original authorial intention, can only allow one of these interpretations to be correct. And, to further add to the burden of interpretation, the historical critic is 'prohibited' from allowing her/his context to in any way influence her/his decision as to which of the two positions is to be preferred.

In the instance of 2 Peter, the problem with historical-critical studies of the text revolves around the issue of a negative estimation of its value for the contemporary church. Apart from 2 Peter's eschatology and doctrine of the Spirit, the consideration of any other of its

¹⁷ Elliott's stance represents an extreme version of the standard claim to 'interpretive objectivity' by historical critics - true 'interpretive objectivity' requires absolute respect for the text's meaning in its original context, thereby precluding the removal of the text's meaning from its definitive context.

¹⁸ Interestingly, Selwyn also argues for a 'materialist' or 'historical' interpretation of *paroikoi* and *parepidēmoi* - they reflect Christianity's final estrangement from Judaism (marked by the incident of St. James' martyrdom in 62 CE), an estrangement which would also deprive it of its privileged position in society as a 'Jewish' sect (Selwyn 1947:57). This would serve to cast doubt on Elliott's assumption that a materialist interpretation of these terms justifies the disregard for any other theological conceptualizations in the rest of the text.

theological conceptualizations has been lacking¹⁹. The letter's relationship to other New Testament writings (apart from 1 Peter and Jude) has been of little interest to scholars. In view of the 'early Catholic' status of 2 Peter's theology, Käsemann et al ascribe only a 'passive' function to the text: its role is not to be seen as contributing to the theological outlook of the church, rather it functions as a guide as to what the 'canon within the canon' is not (Wainwright 1975:558f.; Thielman 1983:400). 2 Peter is denied any positive hermeneutical significance. To illustrate this prevailing situation, we might consider the conflicting interpretations of 2 Peter 1:4 - '...through [the promises of Jesus Christ] you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature' - by F.F. Bruce and Käsemann. Bruce, in an effort to justify the presence of 2 Peter within the canon, states:

"The most disputed of all the disputed books of the New Testament is probably 2 Peter, but the New Testament would be poorer without it: there are those who have seen the high-water-mark of the Christian revelation in its statement that God's purpose is that his people should 'become partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4)" (Bruce 1988:251).

Käsemann's estimation of the same passage, however, is not as flattering:

"It would be hard to find in the whole New Testament a sentence which...more clearly marks the relapse of Christianity into Hellenistic dualism" (Käsemann 1964:179f.).

A final problem relating to the historical-critical-canon-within-the-canon estimation of both 1 and 2 Peter concerns the negative image of the canonizing church which it fosters. From the historical-critical perspective the canonizing church is to be considered naïve in its inclusion of pseudepigraphic documents within its canon - it follows that the church must have considered the documents to be authentic if it allowed them to keep their titles which attest to their supposed authenticity. From the canon-within-the-canon perspective it is assumed that it was 2 Peter's 'early Catholic' character that must have ensured its canonization - since, was not the canonizing church the epitome of 'early Catholicism' itself?²⁰ However, contrary to both these assumptions, a cursory consideration of the church's use of the Petrine Epistles prior to their canonization reveals that there were widespread reservations as to the authenticity of 2 Peter, and yet, it was still canonized. This would indicate that a clearer motive than naïve acceptance of Petrine authorship lies behind the ultimate canonization of 2 Peter. In what follows we will seek to ascertain the canonizing church's motives for including the Petrine Epistles in the canon. By doing this it is hoped that we are assured of at least a slightly more positive interpretation of the Petrine Epistles (especially 2 Peter) than

¹⁹ The only other theological elements in 2 Peter which are referred to by scholars are those to which the text alludes: the fall of angels and the creation and destruction (by fire) of the world; both of which have their origins in the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* (cf. Bigg 1902:236; Barclay 1960:379-383; Green 1968:27f.).

²⁰ That a document's 'early Catholic' character could speed up its entrance into the canon is clearly evidenced by the situation of the Pastorals (cf. Dunn 1977:344).

that offered by supporters of a canon-within-the-canon approach.

4. THE CANONICAL FUNCTION OF THE PETRINE EPISTLES

In this chapter our focus is on the canonical function of the Petrine Epistles; that is, the function of 1 and 2 Peter within the early Christian community leading up to their attainment of canonical status. Our approach will involve the consideration of three related aspects of the canonization process: (i) the evidence concerning the circulation and usage of the Petrine Epistles up to their point of canonization; (ii) the relationship of the Petrine Epistles to other New Testament collections and books in the final literary product (as a possible means to arrive at the underlying motives for the selection and ordering of the canonical writings) and; (iii) the development of the canonizing church's portrait of Peter.

4.1. Canonization History

4.1.1. Canonical Setting (180-325 CE)

The setting in which the New Testament canon initially arose involved a predominance of churches in the East. The greatest concentration of churches and, hence, number of Christians was to be found in Asia Minor; the "heartland of the Church" where about half the population were Christians (Aland 1987:53f.). Other areas in which Christianity was well established were Syria, centred at Antioch; the districts around Alexandria in Egypt; the Aegean coast of Greece (and Crete); Numidia and Cyrenaica in North Africa; southern Gaul; the districts of Rome and Naples in Italy; and perhaps also in southern Spain. The smaller size of the Roman church meant that its power in relation to other centres of Christianity was not felt in the areas of dogma and scholarship. Rather, it was in more practical areas of concern for the church at large that it excelled and became influential. It facilitated the expansion of the primitive form of the creed, contributed to a definition of the canon (in the form of the Muratorian Canon), developed the church practice of penance, and improved the church's administrative structure. As a result of this influence, highly esteemed scholars and 'heretics' tended to gravitate towards the 'Roman church. Most of the theologians in second-century Rome were from Asia Minor; such as Justin¹, Hippolytus, etc. Marcion, the son of an Asian bishop, journeyed specifically from the Black sea area to Rome in order to present his theological position (and monetary gift) to the Roman leadership. The extent of the Roman church's influence meant that upon its rejection of Marcion, the latter separated himself from the church altogether and established his own movement. Further evidence for the preeminent position which the Roman Church attained in the course of the second and third centuries, is located in Irenaeus who speaks of the 'more powerful and preeminent-eminent position of Rome' (*Potentior principalatis*) (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2)².

¹ Justin Martyr was originally from Palestine, however, he had been converted to Christianity in Asia Minor.

² This shift in the status of the Roman Church is to be contrasted with the situation of the late first and early second century: Bishop Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Romans adopts a hortatory tone which would indicate a view of the Corinthian Church as a sister church.

Two further power centres existed at Alexandria and Syro-Palestine. The Alexandrian church's influence reached its peak under bishop Athanasius (c. 328 CE), who had been preceded by Clement, and the universally acclaimed Origen. The exegetical school of Antioch is noted for its students of Origen's theology and Arians, as well as its role in providing bishops for many dioceses throughout the East. An ally of Antioch was the school of Caesarea, an important centre for manuscript production (Aland 1987:65), and represented by bishop Eusebius who was much favoured by Emperor Constantine. These regional divisions of power took on greater clarity at the beginning of the third century, with the translation of the original Greek New Testament manuscript tradition into Latin in the West, Coptic in Egypt, and Syriac in Syria. The fourth century Constantinian revolution brought hordes of converts into the churches throughout the Roman Empire, especially Rome itself - the initial centre of Constantine rule. It was during this period that the New Testament canon achieved a state of greater stability, and came to include most of the documents found in the church's New Testament today.

In view of the above scenario, the claim of 1 and 2 Peter³ to originate in Rome and be addressed to the churches in Asia Minor, is of great significance. If our letters had in fact originated in Rome we would expect them to have circulated at a very early period in both Rome and Asia Minor. In addition, in view of the influence of the Roman church, we would expect our letters to have attained a normative status for the church universal at an early date.

4.1.2. Early circulation of the New Testament documents

The four canonical gospels were the first New Testament writings to be gathered into a fixed collection and ascribed with authority by the church. This development is attested to around 180 CE by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, who uses the term *tetraeuangelion* and offers a variety of arguments in support of the normative status of the fourfold gospel (cf. *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; 3.2.9; 3.4.3; 3.11.8). Further evidence is located in the Muratorian Fragment which lists only the four Gospels as 'recognized'⁴. The Acts of the Apostles, with its connection to the Gospel of Luke, appears to have achieved normativity with, or a short while after, the Gospels (cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.2.9; 3.14.1ff.). The manuscript evidence would indicate that Acts came to be circulated along with the Gospel collection (cf. p⁴⁶ and Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis).

Paul's letters were the earliest of the New Testament writings to be circulated in a semi-stable collection; as evidenced by the New Testament writings themselves (Col. 4:16), and *1 Clement* (c. 95 CE) - which contains references to Romans, and citations from 1 Corinthians and Hebrews. Marcion (c.140 CE) appears to have been the first person to

³ 2 Peter's claim resting on its association with 1 Peter.

⁴ Its date of 190 CE and its place of compilation in Rome are questioned by A.C. Sundberg (1976:136f.) who favours a fourth century date and an Eastern location; scholarly consensus, however, is against Sundberg (cf. Metzger 1987:191).

establish a fixed collection of (10) Pauline Epistles. The Muratorian Fragment (c.190 CE) included the Pastoral epistles in its list of 'received' Pauline Epistles, but it still excluded Hebrews. p⁴⁶ is the earliest manuscript of the Pauline epistles, dated from c.200, and includes Hebrews (the text breaks off at 1 Thessalonians, hence it is unknown whether 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles were originally included). Of the Pauline corpus, Hebrews had the most difficulty in achieving canonical status in the Western church (only being 'recognized' in the fourth century) due to its rejection of a second repentance - cf. Heb. 6:4ff - and the questioning of its authenticity by scholars such as Tertullian (196-212 CE). In the fourth century Jerome was still arguing for its authenticity in the West (*De viris illustribus* 5). Other New Testament writings which were also designated as 'disputed' along with Hebrews in the second century and beyond, were James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. Revelation was rejected by the Eastern church up to the fourth century due to the use which the 'heretical' Montanists made of it (and other apocalyptic writings). All the other New Testament writings, apart from the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, circulated as independent writings for much longer.

Of the 'Catholic Epistles', only 1 Peter and 1 John had gained universal recognition by the third century. Eusebius places them along with the Gospels and most of the Pauline Epistles in his category of *homologoumena*, signifying their full universal acceptance (*H.E.* 3.25.2). The attestation to 1 Peter prior to the third century, is universal and substantial⁵:

* New Testament writings - 2 Peter 3:1 and, possibly, James⁶.

* Church Fathers - *Barnabas* 1.5; 4.12; 5.1,6; 16.10; Clement of Rome in *1 Clem.* 7.4; 9.4; 30.2; 36.2; 59.2; 69.5; *Hermas Vis.* 3.5; 4.3; *Sim.* 9.28.5; Polycarp of Smyrna quotes our text extensively in *Phil.* 1.3; 2.1,2; 5.3; 7.2; 8.1; 10.2; Papias of Hierapolis in Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.17.

* Greek Apologists - possibly Justin Martyr in his *Apology* and *Dialogue with trypho*, and Melito of Sardis in his *Apology*⁷; Theophilus of Antioch in *Ad Autol.* 2.34; *The Epistle to Dognetus* 9.

* Irenaeus is the first to quote 1 Peter by name - *Adv. Haer.* 4.9.2; 4.16.5; 5.7.2.

* Ante-Nicene Fathers after Irenaeus - Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 12; *Adv. Judaeos* 10; *Adv. Marcionem* 4.13; *De Oratione* 15; Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposes*.

* Heretics - the Valentinians in *Clem.*, *Excerpta ex Theod.* 12, 41, and 86; Marcion in *Theod.*, *Haer. Fab.* 1.24.

In light of the above attestation to 1 Peter, it comes as a surprise that the Muratorian Fragment does not mention the writing at all (along with 2 Peter, 3 John, and James), but instead mentions writings such as the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and

⁵ Bigg notes: "There is no book in the New Testament which has earlier, better, or stronger attestation, though Irenaeus is the first to quote it by name" (Bigg 1902:7); cf. Selwyn 1947:38.

⁶ Cf. Bigg 1902:7f. Selwyn also lists Ephesians as possibly attesting to our text (Selwyn 1947:37).

⁷ Cf. Bigg 1902:9f.

*Hermas*⁸. What this would serve to indicate is the ambiguous status of 1 Peter in the second century church - on the one hand, its usage was extensive (appearing in a large number of Old Latin mss.), while on the other hand, official normative status eluded it (not being quoted by name until the end of the second century). With this ambiguity in mind, Harnack has suggested that a later editor attached Peter's name to the work - adding the opening and closing verses to an originally anonymous letter - in order to guarantee its apostolicity, and consequently its canonicity⁹. This idea has not been accepted by any other scholars, since it also requires that 2 Peter's allusion to a prior letter not be considered to be referring to 1 Peter (cf. Stibbs 1956:21).

In contrast to 1 Peter and 1 John, the remaining Catholic Epistles of James, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, and Jude¹⁰ continued to struggle for acceptance with varying success until the fourth century. The earliest supposed citation of 2 Peter was in Clement of Alexandria (c.150-215 CE): Eusebius attests to Clement's knowledge of 2 Peter (*H.E.* 6.14.1). Unfortunately, in none of Clement's extant writings do we find any mention of, or allusions to, 2 Peter (as well as James, or 3 John)¹¹; hence the conclusion of most scholars that he did not know 2 Peter (cf. Barclay 1960:337). All that Clement's extant writings tell us is that he cited 1-2 John, 1 Peter, and Jude as 'scripture'. Origen (185-254 CE), in a statement quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* 6.25.8) from his *Commentary on John* (5), reports that 'Peter...has left one acknowledged (*homologoumena*) Epistle; possibly also a second, but this is disputed' (*Antilegoumena*) - he also notes the disputed status of 2-3 John, James, and Jude. It is argued by some scholars that Origen shows a greater willingness to accept 2 Peter as authoritative since he does not outwardly seek to disprove its authenticity. He does, however, do this in his reference to Hebrews (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.11). Added to this is the fact that in some of his treatises (which exist only in the Latin version of Rufinus), six quotations are taken from 2 Peter. Other scholars however, remain unconvinced (cf. Bigg 1902:201). Hippolytus, bishop of Rome (c.170-235 CE) is the first Christian writer to reflect a clear knowledge of 2 Peter (along with James and Jude), however he does not consider it to be 'scripture'. In the fourth century, Eusebius (c.324) reports the continuing uncertainty with regard to 2 Peter's

⁸ Some scholars attempt to locate reference to 1 Peter in the Fragment by claiming that (i) it was referred to in the beginning, now mutilated part of the Fragment where it is likely that the author listed the Gospel of Mark (Selwyn 1947:37); (ii) both 1 and 2 Peter are in fact referred to, indirectly, after the author mentions Acts (cf. Bigg 1902:14) or; (iii) a line has been left out of the body of the document through scibal error.

⁹ *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, (Leipzig, 1897).

¹⁰ Jude's path to canonization is to be distinguished (slightly) from that of the other disputed Catholic Epistles: it was received both in Rome (as evidenced in the Muratorian Fragment - and also possibly alluded to by Hermas, c.140) and in Carthage (Tertullian) about 200 CE, but after that it seems to have fallen into disrepute.

¹¹ Bigg attempts to locate possible phrases from 2 Peter in Clement's extant works, but ultimately he is led to concede that the evidence is not conclusive - as is also the case with the Clementine literature, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Aristides, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Melito, Irenaeus, 2 Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, Hermas, and Clement of Rome (Bigg 1902:199-210).

authority. He includes it under his category of 'disputed' writings (*H.E.* 3.3.1,4; 3.25.3), however, he does refer to the populist support for it: 'Of Peter, one epistle, which is called his former epistle, is acknowledged by all; of this the ancient presbyters have made frequent use in their writings as indisputably genuine; but that which is circulated as his second epistle we have received to be not canonical, although, since it appeared to be useful to many, it has been diligently read with the other Scriptures'¹². Thus, while 2 Peter (along with the other disputed Catholic Epistles) did not receive much acceptance on an 'official' level (i.e., the usage of specific writings by 'acknowledged' church writers who invariably held some church office - typically, that of bishop), on the 'populist' level (i.e., the usage of writings in local congregations) it did. The evidence of p⁷² serves to further illustrate the acceptance of 2 Peter on the popular level. The fact that out of all the extant papyrus and parchment manuscripts dating up to the fourth century (which amounts to 41 papyri and 4 uncials) p⁷² is the only manuscript which contains a portion of the Catholic Epistles (Jude and 1-2 Peter)¹³, would indicate that 2 Peter did not find great acceptance on an official level. In addition to this, the "extremely bad state" of the text (Bigg 1902:211), in terms of textual corruptions, would indicate the limited circulation of the text on any official level. The manuscript's compilation in Coptic in an 'awkward hand' (cf. Aland 1987:56f.) is a possible indication of its populist use; and the variant text types combined together in the manuscript might indicate a history of the texts' use in Egypt prior to their embodiment in the third/fourth century manuscript (cf. Green 1968:13).

A sector of the church where the disputed Catholic Epistles received the greatest opposition, well into the sixth century (and beyond), was the Antiochene church. 2 Peter, 2-3 John, and Jude (and Revelation) are absent from the Peshitta (a twenty-two book Syriac version of the New Testament), which recognised only three of the Catholic Epistles (James, 1 Peter, and 1 John)¹⁴. The Peshitta arose in the fifth century during the period of Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (411-435 CE). At the beginning of the sixth century (508 CE) the five outstanding books were translated by order of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbûg (Hierapolis) and a founder of Jacobite Monophysitism. A prior split in the Syriac church meant that the Philoxenian version, made and sponsored by Jacobite ecclesiastics, was used only by the Monophysite branch of Syriac-speaking Christendom, and not by the Nestorians.

¹² Eusebius says the same about James and Jude (*HE* 2.23): It needs, however, to be born in mind that it [James] is regarded as spurious. Certainly not many of the ancients have mentioned it, and the same is true of the so-called epistle of Jude, which likewise, is one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. All the same we know that these also are read publicly with the remaining epistles in most churches'.

¹³ 1 Pet 1:1-5:14; 2 Pet 1:1-3:18; Jude 1-25.

¹⁴ Uncertainty as to the exact contents of the Old Syriac version prevails. Souter suggests that it originally included Revelation and 2 Peter, but these were removed when Lucian, who founded the school at Antioch, established his own version which subsequently served as the basis of the Peshitta (Souter 1913:185). Aland insists that Lucian never established his own version, and that, therefore, Revelation and 2 Peter were never in the Old Syriac version (Aland 1987:193). Consensus has it that the Old Syriac version lacked all of the Catholic Epistles.

2 Peter, along with the other disputed Catholic Epistles, appears to have established a more stable presence in the North African church amongst the Latin writers in the fourth century. In the third century, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage excludes 2 Peter, James, 2-3 John, and Jude in his citations of scripture. And, also during this period, Tertullian (160-225 CE) only cites 1 Peter, 1 John, and Jude. Later, however, 2 Peter is listed in the African canon (360 CE). And, Ambrosiaster (c.380 CE), Filaster, (bishop of Brescia, c.385-391 CE), Priscillian, as well as the 'Damasine' canon cite all of our disputed Catholic Epistles as 'scripture'. Jerome and Augustine (396-426 CE) also cite 2 Peter often, along with all the other Catholic Epistles. This practice is continued in Pelagius, Cassian, and the Pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum*.

From the fourth century onwards in the Eastern church some influential writers drew up lists of writings considered to be accepted as universally authoritative. Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315-386 CE), in his *Catechetical Lectures* (4.33-36), dating from about 350 CE, lists the seven Catholic Epistles along with the rest of the New Testament books (except Revelation). Athanasius' list (Alexandria, 367 CE) in his official Easter letter 39 includes all our New Testament books. The list of Gregory of Nazianzus' (d.389 CE) supported that of Athanasius (except for the omission of Revelation). At Alexandria 2 Peter, and the other disputed Catholic Epistles, appear to have been accepted more readily after the production of Athanasius' list. Didymus of Alexandria (d.c.398 CE), head of the Alexandrian catechetical school, accepted 2 Peter as authentic, and wrote a commentary on the seven Catholic Epistles (only extant in a Latin translation)¹⁵. The disregard for the list of Athanasius - and especially that of Gregory of Nazianzus - was most apparent in the Asia Minor church, where 2 Peter's canonicity continued to be questioned. This position appears to have been due to the influence of the church at Antioch which, as we noted above, excluded 2 Peter, 2-3 John, and Jude from its Peshitta. John Chrysostom, an exegete from the school of Antioch (c.347-407 CE, made patriarch of Constantinople in 398), quoted the writings of our New Testament extensively in his homilies and treatises (approximately 11,000 quotations). Despite this, he never quotes 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude, or Revelation¹⁶. And, in a list of biblical books, included in a poem entitled *Iambics for Seleucus*, supposedly by Amphilochius (a Cappadocian by birth), bishop of Iconium (c.389 CE), mention is made of the earlier debate concerning Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation. The compiler, in listing the books of the New Testament, indicates his rejection of 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude, and Revelation, but then proceeds to state: 'This is perhaps the most reliable canon of the divinely inspired Scriptures'; thereby indicating that for the church in Asia Minor the canon's boundary was still not set, and 2 Peter - supposedly sent to this church - was still not unanimously accepted. Even in the sixth century there are still indications of the disputed

¹⁵ It includes the questionable concluding statement: 'It is therefore not to be overlooked that the present epistle is forged, which, though it is read publicly [in the churches], is nevertheless not in the canon'.

¹⁶ Metzger notes R.A. Krupp's index, *Saint John Chrysostom; A Scripture Index*, (Lanham, 1984); which locates in Chrysostom two quotations from 2 Peter, one from Jude, and nine from Revelation. The issue is complicated by the uncertainty over which of Chrysostom's works are authentic (Metzger 1987:214f.).

status of 2 Peter for a minority in the church of Asia Minor and/or Syria: Junilius of Africa, c.550 (African by birth, but lived in Constantinople, and derived his Syrian theology from Theodore of Mopsuestia - who never used 2 Peter¹⁷), places 2 Peter among the books which he calls *mediae*, those which, though not absolutely undoubted, are accepted by very many (*quam plurimi*). In the West, the New Testament canon had achieved greater stability during the fifth century. Augustine compiled a list (in his treatise *De doctrina christiana*, completed in 426 CE), which concurred with that of Athanasius. The Synod of Carthage (419 CE), influenced by Augustine, also produced a list matching that of Athanasius.

From our consideration of the canonization history of the Petrine Epistles above, it would appear that the circulation of 2 Peter in the third century was predominantly in Egypt - with Origen ascribing it with normativity whilst acknowledging its disputed status. The evidence from Hippolytus would indicate that 2 Peter was also in circulation at Rome in the early third century, however, at this location it still lacked any 'official' recognition. Thus, the 'normative' status of the five disputed Catholic Epistles appears to have initially arisen in the Egyptian church. If we accept that Clement did not know 2 Peter, and yet cited 1-2 John, 1 Peter, and Jude as 'scripture', then this could be seen as a further indication of the earliest circulation of our texts in Egypt: the disputed Catholic Epistles did not come to be accepted in Egypt *en bloc*, as was the case in the West, rather their path to normativity was gradual and probably based on local usage. The next stop for our texts was the North African church, where fourth century references to them indicate an acceptance of their authority and authenticity. This means that 2 Peter did not originate at Rome. The evidence of the high esteem in the early church, for other relatively pedestrian writings produced at Rome by the Apostolic Fathers (such as *1 Clement*, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, and possibly *2 Clement*), would also serve to indicate that the origin and initial circulation of 2 Peter was in no way connected with the Roman church. It also follows that 2 Peter was never sent to Asia Minor - its disputed status in this church, in some cases until the sixth century, attests to this. The evidence discounting the origin and early circulation of 1 Peter at Rome is not as clear as that for 2 Peter, however, it still casts reasonable doubt on the author's claims. The manuscript evidence as well as the fact that 2 Peter is probably the earliest document to attest to 1 Peter's existence, would indicate that it probably originated and had its earliest circulation in Egypt¹⁸.

1 Peter's (and 1 John's) earlier date of origin gave it the edge over 2 Peter in acquiring its initial universal authoritative status. Its recognition was probably the result of its relevance

¹⁷ Cf. Leontius, *Contra Nestorianos* 3.14.

¹⁸ Goppelt suggests Asia Minor as the earliest location of 1 Peter's circulation, due to (bishop of Hierapolis) Papias' reported 'reliance on testimonies' from the Epistle (Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.16); although he concedes that the location is not certain considering the lack of any mention of 1 Peter in Ignatius' letters - written during his travels through Asia Minor on his way to be martyred at Rome (Goppelt 1993:33).

for the situation of the second through third century church's experience of persecution¹⁹. Its ascription to Peter, as well as its indirect allusions to Paul (through its references to Mark and Silvanus) would have also contributed toward its acceptability. Thus, when trend toward the greater fixation of the canon's boundaries arose in the fourth century (Western) church, the nature of the universal authority of 1 Peter (and 1 John, along with the Pauline Epistles - except Hebrews - and the fourfold Gospel) meant that its inclusion in a closed canon was a forgone conclusion. When it comes to the disputed Catholic Epistles, the fact that they had only recently achieved an authoritative status in the fourth century (and, not in any universal sense), it would be expected that the motivation behind their canonization would possess a greater 'depth' - that is, that such a motivation would be intricately linked to the circumstances of this period. From our consideration of the evidence above two major developments within the church are to be singled out as offering important clues as to the motives of the church in this regard: (i) the division of the church into geographical power centres and, (ii) the transformation of Christianity into a state religion under Constantine.

4.1.3. Fourth century influences on the canonization of the disputed Catholic Epistles

Souter suggests, in passing, that it was the acceptance of the disputed Catholic Epistles by Jerome and Augustine in North Africa which ensured their eventual canonization (Souter 1913:191f.). This idea of canonization in relation to influential figures and groups reminds us of our earlier consideration of Gottwald's critique of Childs - could it be that the final canonization of the disputed Catholic Epistles is to be understood in terms of certain tensions between the major power centres of the fourth and fifth century church? The initial support for the universally normative status of our texts came from Alexandria²⁰. As we noted above, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (c.296-373 CE) was the first church official, in his *Festal Epistle* 39, to ascribe canonical status to the twenty-seven books of the present New Testament. The intention behind the list was not merely suggestive or descriptive, as was the case with Eusebius' earlier categorized list. Rather, Athanasius sought to be prescriptive - he concludes his list with the declaration:

‘These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed. Let no one add to these; let nothing be taken away from them’.

Athanasius' roots appear to lie firmly in the Alexandrian church. He rose to prominence at the Council of Nicea (325 CE), where as a deacon and secretary to his bishop Alexander, he

¹⁹ If we are to believe William R. Farmer, 1 Peter's theme of persecution would have made it the most likely document after the Gospels to have been canonized; W.R. Farmer & D.M. Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon*, (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1983).

²⁰ Our earliest source for the inclusion of the disputed Catholic Epistles comes from Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Catechetical lectures* (c.350). The work lacks a clear universal prescriptive intent - it was published from shorthand notes of Cyril's instructions to catechumens, taken down by a member of the congregation.

took an active part in the disputes with the Arians. Only three years later, he succeeded Alexander as bishop. In his role of bishop of Alexandria it was customary to dispatch an annual 'Festal Epistle' to the Egyptian churches and monasteries shortly after the Epiphany, for the purpose of informing them as to the date of Easter (and consequently, all other Christian festivals of the year). A secondary function of the Festal letter, was the discussion of other matters of concern for the church. The notoriety of Alexandrian scholars with regard to their astronomical calculations meant that the bishop of Alexandria's Festal letter, with its dating of Easter and its discussion of a particular matter, inevitably reached Rome and Antioch. In this regard Athanasius became the first church official to use his position to influence universal church opinion on the issue of the contents of the canon.

Athanasius' relations with the Roman church appear to have been favourable. As a result of his being exiled from his see for a second time in 340 CE, he took refuge in the Roman church where he appears to have been on good terms with Julius, bishop of Rome²¹. He also appears to have had allies in other parts of the Western church. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers (d.367 CE), was one of his followers, hence, his acceptance of Hebrews and James as apostolic and authoritative (*de Trinid.* 4.8). Alexandria's relationship with the Syro-Palestinian church was, during earlier times, close. Clement had sought refuge during earlier persecution of the church under the preeminent-Constantine state. And, Origen had spent the latter part of his life in the Syro-Palestinian church - his legacy still persisted well into the fourth century and beyond. Athanasius' defeat of Arianism - a movement supported by some notable figures from the Syro-Palestinian church, such as Eusebius of Caesarea - at Nice, resulted in his disfavour at Antioch²². This situation is reflected in his subsequent condemnation by Constantine through the influence of the Eusebian sector of the church, on two occasions. Athanasius' response was to ally himself with the Western church, which had the effect of creating greater tension between the Western and Eastern church. In 342 or 343, at a synod convened at Serdica (modern Sofia), attended by three hundred western bishops and seventy eastern bishops, the latter group demanded that Marcellus and Athanasius be excluded from the synod²³. The motion was rejected by the Western delegation, causing the Eastern delegation to leave (Theod., *Hist. Eccles.* 2.8.38-43).

In view of the favourable ties between Athanasius and the Western church it is not surprising that Jerome and Augustine had little difficulty in accepting the disputed Catholic Epistles. Jerome had been educated at Rome in Greek, Latin, rhetoric, and Philosophy under Aelius

²¹ It is in regard to this event that Bruce proposes that Athanasius was possibly influential in ensuring the acceptance of Hebrews in the Western church (Bruce 1988:221).

²² Athanasius' poor reputation in the Antiochene church is not to be seen as extending to the Alexandrian church as a whole; as evidenced by the fact that Arius was an Alexandrian himself.

²³ The motive for Athanasius' exclusion was his close association with Marcellus of Ancyra, considered to hold an unsavoury doctrine of the nature of God. The latter had been condemned and exiled by a synod of Eusebians at Constantinople in 336 CE (and a second time in 337). However, he was taken into communion by the Roman church (340 CE) after Julius, bishop of Rome accepted his defence of his orthodoxy.

Donatus. He also travelled extensively, spending time in Gaul and the East (as an ascetic). He was ordained as a presbyter at Antioch in 379 CE, following which he returned to Rome. From 386 to his death in 420 CE he lived at Bethlehem. During his stay at Rome he was commissioned to provide a comprehensive Latin translation (in relation to all the other competing Latin translations) of the New Testament (the Vulgate). In 384 CE he delivered a translation of the Gospels to Pope Damasus. It is debateable, however, as to how much of the remaining New Testament books he translated (cf. Metzger 1987:235). He provided several catalogues of the scriptures in which he embraces the whole of our canon. One of his catalogues is included in his *De viris illustribus* (1-9) (also printed as a prologue in older editions of the Vulgate Bible), in which he makes reference to the disputed status of some of the Catholic Epistles:

‘Simon Peter...wrote two epistles which are called catholic, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be by him. Then too the Gospel according to Mark, who was his disciple and interpreter, is ascribed to him.

James...wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles and even this is claimed by some to have been issued by someone else under his name, and gradually, as time went on, to have gained authority.

Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many. Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures.

John, the apostle whom Jesus loved...wrote also one epistle which begins as follows, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands handled concerning the word of life" which is esteemed by all men who are interested in the church or in learning. The other two of which the first is, "The elder to the elect lady and her children," and the other, "The elder unto Gaius the beloved whom I love in truth," are said to be the work of John the presbyter to the memory of whom another sepulchre is shown at Ephesus to the present day’.

From his comments above it is clear that there was no active campaign on his part to have the Catholic Epistles included in the canon. This would indicate that Jerome’s canon is primarily a *reflection* of established populist usage in the West. The manner in which he first alludes to our texts’ authenticity - ‘Simon Peter...wrote’; ‘James wrote’; etc. - before going on to note the prevailing situation of their questioned authenticity, would indicate that for him, personally, they were authentic. In view of this it is highly significant that he continued to maintain strong ties with the Syro-Palestinian church, what with the latter’s reluctance to affirm the normativity of our texts well into the sixth century. It proves conclusively that the tensions between the Western and Eastern church were not in any way related to the disputed status of our five Catholic Epistles.

Augustine’s initial experience of the church was in Italy where he came under the influence of Bishop Ambrose of Milan and was baptized. He returned to Africa where he became coadjutor to Valerius, bishop of Hippo, in 395 CE. In his work, *De doctrina christiana* (2.13) (c. 396-7 CE; the entire work being completed in 426), he produced a list of canonical books

which encompasses our New Testament. Of interest is his ordering of the canon as well as the Catholic Epistles themselves: he places Acts after the Catholic Epistles, and with regard to the latter he positions James last, after 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude (probably on the basis of some theological motive). The fact that neither the African, nor the rest of the church followed his ordering in both instances is probably an indication that his influence concerning the Catholic Epistles was not felt²⁴. With regard to the issue of the relationship between the Western and Eastern church, Augustine is to be noted for his desire for a united and uniform church²⁵. This shift towards uniformity in the Greater church appears to have been a major motivation behind the formation of the canon in general²⁶. Constantine, in particular, was instrumental in pressurizing the church in this direction. In a letter to Alexander and Arius over their christological dispute, he refers to his overriding desire for uniformity (Eusebius, *Vita Constantinus* 2.65). Instances of his active intervention in the affairs of the church for the sake of unity-uniformity abound: he made decisions on whether and how to punish 'heretics' (ibid., 3.20, 64f.); he often called together bishops and other church leaders at various councils (ibid., 3.6) and; in the instance of the Donatist controversy, he even threatened bishops under penalty of banishment if they did not obey his orders to convene at Tyre (ibid., 4.41-43). With regard to the formation of the canon, he also appears to have influenced a trend towards uniformity, i.e., through its closure. He commissioned Eusebius to supervise the production of fifty copies of the 'scriptures' for use in the new capital of Constantinople (ibid., 3. 34-37). Shortly before this event, however, Eusebius' description of which books are to be considered to be normative was far from conclusive (*H.E.* 3.25.1-7). This means that in order for Constantine's fifty copies to be produced the issue of which books belonged in the canon had to be decided upon. Unfortunately, the fifty copies are no longer extant, hence canon historians are at odds as to whether they included the disputed Catholic Epistles (as well as Hebrews and Revelation). From the evidence of the contents of the later Peshitta it is probable that the copies did not. And, from the evidence of Jerome the 'fact' that it did not, was not of any great concern to East or West. A uniform canon, in relation to East and West, only appears to have become a matter of concern in the sixth century when Philoxenian yielded to the influence of the West. Thus, the significance of the trend towards unity-uniformity is not to be located in its bringing about of an immediate universal decision on the contents of the canon, rather its significance is to be located in the alliances it promoted in the contest between the West and East to rule the emerging unity. The Western church, in its alliance with Alexandria, was obviously influenced by the latter church in its acceptance of the normative status of the disputed Catholic Epistles.

²⁴ That he was influential, in general, is clear from the events of the three provincial synods (Hippo, 393 CE; Carthage, 397 CE and 419 CE).

²⁵ Cf. his comments on the canonicity of Hebrews, where he claims that he is moved more by the 'prestige' of the Eastern church than the actual contents of the writing, to include it in his canon (ibid.).

²⁶ Cf. the position of recent canon historians on this issue (McDonald 1988:145; Bruce 1988:204f).

4.2. Canonical Context

4.2.1. The Relationship between the Catholic Epistles

From our consideration of the early circulation of the Catholic Epistles above, it is apparent that these texts did not come to be collected together in a smaller collection prior to their canonization²⁷. On the other hand, the fact that they came to be referred to specifically as the ‘catholic epistles’ indicates that the early church had some kind of an understanding of their relationship to one another. For this reason, it is necessary for us to consider what, exactly, the early church understood its term ‘catholic’ to mean.

The term ‘catholic’ was initially used in reference to a single writing, and first appears in Apollonius (c.197 CE), followed by Origen and Dionysius. In the instance of Apollonius he disputes the right of Themison, a Montanist, to imitate ‘the Apostle’ by composing a ‘catholic epistle’ for ‘the instruction of those whose faith was better than his own’ (Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.18.5)²⁸. Two suggestions as to what Apollonius meant in his usage are: (i) he is claiming that like the Apocalypse of John, Themison addressed a wider audience or; (ii) he is claiming that Themison sought to write an ‘orthodox’ letter. The uncertainty as to the term’s meaning remains in the instances of Origen, the first writer to refer to 1 Peter as a ‘catholic epistle’²⁹ (Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.25.5), and Dionysius of Alexandria, who in turn calls 1 John ‘the catholic letter’ (Eusebius *H.E.* 7.25.7). Eusebius’ use of the term (in the plural form) also lacks clarity. He uses it in reference to a group of writings in the course of his outline of those documents considered to be ‘recognized’ (*Homologoumena*), and those ‘disputed’ (*Antilegoumena*) by earlier church writers (*H.E.* 2.23.25). It has been suggested that Eusebius’ understanding of the term is that of a letter addressed to a general or wide circle of readers, since he also applies it to writings which are located in his ‘disputed’ category (Childs 1984:494f.). The problem with this, however, is that Eusebius’ category of ‘disputed’ is not to be assimilated with ‘unorthodox’ - ‘disputed’ customarily meant pseudonymous³⁰. Eusebius’ third category of ‘rejected’ (*amphiballetai*) writings, best assimilates the church’s

²⁷ That the Catholic Epistles came to be circulated, along with Acts, in a smaller collection might be concluded from the evidence of Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century), which places Acts after the Pauline Epistles and before the Catholic Epistles. Canon historians, however, tend to favour the idea that they did not belong to a smaller collection prior to their canonization (cf. Bruce 1988:205f.).

²⁸ Bruce suggests that the ‘apostle’ referred to here might be Peter, since the passage echoes 2 Pet. 1:1 - ‘those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours’. However, in view of the Montanists’ primary utilization of Revelation, John is usually favoured as the ‘apostle’ being referred to.

²⁹ Origen also refers to the *Epistle of Barnabas* as a ‘catholic’ epistle (*Contra Celsum* 1.63); serving to indicate that the term had as yet not come to be specifically applied only to our seven texts.

³⁰ Cf. Eusebius’ classification of Revelation as both ‘recognized’ and ‘disputed’; which is an indication that these two categories were only to be understood as representing official church usage.

understanding of 'heretical' or 'unorthodox'³¹.

From the fourth century onwards, writers in the Eastern church came to use the term with increasing regularity in reference to our seven epistles - in the Council of Laodicea, Chrysostom, Johannes Damascenus, Ebed Jesu, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, the Alexandrian Codex, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Amphilocius, Leontius, and Nicephorus. Its meaning in these instances, vacillated between that of its universal *acceptance* (Ebed Jesu), and its general audience (Leontus)³². In the Western church the terms 'canonical' and 'authoritative' came to be specifically applied to our seven epistles - as seen in Cassiodorus, Junilius, Gelasius (according to two mss.), John of Salisbury, Hugo of St. Victor, and in the *Liber Pontificalis*. In these instances the terms took the meaning of 'universally accepted', 'included in the canon', or 'orthodox'. The term 'catholic' came again to be applied specifically to our seven letters in the Middle Ages, with the meaning of 'universal' addressees; hence the English term 'general epistles' - commonly used in the titles of earlier commentaries on the letters - as well as the common definition:

"[The term 'catholic'] is applied to those New Testament epistles which are not directly addressed to any particular community of Christians, or to any particular individual, as are the Epistles of St. Paul, but envisage a more 'general' type of reader" (Sparks 1952:126).

Strictly speaking, this definition is inaccurate since many of the Catholic Epistles do have specific addressees (cf. 1 Peter, 1-3 John). For this reason some scholars have chosen to reject any idea of the term as having meant 'universal addressees' (cf. Barclay 1960:163f.; Kelly 1969:227). Such a position, however, is unacceptable on the grounds that:

* It does not adequately account for the interpretation applied to the term by early writers such as Leontus.

* The term 'catholic' was initially applied to our epistles in reference to their 'universal audience' due to the fact that they were, in all probability, never sent to their supposed addressees - the evidence for 1 Peter's circulation offers no indication of it having initially circulated in Rome and Asia Minor to the exclusion of any other areas. Furthermore, 2 Peter's attestation to 1 Peter is a possible indication of the latter's earliest circulation in Egypt. 2 Peter's initial circulation places it in Egypt, and definitely not in Asia Minor, the location of the implied addressees.

* The didactic thrust of our letters would also indicate their being understood as addressed to a universal audience; the traditional critical understanding of 1 Peter's catechetical nature being a point in case (cf. chapter 3).

³¹ Writings which we find listed under this classification are the apocryphal gospels and acts, etc.

³² Bigg only accepts the viability of the former meaning; hence his claim that Leontus does not provide us with the 'true explanation' (Bigg 1902:1f.).

* That the term 'catholic' inevitably came to be assimilated with 'canonical' in the fourth century is obvious in light of the significance of this period for our letters in their path to the canon. Furthermore, that the church came once again to understand the term to refer to a universal audience, subsequent to the canonization of the Catholic Epistles could be said to be attested to in the sixth century writing *De sectis* 2.4 (cf. Kelly 1969:227).

Thus, by accepting that the term initially referred to their universal applicability, we are able to conclude that the canonizing church had some sort of understanding of our epistles' commonality.

The most obvious point of congruency between the Catholic Epistles is to be located in their respective claims to derive from one of the Palestinian Apostles. Each letter has been ascribed to a leading figure in the Palestinian church. And, all our letters reflect certain links to the primitive Christianity whether it be Old Testament phraseology or 'personal allusions' to the historical Jesus. James (ascribed to the brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem church) addresses the 'twelve tribes in the dispersion' (1:1), and, in many instances, echoes the (Jewish-Christian) Gospel of Matthew³³. 1 Peter (ascribed to Peter, 'an apostle of Jesus Christ') describes its addressees as 'resident aliens of the dispersion' (1:1). 2 Peter's 'primitive' status is located primarily in its claim to be written by Peter as well as its alluded link to 1 Peter. 1 John's link to primitive Christianity is established through its author's claim to have 'heard, seen, looked upon and touched' the Word of life (1:1). 2-3 John's primitive status is located in their association with 1 John. Jude's primitive status is reflected in its author's claim to be the brother of James (1:1), as well as its appeal to numerous Old Testament themes (5-11).

A further link between our texts is to be located in their common Hellenistic flavour. James is to be noted for its use of polished Greek and Hellenistic literary conventions; its familiarity with the Septuagint. and; its largely paraenetic style. 1 Peter also offers a paraenetic thrust along with a constant appeal to the Septuagint. 2 Peter, 1 John and Jude all reflect a concern to combat an antinomian, or proto-Gnostic, threat.

In conclusion, the nature of the Catholic Epistles as Hellenistic 'apostolic' letters addressed to the universal church is basically all that our texts have in common. One is hard pressed to find a theological motif common to all (cf. chapter 3). Thus, their hermeneutical value is not so much what they say to each other, but rather what they say about themselves. In their canonical context, what they say is directed to the Pauline Epistles - the other body of 'apostolic letters'

³³ Cf. 1:5, 17 with Mtt. 7:7ff.; 1:22f. with Mtt. 7:24ff.; 4:12 with Mtt. 7:1; 5:12 with Mtt. 5:34-7.

4.2.2. Relationship to the Pauline corpus

The placement of the Catholic Epistles after the Pauline corpus has the effect of affirming the primacy of the latter. Both Childs and Wall note the hermeneutical significance of the ordering of collections within the canon (Childs 1984:30; Wall 1992:176). The issue of the ordering of the canon's constituent parts was also considered important by the canonizing church. During this period four different orders are to be found in church writers' lists, the manuscript tradition, and council catalogues³⁴.

* Acts -> Catholic Epistles -> Pauline Epistles

This order was favoured predominantly in the Eastern church. It is found in Cyril of Jerusalem c.350 (*Catechetical Lectures* 4.36), and Athanasius (*Festal Letter* 39). In the manuscript tradition, this sequence is found in A, B, C, and the majority of Greek manuscripts. It would appear to follow the chronology of Acts, and possibly alludes to the primacy of the Palestinian Apostles - Paul being the 'least of the Apostles' (1 Cor. 15:9).

* Acts -> Pauline Epistles -> Catholic Epistles

Gregory of Nazianzus favoured this order, as did the Synod of Carthage (c.419), and Jerome in his Vulgate; hence its later domination. It goes against the chronology of Acts, which has the effect of indicating the secondary status of the Catholic Epistles.

* Pauline Epistles -> Acts -> Catholic Epistles

In Jerome's catalogues, Acts comes after the Pauline Epistles. In the manuscript tradition this sequence is found in codex Sinaiticus, the sixth century codex Fuldensis, and a group of miniscules (and the Peshitta, although it excludes four of the Catholic Epistles). The order possibly reflects a chronology of the history of these texts' canonization.

* Pauline Epistles -> Catholic Epistles -> Acts

Augustine's treatise *De doctrina christiana* places Acts after the Catholic Epistles. The Council of Florence (1439-1443) also proposed this sequence. It is considered by Aland to possibly reflect "theological evaluations or historical hypotheses" (Aland 1987:79).

In terms of the ordering of the canon which ultimately came to be accepted, the primacy of the Pauline corpus, in relation to the Catholic Epistles, means that the canonical function of the latter is to be seen in terms of the former. Taking this assumption as his departure point, Wall suggests that the Catholic Epistles' function is to be understood as that of 'Pauline

³⁴ The fourfold Gospel was always placed first, with Revelation, if included, last.

correctives³⁵. He notes that:

"a number of these letters (James, 1 Peter, 1 John) were originally addressed to audiences threatened by Pauline tradents who took the apostle's kerygma in antinomian or Gnostic directions. I would want to argue that this historical intent provides us with an important clue in understanding the purpose of adding the non-Pauline corpus to the Pauline one in the final form of the NT letter. While much of its canonizing history remains obscure, perhaps the non-Pauline corpus was preserved and added to the canon's Letter precisely because of its usefulness in keeping the Pauline tradition balanced, preserving it from distortion" (Wall 1986:172).

From the quote above we see that Wall is led, due to a perceived lack of any clear evidence for the second through fifth century canonizing church's motives in its canonization of the Catholic Epistles, to appeal to the attitude of the first century church toward the issue of diverse theological traditions. In this regard, the reported events of the Jerusalem Council are appealed to (Gal. 2:1-10; Acts 15:12-21): the acceptance of a 'pluralistic apostolate' is evidenced by the mutual agreement between Paul and the 'pillar' Apostles (James, Peter, and John), that the former would focus his mission on the Gentiles and the latter on the Jews. Wall concludes:

"Thus, even as Paul debated the 'pillars' of the Jewish church, so also the canon's Letter continues that historical debate as a canonical conversation between the Pauline corpus and those attributed to 'James, Cephas and John' (Gal. 2:9). The interpreter should expect to uncover within these canonical conversations similar issues to those debated during the Jerusalem Council. In this sense, the very formation of the canon's Letter is intended to continue the apostolic debate and its accord as normative for the ongoing community of faith" (Wall 1992:168).

Wall's understanding of the actual details of the 'canonical conversations' between the Pauline Epistles and the Catholic Epistles involves a focus on two specific areas:

(i) *Heretical interpretations of Paul*. As noted above, Wall sees the major function of the Catholic Epistles (especially James, 1 Peter, and 1 John which were addressed to communities threatened by 'Pauline tradents') as functioning to counter antinomian and Gnostic style interpretations of the Pauline Epistles (Wall 1992:172). 2 Peter and Jude are directed against antinomians/Gnostics - those who 'promise freedom' (2 Pet. 2:19); who are antinomian (2 Pet. 2:2f.; Jude 4); who spiritualize or scoff at the parousia (2 Pet. 3:3ff.; Jude 18); who appeal to Paul for justification (2 Pet. 3:15-17). 2 Peter's household code serves to counter imbalanced interpretations of the 'pneumatic character of Pauline virtue' (cf. Gal.

³⁵ He claims surprise at Childs' failure to consider the relationship between the Pauline corpus and the Catholic collection: "Curiously, Childs for all his concern with the intertextuality of the NT fails to give an account of the relationship between the two collections of letters" (Wall 1992:169).

5:22f.). James with its emphasis on human responsibility and 'works' also serves to counter an antinomian interpretation of Paul. 1 John is also directed against a 'Gnosticizing Christianity' - it counters by emphasizing the humanity of Jesus. And, it also seeks to counter the 'elitism' and 'individualism' of Gnosticism by emphasizing community and self-sacrificial love.

(ii) *Ecclesiology*.

"the non-Pauline letters envisage the church as a *pilgrim* community. The social vision that the pilgrim motif forms emphasizes conflict against rather than integration with the surrounding world" (Wall 1992:202f).

1 Peter, James, and Hebrews³⁶ envisage the church as a community of pilgrims (Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; Heb. 10:32-34; cf. 11:13-16; 12:18-24; 13:13-14). This ecclesiological position is to be understood as being the result of these churches' experience of persecution. Suffering, the experience of pilgrims, is viewed as a test of faith (Jas. 1:2-3,12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12) or as a means of discipline (Heb 12:3-11). The Pauline corpus, on the other hand, is seen to relate the church to society in a "more accommodating way" (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Wall 1992:197). This is seen in Paul's (i) lack of consideration for the impact of the church on the surrounding society; (ii) 'middle class' status (cf. Acts 22:22-29) - leading to conservative values with regard to work (1 Thess. 4:11-12), the state (Rom. 13:1-7), and society in general and; (iii) belief in an imminent parousia resulting in social apathy (Wall 1992:200f.). Wall concludes, concerning the corrective function of the Catholic Epistles in relation to the Pauline ecclesiology:

"The non-Pauline collection of letters is more clear, and checks those interpretations of Pauline ecclesiology which move the church 'into *and* of the world'.... The pilgrim motif, then, is the built-in check for Paul's accommodation principle. Yet the reverse might also be true" (Wall 1987:206f.).

A critique of Wall's proposal which immediately comes to mind is the lack of a *common* function for the Catholic Epistles. 1 Peter doesn't appear in any clear way to combat antinomianism. And, 2 Peter's ecclesiology does not betray a 'pilgrim' motif. Furthermore, while it might be argued that 1 Peter was originally intended to be subversive (cf. Elliott), one could quite justifiably argue that it is also 'accommodating' of the world (cf. Balch). Thus, if we are to search for 'conversations' between the Pauline Epistles and the Catholic Epistles, it would be more rewarding to consider the relationship between individual documents.

This suggestion is also supported by the fact that the extent of the contrast which Wall

³⁶ For Wall, Hebrews with its positioning between the Pauline Epistles and the Catholic Epistles functions to facilitate a canonical conversation between the two corpora - what with its Pauline conceptual framework and its Jewish-Christian addressees (according to those who gave it its title) (Wall 1992:178f.).

highlights between the Catholic and Pauline Epistles tends to be exaggerated: he fails to acknowledge the varying degrees to which the individual Catholic Epistles are related to the Pauline Epistles. James' connection to Paul occurs on a negative level. It offers a specific polemic (Jas. 2:14-16) against the doctrine of faith without works first expressed by Paul (Rom. 3:28)³⁷. That James had Paul in mind is apparent from his appeal to the same Old Testament text - Genesis 15:6 - as Paul (cf. Rom. 4:3-8; Gal. 3:2-7): Paul cites the Genesis passage as proof that Abraham was justified by faith alone and not by works, whereas James cites the passage to prove that Abraham was justified by works and not by faith alone (Dunn 1977:96). Contrary to the claims of Wall, the contact points between 1 John and Paul, are in fact, rather difficult to ascertain. The former's (along with the Gospel of John) radically different theological conceptions in the areas of eschatology and ecclesiology tend to isolate it from other canonical writings, rather than foster a 'dialogue'. Childs, in his discussion of 1 John, understands its canonical function solely as a corrective to John's Gospel with regard to Gnostic distortions³⁸ (Childs 1984:484f.). The relationship between 1-2 Peter and the Pauline corpus is 'supportive' rather than 'corrective'. 1 Peter's connection to Paul is established through its reference to the figures of Mark and Silvanus (former companions of Paul); its utilization of Pauline language and thought (2:5; 3:16; 4:10f., 13; 5:10, 14). 2 Peter's connection to Paul, apart from its reference to the writings of Paul as 'scripture', also lies in the nature of the letter's form as a farewell address or 'last will and testament', comparable to 2 Timothy. Jude's connection to the Pauline corpus serves to highlight the most serious problem of Wall's 'Pauline corrective' proposal.

It is contended that Jude serves to correct any 'antinomian' interpretations of Paul. However, this is the very function of the Pastorals with regard to the authentic Pauline Epistles. It is not necessary for the Pastorals to be 'corrected' by the Catholic epistles, since they do not betray any Gnostic or overzealous antinomian tendencies. It is likely that they originated for the very purpose of supplementing the undisputed Pauline epistles. Furthermore, in comparison to the Pastorals, the areas in which the Catholic Epistles are considered to dialogue with the Pauline corpus, are rather limited. The Pastorals dialogue with the authentic Pauline Epistles in the areas eschatology, ecclesiology, and soteriology.

Eschatology. Paul's eschatology in 1 Corinthians is an imminent one (1 Cor 7:29-31; 16:22). For the Pastorals the belief in the return of Jesus at the eschaton remains strong (2 Tim 1:12, 18; 4:8), but belief in the imminence of the eschaton appears to have declined (1 Tim 6:1, 4-15; 2 Tim 2:2) despite hints of it (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1).

Ecclesiology. The Pastorals' dissimilarity with the Pauline ecclesiology is one of the central arguments against their authenticity. This is seen in the appearance of the office of "elders" for the first time in the Pauline corpus (1 Tim 5:1f., 17, 19; Titus 1:5). Furthermore, Paul's concept of charisma has been subordinated to church office - the Spirit is only mentioned in terms of Timothy's reception of it at his ordination (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). The Pastorals' church order depicts a much clearer hierarchical structure, as seen by the

³⁷ Cf. also James' exaltation of the law - 'the perfect law' (2:8); 'the law of liberty' (1:25; 2:12); 'the royal law' (2:8).

³⁸ The links between 1 John and John's Gospel are far greater, cf. their similar prologues (1 John 1:1-14) and phraseology ('That which is from the beginning' - 1 Jn 2:13; etc.).

phrase "household of God" (1 Tim 3:16). Scholars tend to locate the Pastorals' ecclesiology between Paul (a charismatic ministry) and Ignatius (Cf. Karris 1993: 575-576; Dunn 1977:114). It is not as developed as that of Ignatius' (ca. 110) monarchical bishop being superior to the elders and deacons. Dunn's verdict concerning the Pastorals' ecclesiology is harsh, placing it in total opposition to Paul: "the author of the Pastorals can properly be regarded as the first churchman to deal with enthusiasm by rejecting it totally and shutting it out wholly from the life of the church." (1977:197).

Soteriology. The Pauline concept of salvation via faith alone and not by works (cf. Rom 3:28), is echoed in all the Pastorals (1 Tim 1:13-16; 2 Tim 1:9-10; Titus 3:5-7). However, the sense of salvation undergoes an adaption in light of the content of the letters: "the Pauline rejection of the Mosaic law as a means of attaining a right standing in the sight of God is said to be compromised in the Pastoral Epistles, which preserve the Pauline formula of justification but, so to speak, 'paralyse' its effectiveness by introducing moralism and the rationalization of faith." (Metzger 1987:278)

In summary the Pastorals can be said to be more deserving of the canonical classification of Pauline 'correctives', primarily due to the fact that - as Pauline pseudepigrapha - they share the greatest amount of theological concepts with the authentic Pauline letters. This idea is thrust home in Dunn's assessment of the Pauline corpus:

"here within these thirteen [Pauline] letters we have embraced the whole sweep of Christianity from apocalyptic enthusiasm to early Catholicism, from deep Jewish sympathies to whole hearted commitment to the Gentiles, from fervent insistence on the immediacy of revelation to complete subserviency to the inherited tradition, etc." (1977:384).

Thus, to reiterate our earlier point, if we are to establish a canonical conversation, of a predominantly theological nature, between the Catholic Epistles and the Pauline Epistles, it has to be on the level of individual Catholic Epistles as opposed to the whole corpus. In this regard we might consider the relationship between James and Paul. Its dialogue with Paul appears to offer some suggestion as to the motive behind the canonization of the rest of the Catholic Epistles. What is striking about James is both its blatant contradiction of Paul³⁹ as well as its lack of 'Christian' characteristics. With regard to the latter, its lack of a christology is alarming - no reference is made to the life, death or resurrection of Jesus and in the instance where an example is sought by the author to illustrate the motif of patience under suffering, Job (5:12f.), rather than Jesus (in contrast to 1 Peter 2:21ff.), is used. In view of the fact that Pauline Christianity was ultimately successful in outlasting the strand of Jewish Christianity represented by James, it is surprising that the Western church proceeded to canonize it. That the Western church had difficulty with the inclusion of James in the same canon as Paul, is reflected in Augustine. In one instance he attempts to harmonize the

³⁹ Despite the fact that James' polemic against Paul is not as slighting as that of the Ebionites - cf. also the striking similarity between James and Paul, in the former's reference to birth through the word (1:18; cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Jn 3:9) - its 'correction' of Paul does too good a job of dismissing his position altogether.

contradictions between Paul and James by arguing that Paul is speaking of the role of works which preceded faith, whereas James of works which followed faith (Childs 1984:441). And, in another instance he places James at the end of the Catholic Epistles (*De doct.* 2.13) - which might be an indication that he was not convinced by his own earlier argument for the compatibility of the two. Possible answers to the question of why the church saw fit to canonize James include: it was accepted on the basis of its apostolic claims and/or the Western church's concession to the East for the sake of unity. Concerning the latter idea our evidence tells us that the Antiochene church appears to have held James in high regard - it is the only disputed Catholic Epistle which was included in the fifth century Peshitta. At the same time, however, it is also to be noted that James appears to have gained a foothold in the West prior to this period: Hilary accepted it as authoritative in the fourth century (*de Trinid.* 4.8). This would mean that an understanding of the motives behind the canonization of James (and consequently, the Catholic Epistles) is not to be seen in terms of the text's function as Pauline corrective or, even, unitary sentiments on the part of the Western church. Rather, the motives of the church can best be arrived at by considering its understanding of the 'apostolicity' of the Catholic Epistles. Our evidence in this regard is illuminating. Up to virtually the point of their canonization the authenticity - and consequently the apostolicity - of the disputed Catholic Epistles was questioned (cf. Jerome's comments above⁴⁰). However, in the act of canonizing our texts, the church still allowed them to retain their apostolic titles. This would indicate that when it came to the actual inclusion of the disputed Catholic Epistles in the canon by the fourth century church, it was decided to disregard the past official position on the issue and fully acknowledge our texts' apostolicity. In view of this situation, as well as our assumption that the nature of the canon's ordering entails that the Catholic Epistles be interpreted in terms of their relationship to the Pauline Epistles, it is apparent that the motive behind the canonization of our texts is to be understood in terms of the claims of our texts to *apostolicity* in relation to the Pauline corpus.

⁴⁰ Jerome's later suggestion in his *Epistle to Paulinus* 120 that the difference in style between 1 and 2 Peter is to be explained on the basis of Peter's use of different amanuenses in each instance, is not to be construed as an active attempt to argue for the universal acknowledgement of 2 Peter's authenticity. In previous references to 2 Peter - in documents intended for a greater readership - he did not feel the need to offer an argument for its authenticity, being satisfied to mention only the uncertainty surrounding its authenticity as well as its growing popularity.

4.3. Canonical Portrait⁴¹

4.3.1. Petrine tradition in the first century Gentile church

The period in the life of the historical Peter which is of interest to us falls after the death of Jesus. The most helpful sources in this regard are the canonical works, the Pauline Epistles, Acts, and to a certain extent 1 Peter. The Pauline evidence is to be considered to be of greater value in our portrait of the historical Peter due to its earlier dating. At the same time, however, the evidence in Acts 1-12 is not to be underestimated since it deals with an earlier period in the life of Peter than the Pauline evidence.

From Jerusalem church leader to missionary and ally of Paul

The portrait of Peter which is found in Acts, is continuous with his portrait as a leading disciple in the Synoptic Gospels⁴². After the death of Jesus, Peter retained his status as head disciple and consequently became leader of the Jerusalem Church: He prompts the choice of the twelfth disciple (Acts 1:15ff.); he explains to the assembled crowd the miracle of Pentecost (2:14); he performs the healing miracle on the lame man, and subsequently defends his actions before the authorities (3; 4:8; 5:29); he exercises church discipline - as seen in the instances of Ananias and Saphira, and Simon the magician (5:1ff.; 8:18ff.), and; his healing power is significant - even operating through his shadow (5:15)⁴³.

Acts also refers to the period in Peter's life where he is no longer leader of the Jerusalem Church but a missionary with less authority. At a stage when all missionary activity was still dependent on the Jerusalem church, Peter and John are sent to Samaria after the successful evangelization of the area in order to lay hands on the believers who had already been baptized, that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:16-17). In this instance Peter's authority has lessened; he is delegated by the twelve in Jerusalem to go⁴⁴. Following the events in Samaria, Peter appears in missionary activity in Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea, where he performs several miracles and baptizes the Gentile Cornelius (9-10). Next Peter is

⁴¹ In our consideration of the tradition surrounding the figure of Peter extensive use is made of Oscar Cullmann's book (1953) *Peter: disciple, apostle, and martyr*, which still remains unsurpassed on the issue.

⁴² Cullmann affirms the authenticity of the Gospels' account of Peter's authoritative position among the disciples, on the grounds that (i) the specific details which accompany the stories depicting Peter's elevated status (Luke 5:1ff.; Mtt 14:28; 16:17f.; Luke 22:32) indicate their authenticity and, (ii) the entitlement of Simon with the name Cephas must go back to the historical Jesus (Cullmann 1953:52).

⁴³ Other apostles' healing capabilities are mentioned in Acts, however, not with as great specificity as in the case of Peter (cf. 15:12).

⁴⁴ Cullmann adds that "his individuality does not emerge at all in the story" (Cullmann 1953:36).

located in Jerusalem where he is imprisoned by Herod and then miraculously liberated. Subsequent to this he goes 'to another place' (12:17) - considered by some scholars to refer to Rome (the name being withheld for fear of the authorities knowing where Peter was residing; cf. R. Graber). For Cullmann, this claim is totally unjustifiable, since it (i) would put Peter in Rome as early as 43 CE and, (ii) would mean that the Book of Acts was compiled during Peter's lifetime. Cullmann concludes, rather, that Acts 12:17 "marks a transition in the activity of Peter and also in his position in the Primitive Church" (Cullmann 1953:36f.). The final mention of Peter in Acts places him at the Apostolic Council (15).

The evidence in the Pauline Epistles tends, on the whole, to substantiate that of Acts. Already in 1 Corinthians (9:5) Paul refers to the missionary journeys of Peter. This would indicate that at an early stage Peter began to concentrate on his missionary work. Also concerning the testimony of 1 Corinthians, some scholars have even suggested that Peter might have been at Corinth subsequent to Paul's establishment of a church there. The parties which formed at Corinth - the Paul party, Apollos party, the 'Christ party', and the 'Cephas party' (1:12) - are seen by A. Harnack and H. Lietzmann to support this notion⁴⁵. Against this, Cullmann argues that most Jewish Christians most probably appealed to the authority of Peter since he was the leader of the Jewish Christian mission. In addition to this, the evidence of Acts offers no opportunity for Peter to have left the Syro-Palestinian region prior to the Jerusalem Council⁴⁶.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul alludes to the time when Peter still led the Jerusalem Church. During Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, Peter is still the leader of the Jerusalem Church. This is seen in Paul's desire to go to Jerusalem to specifically visit Peter (Gal 1:18ff.). The fact that James is the only other person of note that Paul sees apart from Peter, would indicate that his status appears to have been second only to Peter. The change in leadership at the Jerusalem Church is alluded to in:

* Paul's reference to Peter's heading up of the aforementioned Church's mission to the 'circumcised' (Gal 2:7ff.).

* In the context of the Apostolic Council, James is mentioned before Cephas and John with regard to their status as the 'three pillars' (Gal 2:9) - a point which is probably significant if one considers the textual variants where, for example, D alters the order, placing Peter before James; and codex Alexandrinus doesn't mention Peter at all⁴⁷.

* Peter's shift to the position of leader of the Jewish mission constituted a demotion - his

⁴⁵ This view was also held by Dionysius of Corinth (in his letter to the Romans c.170) which is cited by Eusebius (*HE* 2.25.8). He goes as far as to claim that both Peter and Paul founded the Corinthian Church - a proposal which is contested by the evidence of 1 Corinthians itself.

⁴⁶ Cullmann does, however, concede that Peter might have at some later stage been at Corinth and even Galatia due to his role as missionary to the Jews (Cullmann 1953:53f.).

⁴⁷ On the latter, Cullmann suggests that, "Perhaps an anti-Petrine tendency could be at work here" (Cullmann 1953:42); however, there is no evidence to support this idea of an anti-Peter element in the early church.

'fear' (*phoboumenos*) of the 'party of James' causes him to 'draw back' and 'separate' himself from the Gentiles at Antioch (Gal 2:12). In contrast, Paul's mission had minimal ties with Jerusalem (cf. Gal 2:9).

* Paul's rebuke of Peter might also indicate Peter's reduced status (Gal. 2:11ff.) - although, on this point, Cullmann concedes that in his reference to the incident Paul does not "cease to designate Simon by his title Cephas, Rock" (Cullmann 1953:46f.).

Another aspect of the historical Peter which Cullmann seeks to highlight is his close connection with Paul. In this regard his evidence comes primarily from the Pauline Epistles. His major argument is that Paul's reference to Peter as 'living like a Gentile' (Gal. 2:14), indicates that Peter was closer to Paul "in the whole question of table fellowship with Gentile Christians, and probably also in his general attitude toward the law" (Cullmann 1953:50). Following this, certain passages from the narrative of Acts are seen to reflect this underlying relationship - for example, the Peter's speech in support of Paul and Barnabas at the Apostolic Council (as recorded in Acts 15:6ff) reflects their close relationship. In the remainder of his discussion Cullmann undertakes the task of accounting for the instances in which a negative relationship between Peter and Paul is referred to⁴⁸.

Peter at Rome

1 Peter is the only New Testament writing which offers a clear allusion to Peter's presence in Rome - 2 Peter by its association with 1 Peter possibly offers a faint allusion to Peter's death at Rome (cf. 2 Pet. 1:14). The Gospel of John (21:18ff.) refers to Peter's death as a martyr who 'glorifies God' by being crucified (the passage refers to the 'stretching out of hands'). John 13:36ff. might also be an allusion to Peter's martyrdom. Unfortunately, John's Gospel does not provide us with any further details, such as clues as to the location of Peter's death. Revelation (11:3ff.) might allude to Peter and Paul as the two figures who are martyred in Rome ('the great city'). However, the two figures referred to in the passage are traditionally understood to be Moses and Elijah (cf. Cullmann 1953:88f.). As we noted in an earlier chapter, the silence of Acts and Romans on the matter tends to cast doubt on the general idea of Peter's presence at Rome⁴⁹. Cullmann claims that the earliest evidence of Peter's martyrdom at Rome is to be located in *1 Clement* 5 (c.96). His argument takes on an uncomfortable complexity, when it comes to the issue of showing that Clement had Rome in mind as the location of Peter's death: in *1 Clement* 3-6 the overall theme is understood to be 'jealousy leading to strife'. Various examples from history are given by Clement to illustrate this theme. One of these examples involves a brief reference to Peter as, like Paul and others, having fallen victim to non-Christian persecutors as a result of disunity in the church caused

⁴⁸ Cf. 1 Corinthians and Galatians' polemic against the 'false brothers' who appeal to Peter, and the *Pseudo-Clementines* (*Homilies* 17, 19) which reflect the questioning of Paul's apostolic status typical of certain elements within Jewish-Christianity (cf. Cullmann 1953:55, 62f.).

⁴⁹ Although, as we also noted earlier, supporters of an authentic 1 Peter are not short of explanations for their silence (cf. Cullmann 1953:78ff.).

by jealousy. That such a situation appears to have prevailed particularly at the Roman Church is clear, according to Cullmann, from the evidence of Philippians (cf. 1:15-17) - written by Paul during his Roman imprisonment, where he expects 'affliction' (*thlipsin*) from other members of the church - and *I Clement* (6:1) - where the phrase 'among us' may even allude to Peter's martyrdom during the Neronian persecution (Cullmann 1953:104f.). Cullmann also appeals to the *Ascension of Isaiah*, as one of the earliest documents that attest to the martyrdom of Peter in Rome:

'then will arise Beliar, the great prince, the king of this world, who has ruled it since its origin; and he will descend from his firmament in human form, king of wickedness, murderer of his mother, who himself is king of this world; and he will persecute the plant which the twelve apostles of the Beloved shall have planted; one of the Twelve will be delivered into his hands' (4:2f.).

E. Zeller saw the passage as referring to the exile of the apostle John. But Cullmann understands the king to be Nero due to the reference to his murder of his mother. Hence, it can only refer to Peter or Paul. And it can't be Paul since earlier (3:17) the author uses the phrase 'the Twelve' in a narrower sense; so it must refer to Peter. Problems with the passage include the lack of any specific reference to martyrdom or Rome. Despite the fact that it can be justifiably claimed that these details are probably assumed by the passage, its brief and vague nature detracts from its significance. A further problem with the passage is the issue of its dating. Suggestions on its dating range from during the lifetime of Nero (C. Clemen) to the third century (A. Harnack). Cullmann favours R.H. Charles' suggestion of 100 CE, however he fails to discuss the evidence for this dating (Cullmann 1953:112).

The clearest evidence for Peter's martyrdom in Rome is found in the *Acts of Peter* (*Actus Vercellenses* 33ff.), which reports that Peter caused prominent Roman women to leave their husbands, and that as a result of the 'jealous' response of the latter, he was executed. The *Acts of Paul* also relates the theme of 'jealousy' to Paul's death at Rome⁵⁰. In view of the common emphasis on 'jealousy' on the part of the *Acts of Peter* and the *Acts of Paul* in relation to *I Clement*, it is likely that the former got their information from *I Clement*, which they elaborated on by locating the event in Rome (Clement was writing from Rome) and interpreting the 'jealousy' to involve a pagan husband with regard to his Christian wife (cf. Cullmann 1953:108). Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the *Romans* at the beginning of the second century, offers possible allusions to Peter and Paul's presence in Rome. Cullmann's argument in this regard, once again takes on a certain complexity: Ignatius' statement in *Romans* 4:3 ('Not like Peter and Paul do I give you commands...') is contrasted with similar statements found in *Ephesians* 3:1 and *Trallians* 3:3 ('I do not command you as though I were somebody,' 'not as an apostle'), which results in the conclusion that the latter statements are of a more general nature. This leads Cullmann to posit that in the instance of his letter to the *Romans* Ignatius drops the general nature of his customary statement and

⁵⁰ Paul is depicted in two instances as the victim of jealousy; firstly, at Ephesus involving Diophantus over his wife a disciple of Paul, and secondly in Corinth where a man predicted that Paul would be martyred in Rome as a victim of jealousy.

refers specifically to Peter and Paul. That Ignatius was prone to apostolic name-dropping in letters to churches where these said apostles had been, is seen in his letter to the *Ephesians* where specific reference is made to Paul (12:2). In further support of this idea it is noted that in the letter to the *Trallians*, a place not visited by any apostles, Ignatius mentions no apostles by name (Cullmann 1953:110f.).

Cullmann's citing of the above evidence, for the specific purpose of ascertaining the *authenticity* of the tradition concerning Peter's martyrdom at Rome as well as his close relationship to Paul, need not be of great concern to us. What is of particular concern to us is the evidence which the sources offer with regard to the first and early second century church's account of the Apostolic heritage. That the church was not simply concerned with relaying the historical facts about the closeness of Paul and Peter is evidenced by the further *elaborations* on the basic relationship between Paul and Peter by later witnesses. 1 Peter includes favourable references to Silvanus and Mark, previous companions of Paul; utilizes Pauline phraseology and; locates Peter at Rome, Paul's last known destination. The even later witness of *1 Clement*, with its linking of the nature of Paul and Peter's martyrdom (as being based on jealousy), would also indicate a concerted effort on the part of the first century church to establish a connection between our two figures. This need to affirm the closeness of Peter and Paul on the part of the early church is best seen in terms of the dominant trend in the early church of affirming and propagating the notion of an authoritative homogeneous 'apostolic tradition'. References to an oral apostolic tradition are already found in Acts 2:42; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 17; Ign. *Mag.* 13.1; Ign. *Trall.* 7.1; cf. Pol. *Phil.* 6.3; *1 Clem.* 42.1. In each case the teaching of the circle of the twelve apostles is represented as a "uniform entity of homogeneous character, in which individual differences do not come into consideration" (Hornschuh 1965:75). The significance of Acts in this regard is that, not only does it refer to the homogeneous apostolic teaching (2:42), it also seeks to propagate a specifically Pauline interpretation of the so-called 'homogeneous' apostolic tradition. Acts' portrayal of the relationship between Peter and Paul - as well as the portraits of the other Apostles (particularly James) - is to be understood in terms of this agenda.

Initially Acts portrays a Peter who is a strong leader and who is much favoured by God in his performing of miracles. In this sense, Acts aligns itself with the general traits of its genre (cf. Wall 1992:182). However, having constructed such a favourable portrait, the author proceeds to document Peter's decline in status to the same level as Paul the missionary to the Gentiles. This equality of status would imply that Peter and Paul are to be seen as supportive of each other's respective missions. From the details of the narrative it is clear that the author is more concerned with showing Peter's support of Paul and the mission to the Gentiles. The author's specific detailing of the event of Peter's conversion of the Gentile Cornelius, as well as his inclusion of the vision of Peter as justification, betrays his motive of establishing not only a continuity between Peter and Paul, but also the notion of Peter's support for the Gentile mission. A further example is found in the account in Acts where Peter as head of the Jerusalem church (along with the other apostles) attempts to take a mediating position between the Judaizers and the Hellenists. Our other sources develop this function of Peter further by having him share the same death as Paul at Rome, the new centre of Gentile Christianity.

Luke's final touches to the legitimation of the Gentile church's interpretation of the

'apostolic teaching', involves the marginalization of any other apostolic figures offering a conflicting interpretation of the 'apostolic teaching'. The character of James in the narrative of Acts remains undeveloped, with only a few vague allusions to his status as leader (cf. 12:17). The only clear reference to the status of James is to be found in the Jewish-Christian writing the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which represents the opposite extreme. James' authority is heightened, and unlike the other later extracanonical writings which tend to transfer the apostles to a Roman setting, the authority of the Jerusalem Church is still maintained: James, 'the bishop of the holy Church' (*Homilies* 1.20), alone bestows authority on teachers (*Recognitions* 4.35); Peter is sent to Caesarea to oppose Simon at the command of James and; Peter has to 'give an accounting' to James (*Recognitions* 1.17). Thus, from our understanding of the nature of Acts we are able to assert that at an early stage the Gentile church set about harmonizing its apostolic figures in relation to Paul. Those figures which it was unable to harmonize, but which were an irremovable part of the primitive church, such as James, it marginalized.

4.3.2. Petrine tradition in the canonizing church

In the second century church and onwards, the idea of the homogeneity of the apostolic tradition continued to be supported. In addition to this, the church also undertook the task of transferring its understanding of the actual contents of the received apostolic tradition to written texts - cf. the *Didache* ('The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'), the Church Order of Hippolytus ('The Apostolic Tradition'), the *Syriac Didascalia* ('The Doctrine of the Apostles') and the *Apostolic Constitutions* ('The Instructions of the Apostles by Clement (of Rome)').

The Canonizing Church also proceeded to elaborate further on the earlier tradition of the (close) relationship between Peter and Paul. Our second and third century sources assume the historicity of Peter and Paul's martyrdom at Rome⁵¹. The Corinthian Bishop, Dionysius, in his letter to the Romans c.170 (cited by Eusebius *H.E.* 2.2.8), represents a further elaboration on the tradition of Peter. Apart from his reference to Peter and Paul as co-founders of the Corinthian church, he also asserts that they taught together in Italy. Near the end of the second century, Irenaeus, in connection with an earlier statement of Papias, asserts that Peter and Paul co-founded, and preached at the Church at Rome (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1-3). Tertullian also refers to the teaching and martyrdom of Paul and Peter in Rome (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 36; *Scorpiace* 15; *Adversus Marcionem* 4.5)⁵². Tertullian is also to be noted for his allusion to the rise of the tradition of associating the text of Mtt. 16:18 with the Bishop of Rome. In *De Pudicitia* 21, Tertullian - probably directing his polemic against the Bishop of

⁵¹ Justin Martyr (mid-second century) is an exception to the rule: he never mentions Peter's Roman residence, despite his reference to Simon the magician who was regarded as the great opponent of Peter (cf. *Acts of Peter*).

⁵² He also mentions the legend concerning the apostle John's being dipped in boiling oil at Rome and yet surviving unscathed. This serves as a further indication of the Western church's attempts to establish a more palatable interpretation of the entire apostolic tradition.

Rome, Callistus, who had issued an edict contrary to the early practice of the church, that penance should also be granted for sins of unchastity - argues:

'I now enquire into your opinion, (to see) from what source you usurp this right to "the Church". If, because the Lord has said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my Church", "To thee have I given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven", or "Whatsoever thou shall have bound or loosed in earth, shall be bound or loosed in heaven", you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to, that is, to every church near to Peter [that is, near to his grave], what sort of man you are, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring (as that intention did) this (gift) personally upon Peter?'

Tertullian's protests would indicate that, as yet, the Matthean passage had not become the possession of the Roman Bishop. What his comments also serve to show is the Roman church's gradual favouring of Peter (rather than Paul) as its figurehead.

Origen (in Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.1.2) elaborates on the Petrine tradition in his description of Peter's crucifixion in Rome head downward. The Roman Presbyter Gaius (Eusebius, *HE* 2.25.7), at the beginning of the third century, not only repeats the earlier tradition of Peter's co-founding of the Roman Church, but also refers to the location of Peter's grave⁵³:

'But I can show the trophies [*tropaia*] of the apostles, for if you go to the Vatican Hill or to the highway to Ostia you will find the trophies of those who have founded this church'.

By the end of the third century the notion of Peter's presence at Rome was even a given for the opponents of Christianity. Macarius Magnus (3.22) reports a statement of Porphyrius, the Neo-Platonic foe of the Christians: Peter was 'crucified after he had shepherded the sheep for only a few months'. The significance of this statement - apart from its supposed greater credibility as a source for the location of Peter at Rome (cf. Cullmann 1953:122f.) - is that it alludes to the church's concerted attempts to expand the Petrine tradition specifically in the area of the length of Peter's stay at Rome.

The liturgical sources from the second and third centuries also prove useful for our tracking of the tradition of Peter. From this evidence we learn that also during this period the tradition of Peter's occupation of an episcopal office at Rome arose. The *Depositio Martyrum* (8) charges Christians with the observing of the 'anniversary of Peter's entrance upon office' on February 22. The document also refers to June 29 as the celebration for Peter in the catacombs (whereas Paul's is celebrated at the highway to Ostia). The *Liber Pontificalis* 1.67

⁵³ The interpretation of 'trophies' is problematic since it can mean 'graves' or 'victory memorials' (i.e. in terms of martyrdom, where they were executed). Eusebius understands the term to mean 'graves' since he introduces his quotation of Gaius with the statement: Gaius speaks of the places 'in which were buried the sacred bodies of the apostles named' (cf. *H.E.* 2.25.6; Cullmann 1953:117f.).

- apart from referring to the earlier popular belief that Paul and Peter were buried together on the Appian Way (later being transferred to separate graves possibly around 258 CE, where the memory of Peter was celebrated) - notes that Pope Damasus erected a church on the Appian Way, at the place 'where the bodies of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul had rested'. Excavations of the site have revealed a *triclia*, or cult room dating to c.300. The walls of the room are covered with inscriptions invoking Peter and Paul. Cullmann concludes that the room served as a venue for the veneration of the two apostles. The structure of the room (stone benches encircling the room) would indicate that here were celebrated the so-called *refrigia*, meals for the dead based on traditional pagan meals, in honour of Peter and Paul. These meals were banned by the church, hence the participants in the ritual meal probably belonged to a schismatic cult in memory of the apostles (Cullmann 1953:133ff.). The fact that many of the inscriptions on the cult room's walls are written in low Latin would indicate that the cult was a populist movement - which in turn would imply that anything 'Petrine' (and Pauline) would have been ascribed with authority by this movement.

From the evidence above, it is clear that the figures of Peter and Paul were held in high esteem, if not venerated from at least the third century onwards in the Western church (reflected in the greater significance which came to be applied to the apostles' burial sites and relics). The veneration of the apostles also appears to have been a feature of the Eastern church. In fact, Cullmann claims that it was in this church that the notion first arose - "In the martyrdom of Polycarp we hear for the first time of a cult of relics, devoted to the memory of the great Bishop of Smyrna" (Cullmann 1953:136). The Eastern church was also prone to appeal to the presence of the burial sites of apostles ('trophies') in its territory, for the purpose of adding weight to their liturgical claims against the West. In the late second century, Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, writes to Victor, Bishop of Rome, on the matter of the Easter celebration. In the course of his argument he seeks to affirm the status of the Asian church by appealing explicitly to the fact that 'in Asia great stars, who will arise on the last day when Christ returns, have found their resting place', (Eusebius, *HE* 3.31.3), following which he lists them. Other than burial sites, churches also appealed to apostolic 'chairs'. Peter was very popular in this regard: he was claimed by four churches (Jerusalem, Rome, Caesarea, and Antioch). As we noted above, Dionysius and others after him claimed that Peter co-founded the Roman church with Paul. The Pseudo-Clementine, *Homily* 3.53, presupposes that there is in Caesarea a *Cathedra Petri* (an episcopal 'chair of Peter'). Jerome's *Martyrologium* lists February 22 as the festival of Peter's episcopal office in Antioch (and January 18 of that in Rome). Also, with regard to the Antiochene church, Peter came to be universally accepted as its founder⁵⁴ (cf. Origen, *Homily on Luke* 6; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.36.2,22; Chrysostom, *Homily on Ignatius*; Jerome, *on Gal* 2:1; *De viribus illustribus* 1). In view of this strong attachment of the figure of Peter to the Antiochene Church it is surprising that 2 Peter was rejected here until the sixth century.

⁵⁴ This notion possibly arose from the interpretation of Acts 8:14ff. That Peter did not found the Antiochene Church is evidenced by Acts 8 itself: the apostles were among the first group of Christians expelled from Jerusalem, who were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1).

During the period of Constantine the figures of Paul and Peter came to be honoured at Rome through the construction of the church of St. Paul and the basilica in honour of Peter (c.333). That Peter's position within church tradition took on a greater primacy than that of Paul is indicated by the entrenchment of the tradition of Peter as occupant of an episcopal office at Rome from 30-55 CE. The *Catalogus Liberianus* (c.354) notes:

'After the resurrection of Christ the blessed Peter received the episcopal office...for twenty-five years, one month, and eight days he was (bishop) in the time of Tiberius Caesar, Gaius, Claudius, and Nero, from the consulate of Minucius and Longinus to that of Nerinus and Verus'.

The *Catalogus Liberianus* was a detailed list of popes from Peter to Liberius (352-366) with notes concerning the duration and the special events of their pontificate. It was preserved in a calendar prepared for Rome along with two other collections, the *Depositio Episcoporum* (containing the days of death and burial of the Roman Bishops from Lucius to Sylvester) and the *Depositio Martyrum* (a list of festivals for the martyrs and of the fixed festivals of the church year). Its continued influence is indicated in its use in the sixth century compilation of the *Liber Pontificalis*.

In view of our consideration of the canonical portrait(s) above, we are now able to draw conclusions concerning the function of the Catholic Epistles in the canonizing church:

It is suggested that the final shape of the canon is to be understood as the fourth century church's lipservice to the principles of the homogeneity of the 'apostolic tradition' and apostolic harmony. Prior to the fourth century, the disputed status of our five Catholic Epistles in the Western church (on the 'official' level), is best understood in terms of their offering little new in relation to the Pauline Epistles⁵⁵. That the Western church felt the need to receive the disputed Catholic Epistles into its canon is revealed in the development of its Petrine tradition in relation to Paul. In the first century church, Peter was appealed to by the Gentile church in order to affirm its apostolicity as well as its Pauline interpretation of the apostolic tradition. By the fourth century the decline of Jewish-Christianity and the extent of the Roman church's prestige meant that it was in a position to extend its influence over the entire church, especially in view of the trend towards unity under Constantine. It was in the light of this situation that the figure of Peter eclipsed that of Paul as the head of the Roman church. The reason behind the ultimate passing over of Paul as primary figurehead (or at least co-figurehead) of the church had as much to do with the greater malleability of the

⁵⁵ Cf. Irenaeus' work, 'Condemnation and Refutation of the Gnosis falsely so called', in which he enumerates his understanding of the 'apostolic tradition'. In the work as a whole, Paul is quoted directly in far greater instances (248) than the catholic epistles (8) and the Apocalypse of John (19). His work also represents the earliest use of the Pastorals in the church - in fact, it derives its title in part from a phrase in 1 Timothy 6:20, and it also begins with a quotation from 1 Tim. 1:4. Irenaeus' use of the Pastorals serves to further support the ideas that the Pastorals arose as a response to 'heretical' interpretations of Paul, and their inclusion with the other Pauline Epistles made the corpus theologically self-contained.

Petrine tradition, as with Paul's shortcomings. Peter was an eyewitness to the historical Jesus, head disciple, and universally recognized - having apostolic chairs in three major churches (his chair in Rome to be understood as lasting from 30 to 55 CE). Paul lacked universal popularity - an anti-Pauline tradition emerged in Jewish-Christianity which even questioned the 'vision' basis of his apostolicity; Paul himself testifies to his lack of popularity among certain elements in his congregations (cf. 1 Corinthians and Galatians)⁵⁶ and; his 'farewell address' reports his dwindling influence in Asia Minor, his first mission destination (2 Tim. 1:15). In view of this, the Roman church focused on its Petrine tradition as a means to legitimize its authority over the entire church. The inclusion of the disputed Catholic Epistles within the Western canon is to be understood in the light of this scenario. The canonizing church sought to encompass the entire apostolic heritage in its canon to show its universality, thereby legitimizing its authority over the entire church.

With specific regard to 2 Peter, one would imagine that the situation of the esteemed status of Peter throughout the church from an early stage would have ensured its canonization prior to the fourth century. In fact, it would appear that 2 Peter also made a contribution to the Petrine tradition which was instrumental in ensuring the canonicity of the Gospel of Mark⁵⁷. However, what the evidence tells us is that the church appears to have been unwavering in its refusal to ascribe official authority to 2 Peter. The fact that at a certain point in the fourth century the Latin church displayed a willingness to ignore past opinion would indicate that the motive behind the change of heart was more than just a sudden acquiescence to populist pressure, or the realization that 2 Peter was in fact authentic and had something of value to contribute to an already ballooning Petrine tradition⁵⁸. Rather its inclusion, along with the other disputed Catholic Epistles, in the canon functioned to foster the perception of a homogeneous Apostolic canon.

Thus, despite the representation of the Palestinian apostles in the canon, it remains essentially a Pauline canon, both in form and content. In terms of the canon's Pauline form:

* the ordering of the Catholic Epistles is in accordance with the record of the 'pillar apostles' in Galatians (2:9).

* the location of the Pauline Epistles immediately after Acts serves to break the chronology of the narrative of Acts as well as the chronology of the canon's narrative. Concerning the latter, the witness of the Palestinian Apostles is relegated to a point after that of Paul, thereby

⁵⁶ Paul's letter to the Romans also hindered the idea of his having founded the church at Rome.

⁵⁷ According to Papias - who probably derives his information from 2 Pet. 1:15 - Mark was the 'interpreter' of Peter in the writing of the second gospel (Eusebius *H.E.* 3.39.15; cf. Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1; 3.10.6.).

⁵⁸ Hence, we must reject Walls' suggestion that, "A pseudonymous work such as 2 Peter was finally endorsed as canonical because the believing community recognized its continuity with the Petrine *paradosis*; the Petrine community recognized 2 Peter's usefulness in maintaining its apostolic faith" (Wall 1986:174).

disrupting the narrative format of the New Testament canon, and causing the discontinuous segment (i.e., the Catholic Epistles) to serve only to sanction the preceding Pauline Epistles. By placing the Catholic Epistles immediately after Acts the Eastern church sought to reduce the centrality of Paul, and establish the nearest thing to an apostolic equilibrium in the canon.

In terms of content, the Catholic Epistles involve the legitimation of the Pauline interpretation of the 'apostolic tradition'. This idea is confirmed by the relationship which has been established between 2 Timothy and 2 Peter (along with 1 John and Jude) through the act of canonization. Both texts share the literary genre of the farewell address. Consequently, both are directed to the coming generations of believers; both warn of the danger of future heresy and; both seek to ground the faithful in the received tradition (cf. Childs 1984:467). A significant difference between the texts, however, is the fact that whereas the Pastorals specifically identify *Paul's* teachings with 'sound doctrine' (2 Pet. 1:12ff.), 2 Peter doesn't fix the content of true doctrine, rather it is simply assumed to be known (1:12). Other Catholic Epistles also follow suit in this regard. 1 John, in relation to its warning against deceivers (2:26), also appeals to a received tradition (2:24; 3:11). And, Jude also does not provide the content of the apostolic tradition (the 'faith once-and-for-all delivered to the saints'; 3), but simply assumes it to be known by its recipients. The effect of 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude's lack of reference to the content of the apostolic tradition in relation to the closure of the canon - where the church's scriptures took on the status of a self-contained unit - was the affirmation of the normativity of Paul's interpretation of the apostolic tradition.

With regard to the book of James, the final form of the canon reflects the earlier situation of Acts where the tradition of James status prohibited the total eradication of his presence from an account of apostolic times. In the second through fourth centuries the Eastern church continued to accentuate the status of James as found in the Jewish Christian tradition. Epiphanius (*Heresies* 78.7) and Chrysostom (*Homily on First Corinthians* 38.5) cite the tradition found in the Pseudo-Clementine, *Epistle of Peter to James* (5) and *Recognitions* (1.43), that James was installed by the Jesus. Hegesippus reports that James received the leadership of the Jerusalem church 'from the Apostles' (Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.23.1). This latter tradition was later taken up by the Alexandrian church, followed by the Western church: Clement of Alexandria clearly draws on the tradition cited by Hegesippus in his claim that Peter, James, and John, after the ascension of Jesus, renounced the preeminent position and chose James the Just as the Bishop of Jerusalem. (*Hypotyposes*, in Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.1.3; cf. Jerome, *De viribus illustribus* 2). In addition to the spread of the tradition of James to the West, the attestation of Paul to James as one of the 'pillar apostles' would also have meant that a 'homogeneous' Apostolic canon would also require the Book of James.

5. CONCLUSION

In our canonical critical analysis of the Petrine Epistles we have sought to focus on their specific function at the point of their canonization. This means that hermeneutical significance is largely denied to the original meaning which was ascribed to our texts by their author/s - the much beloved meaning sought by historical critics. In this sense we are in agreement with Childs, Sanders, and other canonical critics. Where we depart from Childs is in our concern to remain *theoretically* true to the historical (an idea supported by Wall and Lemcio). That is, the hermeneutical significance of *historical intentionality* is maintained, although it has been relocated to the context of the canonizing church. It is this community's intentionality which is ascribed with hermeneutical significance. Childs has been hesitant to ascribe hermeneutical significance to any specific community which has resulted in estimations of his approach as purely synchronic. Our approach also comes into conflict with Sanders on the issue of which historical context is to be preferred - that before textualization or that after. Being an Old Testament scholar, Sanders chooses to focus predominantly of the transmission of authoritative traditions prior to their textualization, which assimilates much of the agenda of the historical critical analysis of tradition history. In doing this he seeks to deny any hermeneutical significance to the textualization of the authoritative traditions, a proposal which is found to be unacceptable by Childs and others. On the specific issue of the canonical critical methodological tools which are to be favoured, of those proposed by Childs, Sanders and others, our study has selected four avenues of analysis:

- (i) previous historical critical interpretations of 1-2 Peter
- (ii) the canonization history of the Petrine Epistles
- (iii) the 'canonical context' of the Petrine Epistles
- (iv) the canonical portrait of Peter

(i) In our consideration of past historical critical interpretations of 1 and 2 Peter certain problems have arisen which make the ultimate hermeneutical goal of the appropriation of our texts for the contemporary community difficult. With regard to 1 Peter previous questioning of its authenticity has been superseded by highly focused historical studies such as those by Balch and Elliott which presume the text's pseudonymity but arrive at contradictory understandings of its original function - Balch arguing for its apologetic function and Elliott for its subversiveness. 2 Peter has fared even worse. Canon-within-the-canon scholars' label it as 'early Catholic' resulting in a purely negative function being ascribed to it. It serves as an indication as to what is theologically unacceptable in the canon.

(ii) Turning to our focus on the canonical function of the Petrine Epistles, and first taking account of the historical evidence for the early circulation of our texts, it is concluded that the Petrine Epistles circulated at their earliest point in Egypt. 1 Peter gained early acceptance throughout the church - being accorded with an authoritative status in the third century - whereas 2 Peter, along with James, 2-3 John, and Jude (the 'disputed' Catholic Epistles), only gained official acceptance in the Alexandrian church under bishop Athanasius (367) following which it was admitted to the Western canon of the fourth century (sixth century in

the Syrian Peshitta). 1 Peter's acceptance in the third century is to be ascribed to - apart from its earlier date of origin in relation to the other disputed Catholic Epistles - its relevance for the second and third century church's experience of persecution. The nature of the disputed Catholic Epistles' acceptance in the West - *en bloc* and suddenly - would indicate that their common canonical function is to be located in the setting of fourth century church. Influential factors in this regard included the division of the universal church into three major power centres, Rome (and North Africa), Alexandria, and Syro-Palestine. Through the Arian controversy which emerged during this period ties between the Roman and Alexandrian church were strengthened, which in all probability resulted in the disputed Catholic Epistles being accepted as officially authoritative by the Roman church. A further factor of influence was the trend in the church - through the instigation of Emperor Constantine - towards unity and uniformity. The impact of this factor is to be seen in terms of the alliances which it fostered in the Western church's bid to extend its influence over the entire church in the general move towards doctrinal uniformity.

(iii) The nature of the final literary shape of the canon would indicate a conscious agenda on the part of the Western church. Its placement of the Pauline Epistles immediately after the Book of Acts - as opposed to the Eastern church's tendency to place the Catholic Epistles immediately after the Book of Acts - serves to break the sequence of the Acts- narrative (the Palestinian Apostles followed by Paul), having the effect of establishing the secondary status of the Catholic Epistles in relation to the Pauline Corpus. In view of this, and on the basis of his understanding of Acts as fostering a 'pluralistic apostolate', Wall has suggested that the canonical function of the Catholic Epistles is that of Pauline correctives. Wall's proposal, however, is to be rejected on the grounds that it fails to take account of the literary and historical function of the Pastorals as 'Pauline correctives'. In addition to this the lack of theological uniformity between the Catholic Epistles does not allow them to offer a united front in the supposed correction of Paul. In the light of the latter point it is concluded that if an understanding of the theological relationship between the Catholic and Pauline Epistles is to be arrived at, it will require that the Catholic Epistles be considered on an individual basis. The Book of James, with its contradictory dialogue with Paul (Galatians), along with its precarious path to canonization, serves to highlight the fact that the canonizing church did not understand its function to be that of dialogue partner to Paul. Instead it was the claim of the writing (along with the other disputed Catholic Epistles) to be apostolic which was important to the fourth century church.

(iv) The portrait of Peter in the first through fourth century church reveals two central functions which came to be ascribed to the figure of Peter. Firstly, in the Book of Acts as well as other first century Gentile Christian sources the favourable relationship between Peter and Paul has come to be accentuated. This trend is to be understood in terms of the principle of apostolic harmony, with its corollary of a homogeneous 'apostolic tradition', which was recognized throughout the early church. In view of the tendency of the author of Acts to marginalize the figure of James it would appear that, rather than simply promoting the idea of a 'pluralistic apostolate' (Wall), the intention of the author was the legitimation of the Gentile church's understanding of the 'homogeneous' apostolic tradition - an understanding which excluded that of the community of James. The second function of the figure of Peter which reached its apex in the fourth century church was his status as the figurehead of the Roman church. The universality of 'Peter' for the entire church meant that the Roman

church, having Peter as its first bishop as well as his burial site, could propagate itself as the centre of the universal church. The fact that the Roman church opted to have Peter alone as its figurehead - despite Paul's equal standing to Peter in the church tradition, as well as Paul's dominance of the church's core New Testament canon - would indicate its primary concern to align itself with the principle of apostolic harmony. The tradition which surrounded the figure of Paul did not serve this purpose. It is in the light of this particular concern of the Western church that the function of the Catholic Epistles is to be understood. Their inclusion within the canon represents the Western church's understanding of their function as legitimaters of a homogeneous Apostolic canon. Rather than correctives of Paul, the Catholic Epistles are to be seen as originally functioning in the canon as legitimaters of the Pauline interpretation of the 'homogeneous' apostolic tradition. Obviously, such a function for 2 Peter is not much better than the function ascribed to it by Käsemann et al. On a more positive note, however, an understanding has been reached concerning the common function of the Petrine Epistles as part of the Catholic corpus. This meagre function remains crucial for the church today - without the mere presence of the Catholic Epistles in the canon the (Protestant) church would cease (in its *perception* of itself) to be 'truly' apostolic.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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