

# **Suffering, Submission, Silence?**

## **Rereading 1 Peter through a Lens of Trauma**

by

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*Dissertation presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University*

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December 2019

## **DECLARATION**

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December 2019

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## ABSTRACT

For many years, First Peter has had the reputation of being an “exegetical stepchild” in New Testament studies. It is typically associated with the terms “suffering”, “submission” and “silence”, as suggested in the main title of the dissertation. The argument of the study is that there is another prevalent dimension regarding 1 Peter, namely the presence of trauma. This dissertation examines the deeper embeddedness of these three associations with the letter by means of multidimensional exegesis as methodology and trauma theory, as developed by Shelly Rambo, as theoretical (hermeneutical) framework. Rambo’s point of departure is that trauma distorts memory and concept of time, it causes a loss for words and communication about trauma and that trauma distorts the relationship of an individual to their physical body, as well as social networks. The methodology and theoretical framework serve as conversation partners in the dissertation in an attempt to answer the main research question: *How can 1 Peter be read from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, to respect its nature and purpose as an ancient canonised text?*

The methodology and theoretical framework are appropriated in the first place to examine whether 1 Peter can be read as a text that reflects a situation of trauma. This is done by means of studying literary, socio-historical and rhetorical aspects of the text to see if and how trauma shattered the lives of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jesus followers. The core of this leans towards the rhetorical situation that the author sees or anticipates – an exigence that probably motivated him to write this letter. Secondly, with the help of multidimensional exegesis and trauma theory, this study examines alternative perspectives or coping strategies that the author probably suggests to the audience for them to cope with their trauma and to live life beyond it. Here, the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God’s story with Israel as found in the Hebrew Scriptures and the emphasis on identity and ethos (especially in terms of temple metaphors, family and household language), stand central. This leads to possible coping strategies for present-day South African believers to cope with their trauma (with the focus on community), namely the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

This study does not suggest that 1 Peter gives easy answers to the realities of trauma. Journeying with trauma is complex in nature and the possibility to be traumatised over and over again is a reality. However, the study wishes to communicate that there is more to 1 Peter than has typically been assigned to the letter and that the author seems to focus on encouraging the audience (1<sup>st</sup> century CE and present-day) to perceive their trauma differently, and even offers the possibility of life after trauma.

## OPSOMMING

1 Petrus het lank reeds die reputasie as 'n "eksegetiese stiefkind" in Nuwe Testamentiese Bybelwetenskap. Dit is ook 'n brief wat tipies met die terme "lyding", "onderdanigheid" en "stilte" verbind word, soos die hooftitel van hierdie proefskrif veronderstel. Die argument van die studie is dat daar 'n ander dimensie, naamlik die teenwoordigheid van trauma, in hierdie brief teenwoordig is. Die proefskrif ondersoek die dieperliggende gesetelheid van hierdie drie terme deur multidimensionele eksegeese as metodologie in te span terwyl trauma teorie, soos deur Shelly Rambo ontwikkel, as teoretiese (hermeneutiese) raamwerk vir die studie dien. Rambo se uitgangspunt is dat trauma mense se geheue en konsep van tyd versteur, dat trauma veroorsaak dat kommunikasie oor die trauma ontbreek, en dat dit sosiale verhoudinge met ander en met die individu self beïnvloed. Dié metodologie en teoretiese raamwerk dien as gespreksgenote in 'n poging om die hoof-navorsingsvraag van die studie te beantwoord, naamlik: *Op watter maniere kan 1 Petrus vanuit 'n 21ste eeuse perspektief gelees word, om sodoende die aard en doel van hierdie antieke gekanoniseerde teks te respekteer?*

Die metodologie en teoretiese raamwerk word eerstens ingespan om te ondersoek of 1 Petrus as 'n teks gelees kan word wat 'n situasie van trauma reflekteer. Dit word gedoen deur middel van 'n ondersoek na literêre, sosio-historiese en retoriese aspekte van die teks om te sien op watter maniere trauma die lewens van eerste eeuse Jesus-volgelingen in skerwe laat spat. Die swaartepunt hiervan leun na die retoriese situasie wat die skrywer gesien of verwag het – die noodsaaklikheid wat hom waarskynlik aangespoor het om die brief te skryf. Tweedens, met behulp van multidimensionele eksegeese en trauma teorie, ondersoek die studie alternatiewe perspektiewe of oorlewingstrategieë wat die skrywer waarskynlik aan sy gehoor gee sodat hulle hulle trauma kan oorleef en die lewe ná trauma kan beleef. Hier staan die lyding en sterwe van Jesus Christus, die verhaal van God met Israel soos deur die Hebreeuse geskifte weergegee en die klem op identiteit en etos (veral in terme van tempelmetafore, familie- en huishoudingstaal), sentraal. Dit gee aanleiding tot moontlike oorlewingstrategieë wat hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse gelowiges kan gebruik om hulle trauma (in gemeenskap) te oorleef, naamlik die sakramente van die doop en die nagmaal.

Hierdie studie veronderstel nie dat 1 Petrus maklike antwoorde op die werklikheid van trauma gee nie. Die pad met trauma is kompleks van aard en die moontlikheid om weer en weer getraumatiseer te word, is teenwoordig. Tog wil die studie kommunikeer dat daar meer aan die eerste Petrus-brief is as waarmee dit tipies verbind word en dat die skrywer waarskynlik daarop fokus om die gehoor (eerste eeus en vandag) aan te moedig om anders na hulle trauma te kyk en die moontlikheid van lewe ná trauma beklemtoon.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the journey of a PhD is mostly an individual one, I have learned in the past three years that one cannot walk this path alone. Therefore, I wish to convey words of appreciation and gratitude to the following persons:

My study leader, Professor Elna Mouton, for guiding me unto the path of trauma theory and cultivating my interest in New Testament studies, especially the General Epistles. Prof. Elna, you have been a wonderful study leader. I thank you for all the inspiring conversations we had and your encouragement and wisdom throughout the project. Thank you for helping people see the life affirming and life giving ways in which biblical texts can be read and appropriated. You made the PhD journey bearable and doable.

Proff. Christo Thesnaar, Johan Anker and Chris van der Merwe for initial conversations on texts and trauma theory. Your insights have helped me tremendously and journeyed with me throughout the project. Your perspectives from other disciplines in theology, as well as the humanities, have helped frame my understanding of trauma and its relationship with literature.

The department of Old and New Testament and the staff of the Theology library for administration help – also to Prof. Len Hansen for some useful tips and advice.

Stellenbosch University for a Merit bursary and the Dutch Reformed Church for a post graduate bursary. I especially want to thank Rhodene Amos and Ingrid van Eck for your help.

Proff. David Carr (Union Theological Seminary in New York, USA) and Fika Janse van Rensburg (North West University, South Africa) who acted as external examiners, as well as Prof. Jeremy Punt from Stellenbosch University, who was the internal examiner for this project. Your feedback was valuable and contributed to the completion of this study.

My mother, Dawn de Kock, and Dr. Dawie Vorster for proofreading my dissertation and (hopefully) sparing Prof. Elna hours of frustration with my language mistakes. Thank you also to Dr. Manitza Kotze for proofreading the final draft of the dissertation.

The Bridging Gaps programme at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands, who gave me the opportunity to spend three months (September to November 2017) working on my research and experiencing the Dutch church and culture with sixteen other students. This experience has significantly contributed to this study (as I wrote most of chapter four when I was in the Netherlands). A special thank you goes to Rev. Willemien van Berkum, Gijsbert Steenbeek, Proff. Klaas Spronk

and Peter-Ben Smit for your involvement in this program. Also to Dr. Srdjan Sremac who supervised me during that time – you gave me wonderful insights into trauma theory and coping strategies. I would like to thank Dr. Leon van den Broeke for your support when I was visiting the Netherlands and receiving me and Danie in Kampen. A word of thanks also goes to the friends I made in the Netherlands and who have kept contact with me.

A special word of appreciation goes to the Dutch Reformed Church La Rochelle (in Bellville), especially the staff (Iddo, Andriessa, Maretha, Oom Attie, Craffie, Moos and Anna) and church council who were supportive. I wish to specially thank my colleagues, Revv. Wouter Olivier, Willem Venter and Jana Dickason. Thank you for supporting me attempting to balance part-time ministry and a PhD – also for your encouragement and prayers. Thank you for making space for me and being mentors to me. Even through difficult times we experienced in the congregation, you have stood steadfast, holding unto God's promises and faithfulness. You are wonderful examples of pastors who live and do your ministry with integrity. A special thanks also goes to the senior Bible study group, our small group and other congregants for their support and prayers.

My family: My parents, Michiel and Dawn, Michiel (my brother) and Annie, my second set of parents Nonnie and Danie, Karien and Sanmarie (my sisters-in-law), Lodi and Willem (my brothers-in-law) and little Jasper and Luan. Also to my extended family. I cannot thank you enough for your support, prayers and love. Thank you for all the phone calls, WhatsApp's, conversations, family outings and encouragement in the past few years.

My friends and conversation partners, especially Rozelle, Odile, Jacobie, Lolly, Madelé, Nina, Ria, Nioma, Oom Clifford and everyone else. You made life more bearable – thank you for your support!

My husband, Danie. A big, big thank you to you, my significant other, for always motivating me, taking things out of my hands in order for me to work and supporting me. Thank you for talking through my ideas with me and providing me the space to follow my PhD-dream. I am sincerely grateful for your support, love and care. This is also (in a sense) your PhD!

Lastly, but most importantly, the ever faithful and life-giving God. I have come to know the suffering Christ through the eyes of 1 Peter in new ways, and this has changed my relationship with God and how I serve in ministry in a wonderful sense. I am grateful for my calling and that I could do this PhD as part of my calling as a pastor, but also as part of the family and household of God.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother,  
Elizabeth Louw de Kock (née Rossouw) (1921-2006)  
and my husband, Daniël Johannes Malan.

The Romans used crucifixion as a way to terrorize those they ruled ... They tried to do that with Jesus, but he was resurrected. The cross, Christ crucified, is our faith's symbol of facing and living beyond terror.

(Carr, 2014: 156)

For millions of Christians the crucified Jesus has become what the suffering servant and other exilic figures were for exiles – a symbol of often unspeakable suffering. The cross that Romans intended to bring despair instead became a beacon of hope.

(Carr, 2014: 173)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CE	Common Era
Cf.	confer (Latin). This is used to refer to another work for the purpose of comparison.
LXX	Septuagint
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
1 Pet	1 Peter
v.	verse
vv.	verses

This dissertation is presented in South African (British) English. Therefore, the dissertation adheres to the spelling and grammatical conventions of South African English. Sources that are quoted from works using American English, have been kept in their original form.

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

It is important to state the background and rationale of the study, as this serves as point of departure. The title of the study is: “Suffering, submission, silence? Rereading 1 Peter through a lens of trauma.” The title is formulated as such because of (what I perceive as) some of the common words associated with 1 Peter. The term “suffering” and synonyms thereof are frequent in 1 Peter (cf. footnote 35 in chapter two). “Submission” is associated with the household code in 1 Peter (2:18-3:7), as well as the attitude of the audience the author is writing to towards the outside world. The term “silence” also features in 1 Peter, especially in the household code. The way in which the first phrase of the title is formulated, indicates that there possibly is more to 1 Peter than these three terms may suggest. The second part of the title specifies the key undertaking of the study.

### 1.1.1 Introductory thoughts

The primary point of departure for this study is my particular interest in the General Epistles of the New Testament. Since the final year of my BTh degree, the General Epistles of the New Testament grasped my attention. I went on to do my MTh on the epistle of James and then began to read 1 Peter earnestly, with my thoughts on doing a PhD whilst I was doing my practical year in a congregation. In my congregational year I encountered a congregation who makes an effort in reading the Bible and appropriating it to their daily lives.<sup>1</sup> However, I also encountered people who were experiencing trauma or have experienced trauma, and this made a deep impression on me. When I began to read 1 Peter, I realised that there is more to this letter than what has been said about it previously.

Initially, I wanted to do a study on domestic violence in South Africa and how a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter could engage this issue through negotiating patriarchy and a culture of violence. I wanted to focus on the way in which 1 Peter (especially 2:18-3:7) functions to justify domestic violence, even though the study was not set to be an empirical investigation. My first research proposal, however, did not convince in making the necessary connections between context and text, and I went back to the drawing board. One day Prof. Mouton e-mailed me and asked me to have a look at “trauma theory”, especially in terms of how it is appropriated in biblical studies. I read a few pages of David Garber’s article (2015) and I was hooked. This was the angle I was looking for to help me see what lies behind the surface of 1 Peter! This dissertation demonstrates my (ongoing) journey with 1 Peter.

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, the word “Bible” will be capitalised (even though I am critical of abuse of its authority) and “biblical” will be spelled without a capital letter (following the recommendations of the *SBL Handbook of Style* (Alexander *et al*, 1999: 19)). The Bible translation of choice for this study is the *New Revised Standard Version*. The Greek text is taken from Nestle Aland 27 (the electronic version found on Logos Bible software).

I also realised that there is much potential to gain from the General Epistles, especially 1 Peter, given the reality of experiences of trauma in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Mediterranean world, in the presence of the Roman Empire. That is why I chose 1 Peter as primary text to be exegeted and investigated.

Much has been written on the context of the (probable) first audience of 1 Peter.<sup>2</sup> The basic premise and argument of this study are that 1 Peter probably originated from a context of trauma. For these early Jesus followers, alienation, suffering, hostility, possible persecution for their faith, being exiles living in diaspora, and living as foreigners, also in the face of Empire, were daily realities which might have caused trauma.<sup>3</sup> The nature of these experiences is not precisely traceable. However, trauma would certainly be part of such experiences, even though the first audience of 1 Peter did not know the word “trauma”. It is further possible that an analogy exists between the first audience of 1 Peter and current victims of trauma (especially with regard to faith communities in South Africa). The type of trauma and causes of trauma may differ, but that experiences of trauma occur, seems to be a given. The main enquiry in this text is to see if 1 Peter can be read as a text that reflects trauma and whether the letter offers any coping strategies in this regard – for the first audience, but also for present-day believers suffering from trauma.

1 Peter is a unique letter in the New Testament, addressing the relationship between believers in Jesus Christ and a hostile outside world. 1 Peter is also the letter in the New Testament that refers the most to suffering (fourteen times). However, 1 Peter remains one of the pieces of “junk mail” in the New Testament that is often overshadowed by Pauline studies and explorations into the Gospels.<sup>4</sup> Even though a number of significant studies appeared on 1 Peter in the last fifteen years, it remains aloof in the South African discourse.<sup>5</sup>

A lot has been written and said on the themes of suffering and submission in 1 Peter. Feminist theologians in particular have made significant contributions to this aspect of Petrine studies.<sup>6</sup> The suffering of Jesus and how the writer of 1 Peter employs it as a rhetorical strategy, however, have

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<sup>2</sup> I am aware that there is a tension between the “first” or “historical” audience and the “implied” or “textual” audience of a text. The tension lies specifically in the way in which an author refers to the audience and the difference may prove to be challenging to discern. It is important to note at the beginning of the dissertation that I am aware of this complexity. It may be argued that the author of 1 Peter wrote this letter to flesh and blood people, but that the author probably also wanted them to react as an “implied” audience. Therefore when I refer to the “first” or “implied” audience, I do this with this complexity and probability in mind (although I will not always refer to the “probable first audience” or “probable implied audience”). Cf. chapter 3.4.3 where the difference between the “first” and “implied” audience is explained. Cf. also footnotes 132 and 180.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Smith-Christopher’s book *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (2002) elaborates on the notion of being in exile and living in diaspora. This will be helpful in engaging with similar themes in 1 Peter.

<sup>4</sup> John H. Elliott refers to 1 Peter as “an exegetical step-child” to indicate the letter’s position in the field of New Testament studies (Elliott, 1976: 243).

<sup>5</sup> Two recent studies that were done by South African scholars are that of Jacobie. M. H. Visser (2015) and Elritia le Roux (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Betsy Bauman-Martin in her contribution in Amy-Jill Levine’s *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles* refers to the contribution of feminist theologians on submission and suffering in 1 Peter (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 63–81).

received less attention.<sup>7</sup> This study aims to do an exegetical study on 1 Peter, citing “the suffering of Christ”, the use of quotations, allusions and images from the Hebrew Scriptures and the author’s emphasis on identity and ethos as key strategies towards understanding the thrust and alternative perspectives of 1 Peter. This is done in order to see if this letter has anything to say in view of contexts of trauma and violence today.

1 Peter is a thought-provoking text, written to Christians in 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Asia Minor who seemingly endured some kind of suffering. The complex issue of the endurance of suffering in view of Christ’s example, according to 1 Peter, poses particular challenges for the study.<sup>8</sup>

The second point of departure for this study is the existence of trauma. Traumatic experiences are part of human existence. All people experience trauma at some point in their lives. Whether it is caused by the death of a beloved pet when one is nine years old, an everyday fear to be the next victim of crime, or a catastrophic natural disaster that claims hundreds of lives, trauma is unavoidable. South Africa is a country where trauma and experiences of trauma are daily realities. Experiences of violence on different levels, systemic discrimination because of race, gender and/or economic class, the remnants of apartheid still haunting South African society, unrests on university campuses, et cetera, are part of the South African reality.

My observation is that because of trauma that has not been dealt with, communities in South Africa are still segregated, and struggle to speak to each other. The effects of two South African Wars and the concentration camps on the psyche of (those who refer to themselves as) Afrikaner people, as well as black and coloured people, the realities of apartheid and the remnants thereof, the Border war that sent many young people to their deaths, and the culture of violence in South Africa, are examples of how trauma has left its mark on citizens of this country.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Already in the opening of the letter, the audience’s fate and conduct are tied to the suffering and death of Jesus. By divine providence, they have been chosen to benefit from the “sprinkling of Jesus Christ’s blood” and they are commanded to live obedient lives in response (Carroll & Green, 1995: 140).

<sup>8</sup> Here David’s Tombs’ article *Crucifixion, State Terror and Sexual Abuse* (1999) may be helpful because of the way Tombs makes an analogy between contemporary contexts of terror, sexual abuse, and Jesus’ suffering. This article gives a different perspective on the crucifixion of Jesus and how victims of torture and sexual abuse may be comforted by Jesus’ experience. The New Testament, according to Tombs, does not portray the whole picture of Jesus’ suffering and abuse, probably because of trauma accompanying it.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Elna Mouton and Dirkie Smit’s article *Shared Stories for the Future? Theological Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (2008). The first Anglo-Boer war (1880-1881) and second Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902), also known as the South African Wars, left many scars on those who refer to themselves as Afrikaner people. The concentration camps that the British built and the many women and children that died there, affected many families. Many Boers returned to farms where everything was destroyed and where women, children and workers did not return to the farm.

Kathleen O'Connor (2011: 2) defines "trauma" as the violence that injury imposes, not the injury itself.<sup>10</sup> She further says that to be traumatised is to receive a setback, or to become a victim of unexpected or recurring assaults. It may be physical or emotional. David Carr (2014: 7) defines "trauma" as "an overwhelming, haunting experience of disaster so explosive in its impact that it cannot be directly encountered and influences an individual/group's behaviour and memory in indirect ways."<sup>11</sup> Raben Rosenberg (2014: 31) also suggests that trauma is equal to events that cause suffering, cognitive dysfunction, and emotional and behavioural instabilities.<sup>12</sup>

O'Connor further states that the experience of trauma influences and distorts what people think, feel and believe. Victims of trauma may have fragmented memories of the cause of their trauma. It overpowers the senses, to the extent that it cannot be absorbed. Trauma breaks down language, as people cannot find the words to describe their trauma. Trauma also numbs people – it shatters emotional reaction. People shut down in order to survive trauma. Trauma further influences victims' belief in God. Suffering and trauma impact people's relationship with God, God images, experiences of faith and trust in God. Many people lose their faith because they experience God as being absent during the disaster that hit them (O'Connor, 2011: 23–26).

There are different forms and causes of trauma. Individual trauma may differ from communal trauma. Cultural trauma reflects experiences of collective trauma that influences people in a systemic manner. Trauma caused by violence may be different from trauma experienced after a divorce. In general, trauma in relationships is a great reality in people's lives. In particular, domestic violence is a major cause of trauma in many South African households. Then there is also trauma caused by betrayal. The security of a relationship can be broken because of a spouse's affair, or simply by being emotionally or physically absent. Although trauma may differ in cause and form, symptoms of trauma appear to be similar or analogous in various contexts.

Part of the motivation for embarking on this research journey is the common appearance of trauma in South Africa. South Africa is a traumatised society because of our history, but also because of events in the present. One could only look at the crime rate, the prevalence of rape and gender-based violence, and other evils that prevail in the South African society. I am, however, a New Testament scholar interested in reading biblical texts, particularly in exploring the dynamic and

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<sup>10</sup> This dissertation is a study that utilises sources from different disciplines. For the sake of the argument, some (main) sources will be highlighted in terms of their field of expertise. O'Connor is an Old Testament scholar at Columbia Theological seminary in the USA. Her contribution to this study is profound, because she works on texts from the Hebrew Bible and trauma.

<sup>11</sup> Carr is a Hebrew Bible scholar at Union Theological seminary (USA). His work on the traumatic origins of the Bible is important for this study as it analyses the Bible from a trauma perspective.

<sup>12</sup> Rosenberg is a professor in Clinical Medicine at Copenhagen University. Contributions from the medical field is interesting for the study and gives insights from different points of view.



potential of biblical texts to transform the lives of individuals and communities today, especially those affected by trauma.<sup>13</sup>

It is also important that I clarify the position from where I am approaching this dissertation. The *Bridging Gaps* programme (that I was part of in 2017) has taught me that it is important to state my context because it influences the way I read (1 Peter) and understand the concept of trauma.<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that I do not take hermeneutics and the understanding of exegesis seriously, but everyone comes to a text with presuppositions.

I come from a middleclass background and grew up in a loving, protected environment. I attended good schools and an outstanding university. I am married to an engineer who earns a reasonable salary. I live in a quiet suburb of Cape Town and have many privileges that others in South Africa do not have. I am involved in a congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church on a part-time basis, where I am responsible for the elderly. Although the congregation sometimes struggles financially, I am privileged to work with three permanent colleagues, where this is not the case in many churches in South Africa. The congregation is situated in an area where an occasional house burglary happens and where middle to lower income people live, but there are not that many violent crimes that other communities not far from here experience.

This, however, does not mean that I have not experienced trauma myself. I have encountered various forms of trauma in my life and working with the elderly has made me realise that there is trauma that many people live with every day that is unaccounted for. This is also the stage where people realise that they are getting older, they get ill more quickly and contract more serious illnesses. This is the stage where their friends, family and acquaintances die. Because of the centrality of the Bible in my tradition and congregation, I have also realised that the Bible plays an important role in how believers in the congregation cope with their trauma (or not).

I realise that 1 Peter is written to an audience who lived two millennia ago and I am reading it from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, whilst appropriating a present-day theory to it. When doing biblical hermeneutics, it is important to be careful to force certain perspectives onto a text. On the other hand, everyone who reads the Bible, sees it from certain perspectives and different concepts. Whilst I am careful in this dissertation not to force trauma theory onto an ancient canonised text, my reading of 1 Peter has convinced me that there are trauma elements present in the letter.

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<sup>13</sup> As Tombs (1999: 89) puts it: "The Bible is always read with a context in mind."

<sup>14</sup> The *Bridging Gaps* programme is an initiative of the Free University, the Protestant Theological University and the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. This programme takes place every year from September to the end of November. It focuses on bringing Christian theologians, pastors and students together to experience the Netherlands as well as learning together with believers from different contexts. Students attend classes with the Dutch students, work on their own research (also to do a presentation on their research) and visit local congregations.

The following section contains a literature review of key sources to the study, and serves as part of the background to and rationale for it.

### 1.1.2 Literature review

The following literature is considered as key sources for the study. Each source's argument will be briefly discussed, as well as its contribution to the study. This section is divided in terms of sources that are important regarding 1 Peter, trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis.

#### 1.1.2.1 Literature regarding 1 Peter

Many studies have been done on the theme of suffering and persecution in 1 Peter. There are, however, less sources available on the suffering of Christ as a key theme in the letter.<sup>15</sup> I could not find anything on 1 Peter and trauma theory. The following resources are helpful to this study in the following ways.

Two books that have been written on 1 Peter in the 1980's and early 1990's, and that are still considered as key sources on the epistle, are David Balch's *Let Wives be Submissive* (1981) and John Elliott's *Home for the Homeless* (1990).<sup>16</sup> Balch makes an important contribution to the understanding of the household codes of the New Testament, especially in the way he researched the origins of the codes. In terms of the function of the household code in 1 Peter, Balch argues that the code is connected to the tensions between Christians and the wider society. He concludes by proposing that the community 1 Peter addresses had to lessen criticism by conforming to the social norms of their time, but not to compromise their faith and commitment to Christ.

Elliott's *Home for the Homeless* is considered as pioneering in what he calls "sociological exegesis" (social-scientific criticism) in the field of biblical hermeneutics. This methodology takes a different approach to 1 Peter than Balch's. With regard to the household code and other chapters of the epistle, Elliott notices a clear distinction between the church and the world. In his argument he focuses on the terms *παροίκοι* and *παρεπιδήμιοι* (1 Pet 1:1; 1:17; 2:11), arguing that these terms indicated the first audience's social and political circumstances. He consequently argues that nothing in 1 Peter suggests social conformation, but stresses that the letter rather refers to a situation of social resistance. Elliott thus stands in opposition to Balch's position.

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<sup>15</sup> A few theses and dissertations where the theme of Christ's suffering is explored, include: 1. Douglas Campbell's thesis, *Christ Preaching to the Spirits: An Exegetical Study of 1 Peter 3:18-22*. 2. Marietjie du Toit's master's thesis, *A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6. An investigation into the historical background of the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades*; 3. Seong-Su Park's dissertation, *Christology as Motivation for Ethical Exhortation in 1 Peter and Philippians*; 4. Patrick Egan's dissertation "This Word is the Gospel Preached to you": *Ecclesiology and the Isaianic narrative in 1 Peter* and 5. Clifford Barbarick's doctoral dissertation, *The Pattern and the Power: The Example of Christ in 1 Peter*.

<sup>16</sup> Balch is a New Testament scholar at the Pacific Lutheran Theological seminary in the USA, whilst Elliott is professor emeritus in New Testament at San Francisco University. Both of them have made important contributions to the field of New Testament, specifically Petrine studies.

*A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* (2004), edited by Amy-Jill Levine, contains helpful articles with regard to the argument of this study. Betsy Bauman-Martin's article in this companion is of particular importance to the study.<sup>17</sup> She engages current Christian feminist readings of suffering and is of the opinion that mainstream Christian feminists regard all suffering as the result of oppression. Bauman-Martin finds that this approach ignores millions of women who have to deal with suffering, and that these responses do not fit all experiences of suffering. They refuse to accept suffering as redemptive and they therefore see ideas of Jesus' atonement and suffering as damaging to women's circumstances.

Bauman-Martin then deals with the household code of 1 Peter in the light of Christ's suffering. She recognises that her proposal could promote abuse, and then makes a distinction between the situation of the women in 1 Peter's first audience and women today who have options to do something about their situation of abuse. She argues that the suffering of Christ "validated" the experiences of women suffering and experiencing trauma. Because of Christ's suffering on the cross, women could find comfort and hope in a God who knows their suffering, even if they could not escape their situations of trauma and suffering. This resource is thus important for the study.

The other articles pertaining to 1 Peter in this collection edited by Levine will also be used here, especially Warren Carter's contribution on the Roman Empire and its (probable traumatic) effects on the first audience of 1 Peter.

Paul Holloway utilises recent findings of social psychology in his work, *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective* (2009).<sup>18</sup> He argues that 1 Peter is one of the earliest attempts by a Christian author to respond to anti-Christian prejudice and persecution. Holloway suggests that the author of 1 Peter, unlike later apologists of the faith, does not try to influence those hostile to Christianity. The author writes to those experiencing this conflict, helping them in their suffering and giving them advice on how to cope. These coping strategies were supposed to help them face hostility. This is an important source for the study, not only in terms of 1 Peter, but also in terms of coping strategies (that are discussed in chapter four of the study).

Jennifer Bird's *Abuse, Power and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter* (2011) is a useful source for this study.<sup>19</sup> In her introduction, Bird gives an extended summary of the development of 1 Peter scholarship up to date. She then utilises postcolonial, feminist and materialist theories to investigate the patriarchal and kyriarchal realities of 1 Peter. Bird has a specific emphasis on the household code in this regard, particularly illustrating the exhortation given to the women on silence.

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<sup>17</sup> Bauman-Martin is a professor in Religious studies at St. Norbert College in the USA.

<sup>18</sup> Holloway is professor in Classics and Ancient Christianity at Texas University, USA. His work is an important voice in the study, especially in regard to coping strategies in 1 Peter.

<sup>19</sup> Bird is adjunct assistant professor in theology at Portland University, USA.

Silence, Bird argues, may lead to emotional, physical or mental abuse of women who are instructed by the text to suffer, whilst Christ's example of suffering is held in high esteem. Bird also discusses the reality of abuse from the first hearers of this text, until today. She deals extensively with the household code in 1 Peter, as well as its ancient origins, and the function and rhetoric of the household code in this epistle.

Travis B. Williams has written extensively on 1 Peter.<sup>20</sup> His doctoral dissertation is written on persecution and suffering in the early Petrine church. It is also published in book form as *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering* (2012). In this book, Williams investigates the suffering and possible persecution of the addressees of 1 Peter from the perspective of social conflict. This work is important for my study, especially in investigating the nature of conflict that the first audience experienced.

In a subsequent monograph, *Good works in 1 Peter: Negotiating Social conflict and Christian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (2014), Williams discusses the theme of "good works" in 1 Peter. With the help of postcolonial theory and social psychology, Williams seeks to understand the social strategy of this theme. He examines how the recurring admonition to "do good" could be regarded as a suitable response to the social conflict that the first readers experienced. He also evaluates how this strategy could have resisted or accommodated the discourse of power in 1<sup>st</sup> century CE societies. Williams' research will be of great importance for the current project, as it explains the theme of "doing good" in 1 Peter, to avoid or resist suffering.

David Horrell has written several articles on 1 Peter and is a prominent voice in Petrine studies.<sup>21</sup> His articles are important for this study, especially *Jesus Remembered in 1 Peter? Early Jesus Traditions, Isaiah 53, and 1 Peter 2.21-25* that is featured in Alicia Batten and John Kloppenborg's study *James, 1&2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions* (2014). This article is especially important in terms of how the author of 1 Peter appropriates Isaiah 53 to the suffering of Jesus and how it is to be imitated.

The following commentaries are especially useful for the study: Ramsey Michaels' commentary on 1 Peter in the *Word Biblical Commentary* series (1988); Paul Achtemeier's commentary in the *Hermeneia* series (1996); John Elliott's commentary in the *Anchor Bible Commentary* series (2000); Karen Jobes' commentary in the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* series (2005); Joel Green's commentary on 1 Peter (2008); Cynthia Briggs Kittredge's contribution in the

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<sup>20</sup> Williams is associate professor in Religious studies, specialising in New Testament and early Christian literature at Tusculum University, USA.

<sup>21</sup> Horrell is professor in New Testament studies at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom.

revised and updated version of the *Women's Bible Commentary* (2012) and David Bartlett's commentary on 1 Peter in the *New Interpreter's Bible* (1998; 2015).<sup>22</sup>

### 1.1.2.2 Theoretical framework: Trauma theory

This study will make use of “trauma theory” as a theoretical framework. Although trauma theory has its origin in the humanities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are a number of biblical scholars who have utilised this theory in their work.<sup>23</sup> Most of the important works described are works of Old Testament or Hebrew Bible scholars, since there are still very few studies on trauma theory and the New Testament.<sup>24</sup> The following works are important for this study and have initially sparked my interest:

The first resource I read on trauma theory, was Garber's *Trauma Theory and Biblical Studies* (2015). In this article, Garber describes how biblical scholars have used trauma theory since the early 2000's as an interpretative lens to understand difficult texts in the Bible. Trauma theory is used as a theoretical framework alongside other methodologies to read biblical texts. The use of trauma theory by biblical scholars started with the exilic literature in the Hebrew Bible. It has also been broadened to other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures and even the New Testament. It does not seem if any study has been done on 1 Peter and trauma theory, and this is the contribution that I wish to make to the field of New Testament scholarship through this project.

O'Connor, in her book *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (2011), uses insights from trauma theory and disaster studies to show how the book of Jeremiah gives its audience strategies for survival amidst trauma and disaster. She examines how Jeremiah may function in our present-day world where victims of catastrophic natural disasters and victims of domestic violence struggle to recover from these events and the trauma it caused. The book provides language to articulate what happened, self-understanding to form an identity as survivors, how people can be responsible for their own future, and how God is also affected by disaster. This book is of importance to the study, in the way it applies trauma theory to bring new perspectives on an ancient book. It is also important for

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<sup>22</sup> Michaels is a New Testament scholar from the USA, for many years lecturing at Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary and Southwest Missouri State University. Achtemeier was a professor in Biblical Interpretation at Union Theological Seminary. Elliott is professor emeritus of theology and religious studies at the University of San Francisco. Jobes is currently professor in New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Wheaton College and Graduate school. Green is professor in New Testament Interpretation at Fuller Theological Seminary and he is also the former dean of this institution. Kittredge is dean and professor in New Testament studies at the Seminary of the Southwest, USA. Bartlett was a New Testament scholar at Columbia Theological Seminary, USA.

<sup>23</sup> According to Kathleen O'Connor (2011: 2) trauma studies arose because of what happened during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She alludes to the effects of the Holocaust, two world wars, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and other events in Europe, Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. Trauma studies and theory led to the recognition and studying of the effects of war, rape, abuse and other traumatic events on victims. David Janzen (2012) also describes the origins of trauma theory and the growth of the field, especially after the Vietnam War.

<sup>24</sup> In this study, the terms “Hebrew Bible” or “Hebrew Scriptures” will be used instead of the term “Old Testament”.

providing trauma theory language to my investigation of 1 Peter, Jesus' suffering, and how it served and may serve as a strategy of hope and survival amidst trauma. O'Connor's book, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (2002), also contains useful insights that may assist in my explorations.

*The Violent Gift: Trauma's Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History's Narrative* by David Janzen (2012) is another important resource for this study. It also reads ancient texts through the lens of trauma theory. Janzen traces the narrative of Deuteronomistic history – a narrative that explains the trauma of Judean exiles living in Babylon. He gives a thorough explanation of trauma theory before exploring the texts at hand. Then he pays attention to trauma that is both evident and hidden and describes how trauma represents gaps in narratives, since it mutes people, even in literature. This study broadened my understanding of trauma theory and how it can be applied to biblical texts.

Carr's book *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (2014) gives a new perspective on the formation of Scripture. Carr argues that the Bible originated from human experiences of trauma. In this book he explores how ancient Israel, early Judaism, and the early church did not only suffer, but that they experienced calamitous disasters that impacted their present group identity. In the centre is a God who is suffering with God's people – in the New Testament in the form of Jesus Christ. This book is important for my study since it illustrates the Bible's formation, response to and survival of traumatic events. The chapters on the New Testament and how the early church saw the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as a strategy of hope and survival amidst their own suffering and trauma, are of specific importance.

Trauma theory has also been utilised as a hermeneutical lens in New Testament studies. Darrian Smyth's work *The Trauma of the Cross: How the Followers of Jesus Came to Understand the Crucifixion* (1999) is formative to my understanding of how the early followers of Jesus made sense of the trauma of the crucifixion of Jesus, and how they coped with it. This is an informative source for this study project. Sandri Polaski (2008) mobilises trauma theory to interpret Paul's "thorn in the flesh" featured in 2 Corinthians 12. She does not try to understand what Paul's thorn was, but suggests that it is a description of Paul's unidentified trauma.

Zorodzai Dube (2013) investigates Mark's version of Jesus' death as an indicator of cultural trauma. He resorts to cultural trauma theory as an interpretive lens. This theory argues that trauma cannot be connected to a single event, but collectively how a traumatic event has been represented and interpreted. Cultural or communal trauma is a social construction. The retelling of Christ's death and resurrection thus represents a cultural trauma, creating a framework for the Markan community to view their own suffering and to find hope in the resurrection of Jesus.



Shelly Rambo gives wonderful insights on trauma theory and the Easter events in her book *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (2010). She uses trauma theory in her theological reading of John's "middle day", the day between the death of Christ and his resurrection. She thus develops a theology of "Holy Saturday", exploring how Jesus' death and resurrection became the persistent witness to love's survival. This finds its primary expression in the Fourth Gospel's theology of the Holy Spirit. Rambo's understanding of trauma theory will form the basis of this study's use of trauma theory as theoretical framework. This book is perhaps the most important source on appropriating trauma theory to a biblical text in the study.

Rambo's latest work, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (2017) is informative as to how an individual or a group may cope with and survive trauma by means of the Gospel of John's account of Thomas after the resurrection of Jesus. She reflects on Christianity's unease with the wounds that remain on Jesus' body after his resurrection. This work of Rambo is helpful, especially in light of chapters four and five of this study.

In terms of coping strategies (that are investigated in chapter four), Kenneth Pargament's work *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* is very helpful. Pargament's work is from the field of psychology of religion. It investigates how and why some people, in times of crisis and trauma, turn to religion to help them cope whilst others do not. He builds a bridge between two different fields of thought and practice, namely religion and psychology, to stress the need for greater sensitivity to religion and spirituality in terms of coping with stress and trauma.

Another work that is helpful to the study (also) in terms of coping strategies is Holloway's book *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-Psychological Perspective* (this resource's contribution is discussed in section 1.1.2.1).

A last resource that is of great value to this study, is Chris van der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's work *Narrating Our Healing: Perspectives on Working Through Trauma* (2007). In this work Van der Merwe, a literary scholar, and Gobodo-Madikizela, a psychologist, explore the necessity of narrative as a means of working through trauma. This work is written from a South African post-apartheid context that is still burdened by individual and collective trauma. They work with a definition of trauma (trauma as shattering the narrative of life) that is useful to this study and that offers perspectives on the process of "narrating our healing". It deals with the nature of traumatic suffering, but also offers hope of healing.

### **1.1.2.3 Methodology**

This study will make use of (a) trauma theory as a theoretical framework and (b) a multidimensional methodology of reading ancient canonised texts to investigate the research problem. The

methodology is determined by the framework of trauma theory. Trauma theory will assist in exploring the observation that some form of crisis lies beneath the surface of the text of 1 Peter. Trauma theory works with the understanding that trauma affects not only one dimension of a person's life or the existence of a group, but the whole reality of that person or group. The text of 1 Peter probably reflects a traumatic social and moral reality, as well as possible strategies for the first audience to deal with their traumatic experiences. This is why a multidimensional exegesis (accounting for the text's literary, socio-historical and theological-rhetorical aspects) as methodology is chosen for the study, with the expectation that it will assist in accounting for the multifaceted existential realities represented in and by the text.<sup>25</sup> In tandem, trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis will hopefully provide the tools to expose the trauma (implicitly) experienced by 1 Peter's 1<sup>st</sup> century CE audience, as well as contemporary trauma.

Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie provided the key to my understanding of a multidimensional reading of biblical texts in their book *Fishing for Jonah (anew): various approaches to Biblical interpretation* (2004b).<sup>26</sup> Jonker's article *Reading with One Eye Closed? Or: What You Miss When You Do Not Read Biblical Texts Multidimensionally* (2006) is also helpful as it argues for both synchronical and diachronical methods to be used in biblical interpretation, in order to read texts multidimensionally.<sup>27</sup> The methodology and theoretical framework of the study will be explained in section 5 of this chapter and will be further elaborated on in chapter two.

### 1.1.3 Concluding remarks

This section described the background and rationale, as well as informing literature that form the basic departure point of the study. According to this point of departure, the research question(s) of the dissertation is formulated in the following way.

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION(S)

The main question of the study can be formulated in the following way:

*How can 1 Peter be read from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, to respect its nature and purpose as an ancient canonised text?*

The following questions relate to the main question:

<sup>25</sup> What is meant by "multidimensional exegesis" will be discussed in chapter two, section 2.3.

<sup>26</sup> Jonker is an Old Testament scholar at the faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. Lawrie is professor emeritus in the department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Rousseau's thesis (1986), focusing on a multidimensional approach to reading the letter of 1 Peter, as well as his later article (1988), have also been helpful in this regard. "Synchronical" and "diachronical" methods will be further discussed in chapter two, section 2.3.



1. What is the exigence present (or anticipated) in the context of 1 Peter's first audience? What is the rhetorical situation of the letter?
2. Can 1 Peter be read as a trauma text? Are there literary aspects in the text that suggest that the author writes it to address a situation of trauma? And in what ways did the author address it (in terms of alternative perspectives or coping strategies)?
3. What do suffering and experiences of trauma entail for the first audience of 1 Peter, given their status as "elected strangers" (1:1), living in diaspora, being homeless and being Christians in the Roman Empire? What was the probable historical situation of the first recipients amidst suffering? How do cultural and moral values play out in a context of suffering and trauma – values of patriarchy, hierarchy, honour, shame, et cetera?
4. Why and how could the first audience find comfort in the suffering of Christ? What analogies are there between the suffering of Christ, and the suffering of 1 Peter's first audience? What was the writer's intention or purpose in employing the suffering of Christ, imagery and quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, and notions of identity and ethos as coping strategies, even if it was a risk as the first audience with their experiences of trauma could interpret it "wrongly"?
5. What is the theological significance of 1 Peter supposed to be for the first recipients, amidst their suffering? How does the writer hope to shift his audience from existential realities of alienation, loss and complexity to experiences of hope, survival and "simplicity" (focus amidst complexity)? Especially slaves and wives in the audience?
6. Looking at alternative perspectives in the text (cf. question 4): How are the themes of "the example of Christ's suffering", the use of imagery, quotations and allusions from the Hebrew Scriptures and the author's reference to identity and ethos used as rhetorical or coping strategies in the text?
7. How was this text received by believers through the centuries, through its history of interpretation?
8. In what ways may a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter assist present-day readers in understanding it and reading it from a trauma theoretical perspective?
9. In what ways can trauma theory as a theoretical lens assist in drawing an analogy between suffering in 1 Peter and contexts of trauma and violence today? Can 1 Peter be reread by traumatised believers today and assist in how they cope with trauma?
10. Does this letter hold the transformative potential and strategies for coping with and overcoming trauma and violence? Or is it meant (merely) to subject women and others to enduring their suffering? In other words, would the example of Christ's suffering trap people in trauma or was Christ's suffering meant to serve as a radically alternative perspective on experiences of trauma – then and now?

The main question and sub-questions of the dissertation stated above serve as guidance to the rest of the dissertation, in terms of content and (broad) structure. The hypothesis is formulated in accordance to these questions.

### 1.3 HYPOTHESIS

For the hypothesis of the study, in a tentative attempt to respond to the research questions, the study proposes a rereading of 1 Peter by means of a multidimensional exegesis as methodology and trauma theory as theoretical framework (cf. chapter two). Rereading 1 Peter from this perspective may help to confront the notion of 1 Peter being a letter that silences, that enhances submissiveness in many respects, and portrays suffering as something that (simply) needs to be endured.<sup>28</sup> First Peter has for a long time, especially in feminist circles, carried the label that is reflected in the main title of the study.<sup>29</sup>

The hypothesis is twofold. In the first instance, it is anticipated that 1 Peter can be read as a text reflecting trauma. It is anticipated that a multidimensional exegesis may assist this to see whether 1 Peter can indeed be read as a text that reflects a situation of trauma. In connection with this statement, it is anticipated that the “example of Christ’s suffering”, the use of imagery and quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as references to the identity and ethos of the first audience, are to be viewed as key themes and strategies in the letter, and that these are crucial for understanding the suffering that the first audience had to endure. These are also key strategies for the survival and hope of the first audience. Together with this, it is anticipated that these three strategies were appropriated by the author as “coping strategies” in order for his audience to cope with and survive their trauma.

Accordingly, it is anticipated that the three building blocks of trauma theory, as suggested by Rambo, will offer a valid lens to reread 1 Peter in order to see in what ways it reflects trauma, and how the author employs coping strategies in order for the audience to survive this trauma. It may be argued that trauma theory, especially with regard to what trauma does to individuals and groups, has the potential to bring a new perspective into Petrine studies. This is also in an attempt to see 1 Peter in a different light than an oppressive text that glorifies suffering and silent submission (cf. chapter two). Trauma theory thus may serve as a link between a broader hermeneutical understanding of texts and the methodology chosen for this study.

Secondly, it is possible that 1 Peter has the transformative potential to address the issue of trauma and violence from a Christian perspective. It is anticipated that trauma theory may be helpful in bridging the hermeneutical gap between the ancient text of 1 Peter and our current context in South

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza (2017: 1–29).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Bauman-Martin (2004: 63–81).

Africa. It is suggested that the experience of trauma is a common denominator between these contexts. I am, however, not oblivious to the possibility that my analysis of 1 Peter, which has been highly criticised for its patriarchal values, positive portrayal of suffering and submission of vulnerable groups, may prove this hypothesis to be invalid.

## 1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

In the following two sub sections the theoretical framework and methodology of the dissertation will be discussed briefly.

### 1.4.1 Trauma theory as theoretical framework

The study will utilise trauma theory as a theoretical or hermeneutical lens to read 1 Peter. This theory will be accompanied by a multidimensional exegesis of the text as methodology. Trauma literature does not only constitute one genre, but appears in different forms. Trauma literature testifies of traumatic experiences and influences the creation of such literature (Garber, 2014: 348). There is a certain exigence that the author sees (or anticipates) that necessitates this kind of literature.

Trauma theory allows one to put different questions to a text, as shown in my research questions. The aim is to ask certain questions from the nature of trauma theory to 1 Peter. The intention is not to invent a new theory, but to use a theory that already exists, that has been used mainly in reading texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, and to appropriate it to a New Testament document. This is the study's particular contribution to the field of New Testament studies.

It is suggested that the congregations to whom 1 Peter was addressed, were suffering individual and communal trauma, and that the author intended to give survival and coping strategies to these believers. This is where questions about rhetorical intention and rhetorical function are very important. It is not only what is said, but how it is employed to help these believers to survive their circumstances. In analogy to this, it is suggested that trauma theory as a reading lens on 1 Peter may have something to say to contemporary contexts of violence.

O'Connor (2014: 219–220) suggests how trauma theory and trauma studies may inform and enhance interpretations of biblical texts. Trauma theory, she argues, in the first place enhances historical imaginings by enlightening the suffering that lie beneath violent historical contexts and the essentials that arise from them. Secondly, according to O'Connor, trauma theory may extend reader-response analysis by focusing on the text's interactions with its readers. This is also connected to the implied rhetorical effect of the text. Thirdly, it asks in what ways a text may *function* rather than just concentrating on what it *says* or *means*. Fourthly, trauma theory enhances explorations of the symbolic nature of a text, and discards genre decisions that intend the text to be literal constructions of events or simple retellings of spoken words. Fifthly, O'Connor continues, trauma theory sees texts

as “symbol-generating literary creativity, artistic therapy and post-traumatic literary involvement” (O’Connor, 2014: 219-220). In the sixth place, trauma theory throws a different light on the dating of biblical texts, but for reasons other than those of source criticism. Trauma theory as lens also has the potential to allow biblical texts to function in pastoral care. And lastly, trauma theory helps to develop language about God and to influence God images.

Part of trauma theory is the consciousness of a God who identifies with human suffering through the suffering and trauma of Jesus Christ. God self is vulnerable, can mourn, can be compassionate and can suffer in relation to humanity. First Peter can therefore be seen as a theological reflection on the trauma of communities living in exile, diaspora and as foreigners.

Trauma theory thus creates a different framework that can be appropriated to 1 Peter. Trauma theory will contribute in reading the text itself – seeking for traumatic language, how the letter is structured, what is said about suffering, and in what ways 1 Peter reflects a context of trauma. In using trauma theory in this study, the historical context of 1 Peter may be placed in a different perspective and the exigence of the letter constructed in new ways. Trauma theory will also help to explore how the author employs rhetorical strategies, especially that of the suffering of Christ, the appropriation of texts from the Hebrew Bible and reference to the identity and ethos of the first audience, in order to give them different perspectives on their situation. In the final analysis, trauma theory may be helpful in discovering the dynamic potential of 1 Peter in contexts of trauma and violence today.

#### **1.4.2 Multidimensional exegesis as methodology**

There are numerous methods in hermeneutics and exegesis to choose from when dealing with biblical texts. I am of the opinion that the dynamic nature of the text of 1 Peter invites a certain methodology. Biblical texts in themselves are multidimensional. This is also the case with 1 Peter. Likewise, experiences of trauma do not only involve one’s memory or emotional distress, but affect the individual’s and group’s holistic existence. When studying texts from different angles, different windows are opened towards understanding them, and different emphases and nuances are recognised. In this study, a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter will be utilised with trauma theory as a theoretical lens.<sup>30</sup> Trauma theory necessitates a deeper investigation into the world of and in front of the text. This reading will be multidimensional by means of studying the literary, historical and theological contexts of 1 Peter, whilst specific emphasis will be placed on rhetorical strategies and the rhetorical situation of the letter.

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<sup>30</sup> I also used this methodology in my MTh thesis on the letter of James. I found that this approach is effective when dealing with biblical texts, although it may also have its limitations.

The term “multidimensional” may have different meanings, but is understood here in the following way: In the first place, it is important to study “the world within the text”.<sup>31</sup> We encounter biblical texts in their textual form and it is therefore important to study their literary aspects. A literary analysis is followed where different aspects of the text itself are researched. When studying the text itself, especially when keeping the rhetorical effects of the letter in mind, three aspects will be emphasised. In the first place, it will help to do a discourse analysis of the text in order to see how the text is structured.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, it will be important to look at evidence of trauma language in 1 Peter. Thirdly, it will be useful to analyse rhetorical strategies in the text that the author might have used to persuade the first audience.

It is crucial to bear in mind that 1 Peter is an ancient document, which originated from a social, historical and moral world different from our own. It is thus necessary to have a historical consciousness in the interpretation of a text and to study “the world of the text”, or the world engrained in it. Aspects of socio-scientific criticism will be used to construct the social and moral world of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. This is of importance when investigating sources of suffering and trauma for Christians, exiles and those living as foreigners in the Roman Empire. This is also important when considering the rhetorical effect of 1 Peter.

A third aspect of a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter deals with “the world in front of the text”. This aspect is concerned about the implied rhetorical effect and rhetorical situation of the letter, and what people might have heard when listening to 1 Peter. This aspect is also concerned with ideological traits in the letter, as well as its reception history. These aspects are important when considering the probable implied rhetorical effect and theological thrust on contemporary (present-day) readers of the text. When dealing with the world in front of the text, aspects of methods such as rhetorical criticism, ideological criticism, reader-response criticism, et cetera, will be used. When investigating the world in front of a text, it is also important to have a theological awareness of the text, as biblical texts are basically texts of faith.

The methodology then is a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter – acknowledging its multidimensional character and purpose. The theoretical framework, however, will consist of trauma theory as a lens that will assist me in reading 1 Peter multidimensionally. Although there are a number of themes in 1 Peter that may be seen as key strategies or themes, Christ’s example and suffering are used a number of times as motivation for the audience’s perseverance in the face of their own suffering and trauma. In every chapter of 1 Peter, Christ is depicted regarding the identity of the recipients and the suffering that they are enduring. The example of Christ, and particularly his suffering, can be seen

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<sup>31</sup> The concepts of “the world within the text”, “the world behind or of the text” and “the world in front of the text” is used by Randolph Tate (2008) to describe the three worlds of a biblical text. It is here appropriated to multidimensional exegesis.

<sup>32</sup> See Addendum A.

as key strategies towards understanding the letter, especially with regard to the situation it addresses.

## 1.5 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study is a non-empirical investigation, focusing on a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter with trauma theory as theoretical lens. The dissertation is structured in the following way: This chapter serves as introduction to the study. The introductory chapter is followed by a chapter on the methodology and theoretical framework of the study and how they interact as conversation partners. Chapter three is the exegetical chapter (and orientation point) of the study. In this chapter, multidimensional exegesis is appropriated together with trauma theory as theoretical lens to investigate whether 1 Peter may be read as a trauma text. Chapter four explores the themes/rhetorical or coping strategies that are identified as key strategies at the end of chapter three, to see how these strategies may function in the coping and survival of trauma (of the first audience of the letter). The next chapter discusses the possibility of two existing coping strategies in church life (also referred to by 1 Peter) for traumatised believers in South Africa today. The concluding chapter follows.

It is important to state that I am aware of the complexities surrounding an interdisciplinary study such as this. Bringing two different methods, from biblical hermeneutics and from psychological, medical, physiological and literary origins together may prove to be challenging. As I stated in the background and rationale of the study, it is possible that the circumstances of 1 Peter and trauma experienced in today's world have something in common. I believe that multidimensional exegesis and trauma theory may work together to bring different perspectives to Petrine studies, as well as to South African churches challenged to serve traumatised believers.

## 1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Although the study appropriates multidimensional exegesis (which may be understood in different ways and can be very broad) as well as trauma theory (which also may be broad in definition), there are limitations to the project.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, this research project is limited to the scope of the letter of 1 Peter. Although there are other documents in the New Testament that may be read with the framework of trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis, this is outside the scope of the study. 1 Peter is chosen as the text to be exegeted, particularly because of the prevalence of Jesus' suffering in the text, as well as the author's appropriation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The seemingly strange naming of the audience as "elected strangers" (1:1, 2:11) and writing from "Babylon" (5:13) initially caught my attention.

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<sup>33</sup> Although I state here that the methodology and theoretical framework of the study may be seen in very broad terms, I attempt to narrow it down in chapter two in order to explain how I use and understand it for the purposes of the study.

Secondly, although I make use of various scholars to explain the phenomenon of trauma and how trauma affects individuals and communities, I choose to work with Shelly Rambo's understanding of a trauma theory in chapter two. Even though there are many ways to describe trauma and apply trauma theory, scholars differ in the way they appropriate trauma theory and what they include in such a theory. Rambo's understanding of trauma theory is appropriated in this study as a means to read the text, to see where trauma related themes are addressed in 1 Peter, and in which ways it assists coping with trauma in terms of the rhetorical situation. This is as far the scope of the theoretical framework of this study will stretch.

Thirdly, the dissertation is not a study of the present-day context of South Africa. Its point of departure is the letter of 1 Peter. It is the text of 1 Peter that convinced me to do the study and to look deeper than its surface. In the section on the background and rationale of the study (1.1), it is stated that the second point of departure is the prevalence of trauma in the world, especially in South Africa. However, I choose neither to do a case study on the South African context in this chapter, nor in chapter five, where possible coping strategies for traumatised believers are discussed. Nevertheless, realising that I do read from a certain context, the definition of trauma that is used in chapter two, is chosen according to the text and context of 1 Peter, as well as the realities of trauma in present-day South Africa.

Lastly, this study is limited to possibilities and not absolutes. The study is not attempting to give (final) answers to how the author might have used the letter to address the trauma of the first audience, or to the realities of trauma today. Instead, possibility is key, first because of the complex nature of trauma, and second, because of the intricate process of biblical hermeneutics. I am reading from a certain context and that has influenced me. Thus, what is written in chapters three, four and five (especially the last two), need to be seen as suggestions of interpretation and not as absolutes. The reality of trauma does not necessarily ask for quick and easy answers, but for a journey with it – even though it might never go away.

However, even though there are limitations to the study, it has a contribution to make to Petrine scholarship.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

The contribution of the project to the field of New Testament studies will not necessarily lie in the design of a new methodology or theory, but rather in identifying the dynamic potential of an ancient text in addressing a current issue. The main contribution of this study, in my opinion, is utilising trauma theory as a theoretical framework and lens. To my knowledge, no extensive study has as yet been done on 1 Peter and trauma theory. Trauma theory has great potential to view biblical texts from new perspectives and also to help present-day readers of these texts to cope with their own

trauma. The bulk of the study will focus on 1 Peter, studying the text, historical context and rhetorical and theological significance, asking critical questions, looking at alternative perspectives and then utilise the South African context to test the findings of the study.



## 2. TRAUMA THEORY AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL EXEGESIS AS THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONVERSATION PARTNERS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In a study such as this one, the natural starting point is to explain the theoretical framework and methodology that will be conversing with one another.<sup>34</sup> For this study, trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis are chosen as conversation partners. At a first glance, these two frameworks may seem incompatible.

Multidimensional exegesis is a more traditional way of approaching biblical texts, one that I have been familiarised with since my first day as an undergraduate student. This is a typical approach that is taught to pastors and preachers in order to interpret biblical texts in more accountable ways. This approach also makes use of more conventional methods of biblical hermeneutics.

Trauma theory and trauma studies on the other hand, especially in New Testament studies, are relatively new ways of interpreting texts. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, trauma theory has evolved in various disciplines, such as psychology, medicine, literature and recently biblical studies, adding much value to processes of interpreting human suffering.<sup>35</sup> My aim in this chapter is to explore

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<sup>34</sup> Cynthia Grant and Azadeh Osanloo (2014: 13) define “theoretical framework” as “the blueprint for the entire dissertation inquiry.” They furthermore state that the theoretical framework functions as the guide on which to build and support one’s study, and also provides the structure to define how one will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole. Consequently, the theoretical framework consists of the selected theory that undergirds one’s thinking in regard to how one understand and plan to research the chosen topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to the topic. Methodology, according to this definition then, is the way in which the house is built and the materials used in order to complete the house.

<sup>35</sup> It is important to ask about the link between suffering and trauma. Does all suffering involve trauma? Does trauma require suffering to exist? One could argue that this can be a very subjective observation – as with trauma, suffering can mean one thing for one person and something else for the next. Chris van der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela answer this question in a way when they address the topic of the “meaning of suffering”. They argue that those who have experienced suffering would rather say “no” to it, especially those who have experienced the horrors of trauma and will not accept it as a way of enriching their lives. However, it is important to distinguish between the causes and effects of suffering. Trauma can destroy people, both mentally and physically. Therefore, society and key role players should work to remove as far as possible the causes of trauma such as hunger, war, crime, poverty, rape, and HIV/Aids, to name a few. However, in the realisation that suffering is always with humanity, it is important to work to soften the effects of trauma. One cannot maintain that suffering is alright, but because it is so terrible, it is important to gain some meaning from it, to counteract the losses that trauma causes (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 18). Suffering, by definition, describes negative emotional reactions and include perceived threat to the body, or psyche, helplessness and loss of control, distress, the inability to cope with the distressing situation, and fear of death (Simkin & Hull, 2011: 167). Paul Maxwell defines trauma as a certain kind of suffering. It is a kind of suffering that overcomes the traumatised person’s ability to cope. It is a wound that can bury itself deep in a person’s consciousness, one that happens in the past but comes back over and over again in the present (Maxwell, 2017). Neither suffering nor trauma may include physical damage, but in many cases physical pain is part of the trauma or suffering (Simkin & Hull, 2011: 167). Thus, trauma entails suffering, but it also goes further than

both these partners in their separate capacities, underlining the uniqueness of each and to indicate how these two are compatible and necessary for this study.

Although this chapter explores the methodology and theoretical framework of the study in terms of multidimensional exegesis and trauma theory, technical aspects related to “coping” and “coping strategies” will be explained at the beginning of chapter four. Although “coping” and “coping strategies” may be seen as part of the theoretical framework of this study, I find it necessary to discuss it in more depth in chapter four where the subject matter of alternative perspectives or coping strategies are the focus of the chapter.

The first part of the hypothesis of this study anticipates that 1 Peter can be read as a trauma text. It is, however, important to first establish the groundwork, in terms of theoretical framework and methodology, for the exegesis and examining of research questions one to three and seven and eight that will follow in chapter three.

## 2.2 TRAUMA THEORY AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will discuss the following aspects of trauma theory as theoretical framework of the study: First, a definition of trauma will be explored. Second, a brief history of trauma studies will be given in order to situate the study. In the third place, a discussion about trauma theory and 1 Peter will follow, and lastly, the aspects of trauma theory that will be used as a lens in this study, will be discussed.

### 2.2.1 What is trauma?

When exploring trauma theory as a potential theoretical framework for a study, it is in the first place necessary to understand what trauma is and what it entails.

The field of trauma studies is vast as different disciplines take part in the discussion. This also applies to the ways the term “trauma” is defined. The word τραύμα in modern Greek means “wound” as it refers to the piercing of skin.<sup>36</sup> Sigmund Freud employs the word metaphorically to show how the

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suffering because of the perception of the event and whether the symptoms of the experience persists and comes back to haunt the person.

<sup>36</sup> Although the term “trauma” was only starting to feature in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, people in antiquity used similar words to describe their experiences. Cicero, who lived 106 – 43 BCE, argues that Latin distinguishes between the words “toil” (λαβoρ) and “pain” (δoλoρ). Ancient Greek has five words that are associated with pain namely ἄλγoς, λυπη, ὀδυνη, παθoς and πoνoς. Where the key definition of these words are “pain”, in some instances, each word can be translated as “mental pain,” “suffering,” “grief,” or “toil”, as Cicero also notes. With Ancient Greek, the definition of the words is ambiguous and dependent on the context, whilst Latin only have two main words for pain (Wilson, 2013: 129–130). Menachem Ben-Ezra (2011: 224–225), a professor in social work at Ariel University, states that evidence of trauma in antiquity is quite rare. This is firstly because of a number of manuscripts that were destroyed or lost during the course of time – leaving only fragments of traumatic experiences in antiquity. Secondly, because most medical texts mostly addressed depressive and anxiety disorders, not necessarily psychological trauma. Many documents portraying

mind can also be pierced and wounded by events that cause trauma (Caruth, 1996: 3; Garland, 2002: 9). Cathy Caruth, a professor at Cornell University in English and Comparative studies, proposes that the phenomenon of trauma appears to be more than pathology or an illness of the wrecked soul. It is the narrative of a wound that calls out, that tells of a reality or truth that is otherwise unspeakable. This truth cannot only be connected to what is recognised, but also to that which stays unidentified in actions and language (Caruth, 1996: 4).

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of trauma theory, there are many ways in which trauma and trauma theory can be defined. In my search for definitions of trauma, I explored works of a number of scholars in different fields. I consider the definitions stated below as the most helpful ones.

O'Connor (2011: 2) defines "trauma" as the violence that injury imposes, not the injury itself. She further says that to be traumatised is to receive a setback, or to become a victim of unexpected or recurring assaults. It may be physical or emotional. Carr (2014: 7) defines the concept of "trauma" as "an overwhelming, haunting experience of disaster so explosive in its impact that it cannot be directly encountered, and influences an individual's or group's behaviour and memory in indirect ways." Rosenberg (2014: 31) also suggests that trauma is equal to events that cause suffering, cognitive dysfunction and emotional and behavioural instabilities.

O'Connor further states that the experience of trauma influences and distorts what people think, feel and believe. Victims of trauma may have fragmented memories of the cause of the trauma. It overpowers the senses, to the extent that it cannot be absorbed. Trauma breaks down language, as people cannot find the words to describe their trauma. Trauma also numbs people – it shatters emotional reaction. People shut down in order to survive the trauma. Trauma further influences victims' belief in God. Suffering and trauma impact people's relationship with God, God images, experiences of faith and trust in God. Many people lose their faith because they have experienced God as absent during the disaster that hit them. Others grow closer to God because of their traumatic experience (O'Connor, 2011: 23–26).<sup>37</sup>

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psychological trauma in antiquity are based on religious, historical and literary texts that portray both mythical and historical events. Examples of descriptions of trauma in ancient Greece and Rome may be seen in the epic poems of Iliad and Odyssey by Homer (850 BCE), the battle of Marathon as described by Herodotus (490 BCE), the account of the battle of Cunaxa by Xenophon (401 BCE), and reactions on the natural disaster caused by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD by Pliny the younger (Ben-Ezra, 2011: 227–230).

<sup>37</sup> Daniël Louw discusses this notion further in his book *Cura Vitae*. When people experience painful events, certain concepts and images of God surface above others. "Needs and frustrations are projected onto God. For example, God may be seen as a tyrant after an experience of injustice; as a bully because of anger and frustration; as a spoilsport after disappointment; as Father Christmas or an insurance agent because of the notion that God is a guarantee against disaster and loss. The pastoral model for the development of a mature faith is closely connected to a theology of the cross ... and a theology of resurrection ... This means that God is not only identified with suffering. In the resurrection God is active in overcoming suffering" (Louw, 2008: 95). Lisa Cataldo suggests that the God of the trauma survivor can take many forms: "God can be experienced simultaneously as the cause of the trauma, the saviour from it, the passive bystander, or the just punisher, in relation to whom the survivor's split-off selves maintain conflicting positions of innocence and guilt, hope and

Rambo (2010: 4) describes trauma as life's encounter with death. This death, however, is not necessarily an encounter with literal death, but a manner to describe the shattering of life through events that change everything that a person or a group knows about life. Through trauma, death and life are linked. Trauma is different from other experiences of suffering because the person's or group's ability to respond to the traumatic experience is severely reduced (Rambo, 2010: 18).<sup>38</sup> Life will never be the same because of life's encounter with death through trauma.

She further states that trauma is what does not go away. It is the result of the storm. It happened in the past, but its intrusive fragments of memories of the traumatic event return. Life after the storm is different. It is life influenced by the recurring reality of death (Rambo, 2010: 2). Rambo also argues, as does Caruth (1996: 3), that studies in trauma suggest that trauma has a double structure: the actual incidence of a violent event(s) and a delayed awakening to the event. Trauma is not exclusively located in the event itself but, instead, includes the return of the event, the ways in which the event is not concluded. Memory therefore plays an important role in trauma (Rambo, 2010: 7).

In connection with what Rambo states, Dawid Mouton (2014: 97–98) argues that trauma is a lived reality where the traumatised find themselves in a space where the line between life and death has been blurred – a space where trauma is faced continually.

In their book *Narrating our healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma*, Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela formulated a definition of trauma that resonates well with this study. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela describe life as an endeavour in search of a narrative. They quote the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur saying: "Stories are told and not lived; life is lived and not told". Ricoeur further states that this is not always the case. Stories are also lived and life is also told. Life then, is described by Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela as a narrative (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 1).

In life, we are the narrators, authors and readers of our lives. Describing life as a narrative is an important way in finding meaning. One's life is characterised by a plot, main characters, subordinate characters, climaxes and anti-climaxes. Life happens in various settings. Every small component forms part of the whole and is imperative to the formation of life. The development of one's life is internally connected to the ethical values of the narrator and choices that one makes in one's life. The exciting part of life is that one does not know what the future might bring – we are still in the

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despair, aggressive rage and helpless submission, among others. To each of these self-states, the all-powerful Other looks decidedly different" (Cataldo, 2013: 797).

<sup>38</sup> It is understood, from the perspective of Shelly Rambo (2010: 18), that not all suffering lead to trauma. Due to the unexpected nature of the traumatic event, the normal processes and interpretations that a person or a group utilise to deal with suffering, shuts down. This results in a range of traumatic symptoms. One aspect that distinguish traumatic suffering from other forms of suffering, is the persistent intrusive recollections of the event that causes trauma.

midst of our stories and we cannot know what will happen tomorrow (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 2–3).

The essential aspect that this description of life acknowledges, is that one's narrative as an individual is connected to other narratives. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela describe this notion as follows (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 4):

The narrative of my life is linked to a multitude of other narratives, and its interaction with these other narratives forms part of its total meaning. Narrating my life is not merely an individual matter. I am not only the main character of my own story, but also a minor character in the stories of others; my story is intertwined with those of others. My story is embedded in family histories and in the history of a city and a country; *my* story is part of *our* story.

We are thus born into narratives and we have no choice in the matter, but we do have choices in terms of our position in relationship with conventional narratives. Individuals write their own stories, but together it forms the narrative of a society (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 5). Narratives can also be conflicting. This is shown throughout history. South Africa's recent history showcases this. The preceding years leading up to 1994 were perceived from a certain perspective as a struggle for freedom of racial oppression, and from another perspective as a war against terrorists and the threat of communism against society (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 7).

Narrating our lives is about finding structure, meaning and coherence in life, as individuals and as a society. Trauma, in terms of this description of life as a narrative, does the exact opposite. Trauma shatters life's narrative structure, and meaning in life is lost. Trauma causes individuals and societies to "lose the plot" (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 6).<sup>39</sup> Trauma causes what Rambo (2015: 10–11) describes as follows in her understanding of a trauma lens: trauma alters language and the use of words; one's physical body, but also one's relationship to the societal body, and the concept of time. Janzen suggests that trauma resists narratives and it presents itself as a gap in narratives. "By its very nature, trauma resists and subverts the common or stereotypical language of

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<sup>39</sup> Van der Merwe in his recent publication, *Gesprek sonder einde: Waar pas ek in by God se verhaal?* (2016: 155–156), also describes trauma's shattering of a narrative. He explains that one's life is seen as a narrative. Describing life as a narrative entails that life needs to be investigated, to find meaningful relations, to find the links between cause and consequence and to see patterns that repeat themselves in one's life. From this humans construct their values and their unique identity is grounded. When a great trauma hits, the sense and coherence of that narrative is shattered and it falls to pieces. Traumatic wounds are painful and the pain is of specific nature. To injure one's ankle is painful, but it is not traumatic. To loose one's leg is traumatic, because life's structure shatters. Trauma destroys the unity of one's life story. The pain is twofold: The event itself is terrible and the memory of what happens that haunts one later in one's life, makes it worse. People have the willingness to talk about it, but they cannot, for the lack of words to describe this reality, is evident. Sometimes it is too painful to talk about it because it will bring forth the painful memory. And yet there is a longing to share the trauma with someone who would understand.

narrative, making ‘familiar traditional words’ merely ‘fabrication’,” Janzen states in this regard (2012: 38).

Isobel de Gruchy tells something of this shattering of life’s narrative in the following poem (De Gruchy, 2013: 6):

When the ordered tenor of our life  
 is shattered by the unimaginable;  
 when the phone-call that splinters  
 others’ lives rings for us;  
 when a nightmare that horrifies  
 turns into reality;  
 how can we believe that  
 anything could be well again –  
 ever?  
 Anguish breaks over us in torrents,  
 like the torrents that overwhelmed you –  
 submerged you, extinguished your life:  
 but we surface again;  
 we go on living;  
 we face each day,  
 wounded and grieving.  
 We hold on to each other,  
 and take a halting step:  
 can we dare hope that  
 all shall be well,  
 and all shall be well  
 and all manner of thing shall be well again –  
 ever?<sup>40</sup>

The definition of trauma as formulated by Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela, is useful for this study because of the focus on people’s lives as narratives. The author of 1 Peter wrote a letter to several congregations in Asia Minor, but behind the letter lies the narrative of the author, as well as the narratives of the lives of the first audience. Because I am working with a biblical text (literature), this metaphor of trauma as the shattering of one’s or a group’s narrative resonates well with the

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<sup>40</sup> This poem was written for and read at Steve de Gruchy’s memorial service in March 2010. Steve, John and Isobel de Gruchy’s son and a South African theologian, died on 21 February 2010 in a river accident in the Drakensberg.



nature of the study. This description of trauma assists this study, because it also acknowledges the alterations that trauma makes in terms of time, body and word.

When studying trauma, it is also important to recognise that there are different forms and causes of trauma.<sup>41</sup> Individual trauma may differ from communal trauma, although they may overlap in various ways. Cultural trauma reflects experiences of collective trauma that influence people in a systemic manner.<sup>42</sup> Trauma caused by violence may be different from trauma experienced after a divorce. In general, trauma in relationships is a big reality in people's lives. In particular, domestic violence is a great cause of trauma in many South African households.<sup>43</sup> Then there is also trauma caused by betrayal. A spouse's affair or a spouse that is emotionally or physically absent may create a sense of trauma. Although trauma may differ in cause and form, symptoms of trauma appear to be similar or analogous.

The study of trauma began with studying the individual. Studies in cultural or structural trauma and historical trauma have also emerged as part of the discussion. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela (2007: 11) distinguish between historical and structural trauma in the following way: Historical trauma refers to a single catastrophic disaster, which can be personal or individual (such as rape) or communal (such as a flood or the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Structural or

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<sup>41</sup> Judith Herman (a psychiatrist), in her famous work *Trauma and Recovery*, states what happens when one studies trauma, regardless of what type of trauma it entails: "To study psychological trauma is to come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature. To study psychological trauma means bearing witness to horrible events. When the events are natural disasters or 'acts of God,' those who bear witness sympathize readily with the victim. But when traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator. It is morally impossible to remain neutral in this conflict. The bystander is forced to take sides" (Herman, 1992: 4).

<sup>42</sup> Michael Bond (2007: 28–29), a scholar in psychology from the Chinese University in Hong Kong, suggests that there are different forms of cultural and collective violence. It depends on its scope, duration and complexity. He further states: "In the course of inflicting the savagery, personal motivations other than normative compliance may be met, at least for some perpetrators, and these idiosyncratic needs help sustain and augment the brutality targeted against the enemy by the group as a whole. Individuals with cruel, sadistic and sociopathic dispositions flourish in parlous times, because they are regarded as acting for their group and are therefore tolerated, encouraged, even idolized. But, they need their collective backing them to legitimize, to support and sustain their violence. The group in times of war provides an incubator for these persons, whose acts in times of peace and directed towards in-group members would result in ostracism, imprisonment, or execution."

<sup>43</sup> South Africa has some of the highest prevalence of domestic and intimate partner violence. Recent studies by the South African Medical Research Council have found that 40% of men have hit their partners and one in four men has raped a woman. Three-quarters of men who said that they had raped a woman say that they did so first as teenagers. Whilst a quarter of South Africa's women has been raped, it seems as if only 2% of those raped by their intimate partner report the incident to the police (*Domestic violence in South Africa: What's happened to our men?* 2013. [Online]. Available: <http://www.sacap.edu.za/blog/counselling/domestic-violence-south-africa-whats-happened-men/>. [2015, October 12]. In an article that appeared in the Star of 3 April 2014, it is said that on average three women in South Africa are murdered by their intimate partner each day. South African women are more likely to be murdered by their intimate partner than a stranger. Whilst South Africa's murder rate has declined between 1999 and 2009, the incidence of women killed by their intimate partners has increased from 50% to 57%. 30% of these women are killed by men they were dating, 52% by partners these women were living with and 18% by their husbands (*The home is dangerous for women* (The Star). 2014. [Online]. Available: <http://www.iol.co.za/the-star/the-home-is-dangerous-for-women-1.1670359#.VhuVLfmqqko>. [2015, October 12]).

cultural trauma refers to a configuration of repeated traumas (such as apartheid, the Holocaust during the Second World War, et cetera).<sup>44</sup>

Structural trauma traumatises people and communities on a daily basis and shatters people's lives because they also feel powerless to do something about the source of the trauma.<sup>45</sup> There are differences across cultures in what constitutes trauma and how a particular culture responds to and manages the trauma (Stamm, Stamm, Hudnall & Higson-Smith, 2004: 92).<sup>46</sup>

Sometimes historical and structural trauma overlap when an event that has happened in the past (historical trauma) causes structural trauma as it continues. Historical trauma and structural trauma are damaging in different ways. Structural trauma is not only agonising in itself, but it continues to be painful – its presence is constantly there. Historical trauma causes its pain by devastating the narrative and framework of an individual or a group (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 11).

Alexander Veerman and Ruud Ganzevoort are of opinion that individual trauma and collective trauma are closely interrelated. Concepts used to define individual trauma can be transported to describe trauma on a collective level.<sup>47</sup> They suggest how individual and collective trauma may be

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<sup>44</sup> Ron Eyerman (2004: 160) defines cultural or structural trauma in the following way. He argues that cultural trauma refers to a great loss of meaning and identity, a gaping hole in the social fabric. It affects a group of people who have achieved some kind of group identity. This is opposed to physical or psychological trauma which involves a wound and an experience of emotional distress by an individual. He further states: "In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a group or have been directly experienced by any at all. While it may be necessary to establish some event or occurrence as the significant 'cause', its traumatic meaning must be established and accepted, a process which requires time, as well as mediation and representation. A cultural trauma must be understood, explained and made coherent through public reflection and discourse".

<sup>45</sup> David Carr (2014: 60-61) also uses the term "imperial trauma" when he discusses the reforms of king Josiah after the threat of the Assyrian Empire's dominion over Judah had passed. He states that "imperial trauma thus powered and shaped religious trauma." The people of Judah had been terrorised for years into renouncing alliances with foreign nations. In analogy to this, Carr argues, Josiah used the same cultural form to require renunciation of gods and ancient sanctuaries that are not in line with Josiah's law book, Deuteronomy.

<sup>46</sup> Stamm et al. (2004: 95) further states what cultural trauma entail: "Cultural trauma involves more than physical destruction of people, property, and landscapes such as might be seen in warfare or ethnic cleansing. It directly or indirectly attacks what constitutes culture, of which there are some essential yet vulnerable elements: body/space practices, religion, histories, language, state organizations, and economics. The attacks may include the prohibition of language, spiritual/healing practices, or access to public spaces. There may be the creation of a 'new' history or a 'new' enemy. There may be rape or interpersonal violence to destroy families, the elimination of traditional authority figures within a community, or elevation of an authority or outside agency to bypass the traditional systems of authority."

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Veerman, a minister in the Protestant church of the Netherlands and Ruud Ganzevoort, professor in Practical Theology at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, describe this in the following way. In the first place, where individual trauma destroys the inner structure of a person, collective trauma destroys the structures of a community. Collective trauma tears social ties, undermines communality, and destroys support structures. It could also become possible for new communities to begin. Secondly, where individual trauma has direct implications for an individual's relationships, collective trauma affects the way the community relates to other groups and communities. Common practices that may occur are withdrawal and isolation, identifying enemies and scapegoating or adhering to external forces. Third, where individual trauma challenges foundational assumptions and personal identity, collective trauma influences the shared frame of reference, basic values,



connected: Firstly, collective trauma may arise from many traumatised individuals within the collective. This is because individuals have been exposed, directly or indirectly, to trauma. Collective trauma is then the consequence of the pain of individual trauma that is imposed onto the community (Veerman & Ganzevoort, 2001: 9).

Secondly, collective trauma may arise from an event that only affects a few individuals directly, but it may threaten the structure and frame of reference of the community. In the process, the lives of individuals are threatened. Individual trauma then may be the result of collective trauma (Veerman & Ganzevoort, 2001: 9). This interrelatedness between individual and collective trauma will be important for the study of 1 Peter. It is important to keep in mind that individuals in a group such as 1 Peter's first audience, could have experienced trauma individually, but also communally. As Carr states, groups can experience all kinds of deeply painful experiences. The crisis that 1 Peter's audience faced, did not only produce suffering and trauma for individuals, but it shattered the identities and narratives of the whole group. This required of them a new understanding of themselves, understandings that come to the fore in the text of 1 Peter (Carr, 2014: 7–9).<sup>48</sup>

When studying trauma, it is also important to understand the symptoms that are connected to trauma. Tessa van Wijk, a South African trauma specialist, lists the following symptoms as emotional symptoms that one (especially an individual) may develop after a traumatic event has happened (Van Wijk, 2013: 48–49): Anxiety, anxiety attacks and fear, discouragement, hopelessness, feeling depressed, tearfulness, a feeling of being out of control, irritation, compulsive and obsessive behaviour, anger management issues and feelings of guilt.

Van Wijk further listed the following as physical symptoms that may develop after a traumatic event (Van Wijk, 2013: 49–50): Eating disorders, low energy levels, concentration problems, sleeping disorders, sexual dysfunction, headaches and short term memory loss.

Symptoms connected to cultural or structural trauma may include: Loss of cultural memory, loss of language, loss of traditional resources, poverty, poor health care options, disruption to families, loss of self-rule and involuntary relocation. During the time that the events that cause cultural trauma occur, epidemics or new diseases may break out, competition for resources take place, and warfare

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and the way the community understands itself and the world. This may be seen in an upheaval of a culture's myths, religious rituals, and a "collective traumatic memory" (Veerman & Ganzevoort, 2001: 5–6).

<sup>48</sup> Carr further states the following when he explains the important influence that trauma had on the communal experiences of ancient Israel and the early church: "The concept of trauma helps us understand how Western culture remains haunted by these catastrophes, even as many in this culture know little about them. For example, one might not initially think of monotheism as a response to suffering, but Israel's development of monotheism arguably was prompted at every turn by communal disasters. Christianity conveyed this monotheism beyond the bounds of Israel. Indeed, central aspects of the Christian tradition, including the very name Christian, owe their origins to the suffering of the early Jesus followers as they spread their form of monotheism across the Roman Empire" (Carr, 2014: 9).

and competing belief systems are evident (Stamm et al., 2004: 99).<sup>49</sup> Collective trauma in the form of colonial trauma typically causes dispossession, migration, diaspora, slavery, segregation, racism, political violence and genocide (Craps & Buelens, 2008: 3).

The occurrence of trauma is a complex one, as it effects many aspects of life and society. It is also a serious phenomenon as it is likely to affect all humans some time in their lifetime. In the following section, a brief history of trauma theory and the study of trauma will be described.<sup>50</sup>

### **2.2.2 A brief history of trauma studies**

The reality of trauma is not new. There is no time in history or no event that constitutes the beginning of trauma. The study of trauma, however, is just over a century old. Beginning with Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet and their contemporaries in psychology, trauma studies developed from different perspectives and disciplines. With the realities of World War II, the Holocaust, and the war in Vietnam, trauma studies increased and developed from studies on the individual to studying trauma in its collective, cultural, social and political dimensions. Developments in technology also furthered the study of trauma. From studying trauma from the perspective of literature, medicine, psychology, biology and sociology, trauma studies also extended to studying multiple levels of trauma: individual, historical, institutional, global, et cetera. Trauma studies continue to be a multifaceted and interdisciplinary endeavour, using different lenses on familiar phenomena (Rambo, 2010: 3–4).

Many works on trauma start with a genealogy of the study of trauma. The aim with this section is only to give a brief account of the history of trauma studies, as it is important for situating the study.

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<sup>49</sup> It is crucial to acknowledge that trauma studies have largely been dominated by Western scholars. It is also necessary to state that people from different cultures deal with trauma differently. Even collective trauma is not dealt with in the same way between different cultures. Boris Droždek and John Wilson (2007: 381–382) suggest ten hypotheses concerning trauma, culture and posttraumatic mental health interventions. 1. Every person experiencing trauma and the effects thereof varies on cultural terms. Although trauma's biological effects seem universal, the dealing and coping with trauma are culture-bound. 2. Each person's healing and recovery from trauma are unique. 3. Each culture develops unique strategies for dealing with trauma in terms of rituals, counselling, treatment, medication, et cetera. 4. Cultures possess the wisdom to develop these strategies. 5. Mindfulness is important and consists of personal awareness of the impact of trauma to living in one's culture and how this trauma has impacted the quality of life. 6. The cultural background and history of a person are always influenced when one is traumatised. 7. Globalisation and migrations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are creating a new "world-culture" where strategies for treatment and recovery may be shared. 8. Healing rituals are an important part of cultures. 9. Western therapies and traditional healing customs in "culturally-specific forms" can facilitate resilience, growth and self-transcendence in the wake of trauma. 10. The ways to the healing of trauma are universal, but the form, purpose, duration, social complexity and utilisation by a culture will differ.

<sup>50</sup> Bond (2007: 38–39) lists risk factors that are factors contributing to events that cause collective and cultural trauma. 1. Political factors: the lack of democratic processes and unequal access to power. 2. Economic factors: unequal distribution of resources, unequal access to resources, control over central natural resources and control over the production and trading of medicine. 3. Societal and community factors: inequality between groups, group conflict along ethnic, national or religious lines and the ready availability of small fire arms and other weapons. 4. Demographic factors: rapid demographic change.

The birth of trauma studies happened between 1866 and 1870 when Jean-Martin Charcot, a French neurologist, took interest in the early accounts by London doctors about the effects on the nervous system following railroad accidents. The surgeon John Eric Erichsen was the first to describe these symptoms by survivors from these accidents. Charcot classified what he found from his studies under “hysteria”. Hysteria was seen primarily as women’s illnesses, but Charcot found parallels in these accidents that happened to men with the symptoms of hysteria (Herman, 1992: 6; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 30–31).

It was Freud and Janet who introduced the necessary etiology into the theories of trauma, although their analyses of trauma differed. Janet introduced the idea that hysteria originates from psychic trauma (Garland, 2002: 13; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 31).

Freud argued that symptoms of hysteria could only be understood if they were traced back to experiences that had a traumatic effect, specifically early experiences of sexual assault. Freud questioned the original standing of the traumatic event by suggesting that trauma did not essentially lie in the event itself, but in the memory of the event. This is what theorists later identified as the “double structure” of trauma: the event occurred that caused trauma, but the memory of the trauma comes back time and again to haunt the individual or group (Leys, 2000: 20).

The focus of trauma studies on railway accidents and hysteria remained in the lime light until the First World War took place. Most historians studying the “Great War” argue that patriotism was the main tool used by governments and armies to fuel soldiers’ fighting spirit. The realities, however, of the battlefields painted a different picture than “dying for one’s country”. Fear in the trenches was stronger than a fighting spirit. “Combat madness”, “shell shock” and “trauma insanity” were realities that medical doctors in the field did not know how to deal with. They were not prepared for the flood of mentally damaged patients who came to them during and after the war. Some of these patients were treated as “psychic deserters” rather than psychically wounded (Herman, 1992: 16; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 40–50).

In 1914 the dominant paradigm in psychiatry to treat war neurosis was still that of forensic medicine with its suspicion that trauma and hysteria were all motivated by personal benefit. Some turned to shock therapy and the like to treat these symptoms. Freud’s work had little influence in France and Austria and psychoanalysts in Britain only started practising in 1917. After the First World War, some psychiatrists in Europe and Britain started protesting against the ill-treatment of soldiers struggling with war neurosis. It was, however, not until the Second World War that a radical shift in thinking about trauma started (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 40–52).

Until the Second World War, trauma and war neurosis were considered something outside of the general public's sphere. It was not until psychoanalysis encountered survivors of the Nazi concentration camps that it suddenly found a very broad audience. Didier Fassin, an anthropologist and sociologist, and Richard Rechtman, a psychiatrist and anthropologist, state this reality in the following way (2009: 71):

For the first time, it was possible to put words, concepts, and images to the unspeakable, an experience humanity could not imagine: the planned, industrial-scale extermination of millions of individuals, with the aim of destroying what was human in mankind (*sic*).

A major shift also occurred as people's traumatic experiences were relocated to testify to the unspeakable. Previously, the emphasis in trauma studies was largely focused on individual and subjective experience, but after the Second World War the concept was broadened to include universal human trauma. It did not only make a difference in psychology and psychiatry, but literature in philosophical, sociological and literary disciplines escalated as well – especially on the notion of trauma and memory. With this paradigm shift, the experiences of people in the concentration camps became the model for explaining what may happen to people in life-threatening circumstances (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 72).

This memory had the potential to leave a moral trace in the collective awareness that should prevent humanity in the future of repeating these atrocious mistakes (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 72). This hope for a moral trace in the collective memory of humanity did not, however, stop nations to make war again or humans killing one another in the most horrific events in human history. The Vietnam War, the genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, et cetera, are witnesses to this.

In 1980 the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III), the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association's classification of mental disorders, was published. A new clinical article was added, namely, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 77; Craps, 2013: 23). Previously, the symptoms of PTSD were regarded as hysteria, war neurosis, shell shock and the like. Now this category had full status and it led to a new direction in the study of trauma (Van Wijk, 2013: 55).

The symptoms of PTSD were classified in three groups and people suffering from this condition could experience these in any combination. The first is recurrent, intrusive recollections, such as dreams, frequent nightmares, or flashbacks; the second, avoidance of situations that may arouse recollections of the event, and the third, hyper-alertness and exaggerated responses when startled. In order to be classified as PTSD, these symptoms should persist for at least six months. The

experiences of veterans of the Vietnam War and also the feminist movement at that time, led to more in depth studies of PTSD. It was only in that time that trauma from sexual assault, rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence, etcetera, came to surface as rightful causes of trauma and PTSD (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009: 77–91; Van Wijk, 2013: 55).<sup>51</sup>

The field of trauma studies, as already mentioned, is an interdisciplinary one. Garber (2015: 24) writes that since the late 1990's and early 2000's, the study of the Bible and trauma theory started with a new attention to the experience of the Babylonian exile and the effects thereof on the people of Judah. The rise of psychological biblical criticism, ideological criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial theory, poststructuralist and postmodern biblical interpretation paved the way for scholars to read biblical texts through the lens of trauma. This undertaking also widened the scope beyond the study of the exile and its effects on other texts in the Bible (Garber, 2015: 24–25).

The implementation of trauma theory as a lens in biblical studies began with the appropriation of psychological insights to the research of the Bible. The prophetic book of Ezekiel provided good material for psychological approaches in understanding the strange actions of the prophet and the violence in the book. This led to a number of studies such as Daniel Smith-Christopher's work, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (2002) that tied this book more concretely to the traumatic experience of the exile, proposing that this book could be read in light of modern refugee studies, disaster studies and PTSD (Garber, 2015: 25–26).

With the rise of literature produced in the aftermath of catastrophic world events, came studies of comparative nature. These works in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Vietnam War, et cetera, named "survivor literature" or "trauma literature" led to similar studies in biblical scholarship. Scholars realised that they needed to move from the individual witness of a traumatised victim to the collective witness of a nation. Comparative studies observe that the testimony in trauma literature goes further than genre, as different survivors give witness to their experiences through various genres such as poetry, novelised fiction and autobiographies.<sup>52</sup> If the

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<sup>51</sup> Serene Jones (2009: 16–18) adds to these symptoms. She suggests that people who suffer from PTSD, are firstly overly attentive when it comes to monitoring their external environment and as a result are easily startled by loud noises and sudden movements. They are waiting for the next attack. Secondly, this state is combined with feeling emotionally and cognitively dead. There is a presence of dissociation. In the third place, those with PTSD suffer from severe anxiety and sleeplessness because of the repetitive and intrusive memories of the original event. In the fourth place, they can also suffer from compulsions to repeat the event in the midst of their everyday life activities. This leads to people suffering from PTSD to find themselves in similar situations to the event, such as a sexually abused survivor repeatedly getting involved in abusive relationships. Fifthly, trauma survivors suffer a loss of language. They can also experience that they are not effective contributors to the world, because of the traumatic experience that showed them the opposite. There is a sense of powerlessness. Then lastly, a combination of these factors create a sense of isolation from others, because people with PTSD find it difficult to communicate with friends and family.

<sup>52</sup> Johan Anker (2017), a scholar of Afrikaans literature (especially on trauma and literature) and education, argues that Antjie Krog's memoir, *Country of My Skull*, can be interpreted as a trauma narrative. This book is a memoir about the years she covered the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work for the

traumatic experience represents the wound, then survivor and trauma literature represent the scar of that trauma. This also led to numerous studies on Lamentations as an example of trauma and survivor literature (Garber, 2015: 26–31).

In recent years, studies on biblical texts through a lens of trauma started to move away from the exilic literature. A few studies on New Testament texts and trauma have emerged of which the most notable, in my opinion, is Rambo's book *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (2010). In this book, Rambo employs insights from trauma theory in her reading of the “middle day” of John's gospel – the day between the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Focusing on Mary Magdalene and the Beloved Disciple as two primary witnesses of Jesus's death, she indicates how the stories of these witnesses testify to the messiness and impossibility of envisioning life beyond the death of Christ. She places emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in a theology of remaining.

This study builds on the work that has been done in biblical studies and trauma theory, but will attempt to fill a gap in the research of New Testament documents and trauma. To my knowledge, there has not been an extensive study done on reading 1 Peter through a lens of trauma. This will be my contribution to the field.

### 2.2.3 Trauma theory and 1 Peter

From the study of trauma, especially in literature studies, it is evident that texts are (often) witnesses to trauma. The textual tradition of the Bible shares this notion. The textual tradition of the Christian faith represents essential truth claims that people and communities employ to interpret themselves, their relationship with God and the world. Trauma theory provides a distinctive lens through which biblical texts can be interpreted and where the truth claims of biblical texts can be reassessed. Biblical texts are important in the ways it testifies to traumatic experiences. It may also help to expose the gaps in texts and to unearth dimensions of the text that are not visible from the surface. Furthermore, trauma theory may expose the insufficiency of our frameworks of understanding and the relationship that believers have with language. Trauma theory is a way of reading where certain dimensions of texts are exposed. It tracks what may evade (traditional) interpretation (Rambo, 2010: 30–31).

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South African Broadcasting Corporation. Anker argues that Krog's own trauma can be seen where she reports about South Africa's individual and collective trauma caused by apartheid. She gives account of this experience in various registers, styles and genres such as reports, memoirs, poetry, an invented affair, dialogues of parliament, witnesses' testimonies, lyrical passages, conversations between witnesses and personal experiences. In the acknowledgements of *Country of My Skull*, Krog states the following: “How do I thank a publisher who refused to take no for an answer when I said, ‘No, I don't want to write a book,’ and also, ‘I dare not write a book’; and was still there when I came round to saying, ‘I *have* to write a book, otherwise I'll go crazy’ ... I have told many lies in this book about the truth. I have exploited many lives and many texts – not least those of my mother and my family on the farm. I hope you will all understand” (Krog, 2002: 294–295).



Trauma theory allows one to ask different questions of a text, as shown in the research questions in chapter one. The aim in this study is to ask certain questions to 1 Peter from within the nature of trauma theory. The intention is not to invent a new theory, but to use a theory that already exists, that has been mainly used in reading texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, and to appropriate it to a New Testament document.

One may ask why 1 Peter is chosen as a text to read through a lens of trauma. It may be argued that the congregations 1 Peter addressed, were suffering individual and communal trauma and that the author intended to supply these believers with survival and coping strategies. This is where rhetorical intention and rhetorical function are of great importance. It is not what is said, but how it is employed to help these believers to survive their circumstances. In analogy to this, it may be suggested that trauma theory as a reading lens on 1 Peter may have something to say to contemporary contexts of violence.

This is further enhanced by the way in which texts from the Hebrew Scriptures function in 1 Peter, leading the recipients to a memory of the past that can be used as survival strategies in the present. Additionally, the example of Christ's suffering that is employed in several places in the text to encourage the first recipients and the manner in which the author of 1 Peter addresses certain situations where believers in certain roles (such as slaves, women, men) are exposed to suffering beyond their own control.<sup>53</sup>

Trauma theory therefore seems to have many aspects that may contribute meaningfully to this study. In the following section, the aspects of trauma theory that will be appropriated in the study, will be discussed.

#### **2.2.4 Important aspects of trauma theory and its use in reading 1 Peter**

There are several aspects of trauma theory that can be employed in a study like this. As previously stated, there are aspects of trauma theory that are the basic building blocks in studying trauma. Rambo (2010: 18–19) states that trauma and trauma experiences cause “alterations in time, body and word.” In this study, Rambo's understanding of a trauma lens will be used in reading 1 Peter. In this section, these three building blocks are the three aspects of trauma theory that will be used in the reading of 1 Peter and what they entail, will be explained.

As human beings we often think of our lives as progressive. We have a past where certain things happened, we live in the present where we experience life at the moment and we can wonder and imagine what the future will be like. The past lies behind us, the future before us and life happens in

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Section 1.4.1 on trauma theory as theoretical framework.

between. The key challenge of trauma is that the past does not stay in the past. It invades the present, shattering our life's narrative over and over again through memory. The past is enacted in the present because of returning memory and situations that remind us of that incident that caused trauma (Rambo, 2010: 18).

That is what Rambo in her understanding of a trauma lens calls "alterations in time". People tend to say: "Time will heal the wounds". Trauma actually proves to be the antithesis of that statement, because trauma distorts time and reopens the wound. Trauma appears not to be a once-off event, but trauma speaks to the event in its access. That is because when the traumatic event occurred, it was not fully comprehended at the time and later returns repeatedly. Because of its unintegrated nature, it is difficult to locate the suffering in time. That is what we call, as previously stated, the "double structure of trauma" (Rambo, 2010: 19–20).

Rambo (2010: 20) further states the following, in relation to Freud's work on war veterans and combat neurosis, and trauma's double structure:

The return of the traumatic event in the form of fragmentary visions, flashbacks and symptoms displaced from their context is an intrusion into life. Death returns in an unrecognizable and ungrasped form; life then becomes a perplexing encounter and continual engagement with death. What happens is that the past event – both what is known about it and what is inaccessible to cognition – enters into the present in a way that confuses a trajectory of past, present, and future.

Thus, life is shattered in the present because of events in the past coming back and one's narrative gets interrupted time and again. An example can be found where Serene Jones describes Rachel's sense of time (Rachel being a prototype of a woman who lost her child when Herod ordered that Jewish boys be killed in an attempt to kill Jesus in Matthew 2). She has fragmented memories of the day. Every time a dog barks, she experiences backflashes to horrific darkness. When she smells fish being cooked, she gets nauseous as if it were that morning. Her mind freezes and her hands begin to shake when she hears a child crying. Trauma does not only bring back the past, but invades the future. The future can be associated with the loss of expectation and a space where the person experiencing trauma is forced to move. Someone, like Rachel, may feel hopeless because of the trauma also distorting her future (Jones, 2009).

Trauma and suffering also alter the victim's or society's relationship with "body". As human beings we live a physical, embodied life. We operate in the world through a complex web of physical processes (Rambo, 2010: 20). The alteration of body that trauma causes, lies on two levels.

Firstly, trauma alters the physical relationship with one's body. When one is threatened by the experience of trauma, the body draws on all of its resources to respond to that threat. Basic functions



of the body are unable to process the level of impact, and the ability to control and regulate one's body is impaired. Studies in neurobiology of trauma have helped to track a person's response to overwhelming experiences of violence. There are also studies done that show that the body that experiences trauma, finds ways to escape cognitive functioning and awareness. Areas of the brain may shut down when extreme levels of stress are experienced (Rambo, 2010: 21).

Secondly, trauma also alters an individual's or a society's relationship to the social body. Through trauma, survivors of trauma, especially those who suffer from PTSD, find it difficult to relate to other people. They easily feel isolated and not only do they feel stripped of their own identity, but also their collective identity, because they feel useless. Communal trauma can result in a new realisation of patriotism and nationalism as national crises tend to draw people together. It may, however, also cause members of a society or social group to become isolated from one another and to feel excluded from the group identity as well. In effect, trauma breaks down one's social ties, especially when the ability to use language is lost.

Christo Thesnaar argues that trauma has an effect on an individual's or a society's group identity.<sup>54</sup> It shows how the significance of trauma (especially collective trauma) is affirmed in its cultural, religious and contextual relevance and impact (Thesnaar, 2013: 4). Social groups and communities are identified by their "collective memories". Trauma endangers collective memory because collective memory provides a framework for meaningful communication and the formation of social identities (Thesnaar, 2013: 5).

The third building block of a trauma lens is that trauma alters an individual's or community's use of language. We use language to describe our experiences and to interpret the world that we live in. Trauma causes a loss of the ability to use language. This intensifies the person's isolation from their friends, family and community. Language is the primary connection with others and the social world that we live in (Rambo, 2010: 21). Trauma causes a loss of language and the inability to describe the traumatic experience. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela (2007: 6–7) argue that narrating one's life is very important to the re-establishment of one's narrative – speaking about the trauma

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<sup>54</sup> Ganzevoort argues that trauma can influence an individual's or collective's identity in two ways. In the first instance, trauma can be a threat to identity. Trauma interrupts the course of life. Everything is turned upside down and nothing is the same anymore. "The traumatizing event is completely alien to the identity of the person, and it is traumatizing precisely because it is alien. Traumatization disrupts the life course that forms the basis of our life story and thus undermines our identity ... [Trauma] threatens to destroy life as we know it" (Ganzevoort, 2008: 21–22). The second manner in which trauma influences the individual's or collective's identity, is that trauma may be an identity marker. Trauma may be a turning point in one's life. This is not to say that one should be glad about trauma, but it is necessary to recognise these events as important because they define and shape identity. "Whether we have integrated these traumatic incidents in our story or in contrast try to exclude them, the impact of trauma is such that it works through in how we can and cannot tell the story. This means that we cannot conceive of ourselves without these experiences, even if we try to exclude them ... The meaning of traumatization in this perspective is an affirmation of the unique individual history of the person's life. The scars on our body and soul tell the story of the wounds inflicted upon us" (Ganzevoort, 2008: 23–24).

helps working through it. But herein lies the paradox – one cannot speak about the unspeakable, even though it helps to speak about it.<sup>55</sup> Trauma effectively resists being communicated (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 15; Anker 2009: 53).

Dori Laub, a psychoanalyst and survivor of the Holocaust, relates to this notion in the following way (Laub, 1992: 78–79):

Toward the end of her testimony at the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, one woman survivor made the statement: “We wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to tell our story.” In listening to testimonies, and in working with survivors and their children, I came to believe the opposite to be equally true. The survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their story; they also needed to tell their story in order to survive. There is, in each survivor, an imperative need to tell and thus to come to know one’s story, unimpeded by the ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself ... In this case as in many others, the imperative to tell the story of the Holocaust is inhabited by the impossibility of telling and, therefore, silence about the truth commonly prevails. Many of the survivors interviewed at the Yale Video Archive realize that they have only begun the long process of witnessing now – forty years after the event ... None finds peace in silence, even when it is their choice to remain silent.

As described, trauma can sometimes be communicated through the absence of words, even though it helps to try to talk about what had happened. The language of trauma then takes another form. It is shattered, it is fragmented and it can be drawn into utter silence – but that already is a means of communicating the traumatic experience (Rambo, 2010: 21). Describing trauma then takes on different forms in order to communicate the effects thereof.

In what manner is a trauma lens going to be employed in this study? In chapter 3, which will consist of a multidimensional exegesis of 1 Peter, this lens will be utilised to show why and how the letter can be read as a trauma text. The letter will be examined from literary, historical and rhetorical perspectives through this trauma lens showing the alterations of time, body and word that occur in the letter.

Multidimensional exegesis as the methodology for this study will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>55</sup> Claassens describe how trauma leaves the traumatised without language to tell what happened to them. This is seen in the book of Job where he experiences an initial loss of language. Claassens proposes that the tragic laughter found in Job emerges as a means of resistance to the trauma he is experiencing. Job laughs when he cannot speak (Claassens, 2015: 149).

## 2.3 MULTIDIMENSIONAL EXEGESIS AS METHODOLOGY

There are numerous methods in exegesis and hermeneutics to choose from when dealing with biblical texts. It is evident that many pursuing a PhD in biblical studies choose to work with one method when dealing with biblical texts. This may be because of the chosen methodology's contribution to their study. Although I do not question the usefulness of utilising one method in one's study, it is important to me when working with a text and trauma, that the rich yet complex dynamics of the text be recognised. Trauma itself is not one dimensional – it shatters one's narrative in more than one way, as shown in the previous section. It is therefore necessary, in my opinion, to use a methodology or approach to the text that recognises the multidimensionality of trauma as well.

It is therefore necessary to recognise in this study that texts in themselves are not one dimensional. Also biblical texts are multidimensional.<sup>56</sup> This is also the case with 1 Peter. It may thus be argued that the dynamic nature of the text of 1 Peter invites a certain methodology. Likewise, experiences of trauma do not only involve one's memory or emotional distress, but trauma affects the individual's and collective's holistic existence. When studying texts from numerous angles, different windows are opened towards understanding the text, and other emphases and nuances are recognised.<sup>57</sup> In this study, a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter with trauma theory as a theoretical lens will be utilised.<sup>58</sup>

Trauma theory necessitates a deeper investigation into the world behind and in front of the text, because of what is seen in the text itself. This reading will be multidimensional by means of studying the literary, historical and theological contexts of this letter, but specific emphasis will be placed on rhetorical strategies and the rhetorical situation of 1 Peter.

Jonker's work on the multidimensionality of approaches to Bible reading in this regard is helpful to the study. Jonker (2006: 60, 62) states that there have been many debates in biblical studies about diachronical and synchronical methods of reading texts. The historical-critical methodologies are

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<sup>56</sup> Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie (2004: 235) describe "multidimensional interpretation" in the following way: "Multidimensional interpretation is neither a new method that replaces previous ones, nor a super method that attempts to integrate all the good points of other methods. It is, rather, an alternative attitude to exegesis. It can be called an approach to interpretation provided that one distinguishes between two meanings of the term "approach". An approach may be both a theoretical framework and the interpretive techniques to which it gives rise. The emphasis then falls on the theory and techniques that give us access to the meaning of texts. An approach may also be a perspective on texts, theories and textuality and techniques of interpretation. The emphasis then falls on the attitude with which the interpreter regards texts and the process of interpretation, on the communal human practice of gaining meaning from texts. Multidimensional interpretation is an approach in the second sense."

<sup>57</sup> Rambo's following statement may also help to enhance the argument of reading texts multidimensionally with trauma theory as theoretical framework: "I read biblical and theological texts with particular attention to their literary and rhetorical dimensions. The language of theology cannot be simply reduced to one single interpretation. These texts cannot yield a simple interpretation of redemption. Reading though a lens of trauma, I press the edges of these frameworks, blurring lines of logic, precisely because the phenomenon of trauma draws us to the enigma of what remains at the edges" (Rambo, 2015: 16).

<sup>58</sup> I also used this methodology in my MTh thesis on the letter of James (De Kock, 2014). I found that this approach is effective when dealing with biblical texts, although it may also have its limitations.

normally categorised under diachronical methods, whilst the reactions and criticisms against the historical-critical methodologies are placed together as synchronical methods. Scholars working in the historical-critical paradigm claim that their methods are objective and controllable in the process. Scholars using synchronic methods criticise them exactly on this point, because they claim that the histories of texts cannot claim to be the absolute truth and they are to be seen as theories (Jonker, 2006: 60,62).

Jonker (2006: 64) states that it is important to consider both diachronical and synchronical methods when reading biblical texts. He therefore argues for a multidimensional reading of texts. If one does not consider multiple strategies, one may miss the richness of meaning:

In all these endeavours, I would like to argue, it boils down to a reading with one eye closed. The multidimensionality of meaning is missed! Meaning cannot be located or isolated within any one of these different realms. Meaning is rather a function of the interaction among all these different dimensions of the reading process ... Such a multidimensional view of the reading process within which synchronical and diachronical perspectives form the bifocal lenses of our observations, does not plunge us into the wide open ocean of relativism ... [These dimensions] are seen as dimensions interacting with one another. Interaction implies contours within which the reading process takes place.

The term “multidimensional” may have different meanings.<sup>59</sup> It may be understood in the following way: In the first place, it is important to study the world of the text, in other words, the syntactical aspects of a text.<sup>60</sup> We encounter biblical texts in their textual form and it is therefore important to study the literary aspects of a text. It is important as readers to understand the nature of the text in terms of its literary aspects. This is, in my opinion, also the starting place when exegeting a biblical text. A literary analysis is followed where different aspects of the text itself are researched. When

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<sup>59</sup> Rousseau (1986: 70–71) relates to Jonker when describing a multidimensional approach to biblical interpretation by means of a Rubik’s cube: “I am going to use Rubik’s cube to illustrate and integrate my communication model which was reconstructed with the aid of contributions from semiotics, linguistics and literary science. This cube so vividly explains the inextricable intertwinedness and interrelatedness of communication as one phenomenon of our complex reality, that it almost stunningly reveals the inadequacy of our over- and underexposure of textual communication ... Anyone who have had some experience with Rubik’s cube will know for sure that there is no way of getting the cube right without interrelating all the different squares and dimensions in chronological phase. The neglecting of the different dimensions, modes and notions is, to my mind, one of the main reasons for the impasse between the historical, theological and linguistic approaches to biblical texts. Biblical scholars were fools to believe in the illusion that one can solve the complex cube of textual communication by the futile and infantile exercise of turning only to one level of squares (whether it be the historical-critical or linguistic-structuralist or theological-fundamentalistic methods) monotonously.”

<sup>60</sup> Rousseau (1988: 49–50) argues that the text is the starting point in multidimensional exegesis. The authors of biblical texts are not alive anymore, but something of their identity has been captured in their documents. With the help of several methods, the text and its components can be discovered. It is, however, evident that the textual dimension of a multidimensional reading has restrictions and it leads the reader in a specific direction.

studying the text itself, especially when keeping the rhetorical effects of the letter in mind, three aspects will be emphasised in this study.

A multidimensional reading of a biblical text implies that the reader pays attention to the original language of the text and to analyse the grammatical and syntactical structure of the text. It would also be of significance to investigate the genre, characters (especially when reading a narrative), rhetorical strategies that help to structure the text in terms of its macro and micro relations, and what the possible thrust of the text may be.

In the first place, it will help to do a discourse analysis of the text in order to see how the text is structured and how the different parts of the text fit together.<sup>61</sup> This will also be important to determine the inner coherence of the text. Secondly, it will be important to look at the different aspects and purpose of the genre of 1 Peter. Reading a letter in terms of its literary and linguistic aspects will differ from reading a biography, narrative or prophecy. There may be important reasons why the author chose to communicate with his audience by means of a letter. Thirdly, it will be useful to analyse rhetorical strategies that can be seen in the text that the author may have used to persuade the first audience to what the author is trying to communicate. This will help in determining the possible thrust and rhetorical effect of the letter.

In terms of reading literary aspects of 1 Peter through a lens of trauma, it will be important to investigate language that reflects trauma, how memory is employed and which rhetorical strategies occur in the text that the author used to influence his audience in coping and surviving their trauma. It would be interesting to see how the author uses words, metaphors, themes and strategies in order to communicate the trauma at hand, but also help the audience to deal with it (if that is the case).

Although our primary interaction with the text lies in the text itself, it is important to understand that 1 Peter is also an ancient document that originated from a social, historical and moral world that is different from our own. This makes it challenging to bridge the gap between ancient canonised texts and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Stanley Porter and Kent Clarke (1997: 11–13) suggest that there are several reasons for this.<sup>62</sup> In the first place: The New Testament was not written in or to a modern society. It was addressed to

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<sup>61</sup> A discourse analysis focuses on the inner and micro relations (hierarchical embeddedness) of a text by analysing the main verbs, subsidiary verbs, purpose and other clauses in the text. It also investigates the key words, concepts, images, metaphors and themes in the text. Andries Snyman (1999: 355–356) explains the core of discourse analysis in the following way: “The basic premise is that meaningful relations not only exist between the words in a sentence, but also between larger parts of a text such as sentences, groups of sentences (clusters), pericopes and chapters.” He furthermore states that it is important to grasp these relationships in order to follow the line of the argument and to understand the meaning of the text.

<sup>62</sup> Porter is a New Testament Scholar at McMaster Divinity College in the USA whilst Clarke is professor in Religious Studies at Trinity Western University, USA.

ancient audiences, either individuals such as in the case of Luke-Acts addressed to Theophilus and the letters to Philemon, Timothy and Titus, or in the case of several other documents in the New Testament addressed to churches (Romans, Galatians, Philippians, et cetera). These letters addressed certain problems and challenges faced by the receivers. Secondly, the original manuscripts of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – ancient languages with a different social and moral framework than our own. Anybody who wants to read the Bible, either needs to understand the original languages (ideally) or needs to rely on translations (where in the process meaning can be lost).

Thirdly, there is a wide historical separation of two-thousand years between the New Testament authors and receivers of these texts and our present day. This separation may also result in ambiguity regarding the aims, goals and intentions of the biblical writers and their audiences. Fourthly, there is also a cultural gap. Customs, manners, medicine, technology, human rights, legal codes and world views are very different. Fifthly, the expansion of biblical traditions, the work that later biblical editors did, and the emergence of textual accretions add to this historical dilemma. It therefore becomes more difficult to seek the intentions of the original writers. Adding to this, the oldest manuscripts that we have are copies made some time after the original documents were written.

We encounter the letter of 1 Peter as a textual document, but behind this document lies a world that informed and shaped it in a certain way. It is thus necessary to have a historical consciousness in the interpretation of the text and to study the world behind it. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the semantic aspects of a text as part of a multidimensional approach to it.<sup>63</sup>

The text reflects a situation that the author found compelled to address. The study of the historical, social, cultural and moral world of 1 Peter may be prohibited by the fact that biblical scholarship can only piece together a possible picture of what this world might have looked like. It is still evident that we are dealing with a text that originated from a context that is completely different from our own.

When studying the semantic aspects of a text, it is important to keep two questions in mind. Firstly: What did the social and moral world look like in which the first audience of 1 Peter lived? It is

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<sup>63</sup> Jonker (2013) discusses why it is important to have a historical consciousness. In the last few years there has been much emphasis on contextual biblical hermeneutics. Contextual interpretation, however, cannot exist without a historical consciousness. History matters in interpretation because contextual reception is all that is available. Interpretation without a consciousness of the historical dimension cannot be contextual. Interpretation without a sensitivity to context cannot be historical. The contexts of the reception of biblical literature are present over many centuries. Jonker further states: "The 'historical consciousness' that is implied here should therefore not be confused with a longing for a past which is forever lost, or with an optimism that the intentions of the original authors can be reconstructed. Historical consciousness is rather the reader- or context-oriented appreciation of the contexts of textual production and of textual reception (from ancient times, throughout the ages, up to modern-day receptions in various and differing circumstances)" (Jonker, 2013: 7).



important to investigate how the Roman Empire functioned, what impact this Empire had on its citizens, how the vulnerable in society were treated and which values were present in this society. Secondly: How did the followers of Jesus Christ make sense (or how were they supposed to make sense) in the world that they were living in? They were supposed to have an alternative understanding of this world, through their faith, their perspective on God, each other and the society. In which ways did they reinterpret or reconfigure their traditions and values? This will lead to the studying of the third dimension in a multidimensional exegesis.

Aspects of socio-scientific criticism will be used to construct a plausible picture of the social and moral world of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Insights from cultural, anthropological and socio-rhetorical biblical studies will also be useful when investigating the world behind 1 Peter and its readers.

The semantic aspects of 1 Peter are of importance when investigating sources of suffering and trauma for Christians, exiles and those living as foreigners in the Roman Empire. Because this study employs a trauma lens as theoretical framework, it is of utmost importance to see where the trauma elements are visible in the world of or “behind” 1 Peter and its effects on the first audience. It would be necessary to see what role Empire played in the formation of trauma and suffering. This is also important when considering the rhetorical effect that the author intended the letter to have on its audience. There was a certain need or exigence that the author tried to address. The investigation of the third aspect of multidimensional exegesis may assist in this.

Although trauma theory traditionally focuses (more) on the individual, it would be important, especially in terms of the social and moral world of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Christians, to focus on trauma as a collective occurrence.<sup>64</sup> This is because of the societal structure of that time.

The third aspect of a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter, deals with the world in front of the text. This aspect is concerned about the implied rhetorical effect of the letter, the rhetorical situation that instigated the writing of 1 Peter, and what people might have heard when hearing 1 Peter for the first time.<sup>65</sup> How was this text supposed to function in the lives of its audience (for example in the contexts

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<sup>64</sup> O'Connor reminds us of this when she refers to Smith-Christopher saying that biblical scholars should be cautious to apply trauma theories uncritically. Trauma theories are often focusing on the individual and study the effects of violence as mental disorders and other conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Interventions and treatment are more often focused on modern western societies, but it is not easily translated to ancient societies or other communities in the modern world. In terms of biblical texts, she states: “Biblical texts arise in community-oriented cultures rather than individually-oriented ones. To the extent that biblical texts address wounds of traumatic violence, they do so in non-medical ways, through artistic and intuitive literary approaches, using resources already available in the culture. Differences in purpose among our disciplines in the conversation remain important” (O'Connor, 2014: 211).

<sup>65</sup> Lloyd Bitzer (1968: 6), a rhetorician from the USA who is the creator of this concept, defines “rhetorical situation” in the following way: “Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relation presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. Prior to the creation and presentation of discourse, there are three

of worship, preaching, teaching, moral formation, and the purpose of memory in the lives of the early church)? Here the rhetorical strategies and themes identified as part of the syntactical reading become important.

This aspect is also concerned with the reception history of the letter, how faith communities in the past have interpreted the text, what effect it had on people's understanding of God, humanity and the world, as well as ideological traits that can be seen in the letter.<sup>66</sup> This aspect is important when considering the intended rhetorical effect and theological thrust on contemporary readers of the text. It is also important to consider if those texts open up new, life-giving and hopeful ways of speaking about God, humanity and the world (then and now).

The author wrote this letter because of a certain exigence in the historical situation, attempting to persuade his audience to an alternative perspective. When dealing with the world in front of the text, aspects of methods such as rhetorical criticism, ideological criticism, reader-response criticism, et cetera, may be used. When investigating the world in front of a text, it is also important to have a theological awareness of the text, as biblical texts are also texts of faith.

This aspect is very important when considering 1 Peter as a trauma text. Although 1 Peter may reflect a certain language of trauma, and the social and moral world of 1 Peter inflicts trauma, it is also necessary to see how the author employs strategies encouraging his audience to cope and survive their trauma, if any. The world in front of the text also confronts readers in their own reading of a trauma text, how the text is utilised and what/how it may communicate to traumatised people today.<sup>67</sup>

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constituents of any rhetorical situation: the first is exigence; the second and third are elements of the complex, namely the audience to be constrained in decision and action, and the constraints which influence the rhetor and can be brought to bear upon the audience." Bitzer further explains that this exigence is an imperfection caused by a situation that anticipates change. The rhetorical situation, however, is only possible through the perspective and observance of the author. This exigence is not necessarily explained in the letter because it is possible that the audience was aware of it. It is thus impossible for modern day readers to reconstruct this exigence or need (Bitzer, 1968: 6). The best that can be done, is to try to picture the historical situation, as Mouton states (2002: 116–117). The rhetorical situation of a text thus represents an observation, either real or anticipated by the author of the historical situation where the author identifies a concrete or underlying problem. Rhetorical situation then is addressed by means of a rhetorical discourse and strategies in order to make a change in the situation. The purpose of a text, in this case 1 Peter, is thus a reflection on the concern of the author because of what he observes in the historical situation. The author is thus responsible for the rhetorical situation. This could also imply that it increases the author's moral responsibility in terms of the ethical consequences of the document.

<sup>66</sup> Alicia Batten (2007: 8) defines "ideology" in the following way: Ideology can be described in one sense, as the beliefs held, concepts used, and rituals practiced by a certain group of people. In this sense, every group has its own ideology. "Ideology" is also used to criticise a form of consciousness because of the false beliefs it contains or that it functions in a way that discriminates against others. "Ideology" can also be described as a set of ideas that are constructed in order to serve the best interests of a certain group.

<sup>67</sup> John de Gruchy (2013: 59,73), when speaking about the Bible as "a book in and through which we are led into mystery" and how it informed the questions raised by the death of his son, says the following on hermeneutics and our attempts to interpret biblical texts today: "Hermeneutics, the attempt to read texts in a way that speaks to us today, is not a denial of the historicity of the events to which they refer, but neither is it



In the next section, the relation between trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis will be discussed. It will be argued why the chosen theoretical framework and methodology may work together. The structural outline for the rest of the dissertation will also be discussed.

## **2.4 COMPATIBILITY OF TRAUMA THEORY AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL EXEGESIS**

So far in this chapter, trauma theory as theoretical framework and multidimensional exegesis as methodology were discussed in their separate capacities. In this section, the relation between these two seemingly odd partners will be discussed. Questions will be asked as to whether and how this theoretical framework and methodology could engage and work together, and why they are (together) important for this study. I will subsequently attend to what the rest of the dissertation's structure and content will look like.

When dealing with biblical texts, it is important to keep in mind that one cannot force a certain methodology and theoretical framework on them. As readers we approach a biblical text with our own presuppositions and hermeneutical lenses and it is important that we acknowledge that. It is, however, important to choose a theoretical framework and methodology that would do justice to the multifaceted nature and intension of 1 Peter, and that would assist this study in the best possible way. Multidimensional exegesis and trauma theory seem, at first glance, to be incompatible. They approach biblical texts from different angles.

Previously in this chapter, it has been said that biblical texts in themselves are multidimensional. We encounter a text in its literary form, but we need to understand something of the historical context and rhetorical aspects in order to grasp the text more fully. Similarly, the experience of trauma does not affect only one aspect of a human being or a group's existence. It affects the whole. Trauma does not only affect one's ability to use language and to talk about the traumatic experience, but also one's relationship to one's body and the social body (also a group's relationship with each other in terms of group identity) and an individual's and collective's relationship with time. Life is multidimensional. However, I am aware of the limitations of this approach, because everything cannot be seen as multidimensional.

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dependent on the total historical verifiability of its testimony. Hermeneutics, we might say, is the theological imagination at work as it engages both the biblical text and the historical context in which we now live in order to discern the Word for us today. We are seeking something beyond what Richard Palmer calls the 'bogus objectivity of the theoretical and scientific' that requires no self-engagement or self-understanding to grasp their significance. 'We are searching', he says, 'for the historical in the plea for "personal knowledge," in the impatience with science's frantic search for origins, causal grounds, neurological antecedents, and the plea for a return to the richness and complexity of concrete awareness in interpreting literature'. We are also seeking ways whereby the truth of the Word can again become deeds in our own time, for hermeneutics is not about translation, but transformation."

However, the multidimensional and intersectional nature of the chosen methodology and theoretical framework of this dissertation, invites the crossing of borders. The methodology is a known approach to biblical exegesis, but together with the theoretical framework, it has the potential to bring surprising elements from the text to the fore. However, I am aware that the reality of trauma and even a text such as 1 Peter, are more complex than I can describe. This dissertation, and especially the following chapters, are conscious attempts to account for the complexities involved.

The motivation for using trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis together in my reading of 1 Peter is mainly because of the multidimensional nature of both. This is also the reason why this particular theoretical framework and methodology are important to the study. My hypothesis is that this will work well together. It is, however, important to work with caution and in a nuanced way when approaching 1 Peter from this angle. It is crucial not to read things into this text, but to account for what is being done. Thus, viewing hermeneutics as the art of understanding texts, trauma theory in the appropriation of it in this study may be seen as the bridge between a broader hermeneutical framework and exegesis (in this case, multidimensional exegesis). What happens in the following chapters will be accounted for in terms of the theoretical framework and methodology, but also in terms of the text itself.

Ultimately, the methodology and theoretical framework of this study both deal with the complexities of life. Biblical texts reflect something of this reality. 1 Peter, in particular, deals with the complexities of suffering as a Jesus follower, of living life in a hostile environment and negotiating Empire, of negotiating just the notion to live as a believer in a man who they say is also God, and to “always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (NRSV). Reading this text multidimensionally attempts to account for the complexities of life that are reflected in 1 Peter. In a similar way, trauma theory acknowledges the complexities of trauma as this theory attempts to account for the multifaceted and devastating effects of trauma on the whole life of an individual or group. This exercise of dealing with the complexities of life, and the methodology and theoretical framework of this study, attempts to bring these elements together in order to see how 1 Peter deals with the realities of trauma on its audience.

In chapter three, an exegetical study of 1 Peter will be done by means of a multidimensional reading of the text through a lens of trauma. The purpose of this chapter will be to show why 1 Peter can be considered as a trauma text in the first place. With the help of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of multidimensional exegesis, the three pillars (alterations in word, body and time) of a trauma lens will be examined, also in order to highlight certain themes, metaphors and strategies used by the author to address the trauma at hand. Chapter four will then discuss three of the concurring themes, metaphors and strategies in 1 Peter, and their rhetorical and theological significance.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss trauma theory as theoretical framework and multidimensional exegesis as methodology of the study in their separate capacities. The objective was also to motivate why trauma theory can be applied to an ancient document such as 1 Peter and which aspects of trauma theory would be used in an argument for 1 Peter as a “trauma text”. The aim was also to show in which ways trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis could serve as conversational partners in the study, especially considering that 1 Peter may reflect a context of suffering, submission and silence.

In the following chapter, an exegetical study of 1 Peter will be made, with the help of multidimensional exegesis and the three main aspects of a trauma lens. This will be done in order to firstly show why 1 Peter can be seen as a trauma text and secondly to identify strategies, themes and metaphors used by its author (to be discussed in chapters four and five of the dissertation).

### **3. AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF 1 PETER – IN SEARCH OF (A) TRAUMA NARRATIVE(S)**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter two of this study reference is made to Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela's definition of trauma. They describe life as a narrative and that trauma, from this perspective, shatters life's narrative and causes loss of control and powerlessness. There are different components to this narrative. To describe life as a narrative is an insightful way to find meaning in life.<sup>68</sup> Life as a narrative consists of a plot, main characters, sub characters, climaxes, anti-climaxes and setting (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 6).

We, as the main characters of our stories, are not only part of our own narratives, but in various ways our narrative is interwoven with those of others and broader society. One's narrative is not only interwoven with one component of society's narrative, but with various aspects. This depends on what we are involved with such as a church community, social circles and community projects. One's narrative is sometimes also interwoven with aspects of society that one did not choose to be involved with consciously, but it plays a role in one's narrative (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 2–3). Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela furthermore state that we are born into these narratives, that we do not have a choice in the matter, but that we do have a choice in our relationship with conventional narratives (such as the status quo). Narratives can also come into conflict with one another – as seen throughout history.

To narrate one's own life, is to find structure, meaning and coherence in one's personal life, but also as group or society. Trauma does the opposite. Trauma breaks life's wholeness into pieces and meaning is lost. Trauma causes individuals and groups to "lose the plot". Trauma causes the loss of control, power and autonomy in one's life. Trauma causes a loss for words or an inability to use words to communicate the effect of trauma, an alienation to one's social body (alienation to group identity) and the concept of time gets distorted.

It is important to be aware of the twenty-one century gap that exists when one applies this notion of trauma shattering narratives to a text such as 1 Peter. The audience and author of 1 Peter did not necessarily think in these categories when they thought about their lives as Jesus followers in the

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<sup>68</sup> Together with this suggestion, Ganzevoort states that describing life as a narrative, identity is the story that one tells about oneself. This story has two main aims: Firstly, it distinguishes the self or group from others to develop a sense of uniqueness in relationship to others. One's life story supports one's identity. Secondly, the purpose of the life story is that it describes contentious elements through which one can communicate that the present self is the same as the past or future self. Events that happen in life are integrated in the life story to the degree that they make a contribution to this sense of continuity (Ganzevoort, 2008: 20).

Roman Empire. 1 Peter is presented to present-day readers not in the form of a narrative, but in the genre of a letter or epistle. However, behind the letter lies people's narratives – those of individuals and faith communities. It is thus imaginable to take a modern notion such as the “shattering of narratives by trauma” and apply it to a 1<sup>st</sup> century context where 1 Peter was written to believers living with the effects of trauma, because they were real flesh and blood people. How these narratives are distorted and shattered are not precisely traceable – possibilities are worked with in this chapter. There is consequently also not proven evidence for this concept, except for what can be derived from the text itself and the world of the text.

It is possible to reason from the contents of the letter that a form of trauma corrupted and meddled with these narratives. This chapter is an attempt to construct, from a multidimensional viewpoint, what the daily realities for these Jesus followers were that may have contributed to the shattering of their narratives. This chapter also works with the notion that the first audience consisted of believers in Jesus Christ (also in reference to 1 Peter 1:14 in terms of their “former ignorance”).

In an attempt to understand the narratives of the first audience, one may ask questions such as: What lies behind this letter? Is the author also influenced by this trauma or did he experience “second hand” trauma? What is the possible need that the author saw that urged him to write this letter to address this trauma? What are the possible causes of trauma for the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE faith communities and individual believers living in diaspora in the Roman Empire? What may be the causes of the shattering of these narratives? These questions are reflected in the research question and sub questions of this dissertation (chapter one).

De Waal Dryden (2006: 64) explains that a culture or a group's worldview is told and transmitted through narratives.<sup>69</sup> He argues that the author of 1 Peter is attempting to encourage these young Anatolian congregations to stand fast in their faith amidst social hostility and suffering. The author utilises theology as a tool, Dryden suggests, to shape his audience's way of looking at the world and living in the world. He does this by means of a “narrative theological worldview”. The author is intertwining a narrative of how he sees the world, because that narrative becomes the context for their own stories as individuals and as communities.<sup>70</sup> Their lives are placed within a narrative of the world, but also what God is doing in their midst. Their stories also form part of God's story with the world and God's people (Green, 2008: 198).

In addition to the notion that 1 Peter is embedded in trauma narratives, the aim of this exegetical chapter is to approach the text from different perspectives (multidimensionally) – syntactic, semantic and pragmatic, in order to let the possible trauma narrative(s) of 1 Peter surface. Emphasis will be

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<sup>69</sup> Dryden is a professor in Biblical Studies at the Covenant College, USA.

<sup>70</sup> This coincides with the concept of “rhetorical situation” that is discussed in chapter four of the dissertation.

placed especially on rhetorical or pragmatic aspects of the text, also in relationship to trauma theory's basic components (alterations in word, time and body) as described by Shelly Rambo. The goal of this chapter is also to investigate the first part of the hypothesis of this study – that 1 Peter can be read as a text reflecting trauma where suffering, submission and silence are causes or effects of the trauma that the first audience experience.

The aim of this chapter is thus to investigate the trauma narrative(s) behind the letter and to argue that 1 Peter can be read as a text that reflects narratives of trauma. By reading the text multidimensionally and keeping trauma theory's basic components in mind, more light may be shed on the trauma that lies in, behind, and in front of 1 Peter. The purpose is also to identify themes, strategies, or metaphors that the author employed to help his audience gain perspective on their situation and to help them to cope with and survive their trauma.

When reading 1 Peter as an ancient canonised text with a modern theory as a lens, however, it must be kept in mind that the danger exists to impose this theory on the text. Given, everyone who reads biblical texts many centuries later than the first audience, are adding more layers to the history of interpretation of the text and are coming to the text with certain hermeneutical lenses. The idea of this chapter is not to impose trauma theory on 1 Peter, but rather to see which trauma related notions come from the text that reflect something of traumatic experiences in the narratives of the audience, and in which ways the author rhetorically attends to this. One cannot do biblical scholarship without acknowledging one's own bias, the place from which the reading is taking place, and putting these cards on the table to recognise the dangers of reading things into texts. However, a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter is attempting to respect the text by reading it from literary, socio-historical, and rhetorical perspectives and to investigate from an exegetical perspective in which ways the narratives of the audience may have been shattered.

### **3.2 LITERARY ASPECTS**

Our primary interaction with biblical texts are with the text itself. It is the primary task of readers of biblical texts to converse with the texts themselves if they wish to respect these texts as ancient documents. Access to other dimensions of a text such as historical, rhetorical and theological dimensions, is gained by interaction with the text itself.

Therefore, a multidimensional reading of a biblical text entails, in the first place, respect for the nature of the text in terms of its literary characteristics. In the following section, the focus will be on identifying certain aspects in the text that will serve the argument of this chapter. In this section, dealing with literary aspects of the text, the following will be focused on in order to identify a probable trauma narrative in the text: 1 Peter's genre, a summary of rhetorical strategies found in the letter, how God is presented in the text, identity markers, trauma related terms, eschatological language

and references to honour and shame. These literary aspects are highlighted in light of the argument of the chapter – to see whether 1 Peter can be read as a text that reflects narratives shattered by trauma.

### 3.2.1 Genre of 1 Peter

The point of departure regarding the literary aspects of 1 Peter, starts with the genre of this document. One may ask why it is important at all to address the genre of 1 Peter, in the search of trauma narratives. The argument is that there are certain pointers in the genre of this text that may fix one's attention on the trauma related aspects of the letter. If one does not see these trauma pointers, the point and intention of the text, seen from this perspective, might go amiss. The people that 1 Peter is addressed to, find themselves in a crisis – first and foremost their narratives are shattered by certain events or realities in their contexts. The author then writes a document to them in the form of a *letter*.

There are different arguments surrounding the genre of 1 Peter. The letter has been known, since the 4<sup>th</sup> century as one of the “Catholic” or “General” Epistles along with James, Jude, 2 Peter and 1-3 John. Hence, the early church fathers have taken this label to indicate that these letters were addressed to the church as a whole as they were regarded as of general appeal and relevance. This is not necessarily an appropriate application of this term because these letters are quite diverse in nature. 1 Peter is addressed to believers in a specific geographical area who faced specific circumstances (Horrell, 2008: 5).

Accordingly, 1 Peter's genre has been a much debated topic in the history of Petrine research. An entire generation of scholars argued that 1 Peter was not a genuine letter, but a “baptismal homily” with some characteristics of an epistle present. Martin Dibelius was one of the first critics of this hypothesis and he argued that 1 Peter is an excellent example of paraenesis.<sup>71</sup> Therefore it may be regarded as a “perfect” epistle (Dryden, 2006: 38).<sup>72</sup>

Dryden argues that more than half of the epistle (2:13–5:12) consists of moral instructions. The household code is a specialised form of moral instruction that is concerned with the household. Dryden also argues against the baptismal homily hypothesis and identifies 1 Peter's genre as paraenesis. This is because of the presence of moral instructions, the emphasis on conversion and

<sup>71</sup> “Paraenesis” may be defined as referring to a universal literary type that consists of exhortation and admonition. It is aimed at influencing the audiences' attitudes and behaviour (Thurén, 1995: 18).

<sup>72</sup> Troy Martin (1992: 41–78) gives an extensive explanation of the characteristics of an epistle or a letter found in 1 Peter. Although this description is helpful to the study, it is unnecessary to repeat it. Martin concludes that his analysis of the letter formulas in 1 Peter suggests that 1 Peter was intended as a letter. Although it draws on other texts such as liturgical, paraenetic material, et cetera, these materials have been shaped to fit the epistolary form (Martin, 1992: 78).



the pragmatically shaped worldview constructs as evidence of the paraenetic form of 1 Peter (Dryden, 2006: 39, 43). 1 Peter thus also has a paraenetic agenda, according to Dryden. 1 Peter's moral instructions function at various levels to accomplish what Dryden calls the "paraenetic aims of the author".

The letter starts with "Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect refugees (foreigners, strangers) of the Diaspora ... Grace and peace to you in abundance" (1 Peter 1:1-2). It adopts the form of the Greek letter, especially that of the Christian form adapted by the apostle Paul. The brief, but standard opening of a Greek letter gave the name of the writer or sender(s), the name of the recipient(s) and a greeting. The author of 1 Peter uses the description "apostle of Jesus Christ", which is similar to the opening of some of Paul's letters (such as 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Galatians). The opening "grace and peace to you" is also similar to that of Paul. There are, however, differences to the typical Pauline letter opening; the address to the Diaspora is closer to that of James, 2 Peter and Jude (Horrell, 2008: 6–7).

Horrell concludes that most scholars have rejected the baptismal homily hypothesis and regard 1 Peter as a genuine letter. Horrell, more specifically, argues that 1 Peter is a "diaspora letter", especially when compared to the Jewish examples of this genre. 1 Peter is a circular letter. It is sent to encourage believers scattered over a wide geographical area and it is sent from "Babylon" to the "Diaspora" (Horrell, 2008: 8–9). Fika Janse van Rensburg also agrees that 1 Peter is a genuine letter and has the characteristics of a Jewish diaspora letter that was intended as a circular letter (Janse van Rensburg, 2011: 2).

Elliott suggests, as found in the text itself, that 1 Peter is a letter sent by the apostle Peter to fellow Christian "visitors and resident aliens" scattered amongst five Roman provinces of Asia Minor. The recipients are suffering from various types of hostility, conflict and trials of faith. This letter contains exhortation and confirmation (Elliott, 1990: 21). Clifford Barbarick (2011: 182) has surveyed three primary suggestions in terms of the genre of 1 Peter (diaspora letter, paraenetic letter, letter of consolation). His conclusion is that the letter contains aspects of all three genres. However, he argues that the letter is not a random mixture of genres, but that the three genres complement each other.

The notion of regarding 1 Peter as a diaspora letter that uses various other genres such as paraenesis, homiletic features and the like, is plausible. Although 1 Peter is presented as a letter, the narratives of real flesh and blood people are lurking in the background. It is also possible to go further with this argument in suggesting that 1 Peter can be read as trauma literature. It is true that the testimony in trauma literature goes further than genre, as survivors of trauma give witness to their experiences through different genres such as poetry, novelised fiction and autobiographies.



Where the traumatic experience represents the wound, the survivor and trauma literature are representative of the scar of that trauma (Garber, 2015: 25–31). It is thus possible that the author of 1 Peter provides the language of the traumatic experiences of the audience in the form of a letter (as one form of expressing this trauma).

Another question comes to mind. Can 1 Peter be regarded as a text that may fully be described as trauma literature, or can 1 Peter be seen as a paraenetic letter that addresses trauma related themes in a pastoral way? It may well be more plausible to refer to 1 Peter as a paraenetic letter that addresses trauma related themes that reflect a situation of trauma in the historical situation of the audience, but the letter also addresses other aspects of the life of Jesus followers.

The author attempts to address these narratives by employing certain rhetorical strategies, which will be highlighted in the following section.

### **3.2.2 A summary of rhetorical strategies found in 1 Peter<sup>73</sup>**

In this section, a summary of the most important rhetorical strategies found in 1 Peter, will be given.<sup>74</sup> Although the identification of rhetorical strategies is a modern theory applied to an ancient text (as all modern biblical hermeneutics are “forced” to do), it is important in the light of the subject of this dissertation, because the author uses these strategies to persuade his audience of his argument. The rhetorical strategies in the text also point to trauma related themes that may reflect the historical situation of the audience. The author wrote a letter, utilising various rhetorical strategies in order to bring his message across to the first recipients, who were suffering from trauma. The author is constructing, what Ben Witherington III calls “a rhetorical world” (2009: 177). In this section, these rhetorical strategies will be briefly discussed with regards to the text itself.

In order for the rhetorical strategies to feature rightfully in this section, it is also important to give an outline of the overall structure of 1 Peter:<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> My own discourse analysis, pointing out certain grammatical pointers, rhetorical strategies and demarcation of pericopes, can be found in Addendum A. It is advised that Addendum A should be read together with section 3.2, especially 3.2.2. In 3.2.2 a summary will be given of my findings in my own reading of the text.

<sup>74</sup> 1 Peter, like all other New Testament documents, originated from an oral culture. It is difficult for us, who live in a text-based culture, to understand the character of an oral culture – also in how scripture functioned in such a culture. Ben Witherington states that the literacy rates of New Testament cultures were between 5% and 20%. All ancient people, whether they were literate or not, preferred the living word (the spoken word). Texts were expensive to produce and it was not for “silent” reading. These texts were intended to be heard and that also explains the number of rhetorical strategies present in 1 Peter. The author wanted to persuade his audience of something – by hearing his argument and realizing the effect thereof (Witherington III, 2009: 1–2).

<sup>75</sup> There are many ways in which scholars have constructed the outline of the structure of 1 Peter. As it is not a major part of my overall argument, this will be done briefly. Here I follow the outline of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2017: 26–27).

### *1:1-12 Greeting and introduction*

Here the author, recipients and their geographical location are introduced, as well as the author's argument. The main part of the letter may be divided into three sections, namely 1 Peter 1:13-2:10; 2:11 – 3:12 and vv. 3:13 – 4:11 (cf. A.2.1 and A.2.2).

### *1:13-2:10 The first section*

The first section emphasises the recipients' high status as the people and household of God, using metaphors and citations from the Hebrew Scriptures (cf. A.2.3 and A.2.4).

### *2:11-3:12 The second section*

The second section stipulates the good behaviour that is expected from the Jesus followers, especially the subordinate members of the household. Behaviour towards the authorities of the Roman Empire are also addressed alongside the household code (cf. A.2.5, A.2.6, A.2.7 and A.2.8).

### *3:13-4:11 The third section*

The third section articulates the necessity of suffering and explains what "doing good" means in this context. Christ's suffering is used as an example and certain exhortations are given (cf. A.2.8, A.2.9 and A.2.10).

### *4:12-5:11 Conclusion, summary and amplification*

The main part of the letter, which may be divided into three sections, are summed up and amplified in this section, which continues to tell the audience to expect difficulties as Christians and that they will endure suffering. The letter ends with a doxology to "God of all grace" (cf. A.2.10, A.2.11 and A.2.12).

### *5:12-14 Greetings from "Babylon"*

This ends the letter and characterises the senders and their socio-political location (cf. A.2.13).

This brings us to the focus of this section, namely the rhetorical strategies of 1 Peter. It may be summarised in the following way:

In the first place, the author makes use of "identity markers" (indicators that refer to the identity of the audience). The focus on the identity and ethos of the audience recurs and repeats constantly in the letter. Although the author uses various ways to describe their identity and behaviour that accompanies it, it is clear that this is a major rhetorical strategy in 1 Peter.

Although 1 Peter's author never uses the word "church" to describe the identity of his first audience, it is evident that the message of 1 Peter is church oriented and determined. The author addresses

certain groups in his letter (slaves, wives and husbands) and he calls the community of believers “beloved” (2:11, 4:12). 1 Peter’s author utilises a number of other metaphors and terms to describe the identity of the first audience. These identity markers in the text may also be linked to trauma related themes and terms used in the text.

The first audience is called God’s elect (1:1, 16; 3:9; 5:10), but in contrast they are strangers and exiles (in the diaspora) (1:1; 2:11), they await their inheritance (1:3; 3:9), they make up a “spiritual house”, a “holy priesthood” (2:5), Christian women are called “children of Sarah” (3:6); and by means of baptism, they are related to Noah and his family (3:20-21). The most articulate constellation of images of the identity of the first audience is found in 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (Green, 2008: 217–218).

1 Peter also contains many images of family and household, maybe to counter the sense of loss and alienation (and the experience of trauma that may come along with it) that the first audience may experience from the outside world. Firstly, there are expressions that make use of the term οἶκος (household) or something similar: οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ (4:17); ὁ οἰκέτης (2:18); συνοικέω (3:7); καλός οἰκονόμος (4:10); also 2:5 οἶκος πνευματικός (“spiritual house” more likely refers to the temple). The audience is frequently reminded of holiness – that their lives are set apart before God, for Godself is holy (1:15-19, 2:4-5, 9, 11-12, 3:7-9). Secondly, the author inserts his version of a household code (2:18-3:7) to address certain matters pertaining to certain groups in the congregation (namely slaves, wives and husbands) (Green, 2008: 218).

Thirdly, there are images of “new birth” (1:3, 23) and “growth” (2:2), together with portraying God as “father” (1:2; 3:17). Lastly, the author also employs familial language: τέκνον (1:14), φιλαδελφία (1:22; 3:8), ἀναγεννάω (1:23), σπορά (1:23), ἀρτιγέννητος (2:2), ἀδελφότης (2:17; 5:9), φιλόξενος (4:9), ἀδελφός (5:12), υἱός (5:13) and φίλημα ἀγάπη (5:14) (Green, 2008: 218).

The terms that the author employs as identity markers, are saturated with imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is as if the author is writing the first audience’s narratives into God’s narrative with Israel. These identity markers reflect the author’s response to the first audience’s situation. Many of the imagery, such as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 2:18-25 and quotations from prophetic literature such as Jeremiah and Hosea, may have reminded the first audience of the suffering and trauma that the people of Israel had to endure during the exodus and Babylonian exile.

Secondly, to strengthen the author’s argument in terms of the first recipients’ identity (amongst other things), the author makes use of citations and metaphors from the Hebrew Scriptures in order to

emphasise their identity.<sup>76</sup> The use of the Hebrew Scriptures are so frequently seen, that this may be seen as a “repetitive theme” in the letter, not in the sense that the same texts are used regularly, but that so many quotations and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures are found in 1 Peter.

Some metaphors have already been pointed out. Some other metaphors include Jesus being portrayed as an innocent lamb (1:19), and God being portrayed as a shepherd (2:25; 5:2, 4). Already in 1:1 there is a reference to “exiles” and “diaspora” echoing the theme of “exile” in the Hebrew Scriptures. 5:13 forms an inclusion with 1:1 with a reference to “Babylon”. The author also mentions three characters from the Hebrew Scriptures namely Sarah (3:6), Abraham (3:6) and Noah (3:20).

Texts from the Hebrew Scriptures that are referred to or quoted in 1 Peter include<sup>77</sup>: Job 23:10 (1:7), Psalms 66:10 (1:7), Proverbs 17:3 (1:7), Psalms 22 (1:11), Isaiah 53 (1:11), *Leviticus* 19:2 (1:16), Psalm 89:27 (1:17), Isaiah 64:8 (1:17), Jeremiah 3:19 (1:17), *Isaiah* 40:6-8 (1:24), Psalm 118:22 (2:4), Isaiah 28:16 (2:4), Exodus 19:6 (2:5), Isaiah 61:6 (2:5), *Isaiah* 8:14 (2:6), *Psalm* 118:22 (2:7), Isaiah 43:20 (2:9), Exodus 19:6 (2:9), Hosea 1:9; 2:25 (2:10), *Isaiah* 10:3 (2:12) *Isaiah* 53 (2:22-25), Genesis 18:12 (3:6), Psalm 34:13-17 (3:10-12), Isaiah 8:12-13 (3:14), Genesis 6:1-7:24 (3:20), Proverbs 10:12 (4:8), Psalm 89:51-52 (4:14), Isaiah 11:2 (4:14), Jeremiah 25:29 (4:17), Ezekiel 9:6 (4:17), Proverbs 11:31 (4:17), Psalm 31:6 (4:18), Ezekiel 34 (5:2), *Proverbs* 3:34 (5:5), Ezekiel 22:25 (5:8) and Psalm 22:4 (5:8).<sup>78</sup>

This is an important strategy in 1 Peter that the author employs with a certain purpose in mind.<sup>79</sup>

In the third place, the author employs a household code to speak to specific people within the audience, who possibly experience suffering and trauma because of their suffering in their everyday lives. The household code in 1 Peter is unique in many ways. In the first place, the code in 1 Peter only addresses slaves, wives and husbands. They are also addressed directly.<sup>80</sup> Secondly, 1

<sup>76</sup> In this section only a summary will be given. Chapter four will discuss the notion of the use of the Hebrew Scriptures in 1 Peter.

<sup>77</sup> Many scholars agree that the underlying text of 1 Peter exhibits an early Greek text and that the textual quotations are closer to the Septuagint than the Masoretic text, except for Proverbs 10:12 in 1 Peter 4:8 and Isaiah 8:14 in 1 Peter 2:8 (Egan, 2016: 20).

<sup>78</sup> Texts that are stated in italics refer to those that are quoted in 1 Peter. Quotations refer to sentences that start with an introductory formula, which alerts the reader that a quotation will follow. It also involves an extensive amount of actual words found in the original text even if an introductory formula is not present. Allusions refer to non-formal references to words of an original text, as well as repetition (before or after a quotation of a number of words that is already quoted in another place. The repetition might not be word for word similar but it would be recognisable for the readers (Williams, 2007: 41). Richard Hays adds a third category, namely “echoes”: “... it may involve the inclusion of only a word or phrase that evokes, for the alert reader, a reminiscence of an earlier text” (Hays, 2016: 10).

<sup>79</sup> Many of these quotations and allusions from the Hebrew Scriptures refer to Israel’s traumatic past and history. It is therefore not surprising that the author of 1 Peter uses these texts to enhance the letter’s rhetorical effect.

<sup>80</sup> Jennifer Bird (2011: 26) suggests that this is a deliberate move away from the Aristotelian form where the male domination of the household is acknowledged. Some scholars see this move as a liberating moment for the slaves and wives, whilst others see this as more restrictive and dehumanising.

Peter's household code is unique because the writer implements an example from a text from the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis 18:12) in referring to Sarah who called Abraham "lord". The precise rhetorical function and effect of the presence of this example have been debated by many scholars. The third instance where the household code of 1 Peter is unique, is the relationship between the code and 2:13-17 where the believers are exhorted to obey the emperor (Carter, 2004: 14).

1 Peter 2:13-3:7, the section in 1 Peter that contains the household code, is characterised by the imperative mode, as well as the vocative case. Verse 13 starts with ὑποτάγητε (you must submit). In this pericope there are six imperatives that could be seen as the main themes of this text (Michaels, 1988: 128–129). The verb ὑποτάσσω, which means "to submit" or "to obey", is repeated five times (in different forms of the verb). Three of these occasions are in the passive tense. Other words that are repeated are τιμάω (2:17), χάρις (2:19, 20), τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν (3:1, 5) and different forms of ἀμαρτάνω (2:20, 22, 24). In 2:21-25 the author writes about the example of Christ in suffering where he also quotes from Isaiah 53. In 3:1-7 he makes use of another example from the Hebrew Scriptures where he refers to Sarah and Abraham.

There are various characters present in the household code. First there is the audience, who is addressed as "beloved" and "resident aliens and visiting strangers". They are, in general, exhorted to uphold good behaviour so that society will not regard them as dangerous. This implies honouring the emperor and other authorities, whilst their inner conviction belongs to God. In 2:18 the author turns to specific people in the audience, namely household slaves, women and men. Wives are exhorted to do "likewise" as the slaves are submitted to their masters. Husbands are also advised to do "likewise" (3:7) (Kittredge, 2012: 618). Certain exhortations and commands, with arguments, are given. Secondly, the author refers to God a number of times. God wants them to do good to others, God will judge and in God's eyes a peaceful spirit is more important than external beauty. Christ is used as an example of suffering.

In the fourth place, the author makes extensive use of stylistic features. Chiasms, doublets (and a few triplets), negative-positive constructions, poliptoton, paronomasia, alliteration, assonance, repetition and comparisons are frequently found in the text.<sup>81</sup>

God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are also portrayed in certain ways. This can also be seen as a rhetorical strategy, but it will be discussed separately in the next section.

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<sup>81</sup> See Addendum A.

### 3.2.3 God images in 1 Peter

Investigating the ways in which God, Jesus, and the Spirit are described in 1 Peter may also point to experiences of trauma that the audience were dealing with. It is plausible that the God images in 1 Peter are carefully chosen to bring a certain message across to the audience and may bring some consolation and alternative perspective to their minds.

Together with the rhetorical strategies already mentioned, there are various ways in which the author of 1 Peter employs God images in his letter. One may argue that the God images in 1 Peter form part of rhetorical strategies. There is a Trinitarian underlining in this letter and it is almost impossible to not look at the God images in 1 Peter holistically, as God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit seem to be interwoven with each other, in the way the author portrays them. One may argue that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are portrayed in ways that address the trauma situation of the first addressees.

God is described or used in the following ways: The generic description of God as θεός appears the most in this letter (1:5, 21; 2:12, 16, 17, 19; 3:4, 5, 18, 20, 21, 22; 4:11, 17; 5:2, 5). Ὁ κύριος is used only once in reference to God (2:13). The image of God as father appears in chapter 1:2, 3 and 17. The holiness of God is described in 1:15-16 where the author exhorts the audience to be holy because God is holy. God is also frequently used alongside “the word” (1:23, 25; 4:11). The “goodness of the Lord” is expressed in 2:3. “God that elects” for example the “living stone” in 2:4, is also seen in this letter (God also electing a new people in chapters 1 and 2).

“The will of God” is also frequently used in 1 Peter (2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19). “The grace of God” or that “God gives grace” is seen on four occasions in this letter (2:20; 4:10; 5:10, 12). God as a shepherd and keeper is featured twice (2:25; 5:2, 4). There are also a few human features attributed to God. In 3:12 ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου (the eyes of the Lord) is used. Also in 3:12 πρόσωπον ... κύριος (the face of the Lord) is used. In 5:6 χεὶρ τοῦ θεοῦ (hand of God) is seen. 5:7 speaks about God who provides for those who trust in God.

Jesus Christ is described or used in the following ways in 1 Peter. The author uses the words Ἰησοῦς Χριστός frequently (1:2, 7, 13; 2:5; 4:11). The “blood of Jesus Christ” appears in 1:2 and 1:19. The phrase τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ appears in 1:3. The title Χριστός also appears a few times (3:16, 18; 5:4). The “resurrection of Jesus Christ” is used in 1:21 and 3:21. The author makes use of “Christ’s suffering” frequently (1:11; 2:21; 3:18 (the righteous one suffering for the unrighteous); 4:1, 13; 5:1). The suffering of Jesus is a theme that repeats frequently and is subsequently used to argue in relation to the identity and ethos of the audience.

In connection with the suffering of Christ, the author also employs metaphors (as in 1:19 where Jesus is described as a lamb that suffered for the guilty). In 2:22-24 the author cites verses from Isaiah 53 in connection with Jesus' suffering - Christ is an example, He is without sin and he did not react when he was scolded or threatened. Christ is portrayed as a living stone, chosen and precious before God, but is also rejected by some (2:4, 6-8). In 3:22 Christ is portrayed as the one sitting on the right hand side of God and as the conqueror over all power. In connection with this he is also portrayed as a judge in 4:5. The author also speaks about the glory of Christ, sometimes in connection with his suffering and resurrection (1:21; 4:13; 5:10). The "name of Christ" is used twice (4:14, 16).

The Holy Spirit does not appear as frequently in the text of 1 Peter as God and Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the Spirit is given a few different titles in the text. The Spirit is referred to as πνεῦμα Χριστός (Spirit of Christ) in 1:11, πνεῦμα ἅγιος (Holy Spirit) in 1:12, and τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα (Spirit of God) in 4:14. In connection with the work of the Spirit in 1 Peter, the Spirit sanctifies (1:2) and gives life (3:19).

The author of 1 Peter presents God, Jesus Christ and the Spirit, intentionally in certain ways. There are certain metaphors and images attached to God, Christ and the Spirit that the author utilises in his argument – he has a certain purpose with it. That is also true in the way he talks to his intended audience. This will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.2.4 Specific references to trauma related language

The aim of this chapter of the study is to determine if 1 Peter can be read as a text that reflects experiences of trauma. It is not the aim in this section to have a broad discussion on traumatic language evident in the text, but only to identify and take note of this language. Although the word "trauma" does not appear in 1 Peter, there are words in the text that may be trauma related. Green (2008: 225) suggests that the author of 1 Peter developed a registry for the experience of suffering, which can be seen as trauma related themes and words. He uses different terms to describe the experience of suffering of the recipients: πειρασμός (1:6), δοκίμιον (1:7; 4:12), πάθημα (1:11; 2:19, 21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 13, 15-16, 19; 5:1, 9, 10), κολαφίζω (2:20), the tree as an instrument of execution (ξύλον) (2:24), φόβος (3:14), καταλαλέω (3:16), πύρωσις πειρασμός (4:12), ὀνειδίζω (4:14), and κρίμα (4:17).

The question may be asked why these terms could be related to trauma at all. Is it not only linked to possible suffering or bad experiences of being Jesus followers? Would the "trauma" of these terms lie in the terms itself or in experiences that go with it? It may be suggested that trauma associated with these terms lies in the effects thereof on the first audience. From a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, it is challenging to know whether their experiences of suffering turned into traumatic experiences,



came back to haunt them and caused physical and psychological effects on the individual and group. It may also be argued that these experiences of suffering could have resulted in trauma and that therefore, these terms may be seen as trauma-related.

These terms and phrases reflect a certain reality that the first recipients were confronted within their daily existence. One cannot study trauma related language in the text only in terms of words that reflect suffering and trauma, but it is also important to look at the eschatological and apocalyptic language present in 1 Peter, because it is interwoven with each other in a certain sense.

Mark Dubis (2002: 39–43) uses three criteria that John Collins gives in his definition of apocalypse, as a manner in which apocalyptic and eschatological language can be examined in 1 Peter.<sup>82</sup> He uses a temporal axis, spatial axis and the letter's concern with "revelation" to examine apocalyptic and eschatological elements in 1 Peter.

In the first place, there is the temporal axis.<sup>83</sup> Protological elements appear in the election of believers (1:1-2), the preordination of Christ's suffering before the making of the world (1:20) and the predestination of the unbelievers (2:8). The author does not formally review history, but he repeatedly makes reference to the history of Israel. The author refers to Abraham and Sarah (3:6), alludes to the exodus (1:2, 4, 13, 19; 2:9, 13) and exile and restoration (1:17, 24-25; 2:11; 5:10, 13). Noah and the flood are also mentioned (3:19-20). The author also has the end of history in mind, but for him the end is also already at hand (1:20; 4:7) (Dubis, 2002: 40).

The eschatological crisis is already underway in the suffering that the first audience is experiencing. The author sees their suffering as the beginning of the eschatological judgement. The first audience is currently experiencing God's judgement (4:17), but the judgement will soon fall on the rest of humanity (4:5, 17-18). Otherworldly beings will also be judged (3:19). There are also references to God in judgement (1:17; 2:23; 4:6). The author of 1 Peter holds strong hopes of an eschatological salvation, which are both personal and cosmic. Here the hope of resurrection is important. Jesus' resurrection is mentioned in 1:3, 21 and 3:21. Believers will share in the same glory that God made possible in Jesus' resurrection and therefore also be resurrected (1:21) (Dubis, 2002: 40–41).

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<sup>82</sup> Collins defines "apocalypse" in the following way: "Apocalypse" is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world." Although 1 Peter is not of apocalyptic genre nor is it presented as a revelation from God by an otherworldly being, there are apocalyptic and eschatological elements present in the text.

<sup>83</sup> This includes (a) protology or protohistory, (b) historical review, (c) eschatological crises, which entails persecution, (d) eschatological judgement, (e) eschatological salvation (Dubis, 2002: 40).

In regard to the second element, namely the spatial axis, the following is applicable.<sup>84</sup> The author makes reference to heaven and other places. The readers' inheritance is kept in heaven (1:4), the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven (1:12) and Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at God's right hand (3:22). The place where the disobedient spirits dwell that is mentioned in 3:19, may also be in the heavenly places. In 1:12 angels are mentioned. The spirits of 3:19 may refer to evil angelic beings. Verse 3:22 also mentions these spirits when it speaks of the "angels, authorities and powers" who are subjected to Christ. The devil is also mentioned in 5:8 (Dubis, 2002: 41–42).

In the last place, the author of 1 Peter is also concerned with supernatural revelation. In 1:11 prophecy from the Hebrew Scriptures is depicted as revealed by the Spirit of Christ. Revelation came through the prophets, but also to them. God has now revealed in the gospel what the prophets only dimly grasped. The most important revelation will come at the second coming of Christ (1:7, 13; 4:13). The author uses ἀποκαλυπτω (1:5, 12; 5:1) and ἀποκαλυψις (1:7, 13; 4:13) in terms of revelation (Dubis, 2002: 42–43).

There is trauma related words found in 1 Peter. This also relates to honour and shame language found in the letter.

### 3.2.5 Honour and shame language

Although honour and shame language may be grouped together with trauma related language, as it is in a sense part of it, its extensive appearance in 1 Peter calls for a distinct category. Elliott (1996: 174–176; cf. Campbell, 1998: 239) provides a wide description of honour and shame terminology and related semantic fields. The concepts of honour and shame are described more thoroughly in 3.3.2.3. Even though these values were considered to be normal in the Roman Empire, to be a recipient of shame may have been a cause of trauma for the audience, especially for slaves and women.

Terms of the "honour" word group that is seen in 1 Peter include firstly, τιμή (honour, with ἔπαινος in 1:7 and with δόξα); 2:7 – all regarding believers; and 3:7, husbands to honour their wives. Secondly, πολύτιμος (very honourable or precious) in 1:7, modifying faith/loyalty. In the third place, τιμάω (show honour or respect) in 2:17 – to the emperor and to all persons. Lastly ἔντιμος (honoured or precious) in 2:4, 6, with ἐκλεκτός modifying Jesus Christ.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> This includes the mention of otherworldly regions and otherworldly beings (Dubis, 2002: 41).

<sup>85</sup> Categories for "honour, to honour, to be honoured", honourable virtues and related images include: 1. Confer or receive grace, favour or credit (1:2, 10, 13; 2:19, 20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 12). 2. Confer or receive glory, glorify (1:7, 11, 21, 24; 4:11, 13, 14; 5:1, 4, 10; 1:18, 2:12; 4:11, 16). 3. Have and display power (1:5; 3:22; 4:11; 5:11). 4. Be father (1:2, 3, 17;), creator (2:13, 4:19), judge (1:17; 4:5, 6, 17). 5. Be superior to other authorities (3:22). 6. Show mercy or clemency (1:3; 2:10). 7. Render impartial judgement (1:17). 8. Execute praiseworthy deeds (2:9). 9. Praise (1:7; 2:14). 10. Bless (3:9), confer blessing (1:3), be blessed (3:14; 4:14). 11. Raise

Terms of the “shame” word group include: κατασχύνω (be put to shame) in 2:6 and 3:16 (of nonbelievers and opponents); αἰσχύνω (feel ashamed) in 4:16 – in terms of the name “Christian”; αἰσχροκερδῶς (greedy for shameful gain) in 5:2 – not to characterise Christian leaders.<sup>86</sup> The exhortation to wives in 3:3-5 to “let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit ... the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands”, also points to shame (in a positive sense) associated with women. It is safe to say the language of honour and shame plays an important part in the rhetorical strategy of 1 Peter.

### 3.2.6 Repeating themes in 1 Peter

As one reads through 1 Peter, there are some striking themes that repeat throughout the letter. As seen in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, the author repetitively focuses on identity matters, how identity influences the audience’s ethos and behaviour, the suffering of Jesus (that features frequently in terms of the audience’s identity), and the use of quotations and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures. The aim in this section is not to repeat what was said in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, but rather to point out that these themes are probably crucial for understanding the author’s purpose for writing the letter, its dynamic thrust, as well as possible alternative perspectives necessary for the audience to engage with (especially with regard to their trauma), since these features frequently.

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(1:21) and exalt (5:6). 12. Make alive, confer life, be alive (1:3, 23; 2:4, 5, 24; 3:7, 10; 18; 4:5, 6). 13. Be called by God (1:15, 2:9, 21; 3:6, 9; 5:10). 14. Be a cornerstone (2:6, 7). 15. Be ascribed honorific predicates (2:4, 5, 9, 10). 16. Be in light (2:9). 17. Be at right hand (3:22 – place of honour). 18. Receive an inheritance, inherit a blessing (1:4, 3:9). 19. Receive a crown (5:4). 20. Lead an honourable and attractive way of life (1:15, 17, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16). 21. Show respect for authority, order and social status (ὑποτάσσω): 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 22, 5:5; as citizens 2:13-17; as slaves 2:18-20; as wives 3:1-6; as husbands 3:7; as elders 5:1-4 and younger persons 5:5a, who behave honourably in accord with their ascribed statuses and roles. 22. Show God awe and reverence (1:17; 2:17, 18; 3:2, 6, 14, 15). 23. Be obedient (1:2, 14, 22; 3:6). 24. Obey God’s will (2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19). 25. Abstain from selfish desires (1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3); 26. Not sinning (2:20, 22, 24; 3:18; 4:1, 8). 27. Avoiding evil (2:12, 14; 3:9, 10-12, 17; 4:15) and vices (2:1, 12; 4:2-4). 28. Doing good (2:14, 15, 29; 3:6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 21; 4:19). 29. Be just, righteous (2:24; 3:12, 14, 18; 4:18). 30. Be holy, pure, blameless (1:2, 12, 15, 16, 19, 22; 2:5, 9; 3:2, 5). 31. Show familial loyalty (1:22; 3:8); maintain loyalty (1:5, 7-9, 21; 2:6, 7; 4:19; 5:9, 12). 32. To love (1:8, 22; 2:17; 4:8; 5:14). 33. Be silent (3:1), gentle (3:4, 16) and quiet (3:4). 34. Be humble (3:8, 5:5). 35. Be like-minded, compassionate, tender-hearted, thereby maintaining group solidarity. 36. Not seeking retribution, 3:9 or defence of honour, 3:9 because honour is conferred by God. 37. Be alert (1:13; 4:7; 5:8). 38. Exercise sound judgement (4:7). 39. Be hospitable (4:9). 40. Serve one another (4:10-11). 41. Bear suffering, courageously and steadfastly (1:6; 2:19-20, 21-23; 3:14-18; 4:1, 13-19; 5:10). 42. Praise one’s name (4:14-16). 32. Emulate honourable examples (Jesus Christ, 2:21-24; 3:13-4:6; 4:12-16; Sarah, 3:5-6; Noah and family 3:20) (Elliott, 1996: 174–175).

<sup>86</sup> Categories for “shame, to shame, to be shamed” and shameless behaviour. A. Outsiders shaming the believers and Christ. 1. Slander, defame another’s honour and good name (2:1, 12; 3:16). 2. Insult, revile (2:23, 3:9). 3. Disparage (3:16). 4. Malign or blaspheme (4:4). 5. Reproach (4:14). 6. Harm or abuse (3:13). B. Forms of shameful behaviour. 1. Do what is wrong (2:12, 14; 3:9, 10-12, 17; 4:15). 2. Be unjust (3:18) and deal unjustly (2:19). 3. Sin, violate social and religious norms (2:20; 2:22, 24; 3:18; 4:1, 8; 4:18). 4. Be impious (4:18) and engage in lawless acts (4:4). 5. Be driven by selfish craving (1:14; 2:11; 4:2, 3). 6. Engage in various vices and dissolute behaviour (2:1; 4:2-4). 7. Be ignorant (1:14, 2:15) and act without good sense (2:15). 8. Be offended at someone honourable (2:8). 9. Be caused to fall, scandalised (2:8). 10. Be in darkness (2:9). 11. Be crucified (as means of extreme public shaming (2:24). 12. Be proud and arrogant (5:5) (Elliott, 1996: 175).

The suffering of Jesus (and the example thereof), the focus on identity and ethos, as well as the prevalence of the Hebrew Scriptures, are seen together many times in the letter. An example of this notion is in 1 Peter 2:4-10. Verse 4 begins with an imperative for the audience to come to Jesus as λίθον ζῶντα ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον (... a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight). Jesus is described as "a living stone" who was rejected by others (possibly alluding to Jesus' suffering and road to Golgotha).

Then follows an invitation from the author to the first audience to be built up as οἶκος πνευματικὸς and ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον (which are identity markers used from the context of the Hebrew Scriptures). This is followed by three quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures to strengthen the argument. In v. 9 the identity of the first audience is emphasised more intensely, followed by a quotation from Hosea in v. 10. This contrasts the audience as "elected strangers" and "visiting aliens" that are estranged from the outside world, but are now given a place as being part of God's people.

The concept of mimesis will be explained in chapter four when it comes to coping with trauma. However, it is important to mention it here, because it may be argued that these three coping strategies are attached to and motivated from the prevalence of mimesis. Although "to follow an example" is only mentioned once in 1 Peter, it appears throughout the letter. Persons the first audience may look up to and follow as examples of faith are mentioned frequently. In v.1 the author introduces himself as "an apostle of Jesus Christ" – he is already a figure in the faith of Jesus followers that can be seen as an example of how Christ is to be followed. The prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures are mentioned in 1 Peter 1:10. In 1 Peter 1:13-16 the theme of holiness is introduced as the way in which the audience is to follow and mimic Christ's life.

In 2:4 the audience is invited to come to the one "who is the living stone" in order for them to also become "living stones" (2:5). In the household code, slaves and wives (and husbands) are specifically instructed in ways to mimic the life and suffering of Christ. In the household code, it is not only Christ's suffering that is interpreted in terms of the suffering of the first audience, but also the example of "holy women" (3:5) and Sarah (3:6). In 1 Peter 3:15-17 the example of Christ is again used to undergird the argument to live as Jesus followers, even if it means that the audience will suffer for it. In 3:20 Noah is mentioned. In 1 Peter 4:7-11 the ethos described is that of Christ. In 5:1 the author again mentions himself as an example as "co-elder and witness to the suffering of Christ" to the elders in the congregations as to how they should care for their fellow brothers and sisters.

I argue that mimesis can be seen as the foundation of the letter and that the three repeating themes may be seen as manifestations of mimesis. It is important for the audience to know who they are and where their story fits in with the greater story of God (even though their narratives are shattered)

in order for them to consider the suffering of Christ and the implications thereof (also as an example for them to follow as Jesus followers). This section will be further established in chapter four and serves as motivation for the argument in chapter four of the dissertation.

### **3.2.7 Conclusion to literary aspects of 1 Peter**

From the above findings, it is vital to this study that 1 Peter, in terms of the text and its literary aspects, shows evident signs of trauma and trauma language. In the next section, socio-historical aspects of 1 Peter are investigated, in order to attempt to construct a picture of what could have motivated the author to write the letter as he did. By investigating the literary aspects of 1 Peter, it is important to look at themes related to trauma appearing in rhetorical strategies, God images, specific trauma related language, honour and shame references, as well as themes that are repeated in the letter – also to see how the text reflects notions of trauma that shatter the narratives of the audience.

Investigating literary aspects of the text, already certain themes or discursive thrusts in 1 Peter stand out, namely references to the suffering of Jesus Christ, the prevalence of quotations of and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures and the emphasis on identity and how this identity may play out in reality (this is closely tied to the household language found in the letter). These three themes seem to jump from the pages of this letter as possible alternative perspectives. What is also interesting about these three themes, is that they seem to be closely connected with each other. This may also contribute to the syntactical thrust of 1 Peter.

Jacques Rousseau summarises the syntactical thrust of 1 Peter as a whole in the following way: 1 Peter is written as an encouragement to addressees whom he calls “elect strangers”. This is to be done by keeping what Rousseau calls their “positive vertical relationships” (through hope, faith and love) and “positive horizontal relationships” (through brotherly love, service to one another and holy, witnessing behaviour towards outsiders) amidst their suffering. Although Rousseau’s summary of the syntactical thrust is framed from a certain perspective, it is still helpful to this study as to how the author wanted his audience to experience life and faith in it. They are assured and comforted by the testimony that they have experienced God’s grace (God’s election, mercy and caring power) through the peace that Jesus Christ brings (Christ who has changed them, gave the first audience new life through rebirth, he has set them an example to follow and who will keep them till the end of times) (Rousseau, 1986: 246). This section paves the way to studying the socio-historical aspects of 1 Peter.

## **3.3 SOCIO-HISTORICAL ASPECTS**

To continue the search for probable trauma narratives underlying 1 Peter, it is of utmost importance to consider the world behind this text. Whilst our primary interaction with biblical texts is with the text itself, the second aspect of multidimensional exegesis asks for an investigation of historical aspects

and the world of the text. The text gives certain clues that pertain to the world behind the text, but one cannot find the full picture of this world, because of the author's and audience's knowledge of that world that is taken as a given.

A multidimensional reading of a biblical text requires respect for the nature of the text in terms of the historical circumstances in which it originated. Firstly, in the following section, the authorship, date and identity of the first recipients of 1 Peter will be discussed. The reason for this is because 1 Peter was written by a person who, as a Jesus follower, may have experienced trauma and is writing to an audience probably experiencing trauma and the shattering effects thereof. These are real circumstances that is being addressed.

Secondly, attention will be given to the social and moral world of the Roman Empire in the time 1 Peter originated. This is done in order to see whether daily realities of living in the Roman Empire could have contributed to experiences of trauma. Lastly, specific events in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE that could have caused trauma and anti-Christian prejudice and conflict in the Roman Empire will be discussed in regard to 1 Peter as well. The gravity of this section will lie with the latter. The aim of this chapter is not to give an account of exactly how the social and moral world of the Roman Empire functioned or what it looked like, but to try to reconstruct a possible glimpse of the world the recipients of 1 Peter lived in and may have caused them to be traumatised.

### **3.3.1 Authorship, date and identity of the first recipients of 1 Peter**

The primary concern in this section is not actually with who wrote 1 Peter, when it was written or who the probable first audience of the letter was. However, it is impossible to ignore these introductory questions, because it will determine, to a certain extent, how the social and moral world of the first recipients is constructed and the possible trauma that they experienced that urged the author to write this letter. The fact that the author addresses this letter to the "elected strangers of the diaspora" and then naming specific geographical locations in Asia Minor, indicates that the author had specific circumstances in mind that cannot be ignored (or generalised because of the letter's classification as a "General Epistle").

The aim is not to give an extensive explanation of arguments for and against Petrine authorship, the dating or who the first recipients were. The tendencies in arguments will be summarised and a choice will be made as to where this letter is situated.

1 Peter starts with the author identifying himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" and in 5:1 he urges the audience as "co-elder and witness of the suffering of Christ". In 5:12 there is a reference to Silvanus who could have been the scribe of 1 Peter and/or the letter carrier. In 5:13 the author



says that “your co-elect in Babylon ... greets you”. If one should take the text at face value, one could assume that the apostle Peter himself wrote this letter or that he used Silvanus as scribe.

In recent scholarship, however, there have been many debates about the authorship of 1 Peter.<sup>87</sup> Williams (2012: 22) gives a clear description on the arguments against and for the authenticity of 1 Peter.<sup>88</sup> He treats authorship and dating together. Many scholars argue that the letter is pseudonymous because: (1) The style of the Greek found in 1 Peter is some of the best in the New Testament and an “uneducated” Galilean fisherman would not have the knowledge to write this; (2) the letter does not mention much about Jesus’ life, teachings and ministry, but rather focuses on Jesus’ death; (3) a large amount of evidence point to a later dating of the letter’s composition: (a) the reference to “Babylon (5:13) to refer to Rome is only found in literature after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE; (b) many scholars assume that it was not possible for Christianity to spread to the areas that the author wrote to during Peter’s lifetime; (c) there is evidence of a literary dependency on Paul’s writings; (d) some scholars argue that the persecutions described took place under Domitian (81-96 CE) or Trajan (98-117 CE); (e) the sequence of the provinces described in 1:1 may reflect the realignment of Pontus, Galatia and Cappadocia that took place under Vespasian (72 CE).<sup>89</sup>

Williams (2012: 24–28) then proceed to evaluate each of these arguments individually and states that it may seem as if they have a strong case against Petrine authorship and an early dating, but looking at them individually, suggests that the case may not be so strong. Williams (2012: 28–34) then states evidence for Petrine authorship.<sup>90</sup> Firstly, some of the most important arguments are the testimony of the early church, especially provided by 2 Peter (80-90 CE) and 1 Clement (70-140 CE) where Peter the apostle is recognised as the author of 1 Peter. Some of the church fathers also recognise Peter as the author.

Secondly, the nature and purpose of the letter itself lends distinctive support for Petrine authorship. If Paul or the “Pauline school” wrote 1 Peter, then why would the letter be written in the name of “Peter”? The author is not merely concerned with a theological agenda for propagation. The author is writing to flesh and blood people, suffering from some form of trauma. He is guiding them in how

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<sup>87</sup> Martin Dubis (2006) gives an extensive survey on the arguments about authorship, dating and the identity of the first recipients. Elliott, in his commentary in the Anchor Bible commentary series, also gives a summary on the arguments against and for Petrine authorship.

<sup>88</sup> Although I consulted numerous sources on this topic, Williams gives the clearest description of the arguments for and against Petrine authorship. He also refers to different scholars who advocate a certain argument throughout his discussion, but there is no need to repeat it here.

<sup>89</sup> Some scholars who support the pseudonymity of 1 Peter (that I have consulted): Elliott (1990), Achtemeier (1996: 43) Elliott (2000), Horrell (2002), Counet (2006), Vinson, Wilson & Mills (2010) and Barbarick (2011: 168).

<sup>90</sup> Scholars who advocate Petrine authorship of 1 Peter include: Jobes (2005: 19) Green (2008), Janse van Rensburg (2011: 2), Watson & Callan (2012), and Kehinde (2014: 79).



to live as Christians amidst these circumstances – he has a pastoral concern for them. He has a specific setting in mind.

Williams (2012: 29–30) states in this regard:

To the extent that the historical situation depicted in 1 Peter is a real experience of the letter's recipients, the pseudonym hypothesis loses credibility. The further removed the letter is from the life (and death) of the historical Peter, the less validity the attribution carries. Audiences who lived some ten, twenty, or thirty years after the death of Peter, would not have been fooled into thinking that the letter was written by the apostle on the occasion of their present circumstances.

Even if Peter was a Galilean fisherman, it may be possible that Silvanus is the author, constructing Peter's thoughts into a logical argument (Kehinde, 2014: 79). The reference to Babylon, which is considered to be only found in literature after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, fits into the letter's argument as a whole, considering the letter is written to the "elected strangers of the diaspora". This resonates with the letter's exilic features and the description of these faith communities as the new household of God (continuing God's covenant with Israel).

Early Christian tradition believes that the apostle Peter was executed in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero. Some scholars pinpoint Peter's death to 64 CE. Williams (2012: 32) states that even though there is a clear agreement that Peter died during this period, there is no accurate tradition affirming Peter's death during Nero's persecution of Christians. Even if Petrine authorship is assumed, there is no indication to date the letter's composition before 68 CE. Williams dates the composition of 1 Peter between 60 and 90 CE to include the possibilities of authenticity and pseudonymity of this letter (Williams, 2012: 34).

In this study, the author will be referred to as *Peter* and the letter is considered to be written between 64 and 80 CE (to include the possibility of Peter's death under Nero's persecution, but to exclude state sanctioned persecution). This choice is also made to include the possibility that Peter as a flesh and blood person writes to an audience possibly experiencing trauma and that there is a human element to this letter.

As with the authorship of 1 Peter, there are also many speculations when it comes to the identity of the first recipients of 1 Peter. It would be a mistake to assume that all the recipients were homogenous, as the geographical area referred to in 1:1 spans an area of 200 000 square kilometres (Jobes, 2013: 21).<sup>91</sup> Elliott (1990: 63) argues that the terms *παροίκιος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* (cf 1 Peter

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<sup>91</sup> Karen Jobes (2013: 21) refers to these areas as "provinces". There is a debate in Petrine scholarship whether the places Peter mentions in 1:1 refers to provinces or regions. This is not central to the argument of this chapter and thus the word "area" or "provinces" will be used to refer to the places in 1:1.

1:1 and 2:11) refer to their literal social and economic statuses, more specifically, that they were tenant farmers. Janse van Rensburg (2011: 6–7) agrees with Elliott in some ways stating that *παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* refer to these people's social-political state before their conversion.

On a second level, Janse van Rensburg argues, it may imply that they were proselytes and God-fearers before their conversion. What the author of 1 Peter does, is to transform an abusive title to a deeper theologically positive significance. One could argue that Peter transforms this potentially traumatising title to one of belonging and identity. Bird (2011: 63) argues that *παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* refers to immigrants and refugees who were exploited by the Empire's kyriarchal socio-economic system.

Both these arguments differ from many scholars who argue for *παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* to be understood in a figurative or metaphorical way, that is that these people were ostracised because of their Christian identity and that the author is encouraging them to keep their eyes on their heavenly home. Williams (2012: 126) discusses problems with Elliott's literal interpretation of *παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* as referring to their literal socio-political status. His conclusion is that the addressees were from a mixed socio-economic background. Some were richer, but most were in an unstable economic situation. There is also no agreement on the ethnicity of the first recipients – some argue that they were Jewish Christians, others argue that they were from a gentile background.<sup>92</sup>

There are many speculations regarding the identity of the first recipients and one could never construct a complete frame of reference regarding the first audience of 1 Peter. Jobes makes an argument that one could reconcile with in trying to understand the identity of the first audience. She has been criticised for her argument, but it encourages the argument of this chapter, especially regarding the search of the trauma narrative(s) of this text.

In her commentary on 1 Peter, Jobes (2005: 28–40) applies a theory on Roman colonisation to the identity of 1 Peter's first recipients and she further extends it in a later publication (2013: 21–41). Jobes' point of departure is that the original recipients may have had some connection with the apostle Peter, possibly in Rome or in Antioch.<sup>93</sup> There is no evidence that Peter travelled and spread

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<sup>92</sup> Jobes suggests that from the time of the Greek colonisation of Asia Minor the term *παροίκος* refer to people living around a colony. The Greek colonists in Asia Minor used *παροίκος* to refer to the indigenous people. As already stated, it is complex to determine the exact identity of the first audience, but it is also possible that the proses of urbanisation opened up opportunities for people to migrate from Rome to the "colonies". This makes it possible for Peter to use *παροίκος* (resident alien) καὶ *παρεπιδήμιος* (visiting stranger) to refer to people who had immigrated to northern Asia Minor from elsewhere, also bringing their Christian faith with them (Jobes, 2013: 34–35).

<sup>93</sup> It is mostly accepted that Peter spent his final years in Rome, whether he was put to death in Nero's time or not. Although it is uncertain when Peter first arrived in Rome and how long he resided there, the theory that Peter had an association with the recipients in Rome, strengthens this argument (Jobes, 2013: 28–29).

the gospel in the areas that are mentioned in 1:1. She argues that these people may have come into contact with Peter in Rome, but found themselves scattered across the northern provinces of Asia Minor, as “colonists” in one of the many cities that were undergoing Roman urbanisation in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>94</sup> She then suggests that Peter writes to these people, “exiled” and “displaced” to help them to understand their Christian identity where they live in diaspora (Jobes, 2013: 25).

The following points summarise Jobes’ argument regarding Roman colonisation and the identity of the first recipients: Firstly, there is historical evidence that Peter lived in Rome, maybe arriving as early as 42 CE during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Peter perhaps had some form of spiritual oversight of the church in Rome for as much as 24 years. Secondly, Claudius was one of the two emperors who most extensively colonised Romanised Asia Minor. This was done by establishing new settlements or by designating existing cities as colonies of the Roman Empire (Jobes, 2013: 38).

Thirdly, it is a fact that Claudius selected cities in each of the five provinces named in 1:1 to become Roman colonies. In the fourth place, Claudius, like some other emperors, utilised both forced and voluntary deportation and expulsion of people, the most famous being the expulsion of Jews (and Christians) in 48/49 CE. This was possibly for reasons that was initiated by the growth of Christianity in Rome. A large Jewish population in Asia Minor combined with the Romanisation of its urban centres could have been an attractive destination. In the last place, Peter uses terms to refer to the first recipients that are in the semantic domain of colonisation (Jobes, 2013: 38–39).

Another possibility could also have been that some members of the audience were forced into diaspora in the time when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Many Jews (and Jesus followers who were seen as part of Judaism at the time) were sold as slaves and/or deported out of Jerusalem to other parts of the Empire.

Although this argument, like other reconstructions of the first recipients of 1 Peter, is based on speculation, it may be useful to this study. It is possible for these believers who were relocated from their homeland to another province, to have experienced some sort of trauma in the process. It could also have been possible that they were experiencing hostility as “strangers and exiles” due to their “foreignness” as “colonists”, but also because of their Christian identity. Living in “Babylon” alone, would have caused some groups of people in the Roman Empire to experience some form of trauma. As people from a mixed socio-economic and ethnic background, living in the diaspora as Jesus followers away from their home, they would have experienced the daily realities of Empire (that

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<sup>94</sup> Williams (2012: 63) states that most modern scholars consider the five areas in 1 Peter 1:1 to refer to Roman provinces rather than regions or districts. Many also contest that the author was not ignorant of geographical specifications and that it was his intention to send the letter bearer to each of these areas in the order he stated.

possibly forced them to live in diaspora). The next section explores what this “empire” might have looked like, in relation to the trauma elements in 1 Peter.

### **3.3.2 Social-moral world of 1 Peter<sup>95</sup>**

Constructing the social and moral world of 1 Peter can be as challenging as to determine who wrote the letter and to whom it was written. 1 Peter reflects a certain historic situation, but it is difficult to pinpoint the precise picture of what this world looked like. A possible construction of this world may be given, from the evidence we find in New Testament texts as well as other contemporary texts.

The New Testament consists of documents that originated in a world where the Roman Empire was present. Some New Testament texts refer openly to the Empire and the Empire's ambassadors, whilst others use more subtle ways to talk about and criticise the Empire. Carter (2006: 1) suggests that even when a text does not speak about the Empire as such, it is always present. Carter (2006: 12–13) further considers the New Testament texts to be “hidden transcripts” – they were not intended to be public writings to a general Roman audience. They were documents written to followers of Jesus who were crucified by the Roman Empire, who found themselves in particular circumstances. The New Testament authors, particularly Peter in 1 Peter, wanted to help their audiences negotiate life amidst Empire, but living as Christ-followers (Diehl, 2013: 70).

The focus of this section is to try to construct a picture of the Roman Empire – the Empire that was the daily reality of 1 Peter's audience that contained elements that could have caused many people, not only believers, immense amounts of trauma.

#### **3.3.2.1 *The World of the Roman Imperial Presence***

The Roman Empire dominated the people and land of the Mediterranean area of that time. The Empire stretched from Britain in the Northwest, modern France and Spain in the West, over Europe to Turkey and Syria in the East and North Africa in the South. This Empire ruled over 65 million people from different social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

Carter explains that there were three general characteristics of the Roman Empire that were prominent, especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. The Empire was firstly known as an aristocratic Empire. A small elite of 3% of the population ruled the Empire. They determined the everyday reality of the other 97% by the quality of life they lived, power that was exploited, controlling the riches of the Empire and enjoying a higher status in society.

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<sup>95</sup> In certain parts of section 3.3.2 I am cross-referencing from the third chapter of my master's thesis (De Kock, 2014).

Secondly, the Empire relied primarily on agricultural means. The riches and power of the Empire were built on land – who owned the land and who worked the land. The elite primarily owned the land and exploited those who worked on it through high taxes. Fear was used to keep these people and all others in the Empire at bay, for Rome was also (in the third place), known for its strong military presence and the use of the military to keep the “peace of Rome” (*pax Romana*). Together with this, the elite also controlled communication media by coinage, building of monuments, buildings, statues and temples. These visual aids, along with the military, presented what the Empire stood for. Networks of patronage and alliances between Rome and the elites in Roman provinces or colonies (such as the Jewish leaders in Judea), exercised power, kept the status quo in place and protected the interests of the elite (Carter, 2006: 3–4).

To achieve this, the Empire ruled its people by fear. From soldiers strutting up and down roads and neighbourhoods, to the imperial presence through coins, monuments, temples and statues, it was all about who controlled the minds of the people. Fear was the “rhetorical strategy” of the Empire. It could be safe to say that trauma was then an experience that most people experienced in that time. There are also other factors that could have contributed to this.

### **3.3.2.2 A collectivist, stratified society and economic circumstances**

The ancient Mediterranean world and particularly the Roman Empire was first and foremost characterised by collectivism (Malina, 2010: 17).<sup>96</sup> The Empire was at its core, being a collectivistic-oriented society, also a stratified society. Society was formed and maintained through social classification. One was born into a class and it was very difficult, even impossible, to move up in the ranks. On the top of the hierarchy, the emperor stood. The emperor was responsible for the general economic and military concerns of the Empire. Both were important in keeping the power of the elite, who enjoyed many privileges (Stambaugh & Balch, 1986: 110, 113).

The emperor (especially since the time of Augustus) was considered to be the *pater patriae* (father of the fatherland) (Carter, 2008: 238). He was at the top of the hierarchy that characterised androcentric and patriarchal notions and structures in society. Women had some part in the elite

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<sup>96</sup> Malina (2010: 17–18) defines collectivism and individualism in the following way: “Collectivism and it’s opposite, individualism, are somewhat technical terms to describe in general how people think of themselves and others. Collectivistic persons think of themselves primarily as part of a group, for example as a member of a family, an ethnic group, a team, a gang. In their ‘off the top of the head’ judgements, group members come first, and what counts above all are the needs and concerns of group members. Single persons always represent the groups in which they are embedded. Collectivists take their clues for what to do and think from the values and attitudes of the members of the group in which they are embedded. They feel their best when their group and its members succeed in the face of competing groups. It is groups that are unique and distinctive, not individuals. Individualistic persons, on the other hand, think of themselves as having to stand on their own two feet, as having to make it by themselves, on their own terms. They believe they have to think for themselves and make their own choices alone. They are willing to use other people who support their goals. Their parents are happy with their successes on their own behalf. Individuals are unique and distinctive, not groups.”

class, as well as the lower classes, but they were to be submitted and subordinate to the patriarchal system of the time. Whilst the elite enjoyed the riches of the Empire, the rest of the population had to cope with this stratified society that determined their lot in life (Carter, 2006: 3, 5; Stewart, 2010: 156).

An immense gap between the elite and the rest of the population existed. Most of the population were artisans, peasant farmers, merchants, slaves and those who were considered to be unclean and worthless. Many had considerable means, but most were very poor such as unattached widows, orphans, disabled people and unskilled day labourers (Carter, 2006: 3; Williams, 2012: 108). For most life was a daily struggle for survival.

Urban life for non-elites was dirty, crowded and smelly. There were a number of dangers that were always a threat; food shortages, fires, floods, infected water, infectious diseases, animal and human waste, ethnic tension and job instability. People living in rural areas also knew most of these threats. Poor crop returns resulted in immediate food shortages, a limited seed source for the next year, the breakup of families, where some were forced to go to the cities to find work and the inability to pay taxes and loans (and thus risking the loss of land). The anxiety and stress surrounding daily survival were prevalent (Carter, 2006: 10–11).

Because of the collective thinking and the way in which society was maintained, certain people fell outside of the group. Beggars, prostitutes, disinherited sons, widows with no family, orphans or children who were abandoned on the streets to fend for themselves were most often cut off from the in-groups that would guarantee survival in this culture. They were seen as people who lived outside of the social norms that were prescribed for them and this left them isolated (Malina, 2010: 23).

In regard to 1 Peter, Williams (2012: 128) suggests that there are various opinions in scholarship pertaining to the economic circumstances of that time, especially when looking at 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Asia Minor. He concludes that the audience of 1 Peter was of a mixed socio-economic race and he comes to this conclusion by looking at some of the clues the letter gives in terms of the economic circumstances of the first recipients.

Williams (2012: 117) argues that the most useful indicators that the letter provides, are applicable to specific groups in the congregations that Peter addresses. A large portion of these appear in the household code. The first group that Peter addresses is the household servants or slaves. Peter addresses a certain type of slave, namely οἰκέται. These slaves would have had a more bearable existence in what their masters expected from them, but they were sometimes also subject to a cruel master. Although their status was just below freedmen and full citizens in the social hierarchy, the economic situation of many of them would have been considerable. οἰκέται would have had food,

clothing and shelter, but when famine struck, they would have felt it the most severe (Williams, 2012: 117–119).

The second group that Peter addresses and that gives some insight into the socio-economic circumstances of the first addressees, are the wives. They are instructed in 3:3-4: “Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight” (NRSV). The question is how wealthy did one have to be in order to wear fine clothes, gold and have braided hair? Williams states that there is little consensus amongst scholars about this. These instructions could have been to women of substantial means, but also to those who attempted to imitate the rich and powerful in their appearance, but could not afford it (Williams, 2012: 119–120).

A third indicator of the socio-economic standing of the first addressees may be 4:3 where their former participation in some activities are described (living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, excess feasting, carousals, and lawless idolatry). Williams argues that even though these practices were associated with local voluntary associations, it reveals little about their socio-economic status.<sup>97</sup> A last indicator of socio-economic conditions in 1 Peter is the specific warning given to the elders. They are exhorted in 5:2 “to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you do it – not for sordid gain but eagerly.” Williams interprets it as they must seek to meet the needs of others, rather than greedily desire to make a profit through deceit and dishonesty. It could be suggested that the elders in the Petrine communities could have made economic gains from their positions of leadership.

If the elders were chosen without regard to their social or economic standing, very little can be known about their economic situation. If eldership, however, was a position that was fulfilled by those who already had respect in the community and who had leadership in the household structure, then they could have been amongst the wealthiest members of the Christian communities. Williams argues for the latter, but he also states that it is difficult to determine their level of their socio-economic status (Williams, 2012: 122–126).

Thus, Williams makes the conclusion that the first recipients of 1 Peter were of mixed socio-economic backgrounds where most fell somewhere between utter poverty and boundless wealth, but most would have found themselves in an insecure and risky economic situation (Williams, 2012: 126, 128).

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<sup>97</sup> Williams refers to Philip A. Harland in this regard, who shows that these voluntary associations were much more economically stratified than many scholars have argued for (Harland, 2003: 25–53; Williams, 2012: 121–122).



Williams argues that the first audience's economic situation could have had an impact when these believers were confronted with suffering or conflict of some kind. Few, if any, would have been able to afford special privileges when a conflict situation arose. Wealthier citizens might have been able to conquer the conflict by giving public or private donations, but those in these Christian communities would not have had the means to do so. The socio-economic standings of the recipients could have made them vulnerable to attacks from opponents and when hostility came to the fore, it could have driven them into a serious economic crisis. Thus, already by means of their socio-economic status, these believers could have been subjected to trauma and shame in a culture that considered honour as one of the most important values (Williams, 2012: 128).

### **3.3.2.3 *The values of honour and shame***

The culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE world was based on the social values of honour and shame (DeSilva, 2000a: 23). It may be considered as a dominant ideology that determined many things in the Empire (Batten, 2007:13). Richard Rohrbaugh states that honour was the core value of the ancient Mediterranean world.<sup>98</sup> It determined everything in life: one's behaviour, interaction with others, how one dressed, ate, married, even up to the point of death. One's place on the scale of honour determined public rights, responsibilities, public speech, friend, associates and the guests that one would invite to dinner – it even determined which seat one would be given at the dinner table of a friend (Rohrbaugh, 2010: 109).

Honour was seen as a person's self-worth, both in terms of a person's own sense of worth and that which was earned by respect by others. "What other people will say" was indeed a constant factor in the honour seeking game. Honour was also something that constantly brought conflict as people competed with each other in order to gain honour. Men were the maintainers, seekers and keepers of honour, whilst women were associated with shame. Women were supposed to act in ways that brought honour to men. Honour was central to the identity of families and the community and it stood in relation to one's social status. A person low on the hierarchal order of society would have expected much less honour than somebody higher up. Honour and shame were also central to the understanding of gender, gender roles and sexuality. Although women were viewed as the weaker gender (biologically, intellectually and morally), they were (paradoxically) powerful because of their potential to bring collective and public disgrace (Elliott, 1996: 168–169).

Shame, on the other hand, was obtained when someone (in most cases, a man) did not adhere to society's values such as a person who fled a battle scene. Secondly, it consisted of having a sensitivity towards group values, because people would rather ignore certain activities in order not to be shamed such as a man or a woman who would turn down an offer to go into an affair or a

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<sup>98</sup> Rohrbaugh is professor emeritus of Christian studies at Lewis and Clark College, USA.

soldier who would not flee the battlefield. Shame, however, in general terms, had a negative connotation and had people living in fear of being shamed in public (DeSilva, 2000a: 25).

According to Elliott (1996: 174–176), there are numerous terms and related semantic fields that refer to honour and shame in 1 Peter, as shown in section 3.2.5. This letter, which addresses matters of social order, alleged misconduct and public insult that result in suffering, uses the language of honour and shame to do so. These believers were shamed because of their identity, their unwillingness to participate in activities that were foreign to their faith and living a life that was different from their neighbours and this might have been a cause of trauma for the audience. Peter does not encourage them to avoid shame, but he tells them to act and live in such a way that those who are shaming them, feel ashamed themselves. Another way that they are shamed, is by the label “Christian” which was used by outsiders to label the Jesus followers (4:16). Shaming and suffering thus must come to no surprise to them, as Christ was shamed and suffered and he is being held up by the author as an example to them (Elliott, 1996: 169–172). Their identity as being part of God’s family in return brings them honour in God’s eyes (DeSilva, 2010: 160).

Shame, in the Mediterranean culture, also had a “positive” side. Shame was also understood as being synonymous with modesty, shyness, or deference. These virtues were constructed to be feminine. This enabled a woman to preserve her chastity, as well as obedience to the paterfamilias of the family which she belonged to (Moxnes, 2010: 21). In this sense, shame was seen as normal in society. However, I would like to argue reading from a trauma lens, that although Peter admonishes wives in 3:3-5 to adorn themselves inwardly and see the example of the “holy women” that accepted their husbands’ rule, there are notions in the household code that defy the social “normality” in households (discussed in 3.3.2.5). The mere fact that slaves and wives in the audience were Jesus followers – therefore not conforming to social expectations of following the religion of the paterfamilias, might have been seen as situations where shame could have been put on them and therefore, by implication, trauma, especially if abuse and slander were part of the package.

It is, however, important to state that the relation between trauma and honour and shame may become blurred. It is a challenging argument to make, for it can very quickly become circular. If people in the Roman Empire lived in an honour and shame culture, why would it have been traumatic? To perform to acquire honour was a social convention of the time and a reality for these people and would not necessarily have been experienced as traumatic. I argue that it is not essentially that trauma lies in the values of honour and shame, but how it could have played out for Jesus followers living in Asia Minor in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE and how they were shamed, by means of slander, economic oppression, physical or verbal abuse et cetera, might have led to experiences that could be described as “traumatic”.

### **3.3.2.4 Patronage, friendship and benefaction**

David DeSilva (2000a: 96, 121; 2000b: 766) states that although the culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Mediterranean world was grounded on the values of honour and shame, patronage was the basic building block of the Roman Empire.<sup>99</sup> It can be described as hierarchical contracts or understandings between people of different social classes that existed for certain periods of time. These understandings existed between a wealthy patron and a poorer client that provided certain services to the patron (to boost the honour of the patron) for basic life necessities (such as land, food, shelter and protection). It sometimes happened that the patron exploited these relationships as the one who had the sole power. Clients frequently had to flatter the patron and so show honour to them, because the client relied on the status and power of the patron. These relationships were mostly not voluntary, but it gave clients the means to negotiate their daily struggle for survival (Batten, 2010: 75).

In the ancient world, there was a great difference between friendship, benefaction and patronage. Although patrons and benefactors used the language of friendship, there was a difference between friendship and benefaction. Friendship in the Roman Empire was associated with loyalty, trust, to share material wealth with one another, grace and to support one another in times of suffering and hardship (Batten, 2010: 58-59). Friendship used familial language like ἀδελφὸς and ἀδελφή when conversing with one another. It was seen as beneficial for both parties and it existed between people from the same social class.

Benefaction, on the other hand, had other implications. A benefactor gave financing and means to an individual and group in exchange for honour and being praised in public. However, a benefactor did not place the beneficiary in a subordinate role like patronage did, although there were people who were benefactors, as well as patrons. Benefaction existed in certain contexts as an ideal friendship and was seen as an unselfish deed. The most important difference between the two was that a client could not pay a patron back and benefaction was based on voluntary relations. To become a client already meant to be shamed in public (Batten, 2010: 68–69, 78).

Peter urges his first audience to “do good” to others (in order to ease the tension or conflict with others), although he knows that these good deeds may get them into trouble again (2:20; 3:6, 14, 16-17; 4:19). Peter thus encourages them to do good, even though they suffer for it. Part of the reason why these believers were experiencing tensions with their neighbours, was possibly because they had distanced themselves from certain activities in which they were previously involved (4:3-4). Peter does not specify the particular activities in the letter, but it could have included public events.

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<sup>99</sup> DeSilva is professor of New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary, USA.

He does not encourage them to recommit to these activities in order to avoid suffering, but rather gives them a strategy to help them to cope with the tensions (Williams, 2014: 82, 102).

It is also possible, given the economic circumstances of the first recipients, that they would not have been able to practice civil benefaction to such an extent that was expected from them from society's point of view, but they must to good works in which possible ways they can.

### **3.3.2.5 Household and family relations in the Roman Empire**

The Greco-Roman culture in which the audience of 1 Peter found themselves, were patriarchal as a society. In the family, the *paterfamilias* (family father) was in charge of the household. Patriarchy did not only exist in the family and also in society at large. Societal gender roles were grounded in the family and it was extended to the family. Males, especially older ones, did not only dominate their households, but also public life. Daughters were raised to follow and sons to lead. Male children would get opportunities that female children would never have. The public life was considered to be masculine, whilst the domestic space was regarded as feminine (Duff, 2017: 138-139).

The household and family relations were seen as the basic form of society in Mediterranean culture. It was something that everyone was born into. The family or household that one was born into, was seen as the primary indicator of one's identity, as well as social status. Honour and shame were also a crucial part of family relations. Families often had competition with one another in terms of honour, wealth and status. It was thus important for a household to work together and to avoid conflict in the house in order to gain these aspects from the outside world (DeSilva, 2000a: 157–173).

Family and the importance thereof in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Empire can hardly be overvalued. The family into which an individual was born to a great extent determined the future of that person. A person born of slaves would probably labour as a slave as an adult. The son of a tradesperson or craftsman would probably do the same trade as an adult. Children born into aristocratic households would either be groomed to rule (boys) or marry well (girls) (Duff, 2017:139).

However, a typical household in the Roman Empire consisted of more than just family in the modern sense of the word. It not only included immediate relatives, but also slaves, freed persons, workers that were hired, as well as tenants and partners in trade or craft. The man was the father, head, and master of the household. The woman was subordinate to the man, but responsible for the running of the household. Children who were not yet married were also part of the household, but in richer families married children and their families could also have been part of the household. Slaves and sometimes clients, lived under the same roof as the family (DeSilva, 2000a: 173–197; Mouton, 2014: 174).

The structure of the household or *oikos*, in both the Greek cities and the Empire, was patriarchal and hierarchical in nature. Fatherly or patriarchal responsibility and reign over others, as well as submission of women, children, and slaves were taken for granted. The household functioned as a micro cosmos of Roman society. The core function of the ancient household codes was therefore socio-political. The household codes were meant to maintain good order in both the household and broader society (Mouton, 2014: 174). The household functioned as an economic unit. Many households had family businesses or worked in the same trade in order to generate an income for the household. Families of a higher social class used their houses as places where friends could network. They also had the means to have slaves and clients to their trade or work for them (DeSilva, 2000a: 179).

The wife in the house was kept to the private sphere of the household, whilst the husband as the patriarch, moved outside in the public sphere. Women who moved outside of the private household were seen as social threats and had the potential to dishonour her household. This was also a reason why the patriarch would protect his daughter, because of the possibility that the daughter could bring shame on her house (especially in regard to her sexuality and how the ancient world understood sexuality and sex). The ideal was for a daughter to get married as soon as possible in order for her to be under her husband's authority, because an unmarried woman was seen as a threat to society and her family's honour (DeSilva, 2000a: 173–197).

Marriage, in the time of the New Testament, for Jews and Gentiles, formed the foundation of the household. By our modern standards, girls were very young when they married – amongst the elite, girls married as early as 12 years old, and the non-elite were mostly older. Boys or men were significantly older, often in their late twenties. Men had exclusive sexual access to their wives and the children born out of the marriage belonged to him. Everyone in the household had their specific tasks that assured a smooth running of the household (MacDonald, 2010: 34–35).

Living in a patriarchal society such as the Roman Empire placed certain expectations on members of the household. Wives, for example, were expected to follow the rule of their husbands. This also applied to maintaining the religion and worship of the husband's gods. Similarly, slaves were also expected to adhere to these expectations. Peter probably writes to wives who were Jesus followers married to non-Jesus followers. Wives not following the religion of their husbands posed a threat to the stability of their households, as well as the honour of their husbands. It is possible that they could have been subjected to abuse and slander by their own husbands – causing trauma to shatter the narratives of their existence (Aageson, 2004:36-37).

Slavery was a reality for many people in the Empire. About one out of every five people who lived in Rome itself, were slaves. Slaves were not seen as people, but as property. A person was born into

slavery or forced into it by means of war (where the people who lost the war were forced to be slaves), or when a person could not pay his or her debt (as it happened to some clients who could not pay their debt to their patron). The conditions under which the slave functioned, were determined by the master and slave-owners, who had different expectations of their slaves. The fear to become a slave was an ever-present reality for many in the Empire and also a way by which the elite controlled the non-elite (DeSilva, 2000a: 190–193).

The sexual exploitation of slaves was a given, as slaves and domestic servants were seen as property. Female and male slaves were supposed to be sexually available to their masters at all times – adults, adolescents, or children. On many occasions 1 Peter refers to the first audience suffering for doing good (for example, 1 Peter 2:18-25, where physical abuse is related to the suffering of Christ). It is possible that Peter wants to give meaning to slaves who suffer beatings for “doing good”. This may include attempts to resist sexual availability to their masters (MacDonald, 2007: 95, 105).

Graeco-Roman society was a society with a high number of slaves. This influenced the mentality of the society. The boundaries between freed persons and slaves were fluid. Slaves could be set free as, for instance, a result of war and cross the boundary between slavery and freedom. Slaves and freed persons lived close to each other in households. This created situations of ambiguity, where slaves were both considered to be the “other” and also “similar”. The Roman system around bodily boundaries, that included beatings and sexual penetration may have served as ways to secure boundaries between free people and slaves (Moxnes, 2014: 132).

Therefore, when 1 Peter speaks of beatings that household slaves would experience, it could have been from both good masters and cruel ones. It may have been that beatings and sexual penetration of their bodies were part of their existence in the household. These acts were ways for the master to express the power relations between him and the slaves. Moxnes states: “When slave bodies were exposed to beating the marks inscribed them into the social system of hierarchy and domination. 1 Peter 2:18-25 not only describe how the masters use their power to mark the slave bodies as subordinate and subhuman, but 2:18 seemingly urges slaves to accept their position by saying “be subordinate” (2014: 132-133).

The stance of wives and slaves in the households of the Roman Empire at the time when 1 Peter was written, was seen as normal in society. Physically and verbally abusing a wife was normal. Sexually exploiting a slave was not out of the ordinary. The question that pops up is whether 1 Peter and other New Testament documents that incorporated household codes and addressed specific groups in their audiences would have seen this as “normal” in light of the gospel of Jesus. One may



argue, at a first glance, that 1 Peter is accommodating towards this “normality”, as the letter does not seemingly condemn these types of behaviour.

The household language and imagery appropriated in 1 Peter are very closely linked to the identity of the first recipients, as well as Peter’s use of the Hebrew Scriptures in order to confirm his recipients’ identity.<sup>100</sup> Peter also addresses specific people in the household, such as slaves, wives and husbands, giving them advice in how they must manage themselves amongst threatening circumstances. Whether Peter encourages them to accommodate or resist the suffering and hostility they face in the household, is debatable.<sup>101</sup>

I would argue that it seems as if Peter is encouraging them to accommodate what they are facing in their daily lives in order to avoid hostility, abuse, or suffering. However, I believe that there are elements in the text, especially in the household code, that suggest resistance to the status quo and therefore the apparent accommodation does not hold ground. It may thus be argued that trauma-related themes and words present in the text reflect the situation described above. One may also argue that the author of 1 Peter not only wrote this letter to notify wives and slaves that their lives are being shattered by realities that seem “normal” to the rest of society, but that there are hope and ways of coping with their situation. This will be discussed further in chapter four.

### **3.3.2.6 Identity in the Roman Empire**

As stated in the previous section, it is important to point again to the fact that identity in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE was determined by one’s family relations and social status. A person’s identity, which was a complex matter in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, was also determined by one’s associations with others (to which voluntary society or group a person or family belonged) (Harland, 2009). For those who were the clients in a patronage relation, their role in the relationship determined their identity. The

<sup>100</sup> Specific references are made in section 3.2.2. in terms of the household imagery and references in 1 Peter.

<sup>101</sup> David Horrell (2007) discusses the debate between David Balch and John Elliott in this regard and makes a case for a third stance. The Balch-Elliott debate originated out of the contrasting conclusions that were drawn in their published monographs on 1 Peter. Balch focused in his work on the household code in 1 Peter. Balch saw the function thereof in connection to the tensions between believers and society at large. Balch then argues that the author of 1 Peter urges his first recipients to accept the Hellenistic social values without compromising their loyalty to Christ. He thus takes a more accommodating stance in his views on the first audience’s relationship with the outside world. Elliott, on the other hand, with his social-scientific criticism, took another approach to 1 Peter. He focused primarily on the terms *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους*, arguing that these labels refer to the recipients’ socio-political status. The strategy of 1 Peter then, according to Elliott, was to build internal cohesion amongst the believers, to foster a distinctive communal identity and offer resistance to external pressures to conform to the norms of society. “Where Balch sees assimilation and conformity, Elliott sees distinctiveness and resistance,” says Horrell (2007: 114). Horrell instead makes a case for “polite resistance”, from the perspective of a postcolonial reading of 1 Peter. He states that the letter does not contain a “hidden transcript” like Revelations, but that the author of 1 Peter urges his audience to conform towards certain things and to resist others. “The author’s stance towards the empire, then, and the one he commends to his readers, is one in which, we might say, he ‘snarls sweetly’, or practices a ‘sly civility’ ... Yet the author’s resistance is not merely hidden or ‘silent’, but in certain contexts and on certain points comes clearly and publicly into view. Perhaps an alternative phrase better captures the particular strategy this author represents: he exemplifies polite resistance” (Horrell, 2007: 143).



collective identity of a person in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Roman Empire, was accompanied by values such as loyalty, trustworthiness and friendship (in some cases).

It was expected to show loyalty to groups and families, but the Roman Empire itself claimed loyalty and allegiance from its subjects. This were propagated by ideological and theological arguments that justified the Empire's power. Carter (2008: 57) explains:

Imperial theology promoted the claims that the gods, especially Jupiter, had chosen Rome and its emperor to rule the world and manifest the gods' will and blessings among the nations. These messages were asserted through civic celebrations of victories and rulers, as well as by image-bearing coins, statues, buildings, imperial personnel, festivals, poets, writers, and so forth. The imperial cult, frequently promoted by local elites, provided a way of understanding the world and Roman presence as reflecting the will and pleasure of the gods. It offered residents of a city like Ephesus a mostly voluntary means of marking their participation in that world by expressing loyalty and gratitude through sacrifices to images in temples, and at games, street parties, artisan guild meals, and so on.

Rome and its allies in the Empire propagated this ideology. These ideas were structured to keep the hierarchical society intact, to keep people in submission to the Empire, and to justify the elite's privileges and self-indulging practices. Submission to the Empire was equated with submission to the Roman gods. Several visual aids, such as coins, statues, architecture, festivals, monuments, etcetera, were used to help people to understand where their loyalty was supposed to be. People of all classes and cultures in the Empire were frequently reminded to whom they belonged to (Carter, 2006: 83–85).

Judith Diehl (2013: 39) states that when the New Testament authors said "Jesus is Lord", they by implication also proclaimed "Caesar is not".<sup>102</sup> This had profound implications for the early Christians, who were expected to show allegiance to Rome by proclaiming to whom their identity belonged to. It could be argued that some kept their eyes on Rome when confessing "Jesus is Lord", for they knew that this could have profound consequences in their everyday lives.

1 Peter, as many other New Testament documents, is concerned with the identity and identity formation of the audience. Because of their identity, these Jesus followers experience some sort of suffering and alienation. The Roman ideology described in this section, looms not only in the background, but it is ever present in the world of these believers. Where faith in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE is associated with loyalty, trust and fidelity, Peter urges these believers to stay steadfast in their identity in Christ (also as the suffering One) amidst the animosity they face. However, to stay

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<sup>102</sup> Diehl is a New Testament scholar who currently teaches at Denver Seminary in the USA.

steadfast in this identity and loyalty in Christ could have had profound implications for these followers of Jesus, living in Asia Minor in the Roman Empire.

### **3.3.3 Trauma elements in 1 Peter**

Although daily life proved to be traumatic for many people living in the Empire, it is important, given the theme of this study, to highlight specific events that could have caused trauma for the early Jesus followers, as well as trauma that was felt because of their identity as believers in their daily existence.

One may ask whether all of these events may have informed 1 Peter, as they span different geographical areas and time frames. In this section, plausibilities rather than absolutes come to the fore. It is possible that one or more of these events influenced 1 Peter's audience and author, but it is rather impossible to know this with certainty. However, given the nature of these events and the subject of this chapter, it is important to focus on these events as probable causes of trauma for the first audience.

#### **3.3.3.1 Specific events that caused trauma**

Whilst everyday life for many in the Roman Empire could have been a source of trauma and suffering, there are specific events that happened before and during the time that 1 Peter was written, that require specific attention. The first is the crucifixion of Jesus himself.<sup>103</sup> Smyth calls it "the great trauma" for the early Christians (1999: 3). There is reason to believe that the early Christians, because of the nature of this violent death, were still traumatised even years after the event. Second generation Christians would have inherited this second-hand trauma, because of the constant reminder of it (as perhaps the key feature of the Christian faith) and the social hostility and sporadic persecution that they themselves faced.

Crucifixion in the ancient times, especially in the Roman Empire, was seen as the most extreme form of punishment. The victim was first whipped or brutally tortured. Crucifixion also appears to have displayed a strong sexual element. Then the person's arms were nailed to a crosspiece of wood or tied to it by rope. Afterwards the victim was hoisted up onto a pole and the crosspiece attached to the pole in order for the person's feet not to touch the ground. The victim was left in public eyesight whilst he died. Death sometimes came quickly, but the purpose was to extend the public humiliation of the victim for as long as possible (Carr, 2014: 157).

Victims of crucifixion were subjected to this brutal form of capital punishment and brutal ridicule. Except for the public humiliation and shame that the victim suffered, the crucified victim was often denied a burial. And this was very important for various cultures in the Roman Empire (Carroll &

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<sup>103</sup> Chapter four will explore the example of Jesus' suffering as a rhetorical strategy in the letter in more detail. Here, it is important to focus on the crucifixion event itself as a source of trauma for the early Christians.

Green, 1995: 168–169). Most of the times, after the victim died, the Romans left the body on the cross, in public display, rotting and being pecked away by birds. The goal was not just to hurt or kill the person, but to humiliate a rebel or slave or murderer in the public eye, whilst terrorising anyone who would look up and gaze at the sight. “Crucifixion was empire-imposed trauma intended to shatter anyone and any movement that opposed Rome,” Carr states (2014: 157–158).

Crucifixion during the Roman Empire must not be understood as an individual event. It was a method to keep fear intact. Those who saw it was appalled by it, but they must have also received a message and felt the fear inscribed by the message. David Tombs argues that not only was Jesus publicly humiliated by his torture and death, he was most probably also sexually abused during his assault.<sup>104</sup> Tombs suggest that crucifixion in the ancient world carried a strong sexual element. It can be understood as a form of sexual abuse that involved sexual humiliation and assault. Victims were crucified naked – this would have carried a message of sexual domination to passers-by. The sexual element in these practices were part of the message of terror and trauma. A person who opposed the Roman Empire did not only die, but was stripped of all personal honour and human dignity. Adult men were stripped naked whilst being flogged and further mocked and spat on (Tombs, 1999: 100–106). The sexual nature and violence that accompanied crucifixion most definitely added to the trauma of the victim and the onlookers.

Although it is evident that Peter also refers to Jesus’ life and teaching as a whole in the letter (such as his integrity in speech, his goodness and rejection of violence), it is clear that the suffering of Jesus plays an integral part in the letter. The memory of it was still alive for the early church (Horrell, 2014: 141–142). Peter, as the author of this letter, might also still be traumatised by this event at the moment of writing this letter, as being an eyewitness to the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

A second event that might have caused trauma for the early Christians and specifically, Peter’s first audience, are the various expulsions of Jews (and Christians as they were still seen as part of the Jewish faith at that time) from Rome in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE – the most famous being during the reign of Claudius in 49 CE. Acts 18:2 makes reference to this in the story of Priscilla and Aquila arriving in Corinth after they were forced to leave Rome (Jobes, 2005: 32–33). It is possible that many of these people went to different places in the Empire, but also to Asia Minor, after being expelled by the emperor. There could have been an influx of many expelled people in Asia Minor, bringing their traumatic experience with them and also being further traumatised by arriving in a place unknown to them.

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<sup>104</sup> Tombs is currently professor in Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

In terms of the Roman law of the time, Jews in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE belonged to one of the following categories: Some were slaves and they were subject to criminal law. They could be punished by their master or the state. Secondly, some were free people, but could still be chased out of the city without a trial. Lastly, some Jews were Roman citizens who could only be expelled from the city when they were found guilty of a criminal offence in a Roman court. They also had the right to appeal to a higher authority – to the emperor (Rutgers, 1998: 98).

There were various expulsions of Jews during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. One can single out their position under Claudius' reign as an example. Jews had a difficult time during Claudius' reign and several privileges were taken from them. They specifically were instructed to respect their non-Jewish neighbours where they lived in gentile cities, especially in terms of religious and political rights, and so the state would respect theirs. Christians, whether Jewish or non-Jewish of origin, could be accused of violating all three points of Claudius' policy by disturbing the public peace (through their street preaching), not adhering to accepted morals and engaging in conversion of others (specifically Roman citizens) (Jobes, 2005: 32–33). These expulsions would have had a traumatic effect on those expelled – for many would have to leave friends and family behind, move to a place foreign to them with unexpected circumstances surrounding it and enduring physical hardship.

A third event in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE that could have caused trauma for the early Christians was the great fire in Rome in 64 CE. This fire destroyed most of Rome and it is best known of all the fires of ancient Rome because of the detailed report that is available from Tacitus (other ancient authors also wrote significantly on this event). The fire burnt for six days and seven nights, but it was only extinguished on the ninth day. Along with many lives lost, many people were left homeless and many public buildings were damaged or destroyed. Some of the ancient sources (such as the writings of Pliny the Elder, Suetonius and Dio Cassius) without any hesitation, blamed Emperor Nero for the fire. Tacitus claimed that either Nero caused the fire or it was an accident (Keresztes, 1984: 404).

According to Tacitus, Nero had the idea that the Christians would be the ideal candidates to use as scapegoats (to save himself from an embarrassing situation) (Keresztes, 1984: 404). Michael Gray-Fow investigates how Nero might have known about the Christians and comes to the conclusion that it was his advisors that suggested the Christians be blamed for this act. The persecution that followed, justified by this terrible act “that the Christians committed” left a lasting impression on a young church and scarred Jesus followers' position with authorities in years to come. Nero went down in Christian tradition as the first state persecutor of believers, which haunted a traumatised Christian imagination for years after.<sup>105</sup> The persecution also affected Roman attitudes towards Christians in Rome, also in terms of their legal status (Gray-Fow, 1998: 595–596, 616).

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<sup>105</sup> The great fire and the Neronian persecution overshadowed Nero's legacy to a great extent. Virginia Closs (2016: 102) states the following in this regard: “Physically and politically, post-Neronian Rome was a city of

A fourth event in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE that was a cause for trauma for Jews and early Christians was the Roman-Jewish war (66 to 70 CE) coupled with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 CE). As with the Babylonian exile, this was a single event in the history of Judaism that had a great impact on the psyche of the Jewish nation. Until the destruction of the temple by the Romans, this was the communality that the Jews and the Jesus movement shared, as the Jesus movement was primarily seen as a Jewish sect (especially from a Roman perspective). It also meant the final collapse of Judaism as Jesus and his disciples knew it, as the temple would never be rebuilt. This was bound to have a traumatic impact on Jews and Jewish Christians who associated with the temple (Smyth, 1999: 8; Carr, 2014: 209; Reinhartz, 2014: 285). Jewish Christians in fact suffered a double trauma; dealing with the crucifixion of Jesus and the destruction of the temple (Smyth, 1999: 63).<sup>106</sup>

From the day that the Romans seized power from the Hasmoneans, Roman rule in Palestine and Jerusalem were complicated. Herod, who was the first governor, was famous for brutal attempts to secure his power against many feared and imagined plots against him. A series of governors were appointed after Herod, many based on patronage. Those who ruled in this area were known for their mediocrity and incompetence. Trouble in Palestine started in the early 40's CE when the Roman emperor Caligula ordered that a statue of him be built in Jerusalem. Later, some Jews protested because some Roman soldiers burned the Torah (Carr, 2014: 196).

In 64 CE the Roman governor, Gessius Florus, mismanaged a conflict between Jews and Greeks in Caesarea. The crisis soon escalated and he ordered that the treasures in the temple be seized. The country exploded in such a revolt that the Roman forces were initially driven out of the region. Emperor Nero sent three Roman legions to suppress the rebellion and they succeeded in reclaiming Palestine as Roman territory. When Nero died, general Vespasian returned to Rome to gain imperial power for himself. Once he was made emperor, he commissioned his son, Titus, to return to Palestine in 70 CE to finish the job. Titus, who was eager to make an example of Jerusalem, seized the city quickly, plundering the city, destroying the temple, killing many inhabitants, and selling thousands of survivors into slavery (Carr, 2014: 197–198).

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ruins, remainders and survivors. Vespasian and his successors claimed to offer redemption not just from Nero's catastrophic reign, but also from the sequence of civil conflict and successive coups that followed it."

<sup>106</sup> The argument here is that the destruction of the temple had an impact on Jewish Christians, because of their association with it. However, it is more challenging to determine whether this had an effect on believers in Asia Minor. Paul Trebilco (1991: 34) suggests that the Jews of the Diaspora did not support the Jews of Palestine during the Jewish war. It is possible that the Jews of the Diaspora did not see their status as Jews being endangered by the Empire. They did not see a reason for jeopardizing their own position by support the rebellion in Jerusalem. It is thus possible that the Jews (and Christians) in the Diaspora did not have anything to do with the revolt in Jerusalem, but it is possible that they could have felt the effect in terms of loss of identity and trauma.

Women, children and the elderly were especially vulnerable as the Romans raped and killed many of them. Some of their husbands and fathers killed their families rather than to let the Romans get to them (Reeder, 2013: 177). Jewish land was seized and given to Roman soldiers as reward for their service. The Jews (and Christians) living in the diaspora (also Asia Minor) were increasingly seen as rebels and criminals in the Empire. They were blamed, just months after the destruction of Jerusalem, for starting a fire in Antioch. The Jewish community in Antioch and those in other major cities came under attack by their non-Jewish neighbours. In addition, the Romans laid a special tax specifically on the Jews. As the temple tax were no longer necessary, these funds were used to rebuild the great temple to Jupiter in Rome. This was a double insult to the Jews and led to later revolts in the Empire (Carr, 2014: 197–200).

A last event that may have caused trauma to Jesus followers, is the expulsion of these believers from the synagogues. Although there is little evidence for this and a few references to this in the New Testament (John 9, 12, 16, Acts), it may have happened, not only to the Johannine community, but also to others, such as Jesus followers in Asia Minor. It was possible that the Johannine community and other followers of Jesus were part of the Jewish synagogues. It may be that the increasingly successful missionary efforts amongst the Jesus followers were starting to pose a threat to the leadership of the synagogue and this could be a reason why they were expelled (Hendrickx, 1990: 167).

The second reason for the expulsions could have been the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Romans and that it resulted in a crisis of faith. The destruction of the temple brought an identity crisis, especially amongst the Jews and this could have led to expulsions of those who considered Jesus as the Messiah. This informal and localised expulsion of the Christians was possibly formalised and made common practice by the Council of Jamnia (90 CE) (Hendrickx, 1990). Even though there is little evidence of these expulsions, it does not take away the fact that it might have happened (Klink III, 2008: 117–118).

These five events may have played a part in the trauma of the audience Peter wrote to. Trauma causes distortion of time – the traumatising event comes back time and again to haunt the individual or group. Peter might have wanted to encourage these early hearers in an attempt to combat this effect of trauma.

### **3.3.3.2 Anti-Christian prejudice and conflict in the Roman Empire**

In the previous sections, the focus was on the social and moral world of the Roman Empire and specific events that might have caused trauma for the early Jesus followers. In this section, specific factors that might have contributed to the trauma experienced by Jesus followers in Asia Minor will be highlighted. Two studies, namely Holloway's book *Coping with Prejudice: 1 Peter in Social-*



*Psychological Perspective* (2009) and Williams' work *Persecution in 1 Peter: Differentiating and Contextualizing Early Christian Suffering* (2012) will be used and critically engaged with to indicate what Christians may have experienced in terms of conflict and social prejudice in the Roman Empire of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Both these studies did thorough research on these topics and I will only attempt to highlight some important notions in this regard.

Holloway highlights stresses and anxieties that people experience who are the targets of social prejudice. This is important to take note of when one is studying the possible forms and causes of trauma for 1 Peter's first audience. Social stigma, specifically, is a form of stress that places unique demands on those who are socially discriminated against and who are probably traumatised by it.

In the first place: Stigmatised people face the possibility, which is ever present, to become a target of prejudice and discrimination – and thus also an object of suspicion, insult, rejection, hostility and violence. This possibility invades their lives and brings vulnerability, and even trauma. Even when such a person hears of another stigmatised person suffering or being discriminated against, it may cause indirect trauma. The environment becomes toxic and dangerous and those vulnerable must always be on guard against negative encounters with others. Holloway emphasises this especially in regard to early Christianity, where state persecution was indeed sporadic, but the possibility thereof was ever present (Holloway, 2009: 35–36). This may be an assumption that Holloway is making, but in the context of the dissertation, it is possible that the audience faced prejudice and discrimination (seen in the text of 1 Peter).

Secondly, socially stigmatised persons are constantly aware that they are discredited people in the eyes and opinions of others. The reality here is to live with public shame. It links with the first point as it is an ever-present reality. Even though it is clearly not possible to know whether this was a reality for the audience of 1 Peter, it is certainly a possibility (therefore 1 Peter also emphasises the notion of identity). A third form of stigma-related stress is the "stereotype threat". People who belong to socially stigmatised groups who are aware of these stereotypes, are expected to live up to these stereotypes by others. This poses a threat to these groups, regardless whether or not the stigmatised group or person accept these stereotypes (Holloway, 2009: 36–37). This may be seen in 1 Peter 4:16 where the seeming stereotypical name "Christian" is said not to be shameful.

A fourth form of stress associated with social stigma, is called "attributional ambiguity". Those who are stigmatised cannot be sure if certain negative outcomes experienced are attributed to circumstances, to their own shortcomings or to the prejudice by others. It has the benefit that those stigmatised can blame their failures on the prejudice of outsiders. But it is a source of stress and trauma. This could have been the case for the audience of 1 Peter. A last factor is that stigmatised people tend to be ostracised. They are denied access to economic resources, as well as social and



cultural benefits of larger society. In response to this, minority groups will typically support each other and try to provide these resources – this is true of diaspora Jews and the early Christians (Holloway, 2009: 37–38).

These are important considerations to keep in mind when one studies the possible causes and forms of conflict in 1 Peter. There were factors present in society and local communities that made a daily existence in the Roman Empire a dangerous one, also because of the trauma that it caused believers. In the next few paragraphs the possible causes and forms of trauma will be explored by means of Williams' work.

Williams (2012: 236) states that although martyrdom and formal state persecution was a constant threat to Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Roman Empire, it was not the primary danger that was often experienced within these communities. During the time of Emperor Nero, identifying oneself with the Christian faith effectively became illegal and punishable by the state, but Christians were only exposed to official persecution on sporadic occasions (Williams, 2012: 235). This fact, however, did not make the situation less threatening. Williams then explores the possible causes of conflict in 1 Peter.

Williams (2012: 239–240) distinguishes between behavioural causes of conflict and legal causes in 1 Peter. The first behavioural cause of conflict might have been that these believers suffered because of social withdrawal. 1 Peter 4:3-4 states: "You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme" (NRSV). The difficulty is to pin down one particular social activity from which they withdrew. In terms of the voluntary associations, the Christians might have withdrawn because of the close relation between the social and religious aspects of these associations and this could have caused serious problems for them.

The second social activity that the Christians might have withdrawn from, is the imperial cult. The imperial cult was not only a matter of worship, but it was part of everyday life. The imperial cult was present through buildings in local communities, but also by means of social entertainment and leisure. For example, the emperor was honoured by these local communities through festivals and games. The problem that the imperial cult posed for Christians was not merely the requirement to demonstrate fidelity to the emperor, but that it was part of everyday socio-religious life. Non-participation meant complete social withdrawal. It is possible that the negative reaction described in 1 Peter comes from the audience's reluctance to participate in the imperial cult. It is probable that 2:13-17 may be seen as subtle criticism of the emperor and his cult (Williams, 2012: 245–254).

A third activity from which the Christians might have withdrawn from, is the worship of the traditional gods. Even though citizens of the Empire were not bound to take part in the public rituals and religious cult, it was expected from them. The appearance of new religions was not strange in Asia Minor, but the Christian belief in one God caused conflict in religious circles and Christians were seen as “atheists”. The atheism of Christianity was looked on negatively because of the various threats it posed to the wider community. Firstly, the abandonment of a god could result in economic losses for local businesses. Secondly, it also posed a symbolic threat to the community. It was thought that the Christian “atheism” was thought to produce a dangerous reparation from the realm of the divine. Thus, the actions of a few Christians posed risk for the whole community. This posed a cause of conflict between the believers and others in the community (Williams, 2012: 254–258).

The second behavioural cause of conflict that Williams identifies, is found in 1 Peter 2:20; 3:6, 14, 16, 17 and 4:19 – the practice of good works. Peter frequently refers to the audience’s notion of doing good works as a source of suffering, or exhorts them to do good works, because it is better to suffer justly than unjustly. Part of the good which the audience was expected to do, was to abstain from certain “sinful” practices (1 Peter 1:14; 2:1, 11; 3:3, 6, 9, 14; 4:1-3, 15). This withdrawal could have resulted in hostility from other members of the community. It is likely that even some of the less offensive good works such as mutual love, hospitality, ministry through spiritual-giftedness, could have been met with disdain. Williams suggests that rather than focusing on particular good works as the causes of hostility, it is better to see the Christian ethical system as a reason for conflict and suffering of the audience (Williams, 2012: 258–275).

Williams then continues to investigate legal causes of conflict between Christians and the rest of society. This lies primarily with the fact that Christians could have been punished or treated in hostile manners, simply for being a Christian (4:16). It is clear from the text that the name “Christian” was an outsider’s label used to stigmatise followers of Christ. The author of 1 Peter attempts to transform this title into one that affirms the followers of Jesus’ identity in a positive way. Williams argues that 4:16 reflects a situation where the profession of being a Christian was already criminalised. The readers of 1 Peter could have faced legal repercussions for their allegiance to the Christian faith (Williams, 2012: 275–295).

After discussing the possible causes of conflict and social prejudice in 1 Peter, Williams then explores the forms of “persecution” and suffering in 1 Peter. Firstly, there are explicit and implicit references to suffering that the first audience faced or could expect. Scholars agree that the primary form of hostility that these believers faced was slander and verbal abuse. A number of passages in 1 Peter allude to this; the audience is said to be “aligned as evildoers” (2:12) and reviled for the name of Christ (4:14). They are encouraged to “silence the ignorance of foolish people” by doing good (2:15) and they are to repay “insults” with blessing rather than cursing the other (3:9). Because of

the nature of verbal abuse, few of the first audience would have been immune against it. Slaves could have been berated by their masters. Wives could have been verbally abused by their unbelieving husbands. Neighbours could have spread harmful rumours. Other mediums could also be used to communicate abuse (Williams, 2012: 300–301).

A second form of conflict that is mentioned in 1 Peter is physical abuse. This is found in 2:20. Peter speaks to slaves about being obedient to their masters and then he says: “What credit is it if you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong? But if you endure when you suffer for doing good, this earns favour with God” (NRSV). For the slaves who were part of the congregations that Peter wrote to, their conversion to Christianity might have caused serious conflict, because the slaves were expected to adopt the religion of their masters. Being a believer, however, implicated that one is devoted to Christ and not the gods of the master and this could have serious repercussions. Women married to unbelieving men could have faced the same treatment for the same reasons (Williams, 2012: 301–303).

There are some texts in 1 Peter that might reflect a background of legal actions taken against believers because of their Christian identity. This could have been an ever-present threat facing these communities. 1 Peter 2:11-17; 3:14b-16; 4:12-19 may reflect situations in which members of the first audience found themselves for being Christians and doing good (Williams, 2012: 304–316).

There are also other forms of conflict that are not explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the text, but can be constructed from the text or context of 1 Peter. The first is spousal tensions. It was already mentioned that a wife’s conversion to Christianity could have caused her some sort of abuse. One possible consequence of a wife’s conversion could have been divorce. If her conversion was the cause of the divorce, her “misconduct” could have caused her to lose part of or the whole of her dowry. If they stayed married, which was most often the case, the husband could have denied or forced his wife into things. He could have refused her to participate in Christian practices and ceremonies. He could have forced her to partake in pagan rituals. Some husbands could have made legal accusations to torment their wives. In 3:6 Peter exhorts them “not to give into fear”. Scholars argue that the primary cause of fear for these Christian wives could have been physical mistreatment by their husbands (Williams, 2012: 317–322).<sup>107</sup>

Another form of conflict that could have contributed to the suffering and trauma of the first audience, is economic oppression. This could have been one of the most problematic consequences of their

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<sup>107</sup> James W. Aageson rightly states that the wife’s Christian identity could have caused conflict in her household if the husband was not inclined to it. Aageson argues; “The line between insider and outsider blurs, and the ability of the wife to maintain her Christian identity threatens the well-being of the entire community.” It is not only the believing wife that is at risk of her unbelieving husband, but also the entire community of Jesus followers stand at risk to be threatened and ostracised (Aageson, 2004: 43).

conversion. As already discussed, the economic circumstances of these readers were probably unstable. A downturn in their economic situation could have been caused by hostility from former friends and acquaintances. Their pre-conversion business associations could have disappeared and some might have faced boycotts by clients (Williams, 2012: 323–326).

Employers could have made life difficult for them if their Christian beliefs negated them. The situation for some members of the first audience could have turned from difficult to life-threatening in a short period of time. The conversion of orphans, unattached widows and the disabled to Christianity could have meant a complete loss of economic assistance. For those in the lowest economic bracket, it could have become a situation of life and death (Williams, 2012: 322–323). Social ostracism and religious affliction were already discussed, but this also posed a great threat to these communities (Williams, 2012: 323–326).

Carr (2014: 239–240) rightfully states that the sporadic persecution and violence that Christians faced in the Roman Empire, life in general in the Empire and social hostility, was in fact repeating the traumatic events of the cross for the followers of Jesus. Believers told the story of their founder who had suffered the worst form of Roman violence and he survived it.

Carr states it wonderfully:

Jesus' cross and resurrection are contagious for his followers. This message had and has a lasting relevance. In an ancient world of widespread suffering and trauma, Jesus' path through trauma represented a powerful vision of salvation.<sup>108</sup>

Conflict causes trauma and the conflict causes alienation from one's social grouping or body. Because of their identity as Christians or Jesus followers, these believers may have suffered alienation from society and their communities. The way in which Holloway and Williams engage with 1 Peter is helpful to this study in the investigation into the historical situation of the first audience. Although it is only speculations and possibilities, it is meaningful as to what the audience of 1 Peter may have experienced. How does Peter, who was a witness of these traumatic events, make sense of this to the Christians he writes to in Asia Minor? In the next section, this will be discussed.

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<sup>108</sup> Carr states that whilst Jesus' death on the cross (and his resurrection), has helped many people survive their trauma, he cannot help but think of studies that describe trauma survivors who compulsively repeat their traumatising event. Adult survivors of sexual abuse often seek abusive lovers. Veterans of war are drawn to occupations that expose them to more violence. Carr asks whether some followers of Jesus took the crucifixion tradition of the Christian faith to other extremes. Is it possible that they sought out and not just endured various forms of violence? What about those contexts where one does not just reinterpret violence, but that it inflicts more violence on oneself? Carr asks these questions in the light of later church leaders encouraging their congregants to seek out martyrdom. He also asks these questions in light of these dynamics that continue today. There are many subtle ways in which the biblical tradition surrounding the cross still encourages believers to embrace and even seek out suffering that could have been avoidable. For example, women suffering in an abusive relationship or marriage and are told by their pastors "to bear their cross" (Carr, 2014: 240–243).

### 3.3.4 Conclusion to socio-historical aspects of 1 Peter

The hypothesis of this study indicates that 1 Peter probably reflects a situation of trauma in the historical circumstances of the first audience. This section argues that from an historical stance, it is possible that the first audience had some form of trauma given the daily realities of living in the Roman Empire and specific events that concerned Jews and Jesus followers that may have caused trauma. Therefore, it could be possible that it was necessary for 1 Peter to be written. The flipside of the hypothesis also needs to be considered. Could it be possible that the realities of daily living in the Empire and specific events that may have caused trauma, were not traumatising at all, but were considered normal? It may be argued that, for example, being a slave in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Empire was normal for so many people that the possibility of being traumatised was accepted, especially because “trauma” itself was not named necessarily, but only experienced. It may have been normal to be a wife of a non-believing husband, having to endure his abuse, but because others were enduring it, it was not seen as something out of the ordinary.

Considering the other side of the hypothesis raises the following question: was it normal for people to live under such circumstances and not be traumatised by it? It is possible that Peter did not think so (even though the household code seemingly may induce trauma when not read with the socio-historical and rhetorical aspects of the text in mind). It may be argued that Peter wrote this letter to state that living under such conditions is not ordinary and that it needed to be stated and dealt with – that these realities were indeed shattering the narratives of the audience. This is why rhetorical aspects of the text are very important to this study. In the next section, rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter will be considered in order to see how Peter possibly wanted this letter to impact the traumatised lives of his audience.

### 3.4 RHETORICAL ASPECTS

This section can be considered as the culmination point of this chapter. The previous two sections are important in terms of literary and historical aspects of the text and also to help discover trauma narrative(s) that lie(s) behind the text. Rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter are the focus point of this chapter. In this, the three building blocks of trauma (as identified in chapter two) will be used in further discovery of the author’s possible intention with this letter.

A multidimensional reading of a biblical text requires respect for the nature of the text in terms of its rhetorical characteristics. In the following section, the focus will be on identifying certain aspects in the text that will serve the argument of this chapter. In this section, dealing with rhetorical aspects of the text, the following will be focused on in order to identify the implied trauma narrative behind the text: The rhetorical situation of 1 Peter, reading 1 Peter rhetorically, and the history of interpretation of the text.

### 3.4.1 Rhetorical situation of 1 Peter<sup>109</sup>

Thus far in this chapter, the focus was on identifying trauma related elements in the literary and socio-historical perspectives on 1 Peter. Peter wrote a letter to Jesus followers living in diaspora who faced certain trials and suffering that possibly caused trauma in their daily existence. The purpose of this section is to put a new lens on 1 Peter in order to see how Peter views and deals with this trauma. This section is thus concerned with the “rhetorical situation” of 1 Peter.

The reason for embarking on a search for the rhetorical situation of 1 Peter, after looking at literary and socio-historical aspects of the text, is that the rhetorical situation may shed more light on why 1 Peter was written. Literary aspects highlight trauma related elements in the text, whilst the socio-historical aspects of the text highlight the possible circumstances the text stems from. A rhetorical perspective on the text, specifically the rhetorical situation, builds on the previous sections of this chapter to what Peter saw in the historical situation, which motivated him to write this letter. This is done here from the perspective of trauma theory. However, it forms part of a multidimensional reading of 1 Peter.

Lloyd Bitzer, who is the creator of this concept, defines “rhetorical situation” as a complex of persons, objects, events and relationships that may present an actual or potential exigence. (Bitzer, 1968: 6).<sup>110</sup> It may be argued that a rhetorical situation originates from “an actual or potential exigence” – an urgent need or critical matter (as perceived by an author) that is existent in the historical situation. Bitzer further argues that any urgent matter is imperfect and derives from a stumbling block or a situation that anticipates immediate attention and action (Bitzer, 1968: 8). Furthermore, it is not just about identifying people, objects, events or relationships in concrete historical situations. The rhetorical situation is an invention of the author or bystanders themselves. The author sees or anticipates a rhetorical situation that is happening or that could happen in the near future, of which the audience is not necessarily aware (yet). The urgent matter that is visible to an author or perceiver in its particular historical situation, is not that explicit to others (or receivers of a document such as 1 Peter). This is probably because the author suspects that the audience could be aware of some of the factors causing an exigence.

It is therefore impossible for later audiences to reconstruct the urgent matter that negated the rhetorical situation and the author’s reaction to it. The best that can be done, as Elna Mouton states, is to try to *construct* a likely picture of the historical situation and to read between the lines of the text

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<sup>109</sup> I also discussed this concept in my Masters’ thesis and I have to give recognition to that (as I use it here as well) (De Kock, 2014: 92–96).

<sup>110</sup> Bitzer (1968: 6) explains further: “Prior to the creation and presentation of discourse, there are three constituents of any rhetorical situation: the first is the exigence; the second and third are elements of the complex, namely the audience to be constrained in decision and action, and the constraints which influence the rhetor and can be brought to bear upon the audience.”



to see what the rhetorical situation and potential exigence could have been (Mouton, 2002: 116–117).<sup>111</sup> A rhetorical situation also implies a rhetorical audience or implied readers, as well as some restrictions that could limit the change that the rhetorical situation implies.

Mouton (2002: 116–117) is of opinion that the rhetorical situation is concerned with that which the author sees as a stumbling block in the historical situation. The author creates the rhetorical situation when he or she notices a problem in the historical situation. The aim of the letter, from this perspective, can be seen as a reflection of the concern of the writer in what he observes in the historical situation. The author is thus responsible for the rhetorical situation. It could also be argued that the author's moral responsibility concerning the ethical implications of the text increases. The author does not spell out the historical situation explicitly, because it would have been well known to the first recipients. The best that can be done in this instance is to construct the most probable situation from available sources. This attempt will always be from the contemporary reader's perspective.

Mouton (2002: 117–119) furthermore states there can be various persons who participate in the rhetorical situation. A distinction may be made between those who have an interest in the situation (namely the author) and those who are able to control the situation and who wish to change it (namely the rhetorical audience). As the author creates the rhetorical situation, he or she also identifies those persons who can be influenced by the author's discourse and can be agents of change in order to change or prohibit the rhetorical situation.<sup>112</sup>

It may thus be argued that Peter saw a concrete or potential problem in the historical situation of his first recipients – namely, that they were suffering from some kind of trauma. At least Peter gives this clue in terms of his concern about the rhetorical situation at hand. He also gives advice in how this rhetorical situation may be resolved by supplying the proper language, vocabulary and concepts to give the audience alternative perspectives (coping mechanisms) on their suffering and trauma. It is also possible that Peter considered his first recipients to be potential controllers of the rhetorical situation and that it was possible for them to change or transform the need that Peter saw in the historical situation.

In chapter two, the aspects of trauma theory that will be used in this study, are explained according to what Rambo calls “the basic three building blocks” of trauma theory, namely that trauma alternates and shatters language (word), one's relationship with one's body and social body (group), as well as the concept of time (Rambo, 2010: 18–19). In this section, 1 Peter's rhetorical situation will be

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<sup>111</sup> Mouton is professor emerita in New Testament Studies at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

<sup>112</sup> Mouton further states that the rhetorical situation cannot be equated with the historical situation. In the same way the audience of the rhetorical situation cannot be equated with a real audience. The author's concern with the audience is determined by her or his view of the audience (Mouton, 2002: 119).



constructed using these three aspects of trauma theory in order to also put a new perspective on the text (given its literary and socio-historical aspects). This is necessary, because trauma theory provides new views of looking at a familiar text and that it provides a fresh way to imagine the impact or affect that it might have had on the first audience (Reinhartz, 2015: 48).<sup>113</sup>

1 Peter's rhetorical situation may be described in the following way, with specific focus on trauma aspects in the historical situation:<sup>114</sup>

In the first place, trauma alters one's relationship with one's own body, but also with the social group (body) that one belongs to. Although it can be assumed that the first recipients of 1 Peter felt trauma to their physical bodies, their relationship with their community and society seems to be very much influenced by the trauma they experienced to their bodies.<sup>115</sup> In section 3.2.4., traumatic language found in the text are mentioned. It is thus plausible that Peter sees that his first recipients experience the trauma to their physical bodies, whether it was physical or psychological trauma that was perpetrated against them. The number of times Peter refers to "suffering", "slander" and "verbal abuse" confirms this.

Peter's concern with his first audience, however, is very much with the identity of his first recipients. In his rhetorical situation, Peter sees that the trauma that they experienced altered their identity and belonging to their group (in terms of their outside world). Ganzevoort (2008: 21–26) explains when it comes to trauma and identity, that there are two opposed positions. In the first place, trauma poses a threat to identity and in the second place, trauma can be an identity marker.<sup>116</sup> Trauma interrupts and shatters life's narrative – meaning, as well as structures in life. The event that causes trauma is foreign to the identity of a person or a group and trauma undermines identity. Trauma may isolate a

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<sup>113</sup> I am aware of the fact that using trauma theory to construct the rhetorical situation of 1 Peter, may be seen as a modern theory being imposed on an ancient text. Although Peter did not necessarily use the word "trauma", it is possible from a trauma perspective on the text, that it was present in his first audience. I am constructing the rhetorical situation of this text by using the three building blocks of trauma theory, as it is part of the theoretical framework of this study. Reading the Bible from a contemporary perspective implies reading these texts with certain (biased) lenses, also implying that no one reads these texts subjectively.

<sup>114</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza (2017: 39) gives a very interesting analysis of the rhetorical situation of 1 Peter and argues that the rhetorical situation is constructed by three elements in Peter's argument. First, the strategy of suffering. There are, according to her, three clusters of suffering that refer to Christ's suffering as exemplary to the first audience of the letter. Second, the strategy of election and honour. Peter's rhetoric of honour, praise and glory against slander, shame and disgrace shows that this was evident in the historical situation of the first audience. Lastly, the rhetoric of subordination. The exhortation "to submit" is used five times in 1 Peter. The reality thereof and the consequences that the adherence to authority may or may not have, was an exigence that Peter saw (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2017: 39–42).

<sup>115</sup> The physical symptoms of trauma and the effects thereof are discussed in chapter two.

<sup>116</sup> Where trauma serves as an identity marker, it does not mean that one should find joy in the trauma necessarily, but it is important that the trauma humans experience, changes the course of life and defines our identity in new ways. Life would have been different if the trauma wasn't there. The uniqueness of a person or group is shaped by the trauma that is part of life. These scars that were caused by trauma tell the story of the wounds inflicted by humans. Life has become more complex because of them and this trauma could also add meaning, against all odds, to life (Ganzevoort, 2008: 23–25). This will be discussed further in chapter six.

person or a group from others.<sup>117</sup> Trauma may also threaten the identity of a person or a group, exactly because of the identity of the group that caused trauma in the first place.

Peter is concerned with the identity of the first audience. It is evident that their identity caused them trauma and alienation from society and their neighbours. Even the way he addresses them as *παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους*, implies experiences of trauma. Because of their identity, they may have experienced trauma, firstly through the cross of Jesus, being expelled from Rome, living in diaspora as “colonisers”, Nero who blamed the great fire in 64 CE on the Christians, the Jewish war and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Simply living as a Jesus-follower in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE held certain implications that caused trauma to these believers. The anti-social prejudice and conflict experience in communities in Asia-Minor where these believers lived also caused encounters with traumatising events because of their identity, their refusal to take part in certain public events and living an alternative life.

This concern that Peter has with the identity of his first recipients and the trauma that they experience because of it, can be clearly seen in the household code, especially when he addresses the slaves and the wives. He motivates the submissiveness of slaves, even to those masters who treat them badly (that causes trauma), through their identity. He acknowledges that it is their identity as Jesus followers that may cause this trauma, but Peter also recognises that they “have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps” (2:21). Then he goes on to motivate this further, by merging the suffering servant’s identity in Isaiah 53 with that of Jesus. Because of Jesus’s identity, he also suffered and experienced trauma.

As with the wives whom Peter addresses in the household code, their identity might also cause them trauma, being married to “some of them [who] do not obey the word” (3:1). Their identity, in a certain way, moved them to silence and could have caused them great trauma in the household. As argued in section 3.3.3.2, physical abuse of wife (and slave) who became Jesus followers, was a way in which the patriarch of the household inflicted fear. This could have caused estrangement to her body, but because of her identity, she experiences trauma. Peter sees, especially with the wives and slaves, but also with the rest of the members of the faith communities that their identity was alienating them from the rest of their communities and the trauma that it brought them (also physical trauma that alienated them from themselves). This is the first part of the rhetorical situation.

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<sup>117</sup> Ganzevoort further states that the response to trauma threatening one’s identity, is resistance. The first form of resistance is survival. When one does not give in to the life-threatening trauma that is encountered, but manages to survive it, it provides proof of the limits of the traumatising event’s powers. When the trauma seeks to destroy the person, then survival resists. The second level of resistance is leaving the situation where the trauma is present and seeking refuge. The third level is to change the situation (Ganzevoort, 2008: 22–23).

In the second place, what Peter further sees in the rhetorical situation, was possibly the lack or the incapability from the first audience to describe with words or language what was happening to them. Human beings use language to describe life and to interpret life and the world we live in. Trauma shatters the narrative, causes the loss of the ability to use language and further isolates the traumatised from friends, family and the outside community. Trauma survivors need to survive in order to tell their story, but they also need to tell their story in order to survive (Rambo, 2010: 21).

It is possible that Peter sees that the trauma the first audience experiences, prohibits them to tell their story and moreover, to tell and live Jesus' story to others. Slaves and wives endure their trauma in silence, suffering submissively under abuse and slander. The precise trauma that the audience were experiencing, comes to the contemporary reader in bits and pieces (obviously the first audience knew what Peter was talking about), but in a way, it also shows the shattering effect of trauma and the inability to put trauma into words. There are things that are not said and it could be that the silence of these events also speaks (as another way in attempting to communicate the trauma).

In 3:9 Peter tells them the following: "Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing" (NRSV). He then further enhances his argument by quoting a few verses from Psalm 34, saying: "Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit." How were they supposed to "repay with a blessing" when slander, abuse and public shaming are of the few things that caused trauma? Would these believers even have the ability to utter a blessing in these circumstances? Would this abuse rather have been met with silence than a blessing?

In 3:14-16 Peter states: "But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts, sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence..." (NRSV). It could be possible that Peter sees, given the abuse and slander that many Jesus followers in these communities had to endure, that they are even too traumatised to speak about their faith (sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts) and even to defend themselves when someone would ask them (or even threaten them) about their faith and lifestyle.

In 3:18-19 Peter uses the example of Christ and says: "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison ..." (NSRV). One may only wonder what this "proclamation" contained, given the trauma that Jesus might have experienced in the events that 3:18 describes and how Jesus could have proclaimed it.

As with 3:14-16, it might have been a challenge to these believers even to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to others.

Given the fact that trauma alters language and that Peter sees this as a crisis in the historical situation of the audience, it is possible that Peter is writing this letter in order to give words to the experiences of the first audience. Is it possible that Peter is appropriating metaphors and citations from the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the experiences of Jesus in order to give words and language to what the first audience was experiencing? It is possible that this document discussed in this dissertation originated from the trauma that faith communities were experiencing, in an attempt to give words and language to that trauma.

The third need or exigence that Peter sees in his rhetorical situation, besides the effect of trauma on the first audience's use of language and their relationship with their bodies and social body, is the notion that trauma alters time. The trouble with trauma is that the event(s) that caused trauma, do not stay in the past. It comes back to haunt over and over again. Life's narrative is interrupted and shattered again and again because of trauma (the double structure of trauma). There is a discontinuity when it comes to trauma – because trauma shatters the narrative of a person or group over again, it may seem to the traumatised as if the event that caused trauma, happened just now, and not in the past. Because trauma alters time, it is also possible for generations after the traumatic event to be traumatised by it.

An aspect of time's alternation by trauma, is the distortion of memory. When trauma breaks and shatters the narrative, memory of life also becomes distorted. Trauma may block out memory or distort it, that this in itself may cause trauma. The past cannot be accessed. The memory instead possesses the person. An unrelated experience in the present can recall past events – but these flashbacks are not the event that is primarily known, but an event that was never cognitively registered. The body then experiences in the present what the mind did not understand in the past (Rambo, 2009: 4).

It may be that the events that are described in 3.3.3.1. were still haunting these Jesus followers. It may be that the conflict and anti-Christian prejudice that these believers were subjected to, were also bringing back the experience of trauma, as it could have happened once or more times to them. It is possible that Peter makes use of images and citations from the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the suffering of Jesus and eschatological language because of these traumas returning time and again, in an effort to combat this effect of trauma and because it exists in their daily existence.

There are a number of allusions to time and the concept of the past in 1 Peter for example 1:2, 8, 10-11, 14, 19-21; 2:9-10 and 2:21-25. Peter also frequently makes use of eschatological language,

also indicating that the past will be vindicated, but also to indicate that the trauma that they are experiencing will not last for ever. Trauma is also infiltrating their hope and sense for the future. Trauma does not only bring the past back into the present, but also allow the future to be in doubt.

The rhetorical situation of 1 Peter has been described through the basic elements of a trauma lens. The next question to consider is which alternatives Peter suggests in the letter. How was he planning to change the rhetorical situation and communicate this to the first audience? In the next section, the rhetoric, rhetorical strategies of 1 Peter and the function thereof will be considered, as ways in which Peter tried to persuade his audience to see the alternative perspectives to their situation that he proposes.

### 3.4.2 Reading 1 Peter rhetorically: Rhetorical strategies

The art of persuasion or rhetoric is very important in this study.<sup>118</sup> As it was argued earlier in this chapter that 1 Peter can be read as a trauma text, it is important to see if and how Peter persuades his readers or hearers of his argument.<sup>119</sup> This is also evident from the rhetorical situation. There was a specific exigence that triggered the rhetorical situation of Peter and he is trying to address that in his letter.

Witherington (2010: 184–185) suggests that Peter is creating a “rhetorical world” and he asks important questions in this regard, also referring to Elliott’s *Home for the Homeless*:

Often missed in such a sociological study of 1 Peter is the fact that the author is also busily constructing a rhetorical world, a world of advice and consent, of persuasion or dissuasion, where certain beliefs and behaviors are inculcated not merely for social reasons, but also for theological or ideological ones. When we analyze 1 Peter as rhetoric, what do we learn about the aims and purposes of this document, broadly speaking? Is it meant to steel the audience for persecution by persuading them about the value of Christlikeness? Is there some considerable rhetorical exigence or problem that this discourse is meant to overcome? And what do we make of the intertextual

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<sup>118</sup> Witherington defines “rhetoric” as the art of persuasion used from the time of Aristotle through and beyond the New Testament times in the Greek-speaking world in order to convince an audience or another about something (Witherington III, 2009: ix). Witherington is of opinion that 1 Peter exemplifies a specific sort of ancient rhetoric, namely “Asiatic rhetoric”. This is not surprising in discourses that addressed Asia Minor. Asiatic rhetoric was known for its emotion and even affection. It was also popular in Asiatic rhetoric to make use of repetition in order to emphasise the main points (as can be seen in 1 Peter). Witherington suggests that the influence of Asiatic rhetoric can be seen in 1 Peter in the following ways: 1. Its long and complex sentences. 2. The letter’s verbosity and use of colourful words. 3. Its tendency towards repetition. 4. The letter’s strong appeal to the emotions at the outset and conclusion as suffering is a major theme in the discourse (Witherington III, 2009: 178–179).

<sup>119</sup> The aim of this part of this chapter is not to do an extensive study on the rhetoric of 1 Peter, but only to point out the rhetorical strategies used in this text by Peter in order to persuade his audience of his convictions or argument. In the section on literary aspects, the aim was to identify the rhetorical strategies used in this letter. In this section, the aim is to determine the possible function(s) of these strategies.

echoes in this document, not only of the Old Testament, but also of material from the rhetoric of Jesus, of James and of Paul?

Witherington furthermore says that one of the primary questions that comes to mind when dealing with the rhetoric of 1 Peter is the following: Is Peter (the author) trying to teach new values and virtues, or is he applauding and strengthening old ones? Is he trying to change behaviour and belief in the nearby future or is he just praising certain existing forms of these things (Witherington III, 2009: 179)?<sup>120</sup>

To answer Witherington's question: One cannot necessarily place these elements up against one another, that one needs to choose whether Peter wants to teach new values or strengthen old ones, or whether he is trying to change behaviour or praising already existing forms thereof. It is possible to say, when studying the rhetoric of 1 Peter, that he is trying to do all of it. Peter is trying to encourage by emphasising the new, but also at the same time stirring up memory by emphasising that which the audience already knows. It is possible to argue that Peter urges them to change behaviour, but he also applauds that which already exists. Peter shocks, but also comforts. He exhorts and warns, but also gives guidance, bearing in mind the historical situation and the trauma that the first audience is enduring. In an oral culture, Peter intended to persuade his audience through his rhetoric and rhetorical strategies to hear the alternative perspectives that he sees in their situation.

Metaphor, images and ideas play a major role in the argument of 1 Peter. Troy Martin (1992: 271–273) suggests that Peter was careful about the composition of this document and he suggests that the Diaspora is the overarching and controlling metaphor of this argument. He then suggests that there are three specific metaphor clusters which unite Peter's argument, namely the *oikos* cluster (1:14-2:20 referring to the elect household of God), the resident aliens - visiting strangers cluster (2:11-3:12) and the sufferers of the Diaspora cluster (3:13-5:11).

Witherington (2009: 180) suggests, from the argument of Martin, that the audience is alienated from both their homeland, Israel and/or Rome, and from its immediate environment because of their identity. In such a situation, their only home is the household of God and the community of Christ,

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<sup>120</sup> It is very important when looking at the rhetorical strategies of 1 Peter to consider the socio-historical world of the Roman Empire. The world of the New Testament was a collectivist society and it was much easier for the writers of the New Testament to appeal to group identity, group loyalty and unity in the group, because these values were already present in the culture. The economic systems and political systems differed from ours – one did not simply get something for nothing. Constructing the gospel to communities where nothing was for free could have proved a great challenge. Thirdly, honour and shame played a decisive role in rhetoric. Avoiding shame and gaining honour was more important than the truth, even more important than life or death. It could almost have been impossible to change this cultural script – how does one place truth above honour? The rhetoric of the New Testament, and specifically 1 Peter, calls for a new evaluation of cultural values. It did not imply that honour and shame, life and death were not important to the early Jesus followers, but it now became more important to tell the truth about Jesus the Christ (Witherington III, 2009: 17–19).



but they are suffering because this household makes them part of a minority sect that is both illegal and subject to alienation and persecution. Their narratives are shattered because of this trauma.

Even if “diaspora” may be seen as a controlling metaphor in 1 Peter, one must also ask how it functions and what lies behind it. This study’s argument is that trauma lies behind the letter, amidst the shattered narratives of the first audience, living in diaspora, away from their homeland, but also marginalised in their current communities. “Diaspora” as the controlling metaphor may function as the reference point of this letter, but Peter goes beyond that. He may have realised, especially considering the rhetorical situation, that giving names and words to that which the first audiences were experiencing, should give them guidance and direction.

Considering that trauma is described as the shattering of life’s narrative, Peter uses rhetorical strategies in order to give a different perspective on this shattered life. By constructing this document as a letter, building in different metaphors, identity markers, eschatological references, God images, the usage of the Hebrew Scriptures, stylistic features, and examples, Peter may be trying to build the narrative that was shattered again. He may be trying to steer these shattered narratives in new directions by offering his perspectives as alternatives to the shattered narratives of the first audience, away from the suffering, submission and silence that causes them trauma.<sup>121</sup> Here the themes of the suffering of Jesus and identity and ethos, underlines by the appropriation of texts from and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures may play a significant role.

Peter makes use of the household metaphors, honour and shame language, identity markers, suffering and trauma language, eschatological language, God images, citations from the Hebrew Scriptures and stylistic features to encourage the first recipients amidst the trauma that they were facing. This is the possible rhetorical effect of 1 Peter. In an environment where fear was prevalent, the rhetorical strategy of the Empire, simply living in the Empire and being a Jesus-follower, Peter tells them not to fear (3:14). Peter makes certain claims, based on certain truths that are part of their memory, but may be forgotten because of their trauma. Peter’s possible aim is to bring that memory back and to help them cope and survive their trauma. The alternative perspectives and coping strategies that Peter gives to his audience, will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### 3.4.3 History of reception

Together with the rhetorical situation and strategies used to address the rhetorical situation, it is also important to ask how 1 Peter functioned through its history of interpretation. What effect did it have on Jesus followers in different contexts through the ages and how did it influence their understanding

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<sup>121</sup> Melvin McMillen (2011: 101) argues that “metaphor” as a rhetorical strategy may function to create textual coherence and/or strengthen cohesion that strengthens textual texture.



of God, themselves and others? Before one could try to construct such a picture, it is also important to look at the implied reception of 1 Peter.<sup>122</sup>

Bitzer (1968: 7–8), in his understanding and description of the rhetorical situation, claims that there is the aspect of the “rhetorical audience” or “implied readers/hearers” involved. He argues that since the rhetorical discourse suggests change by influencing the actions of people in the audience who act as mediators of change, rhetoric therefore always requires an audience. The rhetorical audience are those persons who are capable of being influenced by the discourse proposed by the author and are willing to be agents of change.

The implied reader or audience is the reason why this document has been written, why Peter uses certain rhetorical strategies and arguments. It is mainly written for those the author believes to be the ones who can change or prevent the rhetorical situation. The first historical audience does not necessarily embody the implied audience. The historical audience only becomes the implied audience when they adhere to the pleas of the author and are moved to action.

Peter writes this letter because he sees or anticipates a rhetorical situation. From this perspective, he may hope that the believers he writes to, is able to see the effect of the rhetorical discourse in a serious light. It is also possible that Peter is of opinion that the effect of his discourse and argument could have influenced the audience to change or prevent the rhetorical situation. They had the potential to deal with their historical situation. The implied reception then is the reaction that the author expects of the audience – to react positively to his alternative perspectives proposed in the letter. However, the actual reception of 1 Peter sketches a different picture.

The actual reception represents the real reaction that historical audiences through history had on 1 Peter. It is impossible to reconstruct the actual reaction of the first audience that the letter was written to. The hope is that the first audience adhered to the pleas of Peter and that they acted as change agents. What we have is a limited history of reception of 1 Peter. The history of interpretation may shed some light as to how Christians and faith communities reacted towards this text and how 1 Peter functioned in these contexts. It is still a challenge to see how 1 Peter functioned as there are limited resources about this, but it is still important to consider this aspect.

Paying attention to the history of reception is done firstly to acknowledge that as 21<sup>st</sup> century readers of 1 Peter we are not the first readers of this text. We stand on the shoulders of many Christians through the ages (some who are not even mentioned in the following paragraphs) who have read this text as informative to their lives. Together with this consciousness, the history of reception is

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<sup>122</sup> I also referred to this in my MTh thesis (De Kock, 2014: 100–102).

important because it shows that “this history of reading and interpretation of the Bible is an overwhelmingly rich, multi-layered and complex story of such different construals of what ‘the Bible’ really is, of what readers could therefore expect from the Bible, and how readers should accordingly read the Bible” (Smit, 2015:176). One may agree with Smit that the history of reception not only shows what followers of Jesus through the ages have done with the text, but also the responsibility that we have as contemporary readers of biblical texts to read in life affirming and life giving ways.

Christian literature in the second century was produced by two groups, namely the Apostolic fathers and the Apologists. The Apostolic fathers wrote the earliest Christian literature outside of the New Testament, whilst the Apologists wrote defences of the faith against the accusations of their pagan neighbours. Neither group cited the Hebrew Scriptures extensively, or wrote many commentaries on books in Scripture or presented a developed theory of interpretation as Origen, Jerome and Augustine who followed them. These two groups used the language of Scripture to describe their experiences and provide ethical and theological instruction to meet the pastoral needs of their audiences. Generally, the Apostolic fathers understood the books of the New Testament as part of proclamation and not yet as Scripture with definitive authority. The Apologists on the other hand were beginning to understand the New Testament as Scripture. The Hebrew Scriptures, however, was understood as authoritative by both groups (Hauser & Watson, 2003: 40).

When it comes to the early church and the patristic theologians, the following can be said of their perspectives on 1 Peter. Elliott suggests that until the church father Irenaeus makes an explicit reference to 1 Peter (around 180 CE), all other verifications to the existence and influence of 1 Peter are allusions. 1 Clement (96 CE) was probably the first writing alluding to the presence of 1 Peter. The author does not explicitly cite 1 Peter, but there are various lexical and thematic similarities that they share.<sup>123</sup> It is possible that the author, Clemens Romanus, knew the letter and alluded to it as part of the Roman church’s local tradition. 1 Clement has 327 words that are also used in 1 Peter, also those that only occur in 1 Peter and nowhere else in the New Testament (Elliott, 2000: 138–139).

2 Peter, which was written sometime in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, is the only New Testament document to make a reference to 1 Peter (2 Peter 3:1). There are differences in vocabulary, conceptuality, style, content and theology that indicate two different authors. The dissimilarities were already clear to some of the church fathers, as Jerome indicates where he comments on the difference in vocabulary and style. This early observations of dissimilarities between the two documents played a role in the different reception and canonical history and processes, where 1

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<sup>123</sup> The following themes are present in 1 Peter and 1 Clement: Elect, election, call, calling, hope, will of God, obedience, order, subordination and humility. There are also citations from the Hebrew Scriptures that appear in both, namely Psalm 34, Proverbs 3:34, 10:2 and Isaiah 53, as well as common references to Noah (Elliott, 2000: 140).

Peter was considered Petrine and 2 Peter's Petrine authorship is in doubt. It is possible, however, that both documents are products of two different authors from Rome and that 2 Peter's author knew about 1 Peter, even though there are not many similarities between the two (Elliott, 2000: 140–141).

*The epistle of Barnabas*, whose date is not absolutely certain (70-100 CE or 130 CE), has some lexical similarities with 1 Peter, but there are no allusions or citations of 1 Peter. This is also the case with the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Didache* (who possibly have some allusions to 1 Peter). Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* included a few clear citations and allusions to the material in 1 Peter, whilst also citing Paul's letters, especially his letter to the Philippians. He refers explicitly to Paul, but only implicitly to Peter ("Paul and the other apostles"). However, Eusebius noticed Polycarp's knowledge and use of 1 Peter (Michaels, 1988: xxxii; Elliott, 2000: 142–143).

*The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) contains some allusions to 1 Peter. Papias of Hierapolis, who was bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, possibly made the first connection between Peter and Mark and this is the earliest external witness to this. Justin Martyr (100-165 CE), who was a native of Palestine and later an apologist in Ephesus and Rome, wrote two writings that contain possible echoes of 1 Peter. Melito, who was bishop of Sardis, in his *Apology* to the Emperor Antoninus echoes some of the themes in 1 Peter. In some of his other works there are also allusions to 1 Peter (Michaels, 1988: xxxii; Elliott, 2000: 144–145).

Irenaeus of Lyons (180 CE), who was bishop of Lyons in Gaul, as well as in Asia Minor and Rome, is the first writer to cite from 1 Peter with explicit reference to Peter as the author. Tertullian of Carthage (160-220 CE) refers to Peter who wrote to the "Christians of Pontus and then cites 2:21 and 4:12-16. He also cites 1 Peter in some of his other works. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE) in his *Hypotyposes* quotes freely from every chapter of the Epistle. Clement also wrote a commentary on 1 Peter. Origen of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage and Eusebius of Caesarea also quote from 1 Peter (Michaels, 1988: xxxiii; Elliott, 2000: 146–148).

In terms of 1 Peter's function, Papias, Polycarp and Irenaeus note that the letter may have had a more immediate impact in the areas to which it was written to, than the place it originated from (Rome) (Michaels, 1988: xxxiv).

The early medieval Christian exegesis and interpretation were "pre-scientific", meaning that the extensive modern scientific methods for contextualising and analysing a text were lacking. This, however, did not mean that their interpretation was uncritical, for these scholars had their own assumptions, standards and methods for analysing biblical texts (Hauser & Watson, 2009: 5).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Horrell describes how the early Christian writers used 1 Peter 2:9 as a source of describing the early church as a race, a nation and a people. It had some influence on early Christian literature, where these writers and

The Western church in this period had four assumptions when it comes to the interpretation of Scripture. Firstly, the Bible is not a lifeless collection of texts to be probed and inspected like an artefact, but it should be treated as a living word, a consecrated force or energy that enlivens the church. Secondly, the salvation history began in the Hebrew Scriptures and is fulfilled in the New Testament continued in the life of the church and pointed to the end of time, when all the nations would have received the good news of the gospel. Together with this is the fact that the Bible is really one book whose ultimate purpose is to save the nations. However, these scholars were aware of the differences in nature and genre amongst the biblical writings. Lastly, Scripture is to be seen as a sophisticated literary text, requiring complex readings. The text itself is to be studied with biblical grammar, literary genres and rhetorical aspects in mind (Hauser & Watson, 2009).

Eastern Orthodox interpretation in the same period focused on the belief in the mystical presence of the divine Logos with the text that determines the dynamic of interpretation of the Bible. This means that any language, including that used in the Bible, does not have the capacity to fully convey the mysteries of God. Unlike the interpreters of the Western church with their four assumptions, the Eastern orthodox interpreters tended to settle on the simpler distinction of “literal” and “spiritual” senses or assumptions to enhance the principle of “contemplative insight”, the church’s sanctified perception of the meaning of texts in relation to the christocentric reality of the Bible. What was crucial to the Eastern Orthodox interpretation of Scripture, is the symbiotic relationship between the study of the Bible (in terms of scholarly commentaries and homilies, and the revealed world that came to life in the context of the worshipping community, as the liturgy is also central to this tradition) (Hauser & Watson, 2009).

One can only assume that 1 Peter was treated and read in the ways described above. In this period, the following persons wrote commentaries on 1 Peter: Didymus Caecus Alexandrinus (4<sup>th</sup> century); Cyrillus Alexandrinus (4<sup>th</sup> century); Johannes Chrysostomus (4<sup>th</sup> century); Eusebius Jerome (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century); Ammonius Alexandrinus (6<sup>th</sup> century); Hesychius (6<sup>th</sup> century); Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (6<sup>th</sup> century); Paterius (6<sup>th</sup> century); Luculentius (7<sup>th</sup> century); Pseudo-Euthalius (7<sup>th</sup> century); Pseudo-Oecumenius (7<sup>th</sup> century) and Pseudo-Hilarius Arelatensis (7<sup>th</sup> century) (Achtemeier, 1996: 359).

One of the few echoes to the household code in 1 Peter in this period, can be found in Augustine’s *Confessions* (9.9.19), which was written between 397 and 400 CE. Augustine presents his mother, Monica, as a model wife who was married to an unbeliever. She served her husband as “her lord”,

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theologians highlights the church as being elected by God and they make an essential ethnic term such as γένος ἐκλεκτόν central to this self-description. The idea of Christians as a third group alongside Jews and Greek is present as early as 1 Corinthians and it is only later that it is specifically linked to the language of race. 1 Peter 2:9 makes an early and important step in defining the Jesus followers’ identity with its unique description of the church as a race, a nation and a people (Horrell, 2013: 134).

in an attempt to win him over for Christ. She endured her husband's abuse when his temper flared. The other battered wives of her community wondered how it was possible for her to hide the marks of physical abuse. Monica, in reply, taught these women to be slaves to their husbands. According to this narrative, this enslavement entailed accepting a husband's extramarital affairs, being silent before an angry, violent husband and to serve him with a humble attitude. Augustine's advice is then for a wife to submit to a husband, whether he is gentle or violent, Christian or not and to be silent before him in his temper (Reeder, 2015: 519–520).<sup>125</sup>

In the later Medieval period the following persons wrote commentaries on 1 Peter: Bed Venerabilis (8<sup>th</sup> century); Isho'dad of Merv (9<sup>th</sup> century); Walafridus Strabo (9<sup>th</sup> century); Pseudo-Theophylact (9<sup>th</sup> century); Alulfus (10<sup>th</sup> century); Euthymius Zigabenus (10<sup>th</sup> century); Dionysius bar Salibi (10<sup>th</sup> century); Marinus Legionensis (10<sup>th</sup> century); Gregorius Barhebraeus (10<sup>th</sup> century) and Pseudo-Thomas (11<sup>th</sup> century) (Achtemeier, 1996: 359).

Turning to the Renaissance and Reformation, the following can be noticed in terms of the interpretations of biblical texts. Hermeneutics and biblical studies during this period were very much influenced by humanism. The slogan of this period was “back to the sources”. Rhetoric and philology of antiquity replaced the Aristotelian logic of the middle ages as the centre of education. In biblical studies, this meant the recovering of the Hebrew and Greeks texts of the Bible, rather than relying on the Latin of the Vulgate. It also brought a renewed interest in the works of the Greek and Latin fathers, rather than relying on the works of the previous period's commentators. The invention of the printing press also helped the cause and translations of the Bible could be distributed (Hauser & Watson, 2009).

Humanists used philology to analyse the Bible. This, however, created controversy. They closely studied the history and transmission of the Bible and theologians saw this critical work as a challenge to inspiration by those less qualified in their eyes to deal with Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church was especially concerned about this, because they supposedly lined themselves with the Reformers. Eventually both the RCC and the Reformers adopted the philological tools of the humanists in reading the biblical texts. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a person could only learn Hebrew or Greek by hiring an individual who had that language skill. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, these languages could be studied formally at educational institutions (Hauser & Watson, 2009).

Reformers such as Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon and John Calvin placed emphasis on the Bible in all matters of faith and practice. They also, especially Luther with his translation of the Bible, made

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<sup>125</sup> The effect of this advice by Augustine will be further discussed in chapter four.

it possible for lay persons to now read the Scriptures in their own language and interpret it for themselves (Hauser & Watson, 2009).

Luther wrote an extensive commentary on 1 Peter in 1523 and said of this letter: “Probably no other document in the New Testament is so theological as 1 Peter, if we understand ‘theological’ in the strict sense as teaching about God.” In a sermon he preached on the second Sunday after Easter, he used 1 Peter 2:20-25. His doctrine on *sola fide* as his admonition for the pope and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) features strongly in this sermon. He focuses on the notion that believers are called to patience in suffering, that Christ suffered for our sake and that Christ was wholly innocent of sin, internally and externally. Therefore the believers should not complain when they suffer at the hands of the world or the RCC (Luther, 1909: 219). This sermon is followed by another sermon from 1 Peter, this time from 2:11-20.

Calvin also wrote a commentary on 1 Peter (1551). Where 1 Peter refers many times to “elect” or “chosen”, Calvin saw it as further proof of his doctrine of election. As with Luther’s commentaries on biblical books that also reflected the time they were writing in and to, this also features in Calvin’s commentary on 1 Peter. In his commentary on 5:12-14, Calvin has an interesting take on “Babylon”. Many scholars at that time (and now) take “Babylon” as referring to Rome, but Calvin did not. This might be odd, because the reformers had the habit of calling the pope the “antichrist” and the Roman church the “whore of Babylon” (McMaken, 2008: 51).

The Roman Catholic Church on the other hand, used this reference to place Peter as the author in Rome and to underline the primacy of the pope. Of this Calvin says: “This comment the Papists gladly lay hold on, that Peter may appear to have presided over the Church of Rome: nor does the infamy of the name [Babylon] deter them, provided they can pretend to the title of an apostolic seat; nor do they care for Christ, provided Peter be left to them. Moreover, let them only retain the name of Peter’s chair, and they will not refuse to set Rome in the infernal regions.” Calvin then sees “Babylon” as referring to the physical place (McMaken, 2008). Others who also wrote commentaries on 1 Peter in this period are: Heinrich Bullinger (1534); Desiderius Erasmus; J. Coglerus (1564); William Alley (1565); J. Hessels (1568) and N. Hemmingius (1579).

During the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, an extensive number of commentaries on 1 Peter appeared.<sup>126</sup> Williams, in his investigation of the persecution in 1 Peter, argues that the “unofficial” view of persecution is not a recent development, as modern commentators believe, but it already features as far back as the 1800’s. Many of the older interpreters of 1 Peter, also before the 1800’s, considered Peter as the author and therefore dated the letter sometime before the first state-initiated

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. Achtemeier (1996: 360–362).



persecution under Nero (64 CE). The proponents of this view often emphasised the localised, inter-personal conflict which included discrimination and verbal abuse. By the list of commentators that Williams provides, it is clear that this was a hot topic in this period. There were also, however, proponents of the “official” persecution view, as early as the 1900’s (Williams, 2012: 6–7).

There were many interpreters who held unto one of the two views during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but it was also during this time that the foundations for a third theory were laid, which proposes a middle ground between the official and unofficial views. Williams notes that one of the key interpretive trends in this period was the attempt to equate the persecutions found in 1 Peter with the conflict that spilled over into the provinces due to the fire in Rome and the Neronian persecution. This event was thought to be the only event that could account for the far-reaching effects described in the letter (especially 5:9). Interpreters also regularly pointed out the legal culpability which seems to threaten the letter’s readers. Because of this, proponents of both views, also started to intertwine aspects of the opposite view (Williams, 2012: 8–9).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many commentaries on 1 Peter appeared, as well as books and articles.<sup>127</sup> Despite this, Elliott wrote in his article *The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent research* that appeared in 1976, that 1 Peter “suffers second-class status in the estimation of modern New Testament exegetes. Alongside the remaining General Epistles and Revelations, 1 Peter is treated as one of the step-children in the New Testament canon. This could have been because of the many works that were published on Paul’s works and the Gospels during this period” (Elliott, 1976: 243).

Since then, Eugene Boring wrote in 2004, sixty commentaries appeared 1979, as well as articles, reference works, monographs on specialised topics dealing with 1 Peter and the Petrine tradition in the New Testament, also due to the efforts of Elliott himself (Boring, 2004: 358). Mark Dubis (2006: 199–239) in his study that surveyed the scholarly literature on 1 Peter since 1985, notes that the following topics were under the microscope: Authorship;<sup>128</sup> date and historical setting; recipients and provenance;<sup>129</sup> unity, genre and structure; sources and literary dependence; conformist or nonconformist ethic;<sup>130</sup> the controlling metaphor and social-scientific criticism; theology; Christ’s

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Achtemeier (1996: 362–365).

<sup>128</sup> The big debate here, and still is, the issue whether 1 Peter was written by Peter or not. The proponents of pseudonymous authorship proposal started to grow during this period (Dubis, 2006: 201).

<sup>129</sup> There is also no consensus amongst scholars on the identity of the recipients, the historical setting or the dating of the letter (Dubis, 2006: 202–205).

<sup>130</sup> Here the big debate was between the studies of Balch and Elliott, where Balch proposed that the author wanted his audience to assimilate to their surroundings, whilst Elliott proposed that he was motivating them to resist. David Horrell, in his assessment of the debate, proposed a middle ground, arguing that the author proposed a bit of both (Horrell, 2007: 142–143).



proclamation to the Spirits; and other. The rise of rhetorical criticism also gave way for works on the rhetoric and rhetorical strategies of 1 Peter.<sup>131</sup>

A number of studies in the last fifteen years have appeared on 1 Peter, also introducing other methods of interpreting 1 Peter, such as postcolonial approaches, feminist interpretation and psychological approaches, etcetera. A number of works have also appeared in terms of certain themes in 1 Peter, such as persecution, the household code and its use in terms of abuse and domestic violence.<sup>132</sup> Although a number of studies have been done on the nature and scope of persecution in 1 Peter, this study with its emphasis on trauma, has not been known so far.

Searching for the history of reception of any given text in the New Testament may be challenging, as seen above. It is challenging to reconstruct how believers through the ages dealt with 1 Peter, how it functioned and how it transformed people's lives. It also seems from the account above that scholars through the ages were primarily concerned with introductory questions, rather than the effect of this letter on their faith communities. It seems, though, through recent scholarship, that this is changing.

#### **3.4.4 Conclusion to rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter**

From the construction of the rhetorical situation and the use of rhetoric in 1 Peter, it can be argued that Peter wrote this letter in order to encourage his audience, whose lives may have been shattered by the realities of trauma. From the history of interpretation, however, it is not clear whether the first audience and audiences thereafter adhered to the plea of the author. However, the history of reception also highlights our responsibility to read 1 Peter responsibly today, even when appropriating a modern theory such as trauma theory as a lens on this text. Rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter lay the foundation for the rest of the study, which will be explained in the conclusion to this chapter.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION: WHY A TEXT THAT REFLECTS TRAUMA?**

Rambo (2010: 4) states that trauma is often uttered in terms of what surpasses categories of understanding, of what goes beyond the human ability to take in and process the exterior world. One can only think of how events such as genocide, mass natural disasters, wars and foreign occupation continue to structure and restructure communities and nations in the aftermath thereof. Trauma is described as an encounter with death – not a literal meeting, but a manner of describing a drastic event or events that shatter all that one knows about the world and the acquainted ways of living in it. A simple interruption occurs from what one knows to be true and safe in the world.

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Thurén (1990) and Campbell (1998).

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Levine (2004); Bauman-Martin & Webb (2007); Holloway (2009); Bird (2011); Williams (2012); Williams (2014); Mason & Martin (2014); Schüssler Fiorenza (2017).

Life takes on a different definition, because it is life in the face of death. Life and death are now linked because of trauma and the dividing line between the two blurs. The thrust to move beyond such an event, to a new and pure place, is not just a misunderstanding about traumatic survival and coping with trauma. It is a dangerous move that threatens to ignore the realities of traumatic suffering. This could cause the suffering to repeat itself over and over again.

It is thus with great caution that this chapter is written. Traumatic suffering cannot comprehend easy answers and cheap responses. And I do not suggest that this is what Peter intended with his letter – that he intended to motivate his first audience just “to get over it and get on with life”. That is indeed a dangerous position to be in because it does not help to heal the wound.

In the search of the trauma narrative(s) of 1 Peter, a multidimensional approach is used by investigating literary, socio-historical, and theological-rhetorical aspects of the text. The conclusion to this exegetical chapter is that 1 Peter can indeed be read as a text that reflects trauma and that the narratives and lives behind this text are probably traumatised and shattered. Van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela’s definition of trauma are very applicable to this text, as shown throughout this chapter. A recommendation for further research in terms of this chapter may be to encourage similar research projects on other documents of the New Testament. It is evident from this chapter that trauma theory and multidimensional exegesis may make useful contributions to the exegesis of other New Testament documents – especially to understand the implied rhetorical effects thereof.

One could ask why 1 Peter does not spell out the trauma and the historical circumstances involved. There are two possibilities in this regard. Firstly, it may have been too dangerous for Peter to explicitly name these circumstances in the letter, given the realities of the Empire and possible prejudice that the early Christians lived in. The other possibility is that the audience would know what he was referring to and that this letter was intended for early Jesus followers living in Asia Minor and not for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians living in South Africa. It is therefore necessary, for the sake of this dissertation, to attempt to put a probable picture together of what the first audience’s world looked like.

What I suggest, is that Peter tries to give them alternative perspectives to their circumstances and to help them to cope with life in the face of death. The reason this may be argued, is not only because of the socio-historical circumstances of the audience or the rhetorical situation that Peter saw in the historical situation. Although, living in the Roman Empire and possibly experiencing trauma also because of traumatic events, as well as a need or exigence that Peter identified in the historical situation, may have been enough to argue that Peter possibly gives the audience alternative perspectives or ways to cope with their trauma. However, it comes from the text itself in terms of repeated themes present in the letter (as discussed in 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.6).

When one considers the hypothesis that it is possible to read 1 Peter as a text reflecting trauma, one must also consider the opposite argument. Rather than giving voice to the trauma that the audience experiences, is it possible that 1 Peter may just be a letter that exhorts obedience and compliance to “God’s commands” (for example in 1 Peter 1:23-25) and thus induces suffering? One can argue further that it is not only inducing suffering, but also appealing to the audience that such suffering is to be endured without protest (for example 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 5:10). This could be a dangerous thing for Peter to do, especially as a leader in the early church community who has the power to form people’s imagination and lives.

Does Peter suggest to his audience to only endure suffering (and their trauma) for the sake of their faith, and not to be shamed in public or beaten by their masters or husbands and entice further trauma on themselves? It is possible to argue as such. However, then the thrust and probable alternatives that, I believe, Peter is suggesting to the audience, will be missed, especially regarding the hopeful and comforting tone that is found in many places in the letter.<sup>133</sup> It is important, however, to consider the other side of the argument, as the potential for 21<sup>st</sup> century readers to abuse the text for their own exploits is a reality. But then the question arises whether 1 Peter entices suffering and trauma or whether contemporary readers of the text reads this into the text without keeping the literary, socio-historical, and rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter in mind (as a multidimensional reading attempts to do).

In the following chapter, the following themes, strategies and metaphors in 1 Peter will be discussed: the example of Christ’s suffering, Peter’s use of metaphors and citations from the Hebrew Scriptures, and identity and ethos in 1 Peter. These three themes are identified (already in the discussion on literary aspects of the text), from the perspective of trauma theory, as themes that are repeated in the letter. I would like to argue that these three repeated themes or strategies are probable alternative perspectives that Peter gives to his audiences who experience trauma in their historical contexts. This is the important link between chapter three and four.

It can be further argued that these alternative perspectives are used by the author to help his audience to cope and survive their trauma, to give them the words to speak about their trauma, to remind them of the past and also to reconstruct the memory of the past, and to help them realise their identity and in a sense, restore the relationship with their identity as well as living according to that identity. This argument is formed from the stance that repetition of these themes suggests that they are more than mere literary constructs of Peter simply for the sake of writing a nice letter. There is a purpose in repeating these themes, which will be explored in chapter four.

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<sup>133</sup> This notion will also be further discussed in section 4.5.

Already in section 3.2, where literary aspects of the text were discussed, these three strategies stand out – firstly for being repeated often and the prevalence thereof, and secondly, because of the way these three themes are intertwined with each other (as the example in 3.2.6 shows). Peter speaks about Jesus' suffering, citing Scripture and linking it with the identity and ethos of the first audience. My thoughts are that it would be firstly, interesting and secondly, necessary to further investigate these strategies.

It would be enough to stop at this chapter and argue that 1 Peter may be read as a text reflecting trauma, but the alternative perspectives or "coping strategies" in the text cannot be ignored and calls for further examination. This is also in line of the title of this study, where a further reading of 1 Peter is required in order to show that 1 Peter gives alternatives to mere the suffering, submission and silence of the audience.

## 4. SURVIVING SHATTERED NARRATIVES: TRAUMA AND COPING STRATEGIES IN 1 PETER

### 4.1 PREFACE

Before the start of this chapter, it is necessary to explain its risky and exploratory nature. In this chapter, the three coping strategies that are identified in chapter three, as tools for the first audience of 1 Peter to survive their trauma, will be explored.<sup>134</sup> This corresponds with the historical and rhetorical situations discussed in chapter three. This endeavour may be challenging because of the following three aspects.

Firstly, the risky and exploratory nature of this chapter comes to the fore in terms of textual and historical aspects described in chapter three. Peter wrote this letter to an actual flesh-and-blood audience. However, he intended them to be his implied audience – to respond to the strategies in his letter and be transformed by it. The problem is that it is impossible to know whether they responded to his advice or not – the reception history that was briefly described in chapter three does not say. It is also not possible to know whether the audience responded positively to these coping strategies and if they were further harmed and traumatised by it. This may be challenging, especially if the suffering of Jesus, as appropriated from the Hebrew Scriptures, and the emphasis on the audience's identity and ethos was applied to help them cope with their trauma.<sup>135</sup>

Secondly, the functioning of the Hebrew Scriptures in a document that was written much later, such as 1 Peter, may be problematised. Like many authors in the New Testament, Peter reinterprets the Hebrew Scriptures for his audience to help them cope with their rhetorical situation (as described in chapter three). The functioning of sacred scripture in a document such as 1 Peter may be problematic, as scripture is reinterpreted to motivate an audience, experiencing suffering and trauma, to avoid inflicting more trauma unto themselves. The appropriation of the Hebrew Scriptures in for example the household code, where slaves and wives were addressed, may seem contradictory and perhaps harmful, when one reads from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective.

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. chapter 3.4.3 of this study on the history of reception. In this section, the difference between the “historical audience” and “implied audience/readers” are explained. This difference will be kept in mind when referring to the audience of 1 Peter, but sometimes it may seem as if the lines between the two blur. This is because 1 Peter is written to real people and it is possible that he wants them to become his “implied audience” that act upon the rhetorical situation he sketches and the possible ways of coping with their trauma he suggests. Cf. also footnote 2 in chapter one and footnote 188 in chapter five.

<sup>135</sup> It is important here to differentiate between “ethics” and “ethos”. Smit explains the difference between these two concepts in the following way: Ethics, in a technical sense, refers to a scientific discipline. It is a discipline that deals with processes of human decision-making on moral issues – the “science of morals”. “Ethos”, on the other hand, can be described as the “habitual character and disposition of a group.” Thus, the ethos of a group usually determines in what ways its members act and live. This happens almost unconsciously and unreflectively, influencing the group's every-day decisions and actions (Smit, 1991: 52–53).

Lastly, this chapter is risky and exploratory because 1 Peter encourages the first audience, especially slaves and wives, to identify with the suffering of Jesus. Moreover, he encourages them to follow in the example of the suffering Christ. This is also done by means of the Hebrew Scriptures. These three aspects intercept each other, because the narratives of actual people are shattered by trauma and the author of 1 Peter attempts to comfort and encourage them.

This is why the discussion of 1 Peter found in section 4.4 of this chapter, describing the three identified coping strategies, with trauma theory as a lens, is provisional and exploratory in nature. It may also seem paradoxical and ambiguous, because these three aspects need to be accounted for. Trauma has a unique contribution to make to the study of 1 Peter (as shown in previous parts of the study, particularly chapter 2.2.3) and it is not the intention to manipulate the text by using trauma theory. Trauma theory brings a different lens to the text, also in terms of coping with trauma. This is what this chapter wants to explore.

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION

Trauma and suffering know no class, gender, race or status. Dietrich Bonhoeffer came from a well-known respected family, but he could not bear, especially as a believer and a pastor, what was happening in the world around him. This renowned theologian who opposed the Nazi-regime in Germany before and during the Second World War, was taken to the camp of Flossenbürg near the end of the war in April 1945. On the way there, Bonhoeffer's fellow prisoners asked him to conduct a worship service. The lectionary reading for the day came from Isaiah 53:5 ("Through his bruises we are healed") and 1 Peter 1:3 ("Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"). His fellow prisoners wanted to have another worship service, but it could not happen. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, Bonhoeffer was hanged and his body disappeared in one of the many mass graves (Enns, 2007: 3).

The choice of Isaiah 53:3 and 1 Peter 1:3 may be self-explanatory, because it came from the lectionary. However, it would have meant something concrete for these prisoners facing their death. Their faith and the consolation that they might have found from these two texts, could have served them with a coping strategy in these circumstances. It is evident from Bonhoeffer's letters from prison and other works that he found ways to cope with his circumstances in Scripture. This story about Bonhoeffer is a good example of the functioning of Scripture in coping with difficult circumstances.

In the congregation where I serve part time, I am responsible for ministering to the elderly. Many of the elderly people whom I visit, tell me stories of trauma that they have experienced in their lives. One woman asked me once about my topic of research for this dissertation. When I told her about the subject matter of this dissertation, she told me that she read 1 Peter after her son had committed

suicide. I was quite taken aback because normally people will tell me how they read the Psalms, Job or Lamentations after something traumatic has happened to them. This is the first time that I heard somebody read 1 Peter. Apparently, the suffering of Jesus as portrayed in 1 Peter and the comfort and survival strategies that Peter gives in this letter have helped her to cope with the tragic death of her son.

These are two examples of the positive ways in which someone's faith has helped them to cope with trauma. For many people, religion and faith have a positive role to play when it comes to coping with trauma. This is also one of the reasons why this dissertation is relevant. Believers use biblical texts to cope with their trauma. Whether their hermeneutics is accountable or not when it comes to appropriating a biblical text to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and trauma, may perhaps be debated. However, the reality is also that for some people, religion has negative connotations when it comes to coping.<sup>136</sup>

Is it possible that Peter writes to his first audience, knowing their historical situation, to prevent or transform their rhetorical situation by giving them coping mechanisms in his letter? The previous chapter of this study argues that it is possible to read 1 Peter as a trauma text or, in other words, a document that reflects a trauma situation. Chapter three also argues that Peter gives his audience alternative perspectives on their historical situation, because he perceives a rhetorical situation at hand. This chapter goes further by investigating three coping strategies that Peter gives his audience to survive their trauma, namely the example of Christ's suffering, reviving their memory from the past by referring to the Hebrew Scriptures, and re-establishing their identity and ethos. This is also done in line with the hypothesis of the study. Research questions four, five and six are the subject matter of this chapter.

This chapter will start by describing the concept of "coping strategies" and its relation to trauma. Then, the three coping strategies will be discussed by focusing on the rhetoric of 1 Peter. These three strategies are difficult to separate, as they are in many places in the letter intertwined with each

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<sup>136</sup> Kenneth Pargament examines helpful and harmful ways of religious coping. Harmful ways of coping with trauma and suffering may be that the person feels discontent with the congregation and/or God. When some people speak negatively about faith, many of their remarks are aimed at fellow believers or clergy whom they feel have let them down. Battered women, for example, have said that they feel that the church expected them to suffer in silence, that divorce is not an option and that some husbands beat their wives because they are not physically satisfying them. A harmful way of coping may also be that people believe that God is punishing them for sins in the past or present (Pargament, 1997: 290–291). In a study done on religious coping after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, there were various positive and negative ways of coping. Some of the negative strategies of religious coping were as follows. "1. Disagreed with the way my church wanted me to understand and handle this situation. 2. Felt that the bombing was God's way of punishing me for my sins and lack of spirituality. 3. Wondered whether God had abandoned us. 4. Felt that God was punishing the victims of the bombing for their sins and lack of spirituality. 5. Tried to make sense of the situation and decided what to do without relying on God. 6. Questioned whether God really exists. 7. Prayed to God to send those who were responsible for the bombing to Hell. 8. Expressed anger at God for letting such a terrible thing happen. 9. Thought about turning away from God and living for myself alone" (Pargament, 1997: 299).



other.<sup>137</sup> Consequently, they will be discussed together. Before concluding remarks in this chapter are made, the possible implications of these coping strategies for the first audience will be discussed. It is important at this stage to clarify the difference between chapters three and four of the dissertation. In chapter three, the argument is made to show whether and why 1 Peter can be read as a trauma text. Different literary, historical and rhetorical aspects are highlighted.

Accordingly, chapter four focuses on how this trauma text gives hope, encouragement and ways to survive trauma that is to be discussed in chapter four in more detail. Therefore, rhetorical aspects of the letter are very important in chapter four. One may say that one should not jump to conclusions too quickly, as shattered narratives cannot be healed instantly. However, one should also not ignore the alternative perspectives that are given in this letter to help transform these traumatised people's lives, as Peter possibly intends for his audience facing a rhetorical situation where suffering, submission and silence could overwhelm them.

### 4.3 COPING STRATEGIES AND TRAUMA<sup>138</sup>

At the end of the third chapter it was indicated that the following chapter will discuss strategies and metaphors that were identified in chapter three as alternative perspectives that Peter offered his audience. The argument is that Peter could possibly have given the first audience these perspectives to help them cope and survive the trauma that they were experiencing (which is described by means of a rhetorical situation). These perspectives may guide them in ways to speak about their trauma, to reconstruct the past and their memory of the past and to help them to realise their identity and see their identity in a new light.

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<sup>137</sup> Whilst writing chapter three, the idea was to discuss these three coping strategies in three separate chapters. However, I realised that I cannot keep these three strategies apart, which is why they are discussed in one chapter.

<sup>138</sup> It is important to consider the terminology of coping. It can become very complicated, as there are also different opinions about this. "Coping process", "religious coping", "coping method", "coping mechanism", "coping style", "coping outcome", and "coping tool" are terms that are employed in literature on religious coping. "Coping process" refers to the process of coping with stress or trauma that arises in life. It is important to take into account the psychological, social and contextual resources available to a person, how the individual makes use of these resources and the outcome of such a process. "Religious coping" refers to the ways in which a person utilises his or her faith to cope with stress or trauma. Pargament's taxonomy of coping methods shows the classification of coping methods and can be seen as a starting point for understanding the functions of coping tools. Pargament sketches four comprehensive coping methods: (1) 'preservation' – the individual attempts to hold on to what he or she has and cares about; (2) 'reconstruction' – where new means are found to reach certain ends; (3) 're-valuation' – this involves a transformation of ends but a conservation of the means; (4) 're-creation' – where a total transformation of the means and ends takes place. "Coping mechanism" refers to how coping methods serve to reduce stress and survive trauma. "Coping tool" refers to a specific object used in the coping process. It can be a tangible object, including a person, that have significance, or it may be a psychological object, such as an image or a concept. The term "coping style" refers to different approaches to control and responsibility in coping (Pargament, 1997; Lundmark, 2016: 2–4). To avoid the complication of terminology that are linked to religious coping, I will use the term "coping strategy" in this study. This term links with rhetorical strategies in 1 Peter, but also with coping and trauma.

In the context of trauma theory, it is important to name these alternative perspectives “coping strategies”. These three coping strategies will be discussed in more detail, especially in terms of how this might have impacted the first audience. This is not to “prove” that these strategies worked – it is rather impossible to prove this as there is limited reception history of 1 Peter and one cannot know the first audience’s response. However, this feature may be important to Peter as the author. It is all very well to define 1 Peter as a trauma text, but it is important to go further. Peter sees a rhetorical situation at hand and this motivated him to write his letter. The coping strategies present here need further exploration. There may be more coping strategies present in this text than these three, but for the purpose of the study these three were chosen.

How may “coping strategies” be defined? Pargament (1997: 90), a scholar in psychology from the USA, defines coping as a non-static process that takes place at a particular time and in particular circumstances. Coping is the search for significance and meaning in times of stress and trauma. Coping strategies thus help the person or group who is experiencing a loss of significance and meaning in their life because of trauma, to reconstruct meaning again. Coping may happen in various ways – voluntary or involuntary.<sup>139</sup> Pargament goes further by saying that good coping is defined by what is helpful for particular people in particular situations and to the extent that the coping process is well integrated in the lives of persons (Pargament, 1997: 91).

Ganzevoort (1998: 264–267), who is a practical theologian at the Free University, Amsterdam (the Netherlands), argues that one should approach religious coping multidimensionally. Religious coping involves four elements according to Ganzevoort, which overlap and interact with one another. The first is “crisis and coping”. Coping should not be investigated whilst focusing on the person or the situation alone, but on the interaction with each another. The second process involved is “religion”, which is also not a static or univocal phenomenon. Ganzevoort states that there are various dimensions of religion that need to be taken into account, such as beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, responses, experience and tradition.

The third process involved in religious coping is “identity”. Ganzevoort states that identity can be regarded as an independent factor that influences the processes of coping, religion and social context. Identity, however, is also a dynamic process that is constantly being reformulated and it stands in constant reformulation and interaction with coping, religion and social context. The last process is “social context” where coping, religion and identity are situated. Social context, like the other three processes, is also not static. Choices that an individual or a group makes in the sphere of religion and coping can alienate him or herself from the social context a person finds him/herself

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. Holloway (2009: 115).

in (Ganzevoort, 1998: 266-267). Religious coping is thus a multidimensional, dynamic process that interacts with several factors.

There are various ways in which people may cope with trauma. One way of coping is found in religion and faith. One may suggest that religion can be seen only as a coping strategy, but for believers, faith is more than that. It is supposed to constitute a way of life. Faith is not supposed to be just one aspect of a person's life, but it is all encompassing. This is found throughout the New Testament. Thus, faith becomes a positive tool that many people apply in times of stress and trauma.

Pargament (1997: 145–146) also makes it clear that people tend to cope with the tools that are available to them. Religion and faith are more accessible tools for people who make religious beliefs, practices and relationships part of their orienting system and the way they experience the world. These people are more likely to turn their religious beliefs and convictions into action when stressful and traumatic events occur. It is thus possible that 1 Peter is constructed in the way it is because of the tools that were available to the author to appropriate in order to help the first audience to cope with their trauma.

Holloway's work on coping with prejudice in 1 Peter brings one closer to how coping strategies may function in terms of trauma, especially regarding a text that may reflect circumstances of trauma. Whilst prejudice does not always lead to trauma, trauma may in some cases influence a person or a group's experience of prejudice. Holloway argues that Peter not only tries to console his first audience, but also to give advice on how to cope with what Holloway calls "social strategies". An important point he makes is that ancient people had coping strategies even though they did not necessarily name them or reflect on them. Holloway further states that people who are experiencing stressful situations or trauma often appropriate more than one coping strategy at a time. Coping strategies are dynamic, multifaceted and interdependent exercises that may appear incompatible and absurd to those observing from the outside (Holloway, 2009: 113–115). Holloway states that this is applicable to 1 Peter as the letter contains three distinct coping strategies.<sup>140</sup> At least two of them seem incompatible from the outside.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Paul Holloway identifies three main coping strategies in 1 Peter, namely: (1) coping with prejudice through apocalyptic disidentification; (2) coping through behavioural compensation; (3) coping through attributional ambiguity (cf. Holloway chapters 7 – 9).

<sup>141</sup> Holloway claims that this statement goes a long way in explaining and possibly solving the Balch-Elliott debate. Elliott, according to Holloway, argues that the author of 1 Peter advocates "a careful sect-like maintenance of religious boundaries and the conversion (not imitation) of outsiders". Balch, on the other hand, argues that the author tries to persuade his audience to assimilate to society as far as possible and to the extent that they do not give offence. Elliott rejects Balch's interpretation as "thoroughly incompatible" with his own interpretation. Holloway argues that from the perspective of stress and coping theory, this so-called incompatibility is to be expected. This can be resolved by "viewing these as practical coping strategies that serve the same concrete objective and can be pursued in tandem by someone seeking to cope with the stress of prejudice" (Holloway, 2009: 116–117).

Holloway focuses on two general types of coping strategies namely, “problem-focused” and “emotion-focused” coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies consist of three types. Firstly, there are coping strategies that concentrate on the self as the target of prejudice. There are people who attempt to minimise the applicability of stigma and prejudice to themselves and there are those who seek ways to compensate for the problems that stigma and prejudice generate in social relations. The most obvious way is to remove the stigma in question or to attempt to hide it. The way to do it is to try harder, to “walk the extra mile” to reduce prejudice from outsiders. This can also mean to change one’s behaviour so that one does not fall prey to the dominant group stereotypes (Holloway, 2009: 117–118).

The second strategy that is categorised with problem-focused strategies, are strategies that concentrate on others as the perpetrators of stigma and prejudice. This happens when people seek to change others or to control another’s potential to act out his or her prejudice. This can also consist of legal and political action. The third strategy focuses on the situation itself. This entails that people will structure situations in order to avoid the problems of prejudice or avoid places where prejudice might take place. People using this coping strategy will seek positive settings where they can find active support (Holloway, 2009: 118–121).

Emotion-based coping strategies consist of the following: Firstly, there are strategies that involve social comparison. People who are stigmatised may want to regulate the internal psychological effects of their situation by manipulating relevant social comparisons. This might be done where personal identity comparisons happen where the person compares him/herself to other individuals or where the social group is compared to other social groups. Sometimes the comparisons are negative like “they have more power than us.” Other times, however, it is more positive, for example in 1 Peter: “They may be privileged in the eyes of others, but we are the ‘chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation’ in the eyes of God.” Another positive example is when the early Christians made the crucifixion of Jesus not a symbol of shame, but of pride and victory. This is maybe also done by Peter when the term “Christian” was used to shame Jesus’ followers, but where he tells the audience not to be ashamed in 1 Peter 4:16 (Holloway, 2009: 122–124).

A second strategy that falls under emotion-based coping strategies are strategies that involve attribution. When stigmatised persons are confronted with negative outcomes in their daily lives, they face “attributional ambiguity”. Negative outcomes can sometimes be attributed to the person’s own poor behaviour, but most of the times it is attributed to the prejudice of others or to forms of institutional bias. This strategy suggests that when negative outcomes are attributed to factors from the outside, they have less impact on a person’s feelings than when they are attributed to internal factors. Holloway argues that this is seen in 1 Peter 3:13-4:11, where the criticism of the first

audience for being anti-social is attributed to the prejudice of former friends (Holloway, 2009: 124–125).

The last strategy involves restructuring of one's self concept. This entails that stigmatised persons who are facing negative outcome in a certain value domain (academics, employment, personal relationships) may cope by "restructuring their self-concept" so that they are not affected by these outcomes. For instance, when a person wants to succeed academically but fails, he or she can restructure his or her self-concept to value success in sports (I am an athlete, not a scholar) or vice versa, a person failing in sports may shift her or his focus to academics (I am a scholar, not an athlete). This is seen, for example, in 1 Peter 1:13: "...Set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed" (Holloway, 2009: 125–127).

Although Peter did not necessarily know the term "coping strategies", the argument of this chapter is that he implements or suggests strategies that can be used for coping. It may be argued, if one follows the logic of Holloway, that Peter implements what is now called problem-based and emotion-based coping strategies. If one argues that 1 Peter can be read as a trauma text, then one should consider the transformative and supportive potential of this text for its first audience (and for audiences thereafter) in the face of rhetorical situations. The question here is how Peter is able to enter into the first audience's deepest longings and their beings knowing that he only has access to language (verbal and non-verbal) to do it. That may be the art of rhetoric.

## 4.4 COPING STRATEGIES IN 1 PETER

### 4.4.1 Introduction

The suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus are in a sense the reason why the first audience of 1 Peter is experiencing trauma. They confess that this person, who died the shameful death of a slave, is not only the Lord, but also the long-awaited Messiah. This confession causes verbal abuse, alienation from their community, physical abuse and possibly state persecution of these believers. The problem in 1 Peter, as in many other New Testament documents, is how to deal with the wider society, namely the Empire. It was the Empire that was responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus and in a sense the suffering of the first audience. The first audience cannot suffer as Jesus suffered. However, it is possible that Peter is portraying Jesus' suffering in the letter in the way that he does, because Jesus is embodying the trauma of the first audience.<sup>142</sup> Trauma is shattering their narratives and it is possible that Peter is giving words to their trauma by using the suffering of Jesus (also by

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<sup>142</sup> Zorodzai Dube (2013: 112) claims in terms of cultural trauma theory that the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jesus followers told the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, because this story portrayed cultural trauma. One can assume that the story was told because it resembles the (traumatic) experiences of the community.

describing the rhetorical situation). The argument in this section is that Peter not only appropriates the suffering and death of Jesus, but the *example* of his suffering as a coping strategy.

The suffering of Jesus and the identity and ethos expected from the first audience by Peter, are almost always described by means of metaphors and illustrations from the Hebrew Scriptures in the letter. Peter probably wants the Hebrew Scriptures to function in way that it would comfort and remind his first audience of their identity amidst their suffering, as well as how they are supposed to act (where Christ is held as the utmost example). Magda Misset-van de Weg (2004: 55) describes Peter's relationship with the Hebrew Scriptures in the following way: "[H]e read the Hebrew Scriptures, read them for his purposes, found meaning in them, and his interpretations found expression in his letter."

One only needs to look on the surface of the letter to see that the language of the letter is founded in the history of Israel, with concepts such as diaspora (1:1), election (1:1) and sacrifice (1:2) all in the opening of the letter. The experiences of the prophets (1:10), Sarah and Abraham (3:6) and Noah (3:20) are all used for exhortation. Quotations and allusions from the Hebrew Scriptures are seen throughout the letter (as pointed out in chapter three). One could argue that the author draws on the experiences of Israel by incorporating the Hebrew Scriptures to bring the first audience into solidarity with the experiences of the people of God (Christensen, 2015: 335–336).<sup>143</sup>

It may also be important to consider the eschatological thinking of 1 Peter in relation to the rhetorical situation discussed in chapter three when one is to consider the prophetic nature of 1 Peter' coping strategies as alternative perspectives. Horrell and Wei Hsien Wan argues that 1 Peter represents a kind of resistance to the Roman Empire and what is expected from the first audience to adhere to. Peter seems to suggest to his audience, apart from coping with their trauma, not conform their lives to the expectations and time of the Empire, but to that of the God of Israel who has intervened in

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<sup>143</sup> David Bartlett gives five ways in which the Hebrew Scriptures seem to function in 1 Peter: Firstly, the church is portrayed as Israel. Peter takes over images and phrases that the Hebrew Scriptures applies to Israel and uses them for the church. Christians in 1 Peter are now portrayed as the people who were once no people. Bartlett also suggests that Peter uses a threefold trajectory to explain the relationship between God, the church and Israel: The suffering servant (in Isaiah 53) foreshadows the suffering of Christ, Christ foreshadows the suffering and trauma of Christian slaves (and wives) and slaves model the appropriate behaviour for all believers in the face of suffering. Secondly, Peter uses passages that are bound together by key words or metaphors. The images are used to link the passages together and also to the situation of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jesus followers. This can be seen in 1 Peter 2, where the stone images are used with allusions and quotations from Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16, Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6 (Christ is the stone, Christians are living stones and the stones together build a house or a temple. Thirdly, Peter provides a rationale for its own use of the Hebrew Scriptures in 1 Peter 1:10-12. The Hebrew Scriptures, for Peter, was written to point to Christ, also in his suffering. In the fourth place, the quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures are often used to give further context and help Peter to get his argument across. In the fifth place, Bartlett argues that the scriptural resources on which 1 Peter draws, may be bigger than the Protestant canon as there are allusions to 1 Enoch, for example. Lastly, 1 Peter implies that the life and power of the Hebrew Scriptures live on in communities of faith. Like the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, Christian writers of the New Testament speak of the life, death and resurrection of Christ for the sake of Christ's people (Bartlett, 1998: 236–238).



time and history through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “This intervention has brought the world into ‘the last of the ages’, an eschatological present that demanded from them a particular way of life, a wholly new way of moving in time,” Horrell and Wan (2016: 273) argue. In terms of trauma and coping, there is an eschatological hope underlying the coping strategies that Peter suggests to his audience in the face of a rhetorical situation – God intervened in the past, but will also do so in the present and future in order for them to survive their trauma (Janse van Rensburg, 2010: 226).

In chapter three there is a great emphasis on the definition of trauma that states that trauma shatters a person’s or a group’s narrative. In 1 Peter the narratives of the people of Israel, that of Jesus Christ and the first audience are tied together. This will also be shown in the following sections.

#### 4.4.2 Mimesis

Although the concept of “imitation” or “mimesis” is only explicitly mentioned once in 1 Peter (2:21), it is a core feature of how the suffering of Christ is portrayed in the letter and how the first audience is expected to react to their suffering and trauma. Mimesis may be seen as the foundation of the letter. Even if it is only mentioned once, it may be argued that mimesis is underlying and implicated through the discourse, and that it plays a vital role in the letter. Peter tells specific people in the audience, namely slaves, “for to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps” (ὅμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἵχνεσιν αὐτοῦ).<sup>144</sup> Mimesis or imitation is not described in this verse in a single term, but in a phrase. It is important, to discuss the concept of Christ’s suffering in 1 Peter and the example thereof for the first audience to follow, to see what mimesis entails.

Jan van der Watt (2014: 1) suggests that mimesis or imitation was socially accepted in ancient times. Mimesis cannot be restricted to one aspect of life, but it was practised in various fields of reality. Plato was the first philosopher to discuss mimesis, especially in art. According to Plato, literature and art were meant to influence people, and he encouraged them to follow the example thereof. He also focused on mimesis in terms of imitating ethical principles.<sup>145</sup>

Van der Watt (2014: 2) further suggests that is important to see that mimesis is not constituted in one theory. Mimesis describes an attitude. Although there are various terms that describe mimesis and imitation, there are also terms and phrases that express similar thoughts. The concept of

<sup>144</sup> The term ὑπογραμμὸν only appears here in the New Testament. Elsewhere in the Greek world, this term was used to refer to both a letter of the alphabet written out for a child to copy and following a moral example. The latter features especially in later Christianity, building on this appearance in 1 Peter (Michaels, 1996: 253).

<sup>145</sup> Plato’s student, Aristotle, did not agree with his teacher. For him, literature and art are part of the fictional world and should be restricted to the sphere of the esthetical. Art and literature thus need not be imitated, according to Aristotle (Van der Watt, 2014: 1).



imitation, mimesis or following must lead one to see the presence of this concept in a text, and not a single word only. Mimesis functioned in many contexts, for example family and friendship ties and thus it can be motivated from a position of social dynamics.

Although the concept of mimesis comes from a Hellenistic background, the idea of imitation or following, especially on a moral level, is not limited to the Greco-Roman context. It is also prevalent in later Jewish and Christian contexts. In the context of the Hebrew Bible, there is little evidence of God being the one to imitate, rather God's commandments were to be the normative to imitate. The phenomenon of mimesis becomes more prevalent later when Hellenism had influenced Jewish contexts. In the New Testament, there are also signs of the practice of mimesis because of Hellenistic influence. It is especially dominant in Paul's letters where the following of Paul himself, Christ, God and other churches are seen. The early church fathers also took up this idea (Van der Watt, 2014: 3–4).

Elizabeth Castelli (1991: 16, 21–22) makes some valuable conclusions in her discussion of mimesis in order to identify mimesis in a text.<sup>146</sup> Firstly, mimesis is almost always detected as a hierarchical relationship. The one imitating cannot aspire to be in the privileged position of the “model”. However, the model has power in the relationship because of the life changing influence he or she can have on the imitator. Secondly, mimesis strengthens the idea of oneness over difference. Unity and harmony are associated with oneness, whilst difference is equated with chaos and diffusion. Thirdly, power is also a factor in mimesis and plays a fundamental role in the relationship. In the fourth place, mimesis always functions asymmetrical, the one element (the model) being fixed whilst the other element tries to transform itself to be like the other.

There is a slight difference between imitation and mimesis. Although in English, mimesis is translated as “imitation”, the concept of mimesis suggests something deeper. Mimesis asks for a deeper involvement than just imitating the model. Burton Mack (1995: 146) says in this regard:

The concept of mimesis, to copy a pattern or an example, strikes deeply into the Greek tradition of philosophy, education and ethical teaching. The English terms imitation and copy do not get at the significance of the concept. Pattern expressed structure, character, and the very being of things. To imitate the pattern of an example meant to become like it, to share its character and being. Thus, it is not just a matter of the mechanical action of imitating, but rather becoming like the model in character, thoughts and attitude.

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<sup>146</sup> Castelli is professor of Religion at Barnard College, Columbia University (USA) and she specialises in Biblical Studies, late ancient Christianity, feminist and gender studies in religion, and theory and method in the study of religion.

Imitation, mimesis and discipleship are closely linked to each other in the New Testament. In the Gospels, as well as in Acts, the followers of Jesus are referred to as “disciples”. The verb “to follow” and its participle “those who follow” appear frequently in the Gospels as reference to the crowds who physically walked after Jesus. But it is also used fourteen times in relation to following Jesus as his disciple. Apart from the four Gospels, Acts and two references in Revelations, the concepts “disciple” and “follower” are absent in the rest of the New Testament. However, there are statements regarding the nature of faithful Christian life, exhortations urging that the truths of these statements be put into practice and call for believers to be “imitators” or to reflect in their lives the “example” or “pattern” of the apostle Paul, Jesus Christ or God. In every occurrence, whether the believers are called to be “disciples” or “to follow” or whether the concepts of imitation, example, or patterning are used, teachings regarding Christian identity and practice come to the fore (Longenecker, 1996: 4–5).

1 Peter’s understanding of discipleship, following and mimesis, is also according to the latter. Peter is not only giving his audience a theological explanation of becoming like Christ in his suffering, but he urges them to follow Jesus (and other examples such as the “holy women” and Noah) in practice. One may ask what exactly Peter urges them to follow in this regard. What is the link between trauma and mimesis and is it a helpful coping strategy?

#### **4.4.2.1 Mimesis and trauma**

One may argue that mimesis can be a good coping strategy for people dealing with trauma. A resilient role model can play a significant role to overcome hardship, tragedy and trauma. It can be an effective way of coping and developing modes of resilience through imitating another person. For instance, someone who has experienced and successfully navigated themselves through a traumatic event, may be imitated. That person can become an important part of the person’s support network and can help to cultivate positive coping strategies. Mimicking the role model can bring significance to the life of somebody suffering from trauma (Iacoviello & Charney, 2016: 163).<sup>147</sup>

Mimesis, however, in the New Testament sense of the word, does not only mean to imitate and to do likewise as the role model, but to become more like the role model in character, attitude and person. Mimesis ties in with the collective mindset of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Mediterranean world. This worldview was based on a parental socialisation process through which people could learn and live

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<sup>147</sup> Leys (2000: 31-34) makes a distinction between mimetic and antimimetic paradigms. Leys uses mimesis as the embodied reenactment of a person that is outside language, because in most cases, trauma victims do not have the ability to remember and narrate the trauma. The antimimetic paradigm refers to trauma victims’ ability to remember and to narrate the event (Ingham, 2010: 229). I am not working with the categories that Leys presents here. However, if trauma causes the inability to use language to recount the traumatic event and memory is disturbed, then mimesis in the sense presented in this chapter may be used to cope with trauma as it also presents ways in which there may be communicated about the traumatic event, also in community where Jesus followers may help each other to faithfully witness their faith and cope with their trauma.

in terms of the norms and meaning of social interaction.<sup>148</sup> This could be a challenge when suffering and trauma come into play. To explain mimesis and its link to trauma, it is important to consider what Rambo says about “witness”, because mimesis and witness are closely linked. There is an element of mimesis that resides in witness. Although the term “witness” does not feature explicitly when Christ’s suffering is mentioned (except for 5:1, where Peter identifies himself as a “witness” to the suffering of Christ) or when the first audience is urged to follow his example, mimesis constitutes witness – an explicit or implicit showing that one is a believer.<sup>149</sup>

Rambo (2010: 15) asks the question: When one looks through a lens of trauma, can theology witness to this suffering that does not go away (trauma)? Is it possible to say something about God and living between death and life to people who are experiencing trauma? Rambo claims that witness is a term that is organic to Christian theology. There are two primary models when it comes to witness in the Christian tradition. The proclamation model is word-centred, meant to communicate the truth regarding Jesus’ works, words and body. The imitation model is centred on patterning one’s life after the life of Jesus and is more focused on body (realised life).<sup>150</sup> By definition, a witness is someone who observes, looks on, a bystander or a spectator of some event. “A witness provides verbal testimony for the sake of shedding light on a situation, therein exposing an aspect of the truth in question” (Rambo, 2010: 37–38).

Furthermore, to be a witness according to the proclamation model, is to become the vehicle by which the message is conveyed. This model is based on what the disciples did in spreading the news about Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. There is an urgent message to be spread and this is done through preaching and missions. The imitation model asks of the witness to pattern his or her life according to that of Jesus. In its extreme form, witnessing means to sacrifice one’s life for the sake of Christ. This model grew out of the early years of Christianity where the gospel had to be defended. As Jesus followers increasingly became threatened by persecution, “witness” evolved and became increasingly tied to believers who would risk their lives for the sake of their faith – Jesus suffers, therefore I suffer (Rambo, 2010: 39).

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Malina on collectivism in Mediterranean culture (Malina, 2010: 17–28).

<sup>149</sup> James Burtneiss states that “witness” and “martyr” are interrelated. To be a witness of the suffering of Christ, is to be a Christian but it also means to enter into the suffering of Christ. He quotes Bonhoeffer, who wrote: “When God calls a man (sic), he bids him come and die.” On a plaque near the church in Flossenbürg, close to the camp where Bonhoeffer was executed, the following words appear: “Dietrich Bonhoeffer, witness, for Jesus Christ among his brothers” (Burtneiss, 1969: 281).

<sup>150</sup> Jacqueline Lapsley (2016) distinguishes as follows between *imitatio Dei* and *mimesis*: “Our problem is that we consciously try to imitate God, as we might try to imitate a dancer in a dance class. The results are usually clumsy and we often give up because we feel uncoordinated. Mimesis is much more powerful: it is mimesis for example, when a small child ... unconsciously does what the parent does, and so becomes more and more like that adult. In ethics, how can we be less about imitating God and more about being formed into a people who embody God’s love for the neighbor and the foreigner? And here I see connections to ... the holistic context of holiness that informs both Leviticus and the Johannine literature. If one is embedded in this holiness, then it is natural to mimic the love that God has for the neighbor and the foreigner, alike.”

Rambo (2010: 39) says the following about the imitation model that constitutes many believers' way of interpreting what it means to witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus:

A faithful witness is not only one who professes belief in Jesus; the faithful witness demonstrates belief by imitating Jesus in his life and death ... One was no longer the vehicle of the gospel message; a witness literally became, in body, that message. The model of imitation cannot, however, simply be reduced to self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Imitative witness also involves a faithful demonstration of the life of Christ, as it is interpreted through the Gospels. To imitate Jesus is also to imitate his life – his works of love and service.

Rambo goes on to say that she challenges these notions of witness. The displacement of the figure of Jesus pushes against these familiar conceptions of what it means to be a witness to the events surrounding Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Traumatic language, as well as trauma's distortion of time, body and word, goes into a different theological field, namely that between death and life. Witness then becomes the link between life and death as it is experienced in trauma and survival. The theological models of proclamation and imitation no longer hold so much value when one is looking at it through a lens of trauma. When one reads 1 Peter and the example of Christ's suffering, as well as the distortion of time, body and word then one must ask what exactly needs to be imitated. How does one become an "imitative witness"? Rambo calls this the "territory of remaining" (Rambo, 2010: 39–42).

Because trauma distorts memory and time, there is an aspect of forgetting also involved here. It thus becomes important here, to stand in the middle between life and death, to acknowledge that everything cannot be known when it comes to trauma and that straightforward imitation of someone who has suffered cannot simply take place. Rambo argues that it is possible that these familiar interpretations have hindered believers to read another aspect of witness in these texts – namely the difficult witness to radical suffering (Rambo, 2010: 39–42).

What does it mean then to witness to trauma? Witness, especially in the face of trauma, is multi-layered. Trauma impacts individuals and communities on different levels and cannot be treated as a flattened-out concept. It is important to wrestle with suffering and trauma in new ways to recognise suffering. Elie Wiesel, a Jewish writer and Holocaust survivor, provides an illustration of what it means to witness to great tragedy and atrocity. An event such as the Holocaust makes impossible demands on those who attempt to witness to it. To witness, from this position, is to stand in a place where one can only see vaguely and where the evidence of what happened is not fully available to you. "It is unwitnessable witness", Rambo claims (2010: 22–23). Life is altered in respect to time,

body and word. To witness to trauma, is a “complex and disorientating process” (Rambo, 2010: 25).<sup>151</sup>

Mimesis in the context of trauma is complicated. It is not as straightforward as it may appear to be. This is because of witnessing that plays a part in this. To be an imitative witness is not only to be a spectator of the traumatic events of Jesus’ death and resurrection, but also to faithfully follow and embody Christ’s life. This in itself may be a dangerous endeavour. When Peter thus urges two specific groups (and the broader first audience) to follow the example of Christ, what exactly does he ask from them? Is it possible now to retrieve the “exact” meaning of the text? And what was Peter urging them to imitate – Jesus’ suffering itself, or the way he handled it? One can only speculate. However, even when Rambo claims that it is unwitnessable witness, I argue that 1 Peter attempts to consolidate the audience to live with hope even when trauma seems unmanageable and life gets complicated.

#### **4.4.2.2 *Mimesis and 1 Peter***

The point is that Jesus’ suffering is mentioned frequently in 1 Peter and surely the author had some purpose with it. The argument of this chapter is that Peter employed this strategy to help his first audience to cope with their trauma. Whether this is a good coping strategy, is hard to judge, for we do not know what the first audience made of it. It is not possible to determine whether Peter himself found this to be a helpful coping strategy and whether that is why he suggests it to his audience. The frequent use of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the focus on identity and ethos as the other two key strategies in 1 Peter, may raise the question of what the link between mimesis and these three strategies is.

I argue that mimesis, in terms of faithfully witnessing to life in the face of trauma and death and standing in that middle ground, is the foundation of the letter of 1 Peter. Peter did not write a letter to tell the audience that “everything is going to be okay”, but rather to urge them to remain faithful amidst their trauma and to give them strategies to cope with life in face of death. Therefore, it may be argued that following the example of Jesus’ suffering, established by the Hebrew Scriptures and God’s story with Israel, and reminding the audience who they are and to whom they belong, are indicators or manifestations of mimesis in 1 Peter. This is important to note before looking at the text of 1 Peter itself in terms of coping.

To mimic the example of Jesus, to faithfully witness to trauma, as well as the trauma of the cross, to cope with and survive trauma, the audience needs to know where they are coming from (standing in

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<sup>151</sup> For Wiesel, witness also implicates a new relationship to language. A new genre of literature came into being, according to Wiesel, namely the literature of testimony. “This genre was distinctive not only in its attempt to speak the truth about the atrocities experienced, but also in its struggle to find an appropriate form of language to speak such truths” (Rambo, 2010: 23).

the tradition and story of Israel), who they are and to whom they belong. Therefore, these three coping strategies (that will be closely dealt with in the following section), are closely intertwined with each other. They amplify the notion of mimesis and emphasise the cohesion and coherence of 1 Peter. Mimesis is explicitly mentioned only once in 1 Peter, but it spurs the audience into action even though they are facing traumatic circumstances.

Therefore, in the following pages of this chapter, the entire text of 1 Peter will be examined. I choose to consider the whole text of 1 Peter for the following reasons (not to only look at a few key pericopes). Firstly, it is important to consider the whole of the letter and not to be selective because of the genre of 1 Peter. It is considered to be an epistle and one of the main features of this genre is that there is a line of thought that is being developed throughout the letter. Peter is attempting to persuade his audience of his argument and (to link with the argument of this chapter), to help them cope with trauma. It is thus important to consider the full dynamics of 1 Peter by respecting the flow and line of thought (Brown, 2007: 154-155).

Secondly, the textual analysis in chapter three also motivates for working with the whole text of 1 Peter in chapter four, especially with regard to repetitive themes that are pointed out. Because the suffering of Jesus, imagery and quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, and emphasis on identity and ethos, with the underlying theme of mimesis, are repeated frequently in the letter, it is necessary to consider how the line of thought of the letter in terms of these themes are used to develop the argument. It is therefore crucial to consider the whole letter, as these themes (considered as coping strategies) are intertwined with one another and repeat frequently.

Lastly, it is important to consider the whole of 1 Peter in order to consider the “culmination points” in the letter. What is meant by this, is that the places in the letter where there is a turning or peak point in the argument, where certain themes are repeated, where conclusions are made, where reinforcements are used such as a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures, are all to support the argument of the letter. The culmination points will especially be highlighted in the following sections to support my argument of coping strategies in 1 Peter.

These are the choices made as to why the entire text of 1 Peter will be discussed in terms of coping strategies. I am not trying to force these notions onto the text of 1 Peter. In chapter three I argued that 1 Peter can be read as a text that probably reflects a reality of trauma in the lives of the first audience. In this chapter I ask which strategies or alternative perspectives does the text provide to help them cope – using the argument of Pargament which says that people tend to cope with what they have. These early Jesus followers had their faith. In 1 Peter their faith is validated, confirmed, and encouraged by the suffering of Jesus, being part of the household of God and God’s journey



with people by means of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the notion that their identity is not rooted in their traumatic circumstances, but in the suffering Christ.

#### 4.4.3 Greeting: “To the elect strangers/exiles in Diaspora”

1 Peter starts with the author identifying himself as an “apostle of Jesus Christ”, therefore validating his position as a primary witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is significant, from a perspective of a trauma lens, that a disciple of Jesus possibly wrote this letter for it was possible that Peter experienced the trauma of Jesus’ suffering first hand. It is as if he is telling the first audience: “You may listen to what I have to say, because I speak with authority on these matters.”<sup>152</sup>

Already in the opening verses of the letter the three coping strategies come to the fore. Peter appropriates covenantal language in order to identify the addressees (language that has been used in the LXX to describe Abraham, Moses and the Israelites). “Election”, “exiles” and “diaspora” seem to be an oxymoron, but these terms function here with a purpose. David Bartlett (1998: 247) states that election and exile go together. Peter might have Jeremiah 29:4 in mind when he writes this; their foreigner status is part of the people of God’s calling and election. Jobes argues that Peter, by drawing an analogy between the Jewish exile, diaspora (during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem and Judah) and the historical situation of the first audience, invites them to understand themselves as Jesus followers in terms of God’s people of the old covenant who have been scattered.

This diaspora experience provides them with a lens through which they can look at their current situation (Jobes, 2005: 59). To take further what Jobes is arguing, acknowledging the reality of “diaspora” in the lives of the audience, is also witnessing to its trauma and finding ways to cope with it. Already by adding “diaspora” in the opening verse of the letter, the imaginary framework that Peter brings forth in the rest of the letter is set – it is exactly in these circumstances that their identity is focused on and their mimicking of Jesus’ example comes into play.

The original diaspora occurred during the Babylonian exile. Theologically, the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures claim that this is because of covenantal failure. In the case of the first audience of 1 Peter, they are experiencing trauma because of obedience, not because of disobedience to the covenant like the people of Israel and Judah. It may be that the negative connotations associated with

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<sup>152</sup> Richard Fenn argues that there are evidence that the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Mediterranean world, dominated by the Roman Empire, were obsessed with “authority”. Those, like the emperor and the elite, had authority and power to say and do as they wished. Many of the New Testament documents challenge this notion of authority, claiming that Jesus Christ is the one who has ultimate authority, also over life and death (Fenn, 1986: 19). Of course, the concept of authority today may also be seen in a negative light, for example, where the authority of Scripture is abused to dictate to battered wives to stay in abusive relationships. However, authority may also be considered as a life giving concept used, for example, by Peter who possibly wanted to help his audience cope with their trauma. This may be seen in line with the authority of Jesus as Lord, where authority in his earthly ministry functioned in life giving ways for example when he healed people and drove demons out.



exile and diaspora have been swallowed up in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (at least for Peter writing this letter). Being the elect exiles of the diaspora, may give the first audience a new faith perspective on their current situation. However, it is because of their relationship with and witness to God in Christ that they are foreigners in their own communities and society. However, being called the “elect foreigners/exiles” already in the first verse of this letter, perhaps intended to tell the audience that Peter wants to help them survive and cope with their traumatised lives (Jobes, 2005: 65–67).

Peter then uses three prepositional phrases to tell the addressees by what means they have been chosen and to what purpose their election is supposed to function. Peter does not describe a fully developed doctrine of the Trinity here. He rather tries to communicate to the first audience that they have been chosen in three ways. From the beginning of the world, God has called these “elected exiles”. This word pair rhetorically functions as an oxymoron - they are elected in the eyes of God, but exiles and strangers in the eyes of the Empire. The Spirit brings these exiles into the covenant of God through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Already the suffering Christ is mentioned. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus probably alludes to Exodus 24. The Israelites were wandering in the wilderness in the context of Exodus 24 - they were a homeless people.<sup>153</sup> Thus, God “the Father”, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are at work in the lives of the first audience even if they struggle to realise it (Bartlett, 1998: 247–248; Jobes, 2005: 67–72). One could imagine that after these few verses, the first audience could already have felt some comfort from these words.

When Peter bestows “grace” and “peace” in abundance on them, it is possible from what is said in chapter three of this dissertation, that the first audience’s lives were not marked by these words. Although this is a typical way of greeting fellow believers in the New Testament, here it might have more significance. Even though they are not handled with grace and peace by others in their society and even if they experience suffering and trauma because of that, they can know that God has chosen them from the beginning and that they belong to a new family.

The introductory verses of 1 Peter already establish the three coping strategies of the letter, with mimesis underlying it. Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ – he himself is a follower of Christ and is therefore compelled to write this letter. The concepts of “diaspora” and “election” not only point to the contexts of the Hebrew Scriptures, but to the identity of the first audience as well; they are chosen by God, through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and the suffering of Jesus

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<sup>153</sup> Jobes further explains the context of obedience and the sprinkling of blood as joined to the diaspora motif in the eschatological prophecy of the Hebrew Bible. According to Ezekiel 36:24-28, God promises to call God’s people out of the diaspora of the nations in order to sprinkle water on them, to cleanse them of any impurities and from idolatry, and to put God’s spirit in them so they will be obedient to the law from their hearts. Jobes then further suggests that Peter may have alluded to Ezekiel’s prophecy to tell the first audience that God is fulfilling that promise of a diaspora prophet through Jesus Christ (Jobes, 2005: 72).

already mentioned, also as the means through which the audience is part of the household of God. These themes and culmination points will be further explored in the following sections.

#### **4.4.4 1 Peter 1:3-12: “You have a living hope!”**

Bartlett (1998: 249) states that 1 Peter opens with a doxology and the themes that will be discussed in 1 Peter, appear in this opening section. I disagree with Bartlett here, because I argue that the framework of 1 Peter is already set in the first two verses of the letter. Jobes explains that this doxology provides the context for the first audience’s new life in Christ. It is possible to go further in terms of a trauma lens and argue that life can be viewed anew in the face of death. It is possible that Peter is trying to create a positive atmosphere to put any negative expectations at ease, as Jobes argues. However, it is not only about a positive atmosphere, but about coping with life in the face of trauma, and I believe that this is why the resurrection of Jesus is mentioned (Jobes, 2005: 79-80).

Jobes also states that Peter draws his first audience into solidarity with the people of God from the Hebrew Bible in 1:3-12. He provides a theological basis for their group identity as covenant people chosen by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It seems that Peter interprets the prophets of Israel and Juda who witnessed to the suffering and glories of the Messiah not for their own generation, but for those who will suffer and experience trauma later because of their relationship with this Messiah. Therefore, it is possible that he wants console his audience with the teachings and exhortations of the Hebrew scriptures (Jobes, 2005: 79-80).<sup>154</sup>

This section can be divided into three sub sections, namely 1:3-5; 1:6-9 and 1:10-12. The first section starts with a doxology to the “God and Father” of “our Lord Jesus Christ”. Covenantal language function here as explanation of God’s attributes – in verse 2 the foreknowledge of God was highlighted, now God’s mercy comes to the fore. Achtemeier (1996: 93) states that the opening formula derives from the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish world with a traditional reference to God and adding “the father of our Lord Jesus Christ”, even though it was typical in Hellenistic rhetoric to invoke the gods. The mention of Jesus’ resurrection can be seen as a culmination point for the argument of Peter. At the beginning of this letter, not only the suffering and death of Jesus are mentioned, but also his resurrection from the dead. For Peter’s argument, this is crucial. One cannot only focus on the suffering and trauma of Jesus, but also on his resurrection – to say that there is hope beyond the trauma of the cross.

Michaels (1988: 17–18) suggests that God is no longer introduced in relation to the heroes of the faith out of the remote past, or in relation to God’s deliverance of Israel, but in relation to Jesus

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<sup>154</sup> Achtemeier (1996: 92) adds to this notion when he explains that the opening doxology to God for all that he has done, namely creating a new family, places the new life of the believer in an implied contrast with the old life with its dead hope, perishable inheritance and salvation that is unreliable.

Christ. One can agree with Michaels here, but one can also argue, for the purpose of this chapter and the letter's focus on the identity of the audience, that the continuity of God's journey with the people of Israel is of importance. However, it is Christ's suffering, death and resurrection that bring Jews and non-Jews together because of this "living hope" that has been given to them through the suffering of Christ.<sup>155</sup>

Then it states that the first audience is given "new birth", through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the death to have a "living hope" and an inheritance (that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading).<sup>156</sup> This hope lives because it is based on Jesus' resurrection from the dead and his victory over death. This hope lives because death cannot overcome it – even when trauma is involved. "Hope lives because even in the face of tribulation, it does not go back down or grow faint. Living hope is hope that gives life", Bartlett (1998: 250) states.<sup>157</sup> To take Bartlett's statement further, living hope is hope that gives life in the face of trauma and death. Christian hope is ever-living, because Christ is ever-living. The reality in the present of the lives of the first audience is determined by the reality of the past (the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) and this hope is guaranteed in the future because of Christ's victory over death (Jobes, 2005: 85). Peter acknowledges that the first audience might have felt feelings of hopelessness and despair because of their lives in the Empire and their trauma because of having a Christian identity, and therefore he offers them "living hope".

When hearing about this inheritance that is kept in heaven, the first audience might remember how the land of the people of Israel and Juda was defiled, defaced and ravished successively by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Romans. This earthly land is not kept for them, but is taken from them in exile and occupation. Even when they had the land, it was defiled by the people who did not take responsibility for their part in the covenant with God. This might be meaningful for the first audience, as this inheritance that is kept in heaven for them, cannot be taken from them and the Empire cannot get its hands on it. They can try, also by traumatising the lives of the Jesus followers,

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<sup>155</sup> One could suggest that even if Peter praised God in relation to heroes of the faith or in terms of God's deliverance of his people from Egypt, it would still have been consolation for the first audience as many of the heroes of the faith and the people of Israel have suffered and experienced trauma. However, it is profound that Peter chooses to introduce God in relation to Jesus Christ, because it is precisely because of their identity as followers of Jesus that the audience is experiencing trauma. Identifying God "the father" with the suffering of Jesus, the one who is considered to be the Messiah and Son of God, could have had a great rhetorical and transformational impact on the first audience's lives and faith.

<sup>156</sup> Catherine Clark Kroeger and Aída Besançon Spencer (2002: 781–782) state that there are several birthing metaphors in 1 Peter. It is an appropriate metaphor, because entrance into a family is possible only through birth or adoption. The term used here can refer to a mother bearing a child and it is also used for the father's act of begetting. The new birth in this verse refers to a living hope and an unfading inheritance. God has given new birth, which is considered as a female act, to an inheritance, which is associated with the paternal side of the family. Both aspects are connected to familial continuity.

<sup>157</sup> There is a noticeable shift in the use of pronouns from verse 3 to 4. Bartlett notices that in verse 3 God has given "us" new birth and in verse 4 God keeps an inheritance for "you". Bartlett argues that rhetorically this is a shift from the confessional to the homiletical, from a testimony of faith that is shared, to the hortatory reminder to the first audience what shared faith means in their lives (Bartlett, 1998: 250).

but this also points to the living hope that the first audience has (Jobes, 2005: 85).<sup>158</sup> The apocalyptic reference in verse 5 may be attributed to this “living hope”, for then the hope may be that the trauma and suffering will be over for ever (which also refers back to the outcry of the exiles in Babylon as reflected in certain prophetic texts of the Hebrew Scriptures).

The reference to the end times is contrasted in verse 6 (the second section), where Peter points out that joyfulness is possible even though they will go through trials for a “short while” (another culmination point in the letter’s argument). This the first time in the letter that Peter explicitly refers to the suffering of the first audience. He almost generalises it, almost as to say that it does not really matter in the greater scheme of God’s kingdom, but it is important enough for him to write them a letter in order to help them cope with their trauma. However, one may argue that the joy here is not in their suffering. It is in the resurrection of Christ – the notion that the one called Messiah who died a horrifying, traumatic death, has been resurrected from that trauma and death. Therefore, God guards their faith in the face of death and suffering.

Jobes (2005: 93) suggests that, humanly speaking, their current circumstances will not give the first audience any reason to hope for a glorious future. This is what trauma does – the future seems hopeless because of the past, but the present really suffers under that realisation. Even knowledge of faith and eschatological hope does not make the distress and trauma any less real or disquieting. Achtemeier (1996: 99) states that the theme of the opening verse – Christians as chosen exiles in the diaspora – may be placed in a greater context. It is precisely because the first audience is now part of the family of God that they are considered outsiders of society in which they once were at home.<sup>159</sup>

The possibility is there that these trials may test the integrity of their faith. It can seem as if he is telling the first audience that their suffering and trauma are brief and necessary and therefore it becomes more bearable.<sup>160</sup> This can be a problematic statement to make, but in the light of the short expectancy of Christ’s second coming it is understandable. They are not experiencing suffering and

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<sup>158</sup> There are debates as to whether the reference to the inheritance has a Jewish or Christian background in mind, also in terms of sources. Achtemeier explains that on the one hand, the author has already employed language that describe the Christian community in terms of the people of Israel. On the other hand, the description of an eschatological inheritance that is currently preserved by God is also found in the sayings of Jesus and is familiar to Paul. It is thus possible that the Jewish background of these ideas has been included already in the Christian traditions that form the more immediate context of these verses. Achtemeier nevertheless opts for a Jewish background to these verses, because of the pattern in 1 Peter’s appropriation of the language of Israel to describe the Christian community. This would point to a more direct and intentional use of this type of language (Achtemeier, 1996: 96).

<sup>159</sup> Achtemeier (1996: 99) also states that there is a certain movement in these verses. There is a movement from the present (verse 6-7) that is determined by God’s act of sending Christ in the past (verse 8) to a future that fulfills the past and the present (verse 7b, 9). This is a pattern that is repeated in 1 Peter.

<sup>160</sup> Lauri Thurén (1995: 100) in his rhetorical analysis of these verses gives three conclusions: Firstly, the first audience must rejoice despite suffering, because suffering does not prevent joy. Secondly, the first audience is willing to suffer in order to glorify God. Lastly, the first audience is willing to suffer in order to gain glory.

trauma because their faith is inadequate. Rather it is evidence that their faith is genuine, otherwise they would not have chosen to be associated with a faith that would cause them trauma (Jobes, 2005: 79, 94). The authenticity of their faith, even if it is tested by fire (traumatic wounds that do not seem to want to heal), it is still more precious than gold. Yet again it points to future praise and glory in the second coming of Christ. This joy in suffering also reflects a Jewish background, specifically the Wisdom of Solomon 3:4; 2 Baruch 52:6-7 and Sirach 2:1-6 (Achtemeier, 1996: 99; Jobes, 2005: 95).

Verse 8 also gives words to another reality. The first audience is suffering, but they also lack the physical experience of witnessing to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They love Jesus even though they have not seen him with their own eyes and even when they are struggling to see him because of their trauma (Jobes, 2005: 93). In terms of mimesis, this is profound – to follow in the footsteps and to become like someone that they have never met in person, can be a daunting task. However, it is possible, being part of God's household and being co-receivers of the inheritance that God is promising. σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν in verse 9 may be more at home in the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures, meaning that salvation includes the whole person (salvation of the self) (Achtemeier, 1996: 104; Bartlett, 1998: 253). The consolation here is then that even though the first audience has not seen Jesus, there is the opportunity to cope with their trauma because of their faith in him. They may be joyous because they know that they already are part of his family as whole persons (even though trauma shatters their narratives).

In the third part of this section, it seems that Peter seeks to establish the relevance of the Hebrew Scriptures for his audience, especially by mentioning the prophets as an important part of his argument. The Hebrew Scriptures function as explanation of the relevance of Christ, especially in his suffering. This is done in connection to confirming their identity as the new family of God and to give substance to the ethos Peter invites them to live. The audience may be considered as privileged because of their knowledge of the gospel. For Peter, God's redemptive work through Christ seems to be superior to that of both the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and the angels. The prophets have forewitnessed the suffering of the Messiah and this functions as a confirmation to the first audience that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.<sup>161</sup> Therefore, the unity of the prophetic messages of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian gospel is the foundation on which Peter will utilise the teachings and ethics of the Hebrew Scriptures to help them cope with their trauma (Achtemeier, 1996: 110; Jobes, 2005: 95).

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<sup>161</sup> Jobes explains the link between the past and the present in 1:10-12 as follows: In the past the prophets have prophesied about these things, in the present the evangelists have preached. In the past the Spirit revealed future things to the prophets and in the present the Spirit has told this to you through those who preached the gospel. In the past the prophets have inquired into the circumstances or time of the Messiah's sufferings and glories. In the present even the angels desire to look into the Messiah's sufferings and glory (Jobes, 2005: 103).

Michaels explains that the effect of Peter's substance and style is to encourage the first audience and strengthen their identity, as well as to help them cope with their trauma. They are the "insiders" now whilst the great prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and even the angels are in a sense "outsiders" – friendly "outsiders" who help to bring the kingdom of God to realisation (a crucial conclusion to make in terms of the argument of the letter). There are other outsiders as well, such as the enemies of the divine plan and of followers of Jesus in the world (Michaels, 1988: 50). The hermeneutics Peter explains in 1:10-12 allows him to draw the first audience's self-understanding into solidarity with the people of God in the Hebrew Scriptures and becoming part of the family of God. They are no longer part of diverse nations, but of one household of God, which he explores further in the next section.

#### **4.4.5 1 Peter 1:13-2:10: "You are the new household of God"**

In 1:3-12, Bartlett (1998: 257) argues, Peter described the gifts that God bestows upon the believers – one may add, even in the face of trauma. In 1:13-25, he attempts to explain the responsibility that comes with these gifts, by explaining the action that the audience needs to take. Jobes suggests that Peter recommends four actions.<sup>162</sup> As a new people with a new identity that has found their hope in the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, it is suggested that they are to (1) "set your mind on the grace ahead" (1:13), (2) "be holy in your whole way of life" (1:15), (3) "love one another earnestly" (1:22) and (4) "crave the pure spiritual milk" (2:2). These imperatives, which constitute the audience's ethos in attempting to cope with their trauma, serve as culmination points in this section, together with five quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is probable that Peter applies the hermeneutic he describes in 1:10-12 by directly appropriating passages from the Hebrew Scriptures to his audience. Allusions to the exodus and the book of Hosea, quotations from the Holiness code of Leviticus and from Isaiah, and echoes of Psalm 34 function interrelatedly to create a new covenant context for these four exhortations (Jobes, 2005: 107).

Achtemeier suggests that imagery of the account of the exodus in the Hebrew Scriptures is very prevalent in this section. There are several images in this section that allude to the exodus: "girding of loins" (Exodus 12:11); "blood of the spotless lamb" (Exodus. 12:5); "kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Exodus. 19:5-6); "desires of former times" (Exodus. 16:3); "liberation from pagan servitude" (Exodus. 15:2-4); and "obedience to God" (Exodus. 15:26; 19:8). Achtemeier suggests that it would be possible to say that this passage is dominated by the notion of the Christian community as chosen people, with a variety of images drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures in order for Peter to accentuate his point. He also suggests that in this passage Peter attempts to emphasise that the first audience is not mere bystanders in their situation, but they are active participants in the covenant of grace that God has established through Jesus Christ (Achtemeier, 1996: 115). In accordance with what

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<sup>162</sup> Each one is expressed in main clauses that contain an aorist imperative and every one of them is qualified by subordinate clauses (Jobes, 2005: 107).



Achtemeier argues, even though they are victims of their circumstances, Peter believes that they may actively participate in coping and surviving their trauma and in this way, possibly prevent or manage the rhetorical situation at hand.

1 Peter 1:13 starts with a Semitic idiom that alludes to Exodus 12:11. This is how Israelite people showed their readiness at the Passover to leave their life of slavery behind. Peter is again appropriating the situation of the people of God in the Hebrew Scriptures to his audience. The emphasis here is that they are invited to fix their understanding of their identity on a single purpose – that they are to trust that grace will be brought to them when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although this is eschatological, this future grace may affect the present and seems already to be working in the lives of the first audience. Because of this they are to be awake and act as Peter encourages them to do (Michaels, 1988: 54, 56).

This hope that Peter is referring to, is not equated to just a wish for the future or that things will go better in the future. This hope, Jobes argues, is assurance that what is hoped for will certainly come to pass. Future hope in the New Testament is based on an event in the past, namely the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (2005: 109). Peter invites them to trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, because it has already been given to them through what Jesus has done in the past. Verse 13 also accentuates this by using an image alluding to the exodus, thus focusing on God's faithfulness in the past.

Bartlett (1998: 258) suggests that as a God of hope creates hopeful people, so a holy God asks of them to live as holy people. Peter explains in 1:14-16 that by being holy, the first audience may embrace the possibilities of the hope that he was referring to verse 13 (and earlier). It is maybe unexpected that Peter here alludes to words spoken by Moses to the Israelites who were wandering in the wilderness. They were awaiting their entrance into the promised land. Peter takes the words of Moses and applies them to these early Jesus followers who are indeed in exile (cf. 1:17).

I agree with Jobes who argues that Peter is referring to holiness as a way of life, not only to live religiously (in the cultic sense of the word). The audience's calling is to live differently, even when they are treated as foreigners by their communities and even in the way that they are surviving their trauma.<sup>163</sup> Peter quotes a text from Leviticus to stress his argument. The holiness to which the first audience is called in Christ, is consistent with the character of God that is revealed in God's covenant

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<sup>163</sup> Jobes (2005: 113) suggests that there are several contrasts in verses 14 to 19 between the former and current state of Peter's readers. Formerly they were ignorant of God, now they have knowledge of Christ. Formerly they were not part of God's family, now they are called God's children. Previously they were controlled by their desires, now they are controlled by their obedience to God. Formerly they led a futile way of life, now they are living a holy life. Previously they were affirmed by society, now they are misunderstood and excluded from society.



with Israel. This is also an important notion in terms of mimesis. Becoming like Christ, implies that the audience is necessarily set apart from the outside society in terms of identity and ethos. This is motivated by the Hebrew Scriptures (and connected to verse 19) (Jobes, 2005: 113, 115).

Holiness in a context of trauma and surviving the trauma, may have implied for the first audience that although they are excluded from the rest of society and their communities because of how they live (not according to their prior desires) and their identity as believers, they can know that amidst their trauma, God has set them apart and is guiding their lives. Peter attempts to affirm this through allusions to, and a direct quotation of, texts from the Hebrew Scriptures. In the past, God has been faithful to God's people, whom God has also instructed to live holy lives, and therefore God will also be truthful to these Jesus followers in their trauma. It creates a sense of belonging and this is further enhanced later in 2:9, where Peter calls these believers "a holy people/nation".

In verse 17 Peter establishes again the first audience's special relationship with God because of their calling and new birth. Calling God "father", may allude back to the way that Jesus addressed God in the Gospels. One may agree with Michaels here, where he argues that it is possible that Peter relies on the memory of the early church and establishes their identity yet again as a community that is collectively made up of the children of God (Michaels, 1988: 60–61). This may be a way of reminding them of the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6 and how prayer can also be a way of coping with their trauma. Peter refers to the audience experiencing hostility as being strangers. Peter wants to remind them that God does not show favouritism or partiality as their society does. God may be respected by them as the one who is impartial and who has saved them through Christ, "the perfect lamb" (v.19).

The comparison made in 1:18 may refer to the Roman custom of "sacral manumission". This entails a legal action by which a slave pays money into a temple treasury in order for the god that is honoured in that temple to "purchase" or "ransom" the slave from the master. The slave would then be the property of the god, but in society he or she would be a free person. It could also have Isaiah 52:3 LXX as background: "You were sold for nothing, and you will be redeemed without silver" (1988: 63–64). The evil, the trauma and the suffering that Christ has saved them from, came at the cost of his own life. Part of it is also their previous way of life, that Peter describes as a useless way of life that was inherited from their ancestors. To continue to live in one's former, meaningless ways of life, may be seen as the denial of the worth of the death of Christ (Jobes, 2005: 116).

The image of Christ as lamb and his precious blood is rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, and Isaiah, from which Peter frequently quotes (Jobes, 2005: 117). The reference to an unblemished lamb may recall Leviticus 22:21. Just as Christ is holy, so the Jesus followers are invited to be holy. The emphasis on Christ's sacrificial gift of himself is starting to point

to an important theme in this letter (another culmination point). It is possible that Christians will also suffer, because of their identity and calling (Bartlett, 1998: 258).

This image is strongly linked to the context of deliverance from foreign exile that is found in the Hebrew Scriptures. It especially alludes to the Passover in Exodus. The phrase ὥς ἀμνοῦ probably recalls Isaiah 53:7 and the suffering servant. The “faultless and flawless” character of the lamb recalls the sacrificial system within the Israelite tradition. References to Christ being foreknown and finally revealed in what follows in verse 19, may recall certain Jewish and Christian traditions about Genesis 22:18 (the young ram that was offered in the place of Isaac). Although the reader is not really held in suspense, Peter achieves dramatic effect by withholding for as long as possible the identity of the one being described: ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ at the end of the sentence is the link between verses 18-19 and 20 (Michaels, 1988: 66).

The focus of verses 18-19, except for the fact that it refers to Christ’s suffering, is also to root the first audience’s identity and to communicate their worth by drawing on (for them, authoritative) images from the Hebrew Scriptures to do so. They are worth more than what society is making of them. Alluding also to the Jewish exile, Peter wants to demonstrate that even in their trauma, their lives have worth, so much so that the most perfect and unblemished lamb of them all were killed in order for them to have hope and life!

1 Peter is a letter of encouragement and this is particularly evident in 1:20. Peter strives to encourage the first audience by reminding them that from the beginning and foundation of the world, God has destined Jesus Christ to redeem them. God has sent prophets to interpret God’s work in Jesus, especially for the sake of these believers. Bartlett rightly argues that exile is framed by God’s intention from the beginning of time and by Jesus’ return at the end of time. In the meantime, the believers are invited to live by faith and cope with their trauma in hope, as verse 21 suggests (Bartlett, 1998: 259).

Peter tries to reassure his audience in 1:21 that to have faith and hope in Christ is to have faith and hope in the God of Israel, because God has raised Christ from the dead and God has glorified Christ. This reassurance may be especially encouraging for Jewish Christians in the audience, who might have realised that obedience to God’s instructions would not necessarily be diverting from the covenantal faith of their ancestors, but a fulfilment of it. Peter argues earlier that the prophets of Israel actually prophesies about the suffering and glory of Jesus the Messiah (1:10-12). Peter explains the believers’ relationships with God in terms of holiness (1:14-16) and he describes Christ’s redemptive work by means of a sacrificial lamb metaphor. All of this happens in the opening of the letter – it seems that Peter views the Jesus’ followers trust in God through the person of Christ to be in continuity with the work that God has begun in the covenant with Israel (Jobes, 2005: 119–120).

In 1:22 Peter continues with his ethical instruction for the first audience. He encourages them as a community that are brought together because of their faith and hope in Christ, to love each other. One can also argue that this is a strategy of coping with their trauma individually, but also as a community who is experiencing similar suffering. The community of believers becomes their primary social context where they can love, care, nourish each other and follow in the footsteps of Christ, over against the society that excludes and ostracises them (Jobes, 2005: 122). The phrase ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς suggests that this is not a meek kind of love, but an active love, encouraging each other in faith and hope and also to live their everyday lives in holiness and obedience – also as ways to cope and survive their trauma.

In 1:22-25, it seems that Peter again does not hesitate to redirect covenant language that was first addressed to Israel in exile to his 1<sup>st</sup> century CE audience in Asia Minor. The same spoken word that Isaiah is referring to (in Isaiah 40:6-8), Peter appropriates in this letter that is framed by allusions to the Babylonian exile. It is probable that Peter resends this word with a similar urgency as Isaiah to comfort communities of believers who are traumatised and suffering, that the promises and words of God remain forever. Human institutions and empires are fleeting and so their suffering can be viewed from this perspective. This reminds them that the good news of Jesus Christ was especially preached to them, who were born from “imperishable seed” (Jobes, 2005: 127–128, 130). One may argue further, in accordance with Jobes, that it is this gospel of following Jesus Christ, that brings a living hope, that is everlasting (referring to 1:25a, culminating in the eschatological hope that God’s word stands for ever).

If communal faith and hope is the theological bond of the first audience, then love is the practical bond. Love is the visible outworking of their identity that has been established by faith and hope as God’s chosen people (Bartlett, 1998: 80). Love is also one of the major ways in which mimesis is embodied, as Christ suffered out of love and self sacrifice. Peter further reminds them of this in the following verses and appropriates extensive imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures to do so.

Because of what has been preached to them and also the encouragement to love one another, Peter invites the audience in 2:1 to get rid of everything that can destroy relationships and community. He describes how the members of the audience may relate to one another, also by longing for the spiritual milk together – to rather crave things such as hope, faith and love that has the potential to heal the community and bring them together (Jobes, 2005: 131). This vice list is not going to help the audience to cope with their trauma together as a community and it seems that Peter knows what harm it could do. Therefore, he encourages them by using a metaphor of new born babies who are craving milk, to grow so that their future salvation can become a reality and that they can survive their trauma. Peter knows that the only possible way to do this is, is to love one another.

Peter quotes a phrase from Psalm 34:9. In Psalm 34, the psalmist praises God for deliverance from distress.<sup>164</sup> Bartlett suggests that the whole psalm therefore foreshadows themes that will be important to Peter's assurance to faith communities under threat (Bartlett, 1998: 264). I disagree with Bartlett here – I do not necessarily think that the psalm “foreshadows” themes, but rather that Peter is appropriating the text for his audience possibly facing trauma and that this quotation is an important conclusion to this section. Peter is again reminding them of God's faithfulness in the past and framing this with Psalm 34 might have stirred the first audience to remember this, amidst their trauma.

The first three verses of 1 Peter 2 paves the way of what Peter is going to say next. In 2:4-10, the densest cluster of metaphors and images from the Hebrew Scriptures in the New Testament may be found. These verses may be seen as a culmination point in terms of the whole argument of the letter. The images and metaphors that are used here, are the climax to everything that Peter has said so far in terms of the audience's identity. It is as if he wants to remind them one last time, before he comes to other practical issues that are causing them trauma, in a dramatic way of who they are – giving words and pictures to their identity in a time where they struggle to speak about their trauma or even see who they really are.

The climax in this passage is not just about who the believers are, but who they are because of the identity of Christ. Peter attempts to establish the nature of this community of believers that has been formed because of who Christ is and in whom they have been born again. The use of quotations and images from the Hebrew Scriptures greatly contributes to the authority and rhetorical power of Peter's argument (cf. Jobes, 2005:142). Jobes argues that Peter already considers the “tasting” to have happened in the lives of his first audience. Peter now appropriates the idea of “seeking” and “coming to God” (as suggested in Psalm 34:5-6), saying that it is realised in the lives of his readers as they come to Jesus Christ and are part of God's glorious building project of redemption (Jobes, 2005: 145).

Achtemeier states that it is clear in these verses that if the Jesus followers as a community are chosen and precious to God because of Christ who is chosen and precious to God, then they may be aware that this can cause the Christian community to be rejected as Christ has been rejected by other human beings. Being rejected then as a community is because of being chosen to be the family of God and that this experience of trauma is not proof of God's rejection of them (Achtemeier, 1996: 152). God does not reject them, even though their traumatic experiences may have led them to this conclusion. Peter furthermore, with the images and metaphors from the Hebrew Scriptures culminating here, tries to establish their relationship with each other as a social body. It is possible

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<sup>164</sup> Sean M. Christensen (2015: 350) argues that because Psalm 34 is also used in 4 Maccabees 18:15, it shows that Psalm 34 was applied in situations of trials and suffering. It was to serve as a reminder of the history of Israel of the blessing of obedience in times of suffering and trauma.

that their relationship with each and their identity may help them cope with the effects of trauma on their bodies.

Peter invites the first audience in 2:4 to come to the living stone, namely Christ.<sup>165</sup> By this invitation, Peter not only invites them to cast their trauma on the living stone, but also to become more like him in their lives as Jesus followers and coming to the one that they mimic. Jesus as the living stone is the dominant image in this passage, as well as the theme of election. The stone imagery might have reminded the audience of the teachings of Jesus himself (cf. Mark 12:10-11, Matthew 21:42-44 and Luke 20:17-18). However, Peter appropriates three texts from the Hebrew Scriptures (Psalm 118:22-23, Isaiah:14-15 and 28:16) to bring his point across. The Jewish Christians in the audience would probably have made a connection with texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, associating the stone image with the Messiah – the one that they are called to mimic.

What is significant of using stone imagery to refer to Christ and to the believers themselves, is that Christ is not only a living stone, but he is a “life-giving” stone. Jesus Christ is portrayed as the cornerstone of God’s building project (2:6). Since Jesus is the cornerstone, the Jesus followers may be seen as “living stones” who are used to build the building or household of God – they are living stones like the one that gives them their identity. This is significant. The opposite is happening to these Jesus followers in the societies and communities that they are living in. They are experiencing not only physical death, but emotional death as being excluded from society. Trauma causes loss, not growth as the imagery that Peter is using, suggests. Peter may be trying to tell them that this life-giving stone, even when he was rejected by others, is the one chosen by God, just as they have been chosen by God and are kept in God’s hand.

Therefore, it can be possible for them to come to this life-giving stone as the cornerstone of the community of faith that they belong to. This life-giving stone is the one that may give words to speak about their trauma, that may help them to remember God’s promises in the past and present and that builds the community where it is possible for them to flourish. In 2:5 Peter calls them a “spiritual house” and a “holy priesthood”, building on the theme of holiness that he introduces earlier in the letter. Now their identity may not only come to the fore when they are living holy lives individually, but especially when they are living as a community, having a communal life that is acceptable to God, not through their own good deeds and words, but through the life, death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. It is also in this community, it can be argued, that Peter wants them to find hope and strength to survive their trauma.

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<sup>165</sup> Cf. Addendum A (A.2.4). The structure in 2:4-10 is important to his argument, especially here where it is crucial for the first audience to precisely understand their worth as a family of God (Jobes, 2005: 142).

In 2:6 Peter quotes from Isaiah 28:16 and applies this quotation to further strengthen his argument. In this quotation the cornerstone is identified as being ἐκλεκτὸν ἑντιμον. Furthermore, the quotation makes clear that those who believe in this cornerstone, or are loyal to him, will not be ashamed. Peter yet again points to the historical situation of his audience. They know what is happening to them (as described in chapter three), but as one will see later, they are not the ones who will stand ashamed in the end.

1 Peter 2:6 is followed by another two quotations where stone imagery can be found (Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14). Here, Peter wants to make the point that precisely the Living Stone that has been rejected by builders in their human building project, has become the cornerstone and also the stone that causes people to stumble. The first audience is experiencing trauma because of their loyalty and affiliation to the Living Stone. Because of their identity, they are constantly rejected by society. Peter wants to assure them that Jesus, as the Cornerstone, the most important stone in the building of God, has also been rejected by the human builders. By using the quotations from Psalms and Isaiah, it seems as if Peter is telling them that Jesus is just as rejected as they are, but if he is precious to God, then so is the first audience.

The imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures found in 2:9 to describe the first audience, may function as confirmation that they belong to God's family.<sup>166</sup> It seems that Peter's previous argument of them being incorporated into the family of God, where they previously are not considered part of God's people, is reinforced. Furthermore, they now have been shown mercy – mercy that will soften the blows of trauma and suffering that are pestering them at the moment.

By using the terms in verse 9, Peter establishes three important aspects. Firstly, they have shared historical memories of a common past, including heroes, events and the commemoration thereof, even if there are members of the audience who are not of Jewish descent.<sup>167</sup> It is possible for Peter that they become part of the people of God through what Christ has done. Secondly, there is a link with a homeland – a symbolic attachment to the ancestral land and also with other diaspora

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<sup>166</sup> David Horrell wrote an interesting article about the use of γένος, ἔθνος and λαός in 1 Peter 2:9 and he made important observations about these terms in 1 Peter: Firstly, it is the only text in the New Testament where all three of these terms appear in one verse. It is evident that Peter had a specific purpose with this. Secondly, it is the only text in the New Testament that describes members of the faith community with the term ἔθνος and the only text to repeat "holy people". Thirdly, it is the only New Testament text in which the term γένος (a specific term for the people of Israel) is applied to the church. This is significant. Whereas λαός is more widely used (it is the loosest of the "people" terms, γένος on the other hand implies a more specifically "ethnic" type of identity where the focus is on a shared descent (Horrell, 2013: 129–130).

<sup>167</sup> In 1 Peter, this can be seen in the following ways. Peter takes a crucial first step to claiming the title Χριστιανός (4:16) as the name of the inner group. There is emphasis on the audience's new birth from imperishable seed with God as "father" and therefore the letter in a way constructs a sense of common ancestry. The historical memories that are shared, are focused on the "heroic" figure of Christ, whose suffering and glorification pave the way for his followers, but also hold certain implications for them. A certain pattern of living (which is characterised by the phrase "doing good" is also brought about (Horrell, 2013: 140).



people.<sup>168</sup> Whether they are physical or metaphorical strangers where they now live and are estranged from their motherland, the first audience may know that they have a common identity with others. Lastly, Peter wants to establish a sense of solidarity (Horrell, 2013: 139).<sup>169</sup>

With the use of these (group) identity markers in 2:9 – 2:10, Peter probably wants to establish a few ideas, bringing this culminating verses to conclusion with allusions to the prophet Hosea: Firstly, God is Israel's only saviour who will deliver his household from exile through the work and life of the Messiah. Secondly, the Jesus followers are collectively constituting a community that is set apart from the people of the world. Thirdly, he repeats the concept of obedience and sanctification even when these believers are seen as being disloyal citizens of the Roman Empire. Lastly, God's love and mercy are no longer only limited to the ancient people of Israel and Juda. Despite all these aspects mentioned, Peter still addresses them as people of the diaspora – that is their reality right now. However, before he gives them practical advice on how to live in the Empire, he needs to establish their identity as God's family. The existence of the Christian community declares through its worship and liturgy and by the first audience's daily lives, the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection and thereby also reveals the merciful character of God (Jobes, 2005: 159–164).

Up till now in the letter, it seems that Peter argues, within a diaspora context, that the first audience is part of the story of God with the people of Israel. By giving words to their identity, he possibly wants them to realise that their identity does not lie in the trauma that they have been experiencing, but in the reality of being God's family. Yet, precisely this might cause their trauma, as Peter explains in the rest of the letter.

#### **4.4.6 1 Peter 2:11-4:11: “Suffering as witnesses to Christ”**

In this section of the letter it is possible that it is important for Peter to provide the first audience with ways of coping with their trauma. Thus great emphasis is placed on the suffering of Jesus Christ. From this Christological viewpoint, Peter tries to console the first audience, also providing words to their suffering, as he does in the previous part of the letter by establishing their identity. In the following section, Peter writes about how their behaviour may complement their sense of identity, even in a context of trauma. Peter gives advice to every believer, but also to specific groupings in the audience (this however can be seen as indirect advice to the whole of the faith communities as

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<sup>168</sup> The concept of a homeland in 1 Peter is implied by the use of diaspora and Babylonian imagery (Horrell, 2013: 140).

<sup>169</sup> Horrell suggests that this rhetorical strategy that Peter uses here by means of this type of language, comes in a context of suffering and hostility. The overall strategy of the letter in which these identity markers play an important role, is to develop a positive sense of in-group identity, of status and honour that are obtained by membership of this community whilst they face hostility from the outside. The use of ethnic-identity language, together with the highly valued designations of Israel's special identity, can be seen as a strategy of social creativity. Despite the shame which their communities seek to apply to them, the first audience is assured by Peter that they have special status as being chosen by God (Horrell, 2013: 142).



well). The Hebrew Scriptures yet again plays an important part in the argument of establishing the appropriate ethos amongst believers.

#### **4.4.6.1 1 Peter 2:11-12**

In the beginning of the letter, it seems that it is important for Peter to establish the identity of the first audience and to affirm it with imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures. In the rest of the letter the ethos that is required for complementing their identity is emphasised. Before Peter goes into specifics regarding how the faith and identity of the audience can come to life, he first gives more general details into how they may maintain themselves in an environment that causes them to be traumatised. Peter then slowly builds up his argument, culminating in the household code with several allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Peter starts with the vocative ἀγαπητοί to seemingly get his audience's attention, but also to remind them, by using a new term, of their identity. They are God's beloved and therefore also each other's. He also appeals to them in terms of their foreign status, exhorting them ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. In this way he reminds them of their commonality with the exilic people of God. Because of being "foreigners and strangers," Peter invites them to take to heart what he is going to say to them in the rest of the letter. They are called to abstain from the things that are not characteristic of their identity, but these are also the things that may further harm and traumatise them. By staying away from τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, however, does not guarantee that others would not bring harm and trauma on them.

In verse 12, Peter again has his eschatological framework in mind, probably alluding to Isaiah 10:3. Their conduct and behaviour are supposed to be so good that those who want to slander them, would rather praise God when the end times come. This could sound as if Peter is giving them advice to stay out of trouble for the sake of their own lives and not to worsen their trauma (which might be so). Indeed, there is great emphasis on doing good in this verse (Holloway, 2009: 177). However, it may also be that Peter exhorts them as such because he sees or foresees that they would not want to live a life that is putting their faith into action, because of trauma.

It is probable that the first audience might not have wanted to have anything to do with the outside world in the first place, because of what trauma does to the relationship to one's social body. It does not seem as if Peter is telling them that it is fine to hide from the world. They do not need to talk to outsiders, which is difficult when one is traumatised, but they may speak through their actions. This becomes an important theme in other parts of the letter as well. Peter suggests that attention will not be given to them then, but to God who is the sustainer and keeper of their lives. These two verses

give an appropriate introduction to the next section of the letter which addresses the issue of how the audience is to relate to the outside world.

#### **4.4.6.2 1 Peter 2:13-17**

In the following verses, Peter speaks to all of the believers. There is much scholarly debate as to whether Peter wants them to assimilate or resist those in society who are causing them to suffer. This is not the major concern of this study. What is of importance is that Peter invites them to cope with their trauma, but they cannot do so by avoiding the broader society. He is giving theological reasons why they should have respect for the emperor and “human institutions”, but their primary identity lies with God, who is the one to whom the honour belongs. There is no other reason, but their identity as God’s children compels them to have respect for the emperor, procurator and human institutions – the very role players who could have caused them great harm. There is an argument that full blown state persecution has not yet been active because of the more “positive” view of the state by Peter. It is possible that he advises them to show respect to the authorities as a means to avoid further trauma. However, it is to God to whom honour (not respect) as the highest societal value, belongs.

Verse 14 builds further on verse 12. Here, Peter widens his argument by saying that there are people in high positions, who are sent by the emperor, who judge according to people’s deeds. Therefore, if they should suffer, they should rather suffer for doing good than doing evil, with the hope that they will get praise instead of slander.

Carter makes a valuable contribution to the discussion about what 1 Peter’s strategy entails in terms of this pericope. He argues that Peter suggests a strategy here of civic and domestic submission, including cultic participation, whilst maintaining an inner loyalty to Christ. Carter draws on James Scott’s work on “weapons of the weak” to help provide another context for considering 1 Peter’s strategy without making the claim that Peter suggests a path of least resistance and easy accommodation. Scott argues that whilst public conformity can negate necessary material and social benefits, it can also mask resistance. This is especially in contexts where elites impose ritual acts of conformity on relatively powerless groups. These powerless groups then perform “anonymous acts of resistance” in order for them to “deny or negotiate” elite claims. This is where public and hidden transcripts intertwine and subordinate people may survive this ordeal (Carter, 2004: 31–32).

Carter continues to say that in this context of public deference and masked resistance (and one must add trauma), this strategy helps the first audience to live in an oppressive context. They cannot change this context, but they maintain an inner commitment that cements their inner dedication to Jesus Christ. This supersedes the restrictive categories that the elite and the Empire project unto “wives”, “slaves” and “subjects of the emperor”. This strategy projects that which Peter regards of

utmost importance, namely the first audience's participation in God's saving work that God has called them for, in spite of their traumatic experiences. Carter (2004: 32) furthermore states:

In sustaining this identity in an eschatological context, the strategy recognises the empire's overwhelming power while denying its claims through revealing its limits" it is contrary to and ultimately overcome by God's purposes. This "inner loyalty" and "false compliance" in cultic observance offer a protest not designed to topple the structures of power, but to enable *hopeful* survival. It provides 1 Peter's women and slaves hearers a means of knowing that the ruling power is not ultimate, that it cannot reach to one arena, their hearts, where Christ, not the ruling power, reigns as Lord (3:14) in anticipation of the completion of God's purpose.

Horrell states, in connection to what Carter is saying, that the author of 1 Peter does not only intend for the first audience to practice inner resistance, but that Peter's strategy is more nuanced than that: Firstly, there is an appeal to submit to every human κτίσει, such as the emperor. Secondly, it may be unclear what Peter means by ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, but it seems as if he denies the claim that the emperor is "divine." Thirdly, Peter indicates that Christians are "free people" (or rather, slaves only to God), even though he insists that this freedom must not be used to do evil (2:16). Lastly, Peter allows that the emperor may be respected, not worshipped, and again this is in a context of respecting all people (Horrell, 2007: 135).<sup>170</sup>

Whether Peter asks of his audience to compromise up to some point or to fully resist, is debatable. What is important is that it seems as if he invites the audience to live from their identity in Christ and this compels them to respect all people, even when they cause trauma to them, but above all, to honour God. In the next two pericopes, Peter gives particular instructions to three groups of people in the first audience.

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<sup>170</sup> Horrell (2007: 142–143) further explains that there are many indications in 1 Peter that encourage resistance, even if it seems as if the author is expecting conformity: Firstly, there is the narrative of identity, what Horrell calls a "hidden or alternative transcript". Peter inserts his readers into this, addressing them as foreigners and strangers in diaspora by the power of "Babylon" and grounds their positive identity and hope in the Scriptures and the God of Israel. With this, which is not explicitly anti-imperial, Peter gives them a perspective on the Empire, which they are to view as an evil power that scatters God's people, not as a manifestation of good news. Even when it seems as if the author is explicitly calling his readers to conduct that represents a degree of conformity to the Empire's dominance and social structures, Peter draws a line at which the conformity stops: Caesar will be respected, but not worshipped. In the label χριστιανός, a label which comes from the encounter between believers and outsiders, comes the clash between commitments. From an outside perspective, this term is an indication of criminality; one should disown this label, or die. From Peter's perspective, this label is to be carried with pride, a way to honour God, even if it means suffering. When one bears this name, resistance finds concrete and specific expression. Christian identity also comes to the fore in this encounter. Peter's call to resistance, also to survive their trauma and to give words and embodiment to their trauma, is not merely hidden or silent, but in certain contexts comes clearly into view. Horrell calls this "polite resistance".

#### 4.4.6.3 1 Peter 2:18-25

In this pericope, a culmination of the three main coping strategies that function as key to the alternative perspectives Peter presents to his first audience can be found. Here, identity, the functioning of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the suffering of Jesus Christ reach a climax, especially in the functioning of Isaiah 53's suffering servant. Peter portrays the suffering of Jesus in such a way that the audience may identify with Jesus, and moreover, that Jesus Christ identifies with them in their trauma.

In the previous section, Peter gives instructions to all in the faith community. Although he specifically addresses household slaves, wives and husbands in the next part of the letter, one can assume that the principle that he is trying to communicate, can impact other members of the community as well. This culminates in vv. 21-25, where Jesus's suffering is compared to that of the suffering servant of Isaiah, which also impacts those described in 2:11-17. In verses 18-20, the issue (*topos*) of how to respect everyone is showcased in the particular case of household slaves. There are some aspects that are unique to 1 Peter's household code in comparison to other codes in the New Testament.

The structure of the household code, as it is presented in other New Testament documents, generally operates with a reciprocity of instruction and obligations that are appropriate to both slaves and masters. In 1 Peter the masters are spoken of and not spoken to. This could be because the first audience included no masters or that Peter's guidelines are not only focused on household slaves, but that it serves as an analogy to the whole of the faith community (Green, 2008: 77). One could go further by suggesting that Peter does this deliberately in order to firstly establish the household slaves' own identity apart from their masters and secondly as a way of undermining the system that is causing these slaves trauma. He seems to speak to the (Christian) household slaves as people in their own right, not as property of their masters.

Part of this aspect is that the first audience may have felt a loss of empowerment and status because of their Christian identity and the various misconceptions that come with it. Peter argues that regardless of one's social status (as slaves and wives), believers may consider themselves to be slaves of God. Peter suggests in this passage that God sent Jesus as one who would have very little socio-political power, to the extreme that he dies a slave's death by means of crucifixion. It is probable that Peter identifies Jesus as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. He bases his instructions to the whole of the community on the example of Christ's lowly position in society, but he first addresses the lowliest, namely the slaves who are being treated in an unjust manner (Jobes, 2005: 187).

1 Peter 2:18, where Peter uses the vocative οἱ οἰκέται with ὑποτασσόμενοι, echoes 2:11. Verse 18 builds on the previous verse where Peter exhorts the first audience to have respect for all people,

but in the case of the household slaves, this might include masters who are good to them or those who are treating them unjustly. This may have the desired rhetorical effect – to be submissive to “good” masters might have been bearable, but to the “cruel” ones? Verse 19-20 again sustains the argument of suffering for doing good. Even though Peter advises his audience to do good and suffer for it when it comes to it, it seems as if he does not advise them to look for opportunities to suffer.

It is possible that he does not support the equation of more suffering equals more commendation from God. This is also clear in verse 21-25. Obedience to the Lord and the gospel is the issue and causing them trauma. What happens to the suffering that increases to persons whose lives are thus different to the ones around them? Peter has already responded to that: Rejection by humans is the standard by which God will judge them and such suffering is undeserved. In 2:21-25 Peter will add another perspective – for Jesus followers, to suffer innocently and unjustly is to follow in the footsteps of Christ, who gave them the example of his life to live by and mimic (Green, 2008: 80–81).<sup>171</sup>

Peter is not making a Christological reflection on Christ by using Isaiah 53, but he appropriates Christology in service of his instruction about the ethos of the first audience. Peter gives his audience three affirmations in his argument that may be applied in the midst of trauma and adversity: Firstly, he makes a connection between Christlike response to unjust suffering and their calling. The calling and vocation of the audience have already been established in this letter. The trauma that they experience is because of them living for God and not against God. Moreover, being courageous and persevering in the face of suffering is an expression of “doing good” and of holiness. They were called also to follow Jesus in his sinlessness (Michaels, 1996: 255; Jobes, 2005: 192; Green, 2008: 84).

Secondly, it is possible Peter uses discipleship language by utilising ὑπογραμμός in verse 21. This word is only found here in the New Testament. It underlines the importance of living like Christ, by placing one’s own life and circumstances in obedience to Christ. Thirdly, in verse 25 Peter underlines the contrast between the audience’s former and current lives. Before they were “straying like sheep” with no proper direction. However, Jesus is the agent of their new direction and also their new sense of overcoming their trauma (Longenecker, 1996: 1, 3; Green, 2008: 84–85).

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<sup>171</sup> Green suggests that one of humanity’s most stubborn views of reality is that what happens in life is directly caused by, or traceable to deeds, whether good or evil, and that the experience of suffering can be traced back to prior sin. Moreover, it is often believed that this chain of cause and effect is ensured by God. This view of reality is confronted by Israel’s tradition of the suffering righteous – the righteous suffer because they are righteous. It can also be seen where Israel obtains the belief that God will rescue the righteous through (rather than from) suffering. Peter reconstructs this reality for his audience by using Isaiah’s suffering servant – the righteous one who is suffering because of others’ sins and wrongdoing rather than his own. If this is true of Christ, then Christ’s suffering opens up the possibility that the power and consequences of sin might be cleared away (Green, 2008: 82).

Peter interprets Christ's suffering in two ways, as exemplary (to be modelled in the lives of believers) and as atoning (unique and also providing the basis for the Christian life). The function of Isaiah 53 brings into focus three observations regarding the presentation of Christ in 1 Peter. Firstly, Peter found in Isaiah 53 a commentary on Jesus' passion, which he organised in relationship to the events of Jesus' suffering and death. Secondly, it raises the question of Peter's appropriation of the Scriptures. Why did Peter do what no other New Testament writer did by explicitly claiming that the suffering servant of God is in fact the crucified Christ? Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant and not the suffering Christ. It may be seen as Peter using the suffering of Christ as a theological assumption from which to read the Scriptures and make sense of them for believers in the world. Peter did not merely find a prophecy in Isaiah 53 that was "fulfilled" in Christ. Rather, it is possible that he saw that the suffering of Christ and the suffering servant point to the same reality in God's purpose: God's saving purpose for humanity is accomplished in the suffering of God's sinless servant (Kroeger, 2004: 83; Green, 2008: 86–87).

There are some remarkable details concerning the suffering of Christ that are woven into the fabric of 1 Peter. Peter refers to Christ's "suffering", not his death" in order to undergird the commonality between their suffering and his (2:19-21, 23; 3:14, 17-18; 4:1, 15, 19; 5:10). Jesus is also executed "on the tree" rather than "on the cross" (verse 24). Peter thus draws attention to the public disgrace of Jesus' death. This terminology evidences the formative influence of Deuteronomy 21 on early Christian reflection regarding the death of Jesus. Using the same interpretive strategy that one sees in 2:4-10, rather than denying the shame regarding Jesus' suffering and execution, Peter possibly wants his audience to embrace it (Green, 2008: 87).

In 1 Peter, the cross therefore becomes a symbol of honour and not of rejection and shame. Peter draws attention to Jesus' non-retaliation in the face of suffering and trauma (as a model for the first audience), reformulating the silence of the sheep before it's shearers in Isaiah 53:9 in order for it to apply directly to the situation of Christians facing hostility. Jesus entrusted himself to God as the just judge and Peter invites his audience to entrust themselves to the faithful Creator – despite of their trauma. Peter informs his audience that Jesus was without sin just as he directs his audience to "do good" rather than "sin" (Green, 2008: 87; Reeder, 2015: 522).

Green states that the suffering of Jesus informs the first audience in how they understand the Scriptures of Israel (especially Isaiah 53). The story of Jesus' followers experiencing trauma in the diaspora is nothing less than their participation in the story of Jesus, which is in itself deeply rooted in Scripture. Jesus, Scripture and the church are woven together as one narrative recounting the outworking of God's plan. However, this narrative is also full of trauma. Therefore Peter's audience can draw strength and direction from Peter's interpretation of Jesus' suffering and life (Green, 2008: 88).



Jesus was *the* model of innocent suffering in terms of two aspects. Jesus suffered though he did not deserve it, and in the midst of abuse, he did not retaliate. It can be argued that Peter has this aspect in mind where he tells his audience to follow the example of Jesus. This is powerful imagery. However, on another level, Jesus' suffering was not repeatable, but unique. The suffering and trauma of the first audience are not as effective of that of Jesus because of the redemptive nature of Jesus' suffering. Peter invites the first audience to survive their trauma by living like Jesus did in the face of difficulties – and this may be one of the main culmination points in the letter. Using the Hebrew imagery of God as the Shepherd and Guardian in terms of Jesus, again establishes to whom the audience belongs, profoundly done before Peter's focus shifts to wives in the audience (Jobes, 2005: 195; Green, 2008: 88–89; Barbarick, 2015: 296).

#### 4.4.6.4 1 Peter 3:1-7

This section starts in a similar way as the previous with αἱ γυναῖκες ὑποτασσόμεναι, but is enhanced with ομοίως. The advice that Peter gives to wives in verse 1 and 2 sounds very noble and submissive. It sounds as if Peter wants to silence the believing women in the first audience by advising them to live τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν. Green (2008: 91) suggests that the term ὑποτάσσω refers to finding and occupying one's place responsibly in society rather than passive or unreflective subjection. Green is of the opinion that subordination is an expression of freedom and not of coercion, because Peter has already addressed the first audience as “free people” who are “slaves of God”. Thus, it is about “doing good” and “honouring God” and therefore could never be “blind submission”. According to Green, the subordination to all human institutions is conditioned by the obedience to God and the gospel (Green, 2008: 91).

Catherine Clark Kroeger suggests that ὑποτάσσω has a wide semantic range, also found in 1 Peter.<sup>172</sup> Synonyms include “honour”, “love” and “fear” (2:17). Its literal meaning “to place oneself under” or “to draw up behind” also developed other meanings such as to serve as an ally, to identify or associate with or to relate in such a way as to make meaning. Kroeger goes further to explain that although “submission” in 1 Peter might seem as a total adherence to the social order of the time, it may actually show a “radical sort of rebellion” (Kroeger, 2004: 83–84). Peter slots in with this notion by bringing in culminating elements in the text, such as the example of the holy women and Sarah (mimicking Sarah by not fearing).

It is indeed puzzling that Peter gives priority of lifestyle over words, especially in 3:16 where Peter tells his audience to maintain a readiness to give “verbal defence” to anyone who asks or demands it from them. Green gives five reasons that show that Peter's appeal to silence in this pericope may

<sup>172</sup> Kroeger was an author, professor and New Testament scholar from the USA.



not be as it seems: Firstly, the emphasis on “manner of life” in verse 1-2 is a key emphasis of the letter (1:15, 17-18; 2:12; 3:1-2,16) and so it does not betray a diminished role of women. Secondly, the instruction in 3:16 is given to all, including the wives that are addressed in verse 1-2. Thirdly, even in 3:16, words are not volunteered, but given on request. This may be a function of the oppressive situation within which the first audience lived. There is no reason to assume that, as with Christian wives of unbelieving husbands in particular and believers in general, an invitation to speak opened the way to sharing the “word” (Green, 2008: 96).

In the fourth place, by echoing the language of Isaiah 53:7, Peter suggests that Jesus was silent in the face of insults and slander (2:22-23). In their silence, believing women follow the model of Jesus as a strategy of nonviolence – a kind of familial challenging giving expression to Peter’s call for courageous perseverance to a marginal group. In the last place, because of the inversion of social categories already signalled in 2:4-10 and especially in 2:21-25, it was possible to declare triumph (before God) in the face of seeming defeat (before humans). This was a central means by which to undermine the Roman ethos of power and status. It seems as Peter is calling them to a struggle against the politics of violence in the name of an ethos of the crucified Messiah (Green, 2008: 96). One may agree with Green’s stance here, as it is possible that what Peter asks of the wives are not as straightforward as it seems.

Verses 3-4 describe the appearance of what Peter is describing in verse 1-2. Bartlett argues that it is not only a case of “action speaks louder than words” in order to win over unbelieving husbands, but more than that, the fitting conduct for wives includes modest silence. It seems as if Christian women are to choose between the perishable beauty of physical appearance and the imperishable beauty of a gentle spirit (Bartlett, 2015: 725). However, Kroeger is of opinion that in choosing their own faith, these believing wives are indeed being actively rebellious against the social order by aiming to win over their husbands instead (even if it happens in silence and in modest clothing). “The aim is not subordination but conversion, not by enabling what is wrong but by persisting in what is right,” Kroeger suggests (Kroeger, 2004: 84).

In verses 5-6, Peter applies an example from the Hebrew Scriptures in an attempt to validate his argument. The “holy women of old” become examples for Christian wives as Christ is an example for Christian slaves. The examples of Sarah and the other women do not provide the rich Christological reflection of the passion story of Jesus, but the rhetorical strategy here is similar – Peter encourages faithful behaviour by recalling examples from the rich heritage of faith. The argument is completed by underlining the women’s new identity: Jesus-following women who are not intimidated by the Empire and live according to high moral standards, become children of Sarah

(Misset-van de Weg, 2004: 52).<sup>173</sup> Although exegetes of Genesis 18:12 that Peter alludes to, argue that Sarah is not the submissive wife that Peter makes her out to be, the argument of using Sarah in this regard is validating, especially in the light of her and Abraham being portrayed as foreigners in Genesis (Kroeger, 2004, p. 85; Bartlett, 2015: 726). Sarah is here, what Jeremy Punt calls, a “model of subversive submission” (Punt, 2007: 464).<sup>174</sup>

Peter calls the women in the example from the Hebrew Scriptures “holy” and this recalls the earlier exhortation to believers to imitate the holiness of God and the reminder that Christian people are now part of the holy people of God. However, the analogy to Sarah can only go this far, because Abraham shares Sarah’s faith. Thus, Christian wives are encouraged to stand fast (quietly but firmly) in their own convictions (Jobes, 2005: 205; Bartlett, 2015: 726).

The last exhortation that Peter gives to the women is not to “give way to fear” (possibly also mimicking Christ’s attitude amidst trauma). This echoes Proverbs 3:25 and may be seen as an encouragement to hold fast to their faith whilst being “submissive” and “obedient” to their husbands. In chapter three the position of wives in the household were described, as well as the abuse that they could face for not adhering to the husband’s faith. This could also be a way of saying to these wives that the trauma of what could happen to them or what has happened to them, is not supposed to paralyse them (Bartlett, 2015: 726).

In the last verse of this section, Peter addresses the husbands. The section begins at 3:7 with “in the same way”, connecting husbands’ submission to that of those who are previously addressed (Kroeger, 2004: 86). The assumption, maybe on Peter’s part, is that believing husbands will be married to believing wives and households. Thus, the issue of the relationship with an unbelieving spouse does not come to the fore. It is probable that the Christian conversion of a man with an unbelieving wife would not provoke the same concerns as the conversion of a wife with an unbelieving husband. It is possible that the extent to which an unbelieving wife who openly resists Christian worship and practices, may have brought embarrassment for the husband. What does come to the fore, is the responsibility of husbands to behave in a loving and respectful way towards their wives. Husbands are to behave in this way with the knowledge that the wives are joint heirs in

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<sup>173</sup> The exact identity of these “holy women” that Peter refers to, are left open. It is possible that the author had Sarah, Rebecca, Rachael and Leah in mind, but he singled Sarah out (Misset-van de Weg, 2004: 53)

<sup>174</sup> Jeremy Punt argues that 1 Peter works with subtle subversion with regard to Sarah. Punt argues firstly that there is no indication in the Genesis narratives that Abraham and Sarah shared the same faith. However, in 1 Peter the context differs as wives are called to submit to non-believing husbands in order to win them over. Secondly, Sarah is a model of fearlessness to the first audience of 1 Peter, where in Genesis 18:15, Sarah’s fear is highlighted. Thirdly, Sarah’s compliance is suggested to call upon husbands to bestow honour on their wives in 1 Peter 3:7, whilst in 3:6 she is cited to sanction submission of wives. This is rather ironic. Thus Sarah is an ambiguous figure in 1 Peter (Punt, 2007: 463–464).

the grace of God, even if Peter calls them the “weaker vessel”.<sup>175</sup> The notion that failing to have respect for one’s spouse might hinder one’s prayers, plays on the assumption that deeds also have an influence in one’s prayer life (Jobes, 2005: 208; Bartlett, 2015: 726).<sup>176</sup>

What is admirable of this passage is that Peter makes two subversive claims in terms of wives’ cultural and social standing: Firstly, whilst he advises Christian women to behave in an honourable way, amongst unbelievers including their husbands, it is possible that Peter stands firm in the conviction that these wives have the right to their own Christian faith, whether the husband is a believer or not (as with the slaves). This is a bold claim to make, especially in the context of the danger the wife potentially could live in and also the possibility that a wife could return to her husband’s faith if the pressure became too severe. However, throughout the letter, Peter makes it clear that the wives’ identity is steadfast in God and that they are part of the people of God. Secondly, even though the wives are addressed more elaborately, addressing the wives and husbands, and especially telling the husbands to love their wives, suggest mutuality, if not equality, in their relationships. As God’s beloved, they are both “heirs to the gracious gift of life” (Bartlett, 2015: 728; Reeder, 2015: 525).

It was not mandatory for a husband to love his wife in the time that Peter wrote his letter. Peter’s advice and encouragement to the husbands may also be a coping strategy to the wives. As they are haunted by trauma because of their identity and because they are living a different life than those around them, the love of a husband could have been a way for a wife to cope with the trauma she was experiencing. It could also be a way of coping whilst utilising silence, where there is a quiet understanding between two people who are facing a hostile world. This may also present a way of resisting the power of empire that was making rules on their behalf. While the suffering of Jesus is implied in this pericope, the Hebrew Scriptures used and the advice given to wives are confirming their identity amidst their possible trauma.

#### **4.4.6.5 1 Peter 3:8-17**

In 1 Peter 3:8-12, Peter draws to a close the instruction that started in 2:13. He addresses everyone in the first audience, returning to the more general instruction he gave in 3:13-17. In verse 8-9a,

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<sup>175</sup> Nicholas Bott (2015: 259) suggests that this a rare occurrence of a New Testament author critiquing Abraham. Bott argues that Peter employs the patriarch himself in advising husbands to treat their wives as equal heirs of the promise. This critique finds support in the Hebrew Scriptures and is employed skillfully by Peter to reinforce the equality of husband and wife within Christian marriage.

<sup>176</sup> Jobes (2005: 204) argues that the “metamessage” of 1 Peter’s instructions is not lost on husbands. Firstly, the apostle of Jesus Christ instructs Christian slaves and wives – he takes on a role that is normally the husband’s and master’s task. Secondly, the direct instruction to slaves and wives implies that both have a measure of moral responsibility and choice. On the one hand, Peter confirms the husband and master’s authority, thus they cannot reject. On the other hand, he also affirms that the slaves and wives’ submission is not motivated by the expectations of the empire or Greek moral philosophy, but by the authority and example of Christ, who was crucified and resurrected. In a sense, Peter then both upholds and subverts the social order of the day.

there are two main aspects that Peter seems to stress for the identity formation of the first audience: Firstly, the nature and unity of the group and secondly, their stance and respect towards people outside the group (Green, 2008: 101–102; Bartlett, 2015: 729).

Verse 8 centres on the nature of life within the community as Peter describes the ethos of the family of believers. These dispositions generate and organise certain practices that are appropriate to particular settings without presuming that all times and places are the same. For example, “mutual love” is an important aspect of character for Peter, but does not determine how this love should be expressed. Remembering that his first audience can only do what they are, Peter prioritises the formation of Christian community and character whilst he recognises that persons formed in these ways will carry the fruit in their relationships with each other (Green, 2008: 102).

One may go further and suggest that what Peter asks in 3:8-9 is the outflow of mimesis, of following in the footsteps of Christ. The audience is supposed to realise their identity in Christ, as his living community, confirmed by the Hebrew Scriptures (referring to 3:10 as culmination point where he quotes Psalm 34) and this is to result in mutual love, humility, et cetera. It is important to remember that Peter suggests to his audience to adhere to the example of Christ, in whose suffering and death the qualities of verse 8 are displayed. It is also possible that these qualities could assist the first audience to cope with their trauma, together as a faith community, and where they were supposed to nurture a sense of belonging. Here, the interwovenness of Christ’s narrative with the narratives of the audience may be insightful (Green, 2008: 104–105).

Verse 9a is aimed at the first audience’s behaviour towards the persons outside the group. Peter names particular behaviours and one can assume that this is based on the unspoken nature of the ethos of Jesus. Green argues in the first place that love for the enemy refuses to differentiate between friends and enemies. Secondly, enemy-love is realised not by passivity in the face of hostility, but by proactive behaviour (by conferring a blessing on the enemies). Verse 9a possibly plays on the behaviour modelled by Jesus in his response to those who were hostile towards him (2:21-25) and it is reflective of the great mercy that is shown by God (1:3). In addition to this, Peter adds 9b as an extra motivation. Whether this can be considered as good advice or not, there is an argument to be made that not repaying evil with evil could have spared the audience further traumatising experiences (Green, 2008: 105–106).

The quotation from Psalm 34 in verse 10-12 possibly function as confirmation and culmination of Peter’s advice. Hereby he also confirms the Lord’s faithfulness and that this is the ultimate demise of hostility. The psalm itself follows a familiar plotline of the rescue of the suffering righteous. It is plausible that Peter here interprets Israel’s holy scriptures by drawing on their significance within the Hebrew Scriptures. In this way, it seems that Peter also draws the first audience into the narratives

of the Hebrew Scriptures. The storyline of Psalm 34 is familiar and it is seen in the story of Joseph, psalms of the suffering righteous, stories of Daniel and his friends, Isaiah's servant songs and in the life of Jesus Christ. Peter brings the three narratives of Israel, Jesus and the first audience together in order for them to cope with their trauma. If the storyline moves from suffering to vindication and glorification, the hostility and trauma known by the first audience cannot have the final say in their lives. In a certain sense then, Psalm 34 is woven into the very fabric of 1 Peter (Green, 2008: 106–107; Bartlett, 2015: 730).

The functioning of Psalm 34 in 1 Peter seems to happen through a Christological lens. This is an important source for Peter as he appropriates it to comfort his struggling audience by drawing their experience into solidarity with those of Israel, and prominently of Jesus himself. It is probable that for Peter, the way to respond to difficult situations is not only a question of knowing the right ethical prescriptions, but it is a matter of understanding the theological basis of these instructions and empowering for such decisions (Christensen, 2015: 336, 350).<sup>177</sup>

Green (2008: 110) is of opinion that verses 13-17 as a textual unit more explicitly identify the agenda of 1 Peter – namely to encourage the first audience in their suffering and trauma as Jesus followers. There is a parallelism between the instructions that are given to wives in 3:1-6 and the instruction to everyone in the audience in 3:13-16. It seems as if Peter is advising the same attitude and behaviour amongst all believers as with the wives of unbelieving husbands, but wives are not advised to speak, whereas the believers addressed here are asked to give a verbal witness.<sup>178</sup> In 3:13-17, it is possible that Peter gives comfort and a strategy for coping in the face of suffering and trauma (Jobes, 2005: 233).

This is also seen by the continuing influence of Psalm 34 in this unit. The effect thereof is twofold: Firstly, Peter identifies his audience as the suffering righteous of the psalm, putting them in a continuing line of believers who were traumatised because of their identity. It can be argued that

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<sup>177</sup> The material from Psalm 34 is appropriate in another way, as it puts the focus on speaking; (speaking) “evil” (v9-12), “insult” (v.9), “tongue” (v. 10), “lips” (v.10), “speaking deceit” (v.10) and “prayer” (v.12). Speech ethics were just as important as behavioural ethics in the Greco-Roman world. Peter prioritises “doing good” whilst shunning harmful words. However, it is possible that Peter does not deny the importance of speech with his emphasis on conduct. Speech is important, because speech means action and because words put on display the nature of one's or a group's character and commitments. Words function to create an alternative world and shape the identity of the first audience (Green, 2008: 108).

<sup>178</sup> Jeanine Brown indeed argues that there are tensions between 1 Peter 3:1-6 and 3:14-16. When one takes the historical situation into account, it may be clear that the exhortation to wives to present a silent witness to their unbelieving husbands, is not the ultimate ethical norm in relation to other unbelievers. In a cultural context where the rejection of the gods of the husband is socially unacceptable, silent rather than verbal witness is one way to minimise slander against the church and the gospel whilst they still remain true to the purpose of winning over the unbeliever. The ultimate ethos in this regard, which is reflected in 3:15, is to be ready to provide a verbal defence for those who demand it. Full witness, including nonverbal and verbal aspect, is the ultimate task of the Christian community as it seeks to engage the social environment, whether by challenge or testimony (Brown, 2004: 402).

Peter is trying to encourage them to persist in their engagement in the outer world as those who embody goodness in character, identity and ethos. Secondly, Peter puts their situation into divine perspective by identifying them with the suffering righteous of Psalm 34. This is done also to address an existential experience of theodicy on their part. If, as Psalm 34 suggests and Peter reinterprets for his audience that “for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (v.12, NRSV), then why does the righteous suffer? Peter gives a possible third option in verses 13-14a and 17 (Green, 2008: 110–111).

Peter’s rare use of the optative mood in verse 14 (πάσχοιτε) and in verse 17 (θέλοι) (if it should happen that this is [God’s] will) introduces two important issues. Firstly, it indicates that one cannot assume a formal or state sanctioned persecution of Jesus followers (although it could be possible that it happened on a small scale). Secondly, “good conduct” is God’s will or rather even if it results in suffering. It is clear that Peter suggests that present suffering does not minimise one’s status before God. It rather qualifies for a state of blessedness and is better than the eschatological suffering that awaits the evildoers (Green, 2008: 114–115).

Peter’s instructions in verse 14b-16 build on these patterns of thought. The first audience is invited to set forth faithful Christian response in the face of suffering. They are invited not to fear those who want to intimidate them and harm them in traumatising ways, but they may “sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts” and be ready to witness. Peter seems to draw on Isaiah 8:12-13 to make his case. For Peter, Isaiah’s words may have immediate relevance to the first audience. Two ways of making sense of the world are proposed: following the ways of society at large where fear reigns supreme, or to live a life according to God’s eschatological aims according to which one’s sense of reality is shaped by God’s reality. God honours faithful witness to their identity, even if one is shaking in one’s shoes and struggling to find the words to witness to it (Jobes, 2005: 233; Green, 2008: 115, 117).

#### **4.4.6.6 1 Peter 3:18-4:6**

This pericope connects with the previous one, as it explains why it is better to suffer for doing good by culminating it into a section on the suffering of Christ – in a similar fashion as 1 Peter 2:21. Verses 3:18 – 4:6 bring into focus key aspects of the message and coping strategies of 1 Peter, especially in the description of Jesus’ suffering and vindication (Holloway, 2009: 208). Peter focuses on Jesus’ death and exaltation, a declaration that God is the one who exercises sovereign justice, and he encourages them to live lives that portray their deepest commitments and identity that are professed and affirmed through baptism. This is done also by utilising an example from the Hebrew Scriptures. This is a clear example of these three strategies put together as coping mechanisms probably supposed to function together.



This section introduces the third major Christological text in 1 Peter that also centres on the passion and death of Jesus. This section, however, goes beyond the previous two where it emphasises the exaltation of Jesus. All three passages bear witness to the sacrificial death of Jesus and also the example of Jesus that is to be followed by the audience (Green, 2008: 119, 121).

Peter seems to suggest that Christ has indeed conquered the “powers” whose existence is not in step with God’s purposes. The paradox, however, for the first audience is that they are being marginalised by these powers in the world, even though they are God’s elect. However, even though they are living lives under the oppressive thumb of social maltreatment and trauma, they are not victims. They are victors with Christ and their baptism can be seen as a sign of this new life that they have inherited. Peter uses an example from the Hebrew Scriptures, namely the person of Noah, to possibly get his point across (Green, 2008: 126–127).

In this section, Peter seems to stress the uniqueness of Jesus’ suffering. Jesus’ suffering once and for all does away with sin, so that in their suffering, the audience does not need to return to sin (4:1–3). They may put sin behind them and follow in the way of Jesus because they have been redeemed by Jesus’ death. Discipleship therefore may be more than a passive acceptance of the saving benefits of Jesus’ death on the cross (Michaels, 1996: 258). Following in the footsteps of Christ, as well as mimicking his life is active participation in the household of God, which consists of lives that have been shattered by trauma.

Christ’ suffering and death were just as human as the first audience is suffering as human beings. Even though Jesus’ adversaries thought that they have silenced him forever, he has risen from the dead and were exalted by God. Jesus suffered and conquered even in the space of Hades. Thus, because of baptism and their identity as followers of Jesus, the audience cannot be silenced to suffer submissively and accept the abuse they are facing. They too are exalted with Christ and may therefore live as new humans who are also free of the vices listed in verse 3. Even though they are experiencing “hell on earth,” they may know that these powers have already been beaten. It is possible that Peter also puts the audience in continuation with other believers before them who lived according to the Spirit of God, even though they had also been treated badly (Green, 2008: 135; Bartlett, 2015: 736).<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Green (2008: 138) sums up this section with the following words: “Those saved by the water in the days of Noah and those saved through baptism follow the way of Christ – his suffering, death, and journey into the abode of the dead, as well as his vindication. The water that endangered Noah and his kin actually served to rescue them, the death of Jesus that was to have silenced him and countermanded his message was actually the means by which he triumphed, and so the suffering of Peter’s Christian audience, far from destroying them, marks them as those who have pledged themselves to Christ and who will share in his resurrection. Here is the decisive demonstration that whatever the source of calamity – divine judgement, the machinations of “powers” at work in the world, or abuse from those with whom Christians shared their former life – the righteous are brought safely through it.”



Those for whom Jesus died, became part of the Christ event and this results in a new life-reality that is open through Jesus' death and resurrection (Hofius, 2004: 186). This also means a new reality in terms of the current traumatic reality in their lives.

In 1 Peter 4:1-6 Peter uses the example of Christ to motivate the holiness ascribed in 1:16 and 2:4-10 to the lives of the audience. Now he stipulates further what this means: "arm yourselves also with the same intention" (NRSV 4:1). Because of the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, described in 3:18-22, the audience is "dead to sin". This sin is probably not only what is described in 4:3 and that outsiders to the communities of the first audience are surprised that they do not participate in the "same excesses of dissipation". Perhaps Peter is also advising them, between the lines, not to let their trauma have the final say and keep them in fear. The reason why this may be argued is because the suffering (by implication the resurrection as well) of Jesus is used to motivate this, as well as "the will of God" (4:2). The suffering of Jesus did not just take away the sins of the world, but also emphasises to the first audience that they are not alone in their trauma. There is the God of the people of Israel, who is also their God, who will let justice serve (4:5-6) when the time comes. Those who already died, but heard and lived the gospel, are an example to be followed in this regard.

Peter ends this section by using the example of those who were Jesus followers, who would be judged by means of humanly bodily sources, but who have chosen to live according to the will of God. The statement that Peter makes here, stresses what he is trying to say in the previous verses, also in terms of trauma. These believers have chosen to live according to the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first audience is called to do the same, even in the face of the "end times", which will be discussed in 4:7-11.

#### **4.4.6.7 1 Peter 4:7-11**

In the final section of the body of the letter, Peter addresses the issue of harmony amongst the audience. In doing so, it seems that Peter also voices a strategy of engaging the wider world of the Roman Empire. This is also fitting for 1 Peter's audience, because the household is a miniature version of society, as pointed out in chapter three. In the household, a range of social relationships and obligations, including the distribution of power, honour-based status strata and the boundaries regarding the outside world, were set up. Relationships inside the household had a ripple effect on what was happening outside of the household. If the Jesus followers were supposed to practice mutuality, if they were to love each other unconditionally and if they were to serve one another without a reference to status honour, then they would already score a blow against an empire distinguished by status-based distribution of power and privilege (Green, 2008: 140–141; Bartlett, 2015: 743).

If the first audience suffered because the Empire and those hostile to them, it is important that they were encouraged to create a space amongst themselves where they can shield each other from trauma. Indeed, these few verses are also in a sense undermining the values of the Empire where Caesar is Lord. The social status of the audience is that of dispersion people, strangers in a world where they are committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Their identity and ethos has possibly sidelined them to the margins of respectable society. By placing these three core characteristics of Christian conduct within an eschatological framework, it is possible that Peter relativises the claims to ultimacy that the current institution and the Roman Empire voice. He encourages behaviour that indeed will attract unwanted attention. Eschatology can be seen as the cornerstone of the Christian imagination. It is a lens through which to view daily life and the whole of time, encompassed of beliefs and values to which the Christian community is profoundly attached and whose terms give rise to a certain ethos (Green, 2008: 142).

Peter thus seems to reimagine a community of believers where the ethos of Jesus Christ is seen on a daily basis, even amidst trauma. Whatever way they find it fitting and whoever has received the gifts of love, service and hospitality, is invited to use it to the benefit of other believers.<sup>180</sup> A quotation from Proverbs is used to stress this point. The reference to prayer makes it clear that prayer is a way of expression and maintaining a relationship with God, even if words are not applied. Peter invites the first audience to help one another whilst facing a hostile world so that God may be glorified in the process.

Peter ends this section with a doxology. The audience is invited to glorify God, but God is to be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong glory, honour and power. On the one side, this is evidence of what Peter is trying to say throughout his letter, namely that righteous suffering does not disqualify someone of honour before God. Jesus as the prototypical righteous sufferer, and not the Empire, is the one who holds ultimate power. This is a remarkable claim indeed, because it reverses the order and claims of the stratified Roman Empire. Thus, those who suffer because of their identity in Jesus Christ, shall be lifted up and honoured (Kroeger, 2004: 83; Green, 2008: 146–147).

Peter thus possibly provides four ways in which the first audience were called to live Christ's victory in their communities, amidst the trauma and animosity that they were facing: Firstly, they were supposed to think rightly and be clear of mind in order to pray. Secondly, they were invited to persist

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<sup>180</sup> The love that Peter refers to here is mutual and unceasing. Love nurtures a group ethos of solidarity and loyalty, where others are favoured and where people are not harmed. Hospitality in the Mediterranean world and in the early Christian movement, was seen as a valued practice. Practices of hospitality emerge from a hospitable character. Hospitality amongst the Jesus believers fulfilled the need for sanctuary and also served as a space for shared meals. Table fellowship encoded messages of inclusion and exclusion, boundary-keeping and crossing and status. Serving others voluntarily was not necessarily seen as a good value, but service embodies something of God's grace. Therefore these three ways of building community identity is of utmost importance for Peter (Green, 2008: 143–146).

in love for one another and care for each other. Thirdly, they were called to be hospitable to their fellow believers. Lastly, the first audience were to serve each other with the gifts of grace that they have received (Jobes, 2005: 276). Their identity and ethos are to reflect their following of Jesus Christ, especially to one another amidst their trauma, as means to help each other cope with trauma.

#### **4.4.7 1 Peter 4:12-5:11: “Suffering and future hope”**

1 Peter 4:12-19 is a typical example in the letter where the suffering of Jesus is used in connection with the identity and ethos of the first audience, stressed by a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures. The suffering of Jesus is matched with suffering for following and mimicking him. Peter opens with the possibility that such suffering is to be expected. This pericope culminates in 4:18-19, where those who suffer are supposed to continue to live righteously as this is an expression of trusting God in difficult circumstances in the face of trauma. Peter is writing a pastoral letter, addressing the needs of people who live in a world where evil, sin and trauma are realities of life. The first audience are, therefore, not supposed to be surprised if “fiery trials” would come their way. Evil and sin targeted Jesus Christ and they are following in his footsteps, mimicking his life and attitude. They too could become targets of these forces and are probably facing it already. However, because the believers are supposed to know that glory and power belongs to God through Christ who had elected them and confirmed their identity in Christ, they could face these ordeals (Jobes, 2005: 285–286; Bartlett, 2015: 747).

If suffering for Christ is to be the believers’ experience, Peter attempts to reframe it as a reason for joy and not bitterness or despair in 4:13 (in connection with 1:6). This thought is just as strange as Peter’s earlier statement that those who suffer will be blessed (3:14). This does not necessarily imply that one should enjoy suffering, but that unjust suffering is evidence of eschatological deliverance. The Empire may judge the gospel to be irrelevant or even as a threat to society, but is God’s ultimate judgement that will stand. The blessing of those who suffer remains not in the suffering itself, but because the Spirit of God and of glory is present (4:14) (Jobes, 2005: 287).

Peter supposedly separates the kind of suffering that comes with one’s own bad conduct and those that mark the believer destined for future glory in verse 15. Whether or not the first audience is participating in meddling or not, it seems as if he assumes that they might be capable not only of meddling, but also of evildoing, theft and murder. This is not the behaviour that is expected from a believer and they are put over against “suffering for being a Christian” in 4:16 (also in terms of the plea to holiness earlier in the letter). They will be comforted for bearing the trauma in the name of Christ and following his example, not for being a Christian murderer, a Christian evildoer, a Christian thief or a Christian meddler. Even if they want to take revenge or is capable of taking revenge because of their suffering, Peter here, like other places in the letter, seemingly discourages them to do so (Jobes, 2005: 289–290).

In verse 17, Peter carries the image found in the Hebrew Scriptures of the judgement of God further, beginning with God's own people with the image of the "house of God" that stems back to the believers being living stones in God's building (2:4-5). Peter seems to suggest that the first audience will be judged with the rest of humanity. The fiery ordeal also possibly alludes back to a tradition in Judaism, but Peter suggests a somewhat different viewpoint for his first audience, namely: The traumatic suffering that the first audience is experiencing now is part of God's eschatological judgement, but because of their faith in Christ, they do not need to fear it (Michaels, 1988: 275; Jobes, 2005: 290–293; Bartlett, 2015: 750).

Peter seems to contrast himself and his readers to those who reject the message of the gospel. Those who accept the gospel suffer temporarily, but those who reject the gospel, will suffer at the end. Those who now reject the gospel, will supposedly suffer much more than the audience who is experiencing trauma because of who they are and their choice to follow in the example of Jesus. Peter furthermore gives a probable response to this situation in 4:19. Peter invites those who are suffering to trust God. Here Peter possibly alludes to the example of Jesus' suffering, because what did Jesus do when he was reviled and he suffered? He entrusted his life to God, who judges justly (2:23). This is an example of trusting God even until the point of death so that the first audience can follow in his footsteps. Therefore, Peter invites them to entrust their lives to God, who will judge justly – also those who are inflicting trauma on them (Jobes, 2005: 294–295).

A quotation from Proverbs 11:31 (LXX) possibly functions as substantiate for his previous statement. This quotation sounds very negative indeed. However, the righteous have been saved by God and were brought into God's family of believers within the story of Israel. Therefore, there is no reason for them to lose hope in their circumstances. Justice will be served, even if the first audience has to wait until the end of times to be vindicated from their trauma and suffering. This is also connected to Peter inviting them previously to be humble and steadfast and not to take matters into their own hands. God will prevail for them.

In chapter 5:1-4 Peter attempts to appropriate a powerful image from the Hebrew Scriptures to describe not only God and God's stance towards God's people, but also how the leaders of the congregations that Peter is writing to, are encouraged to care for the people they were called to serve. By using a "shepherd-flock" metaphor, Peter seemingly incorporates a long tradition of an image from the Hebrew Scriptures that can also help the first audience to survive their trauma. They need leaders who will listen to them and guide them through their troubled times, as much as the elders themselves are urged to console each other in the community of faith. It is possible that Peter advises them not to do this out of obligation, but voluntary according to God's will that asks of them to care for God's flock. The "Great Shepherd" may reward them with the glory that they do not

necessarily experience now because of their trials. By doing this, they also model the ways in which Jesus is described in the Gospels as the Good Shepherd who tends to his flock.

In this passage Peter addresses the elders (verses 1-2), younger people (5a) and all of the believers (5b). Much of the terminology used in these verses divides itself into two semantic domains – namely words that are associated with honour/glory and terms used to describe mutuality and humility.<sup>181</sup>

To have honour before God is no excuse for exercising a privileged status over others. Those who identify with a system of valuation exemplified by Christ and advocated by Peter (with the emphasis on the path from suffering to glory), are invited to see that it is not only about how they maintain themselves in the outside world, but also in their common life as believers. It is not possible to have one set of standards outside of the community (so that the first audience can make sense of their marginal status in broader society) and to have another set of standards inside the community (so that other believers can be marginalised). Peter probably calls here for a transformation of heart and life, a transformation for imagination, that reforms biases at a basic level that it cannot but change ways in relating with others (believers and unbelievers) (Green, 2008: 163).

Following this, Peter is supposingly not putting himself above other leaders. He calls himself a “fellow elder” and he is a witness of the suffering of Christ. Because Peter is a witness to the gospel of Jesus, it is possible for him to have shared in the trauma that the leaders and communities he is writing to, are facing. This qualifies him to write this letter of comfort and consolation – he does not only talk about the way of suffering, but also walks the path (Jobes, 2005: 300; Green, 2008: 164).

The image of the shepherd-flock is deeply rooted in the Scriptures of Israel and is significant, according to Green, for three reasons: Firstly, God is Israel’s Shepherd and they are his flock (e.g. Psalms 23:1-4; 28:9). Jesus is identified by Peter as the true shepherd by whom God’s shattered people have been regathered and restored. This may also relativise the role of the elders, as they are to exercise leadership, but it is limited by God’s purpose exemplified in Christ. Secondly, Israel’s leaders (many times called “shepherds”) have been unfaithful and have led the flock astray (Jeremiah 23:1-4, Ezekiel 34), a role that is now taken up by the elders. Lastly, John’s gospel witnesses to a tradition, whereby Jesus calls Peter to “tend my sheep (John 21:13-17), a calling that is now mediated through Peter to these elders. The role of the elders and the position of the first audience are deeply rooted in God’s story with Israel and is therefore a fitting image to apply (Green, 2008: 165–166).

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<sup>181</sup> The words used to describe honour and glory are: “elder”, “partner in the glory to be revealed”, “exercising oversight”, “coercion”, “greedily”, “lording it over”, “crown of glory” and “arrogance”. Mutuality and humility are described by: “fellow elder”, “suffering of Christ”, “shepherd/tend the flock”, “voluntary”, “like God”, “freely”, “serve as an example”, “Christ is the Chief Shepherd”, “subordinate yourselves” and “clothe yourselves in humility” (Green, 2008: 163).

Peter invites the elders to act in the way God exercises leadership – not as people who are obligated to act, but because they have been called to care for their fellow believers. This is how grace works as a voluntary act of giving. Peter also warns them of the love of money, especially in the economic circumstances of their time and where the majority of the first audience found themselves in. Jesus himself numerous times warned against the pursuit of money. Greed could communicate to others that the gospel is not free to give, but comes with a price. More than perhaps anything else, money serves as a barometer of one's deepest motivations and for Peter there is no middle ground – greed or beneficence. Then Peter also advises the elders to “lead by example”. As Jesus is the “Great Shepherd” and the elders are also “shepherds”, Jesus provides them with a model for the elders to follow in this regard. Their practices as leaders are measured on how they conform to the courageous endurance of Christ, his humility and selflessness and are accountable to him. In these few verses Peter instructs the elders to not operate like the leaders of the world, but as those who belong to the kingdom of God (Michaels, 1988: 285; Green, 2008: 166–168).

In 5:5 Peter speaks to younger people in the congregation and then to all the members. The reference to “younger people” probably include everyone that is not an elder. They are supposed to submit themselves to the elders, that is, they should acknowledge the leadership roles of the elders. This, however, is not blind submission, as the elders are to care for the people as a reflection of Jesus' ethos. They are all called to “clothe themselves with humility” – so everyone is instructed to wear the same garment because they are of the same status before God. Their humility towards each other is a way of thinking and also a way of surviving their trauma together. This is validated by a quotation from Proverbs 3:34 as confirming Peter's suggestion to them to show humility towards each other. Where the lowly is mocked in society, God withstands the proud and those who claim status for themselves (Green, 2008: 171).

In verse 6-11, Peter possibly interweaves three motifs, namely the historical situation of the first audience, the character of God and how he invites the audience to respond to what is going on around them. Although it is clear throughout the letter, that it is people from outside the Christian community that are inflicting suffering and trauma on them, Peter probably argues that it is the evil forces (specifically the devil) that are behind it. The devil is walking around like a lion, seeking someone to devour. In the tradition and scriptures of Israel, the image and roar of a lion are associated with two features. The lion roars in search of prey (for example Psalm 104:21 and Amos 3:4) and to evoke fear (Amos 3:8 and Isaiah 30:6). Peter earlier in the letter exhorts not to fear and this also implied in verse 9. Peter possibly envisions indignity in the social sphere (v.6), responses of fear and worry in these circumstances (v.7), recognition of the enemy that is causing this animosity (v.8) and the suffering of the first audience locally (v.10) and those throughout the world (v.9). Peter assumingly provides some relief by locating their social situation within an eschatological horizon (vv.6, 10-11) (Green, 2008: 173–175).



Peter represents God's character here along the lines of two authentic representations of the God of Israel: God, the mighty warrior and God, the merciful. God, the warrior, is characterised by "the mighty hand of God (v.6), "he will lift you up" (v.6), "God will restore", "support, strengthen, and secure" (v.10) and "to him be the power forever" (v.11). God the merciful is represented by "he cares for you" (v.7), "God of all grace" (v.10), "God, who called you" (v.10). Both of these images are strongly reflected in the exodus of Israel. The people were in distress, God hears their cries and God acts to deliver (Deuteronomy 26:5-9) (Green, 2008: 175–177).<sup>182</sup>

Green points out that there is a number of similarities between Peter's presentation and Israel's confession here. This includes the alien status of God's people, the affliction that is practised against them as a minority people by the majority, God's loving care for his people who are suffering, God intervening on their behalf, a declaration of God's power and that God will provide an inheritance for them. Peter is writing to the first audience using powerful images of God from the scriptures of Israel to encourage the first audience that as God did with the Israelites in slavery to Egypt, so God will do with the Jesus followers who are suffering trauma under the Roman Empire (Green, 2008: 177).

Peter presents here two views of the world; the same reality, but just in two different ways. The question he asks is: What do you see? The one world is a world of suffering, trauma, distress and humiliation. The other world does not deny or downgrade these experiences and it does not set the believers free from struggle in the future. What it does instead is to limit the duration of suffering, and it puts the suffering and trauma in the trajectory of God's power, God's character and purposes. From this perspective, life does not belong to the devil nor the Roman Empire. However, it is God who is at work with grace and care, God is the one who will restore, strengthen, secure and empower. God will at the end also vindicate, exalt and gather God's people into his unending glory (Green, 2008: 178).

In which ways should the first audience then respond? It is clear that only those who have embraced the latter way of seeing and knowing can respond in the way that Peter supposedly directs them. In the Empire, believers do not choose honour or shame. It is chosen and inflicted on them by others. Humility in this instance is a position in society assigned by others and social humiliation will follow when one follows in the footsteps of Christ. The task of the first audience then is how to respond. Peter possibly explains how to accept one's humble status: "cast all your anxiety on him" (5:7). As Christ "entrusted himself to the one who judges justly" (2:23), as the holy women "who hoped in God"

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<sup>182</sup> Israel's credo in Deuteronomy 26:5-9: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey."



(3:5) and as Peter has already urged his audience to “let those suffering in accordance with God’s will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator” (4:19), so now the Jesus followers should allow God to be God by entrusting their troubles to God. Casting one’s troubles on God is a recognition that God is the only one who is just and it is a confession of God’s power in the world. It is a *lived* confession (Green, 2008: 179).

#### **4.4.8 1 Peter 5:12-14: Greetings from the church in Babylon**

In verse 12 the reason for writing this letter is given. Firstly, Peter wrote this letter to encourage the first audience in their suffering and secondly to witness to the true grace of God. It is by God’s grace that they can stand and survive their trauma. Peter also states that there are other believers who stand in solidarity with them, namely those in Rome. Even if it is possible that many of the believers Peter is writing to, came to Asia Minor from Rome and other places in the Empire because of their identity, the church in Rome stands with the believers in Asia Minor. He appropriates the word “Babylon” probably to refer to Rome. Here, he also incorporates the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures where empires were referred to according to the archetype of worldly empires, namely Babylon. Peter again affirms the first audience’s relation with the people of ancient Israel and God’s story throughout (Bartlett, 2015: 257).

A final reminder in verse 14 is given where Peter encourages them to stay and act as a community. They are supposed to embody what he has told them, to encourage each other and to care for one another. In such a way, it would become possible for them to survive their trauma together. The last word belongs to Christ who gave them everlasting peace – peace instead of panic, anxiety and stress. Peace because they belong and because they are called to follow in Jesus’ footsteps as faithful disciples.

### **4.5 IMPLICATIONS OF COPING STRATEGIES**

In the beginning of this chapter, it is stated that chapter four embarks on a risky and explorative endeavour. It seems as if there are ambiguities in this text that may have sounded helpful to 1<sup>st</sup> century CE ears, but harmful to people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In chapter three, section 3.4.3, the advice that the church father Augustine gave to battered wives (through the character of his mother Monica), was referred to. The advice he gives can be considered unhelpful by a 21<sup>st</sup> century understanding. Submission, suffering and silence do not calm an abuser, but it sustains the cycle of abuse and endangers the battered wife and children. Unfortunately, many Christian denominations continue to preach this message by using 1 Peter 3:1-6 to encourage battered wives to submit to their husbands, even in the face of abuse. This is why this chapter of the dissertation began by explaining the risks. It is indeed risky to take a text that was written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE where slaves and wives had little or no options and apply it indiscreetly to a 21<sup>st</sup> century context that functions differently (Reeder, 2015: 520).

The question of why Peter included a household code in his letter also comes to the fore. In light of this dissertation, it is possible to argue that the experiences of the audience motivated Peter to specifically address slaves and wives as those who might have been traumatised the most. The question in this regard is not necessarily what feminist and post-colonial theories can tell a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience about the slaves and wives in the audience, but rather lies in the nature of this text itself.

What did the text want to say to slaves and wives? There is a paradox here. On the one hand, the household, as the rest of 1 Peter, may have told the audience (wives and slaves specifically) that they must be content with their circumstances, but that they have a new *κύριος* who determines their identity. On the other hand, the transformative potential of the cross of Jesus Christ makes it possible for the audience to resist, because of their new identity, their status before God, and how they live their faith. If Jesus followers through the ages considered the impact of the cross and resurrection of Jesus and how it may transform people's everyday lives, then the lot of slaves and women may have changed sooner than it did.

In the rest of this chapter possible ways in which the slaves and wives Peter addressed may have heard when they were confronted with Peter's letter, will be discussed and problematised.

As in the many documents of the New Testament, discipleship and mimicking in 1 Peter involve suffering. In the context of this dissertation, one could say that discipleship and following the example of Jesus necessarily involve trauma. The question is why Christ's suffering is specifically used here as the example for 1 Peter's audience to follow and not Jesus' teaching, his practice or even his life after his resurrection. Michaels (1996: 253) argues that it is not the redemptive character of Christ's suffering that is to be mimicked. Followers of Jesus are not called to bear the sins of the world or of one another. Michaels suggests that Christ's suffering is a fitting example because its nature was that of undeserved and unjust suffering. Christ suffered because he did good, not for doing evil. Furthermore, in his suffering, he kept on doing good.

Michaels (1996: 254) further argues that the call to follow Christ's example in 1 Peter is not a call to suffering, as if suffering in itself is something good and something to be glorified. Rather, it is a call to do good even in the face of suffering and trauma. Peter's call to follow in the footsteps of Christ appears to be in the context in fairly stable social relationships in the Roman Empire; citizens in relation to governing authorities (2:13-17), slaves in relation to slave owners (2:18-25), and wives and husbands (3:1-7). It is not a coincidence that the call to follow the example of Christ's suffering appears at the beginning of the household code in 1 Peter 2. "Slaves were more likely than others to face unjust suffering, and Peter seems to regard their experience as a precursor of what is in store for the Christian community as a whole," Michaels argues (1996: 254–255).

One must, however, problematise Michael's stance here. It is profound that Peter urges his audience to follow in the example of Christ before he speaks to slaves and wives. But what would this exhortation have meant to the first audience, especially slaves and wives, in their particular circumstances? Michaels rightly acknowledges that slaves (and wives) were more likely to face unjust suffering than others, but can an author of a New Testament document say this to people who possibly faced hardship every day? And were these relationships really as stable as Michaels claims to be?

One should also ask if Peter's coping strategies involve harmful ways of coping (which is actually difficult to evaluate from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective). Is Peter really helping the first audience to speak about their trauma, or is he asking of them to suffer submissively in silence? Is he rightfully suggesting ways of restoring their relationships with each other (if it is not possible to do so to the outside society) or is he suggesting behaviour that may be harming them more in terms of their identity and relationships with others? Is he really suggesting ways of restoring their memory regarding God's story with Israel, then included?

James W. Aageson (2004: 46) argues that Peter's appeal to the example of Christ in 2:21-25 can be seen as problematic because a person who is respected by the community and thus in a position of authority, gives these instructions to household slaves and wives.<sup>183</sup> If one looks past the issue of authority, this appeal is also problematic because of one person calling upon others to submit to abuse and slander in the name of Christ. To put oneself in the position of subordination is something very different from being advised to submit by someone else, especially if that person is one of authority.

Aageson further argues that the suffering of Christ and the example thereof can be used (maybe contrary to the intent of the author) to compound oppression. Thus, the suffering and death of Christ become neither hopeful nor liberating. Mimicking the example of Christ becomes, either unwittingly or for ulterior purposes, an instrument of submission to oppression. Is it possible that Peter consciously sought to build up the identity, discipline, obedience and hopefulness of suffering believers whilst at the same time undermining the well-being of others in the community? Aageson (2004: 46) further states that another problem with Peter's appropriation of Christ's suffering is that it bears the text open to cynical or even well-meaning interpreters to abuse Christ's example in order to give authority to their own purposes and for their own agendas.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Aageson is professor of Religion at Concordia College in Moorhead, USA.

<sup>184</sup> Aageson further states that modern interpreters may become confused with this text. If modern readers read from a position of a privileged majority church in a democratic, developed world where persecution is not a threat or from a point of view of an antique perspective on gender relations, this text can provide a dissonant ring. In the first case, 1 Peter can be used to sentimentalise and insulate interpreters from the terror that the believers in 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Asia Minor face. In the second case, it can be assumed that women's emancipation is complete. One can easily get entangled in this web of social dynamics and lose sight of the freeing message

Bird argues that 1 Peter might be contributing in silencing the first audience as victims of their circumstances and trauma. Language cannot be used because it becomes meaningless in such circumstances and then isolation steps in that leads to hopelessness and isolation. Bird argues that the victim becomes a willing participant in maintaining this space of hopelessness and isolations with their own silence, because it becomes too unsafe to speak for every word can be used against you. Silence then becomes a haven even if it brings one into isolation. The silencing of people in such situations of abuse, keeping them from speaking out about any abusive treatment, allows those around them to deny what is happening as well as to have control over them. It can be argued that 1 Peter is urging wives to endure the abuse silently so that the overall “socio-political peace” can be maintained (Bird, 2011: 121–123).

One may argue that there are rightful concerns when it comes to 1 Peter. It can be argued that the coping strategies that Peter suggests can be harmful, especially when one does not consider the historical situation of the first audience and when it is applied to present-day context in unnuanced ways. There are, however, also arguments that state that this text can also be read in other ways that are not harmful, but can help faith communities to cope with their trauma.

There are also positives in 1 Peter that make one believe that this text can be read in redemptive ways. Chris de Wet (2013: 19) argues that it is evident that suffering is not generalised in 1 Peter. All suffering is not valid, but only if it is unjust suffering.<sup>185</sup> The theme of suffering in 1 Peter develops from the reality of actual, institutional slaves, who suffer unjustly, to the notion of Christ as God’s suffering servant and finally ending with the problem of all Christians (as slaves of God) who are suffering for doing good.

In 1 Peter slaves already experience suffering – there is no need for Peter to prepare them for the suffering. Halvor Moxnes argues that their suffering is put in a new light when Peter says that “Christ has suffered for you”.<sup>186</sup> He is portrayed in similar ways as slaves when they receive harsh treatment. He was exposed to power in a hierarchical system of domination, he was insulted, he suffered and he also did not do anything wrong. He did not threaten his adversaries (Moxnes, 2014: 137).

Moxnes further asks the question how silence in the face of suffering could be interpreted in a culture where an attack demanded a response. On the one hand, it could have been seen as shameful and an expression of weakness. On the other hand, it could also have appeared as honourable, as

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of the gospel, which according to Peter, is the message of hope. “As already suggested, the theology and ethics of this text seem to be tied up inherently with an assessment of the church’s cultural situation; when the cultural situation shifts, a corresponding rearticulation of the gospel must follow if the gospel message is to offer hope and not harm”, Aageson states (Aageson, 2004: 47).

<sup>185</sup> De Wet is a professor in the department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at the University of South Africa.

<sup>186</sup> Moxnes is professor in theology at the University of Oslo, Norway.

holding one's stance and not giving into a higher power. Jesus' silence in the trials against him in the passion stories shows this point – the silence of Jesus simply meant not accepting the authority of those who were abusing their power against him. This is also seen in 1 Peter (2:23). Now God is also brought into the picture, not as the upholder of a slave-oriented society, but as the one who has ultimate power, as the judge who judges justly in contrast with slaves who suffer unjustly (Moxnes, 2014: 137–138).

The suffering Christ who trusts in God, the just judge, is the example for the slaves suffering abuse. The focus is taken away from the moral warnings regarding their conduct and it is placed on the “just judge”. The question may be asked: What will God do to the suffering of Christ and the suffering followers? The response to this question frames the theme of suffering in 1 Peter. In the introduction to the letter, Peter says that the prophets witnessed to “the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory” (1:11). 1 Peter concludes with the same theme of suffering that transits to glory: “The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you (5:10) (Moxnes, 2014: 138).

Moxnes points out that on the one hand, the example of Christ's suffering functions as supporting the admonitions given to slaves to live obediently to their masters where their bodies are marked with the signs of submission. The history of interpretation of the destructive function that the example of Christ had cannot be denied. However, at the same time the passage also creates a different space. It creates a place of difference to that of society where the slaves live. The form of the discourse in 1 Peter may be the creator of this space and so contradicts the content of exhortations given to slaves. The slaves are not totally surrounded in a slave-master relationship because the exhortation to the slaves are not balanced with an exhortation to the masters. By firstly speaking to the slaves, Peter's advice to them in a way becomes paradigmatic for all in the first audience. “The beaten bodies of the slaves were visible illustrations of the sufferings experienced by all believers; and the ‘faithful slave’ in Christ who showed patient endurance in such adversities, might become a model for all followers of Christ,” Moxnes argues (2014: 138).

Balch (1984: 169–170) argues that there is a parallel to be found in Jesus' rejection of the society of his day's treatment and attitude towards women and the rejection of important aspects of Aristotle's attitude towards slaves and women in the household code of 1 Peter. The household code in 1 Peter rejects the Roman's insistence on the absolute religious and social subordination of women to their husbands. When Peter's exhortation to his first audience is quoted to Christian women with Christian husbands living in a predominantly Christian society today, the same words will no longer convey the message as it was heard by 1<sup>st</sup> century CE women. The same words that early slaves and wives could possibly understand as granting them more independence, freedom and power in an

oppressive, hierarchical, patriarchal Roman society, may in present times be interpreted as Christian women having less freedom than their secular counterparts.

Balch further argues that the continuity of this passage with the attitudes and actions of Jesus toward women has been lost by modern interpretations. People who are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century who insist on wives' natural subordination are not disciples of Jesus who insists that intellectual discipleship is not to be taken away from Mary (Luke 10:42), but disciples of Aristotle who criticised democracies for encouraging anarchy in slaves, women and children. If the interpretation of Aristotle as a conservative functionalist is correct, it is not surprising that the Roman Emperor, Augustus, chose a court philosopher with the name of Arius Didymus to teach him this hierarchical and patriarchal ethic. Centuries later, it is not surprising to find some popular preachers who stress the same Aristotelian ethic embedded in Scripture without the critique of that ethic such as those of Colossians and 1 Peter.

In contrast, Jesus related socially and intellectually to women in ways that could have horrified the traditional culture in which he lived. Peter criticised traditional Roman culture as firstly, unjust for slaves and secondly, too restrictive for wives who were also exhorted not to allow their husbands to "terrify" them (1 Peter 3:6).

Bauman-Martin makes a helpful analysis of the theology of suffering that is found in 1 Peter. She admits that feminist theologians in the past have rightly critiqued the traditional doctrine of the atonement and redemptive suffering of Christ as a dangerous model for women. The pericope in 2:21-25, for those scholars, confirms the damage that 1 Peter can do. In this passage, Peter demonstrates the many similarities between trauma suffered by slaves and Christ's own experience. By doing this, the text witnesses to the unjustness of the suffering of slaves, rather than justifying it (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 72).

Firstly, Jesus and the slaves referred to here are innocent of any misconduct. Their attendance at Christian meetings or the refusal to engage in sinful activities confirm that they are behaving in the right way, but that this would create conflict. Secondly, outsiders of the community responded to Jesus' radical and non-conformist conduct with slander and abuse, and the slaves are getting a similar reaction. They are doing right and suffering unjustly, because it creates conflict. Thirdly, Christ did not retaliate and this is the model of Peter's idea of submission. Peter does not encourage passivity or the perpetuation of injustice, but he discourages violence. Lastly, Jesus died a slave's death, despised and rejected. Thus, he repudiated the Empire's idea of shame and changed the perception of slavery. Those at the bottom of the hierarchy are, because they identify with Christ, the most worthy (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 72).



When it comes to the position of women in the text, there are some issues: Women are considered weaker, their appearance can be provocative, they should be silent and modest. Peter does not offer a liberating message or a solution to the abuse they are suffering. He wrestles with the conflict caused by women destabilising household (and imperial) hierarchies, but he also acknowledges and encourages the same actions. Peter points out the reality that slaves and wives are facing and that they are making radical choices regarding their Christian identity and lifestyle by not conforming to society's values and norms, unlike the household codes of Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral letters (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 73).

What is also remarkable, is that 1 Peter does not carry the characteristics of an oppressive patriarchal theology of suffering. In fact, the slaves and women already resisted patriarchy by identifying as Jesus followers. The victims are not blamed and it does not disguise the evil. The non-believing husbands and masters are recognised as the ones causing the conflict. The slaves and women are not told that their suffering is "redemptive" and that it is not meaningless. Peter also provides them with ways to interpret the suffering in different ways from either their masters, husbands, or neighbours. For people who had very little if any options in situations of abuse, slander and violence that caused trauma, they are practising resistance because of who they are (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 73).

Slaves and women, as well as the rest of the communities of faith, could have taken refuge in the fact that a suffering God is not a powerless, annihilated, defeated God, but is a God of active love, purposeful vulnerability, solidarity and mutuality with the suffering. God, having suffered and suffering with the traumatised, does not deny the reality of suffering or reprimands people for experiencing it (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 79).

One could thus paint the following picture: A female slave is asked to provide sex for her master's guests. She resists or refuses. She is beaten and probably raped. She does not have the option to change the social structure or to run away. However, she has already resisted the social structure by living out her Christian identity and by refusing the sex. She endures the humiliation of rape and abuse, but she can take comfort that her suffering is not just, that her fellow believers support her and that Christ has also experience suffering and trauma. In this instance, Bauman-Martin argues, Peter's interpretation of suffering and his coping strategies might have helped her (Bauman-Martin, 2004: 75).

Women in the first audience, like other members of the churches in Asia Minor, faced verbal critique and probably physical violence as a result of their faith and identity in Christ. The instructions given to them provide a way for these women to navigate a dangerous situation at a time when women had little power, few resources and a small chance of escape. The societal expectation of



submissiveness masks the wives' faithful subversiveness. They are to live up to their identity in Christ rather than to please their husbands and to faithfully witness and follow Christ even if it means to suffer and experiencing trauma for doing good – like the rest of the community (Reeder, 2015: 538–539).

One thing that need to be made clear is that Peter does not give cheap answers to his audience, and therefore it is also not the intention with this dissertation to provide cheap answers. Peter walks on a very fine line – there is a tension in the text that is explained and maintained in this section. There are things in 1 Peter that falls hard on 21<sup>st</sup> century ears, but it may precisely be those things that could – paradoxically – have helped the first audience to negotiate their situation and cope with their trauma. The question for the first audience is to maintain their identity and steadfastness in Christ whilst at the same time living in the Empire as strangers – there is no straightforward answer to this question and Peter does not provide an easy answer to it. This is also the tension that we are confronted with as 21<sup>st</sup> century readers of this text.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

One cannot know whether the first audience adhered to Peter's advice and saw the rhetorical situation at hand. It is impossible to see whether they followed his coping strategies or alternative perspectives to overcome and survive their trauma. What is clear from this chapter is that there are coping strategies present in this letter and that Peter at least intended his audience to make use of them. Linking the suffering and trauma of the first audience to the suffering of Christ whilst affirming their identity, also in regard to God's narrative with Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures, could have brought some consolation for the first audience.

Given that the theme of diaspora in a certain way frames the letter of 1 Peter, it may be that Peter emphasises the suffering of Christ, because Jesus was “the ultimate exile”, as Michael Frost suggests (2006: 29, 49). Jesus lived as a *παροίκος καὶ παρεπιδήμιος* in this world. He is not only an example in suffering, but also in the following: “[A]nd like all good and faithful exiles, he enters fully into life in this host empire without giving himself over to it completely” (Frost, 2006: 29). Peter thus portrays Jesus and his suffering as the ultimate example for the faith communities he writes to. Peter, throughout the letter, applies language and images of community, brother-and sisterhood and fellowship.

Michaels (1996: 267) makes a statement at the end of his article that sums up what I think Peter is trying to convey to the first audience: “Disciples love one another, help one another, forgive one another. Only in community, Peter teaches, is it possible to follow the path that Jesus walked alone.” The question of how to follow Jesus' example will perhaps be present in Petrine scholarship for years to come. What is important of Peter's message is that he urges the first audience that they cannot

walk the path of faith and of mimicking Jesus *alone*. They cannot and they do not have to face their trauma alone. That is why God has brought them into a family of believers who are experiencing similar things and where it is possible for them to survive their individual and communal trauma.

One could argue, keeping the definition of “coping” in mind, that Peter suggests to his audience, not just mere survival of their trauma as in only barely holding their heads above the water, but in looking for ways to make meaning in their lives – to be witnesses of their faith amidst their trauma. Peter gives them tools to speak about their trauma by means of texts and imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures, to draw closer to another as different traumatised bodies and to help them remember that they have an identity in Christ, who also suffered. They are invited not only to cope for the sake of survival, but to lead meaningful lives, amidst and after the presence of trauma, as communities that faithfully witness together to the crucified.

There is something about tackling trauma head on as a community. A sense of solidarity and togetherness is created. The isolation that trauma brings can be broken, the individual’s relationship with others and the outside world can be healed (at least partially in regard to the outside society), a common memory can be shared to remind one another of God’s faithfulness and liability and fragments of words can be shared to tell their stories, even if it comes out broken and fragmented. In a sense there may be healing in dealing with trauma together.

In the following chapter the emphasis will be on rereading 1 Peter in a present-day South African context and whether there are coping strategies, analogous to those presented to the first audience, that may somehow help believers and faith communities today to survive trauma and live a faithful witness to Christ amidst societal challenges.

## 5. SURVIVING TRAUMA TOGETHER: REREADING 1 PETER IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The multidimensional nature of this dissertation invites the crossing of another border. This boundary is the border of theological discipline. Although this study is situated in the field of New Testament studies, I am convinced that the alternative perspectives or coping strategies that I have discovered in the text of 1 Peter, needs to be tested in a way. This chapter, although situated in the text of 1 Peter, moves towards the disciplines of Systematic and Practical Theology.

When engaging ancient canonised texts today, it is essential to consider that literal application of texts like 1 Peter further traumatise people and spur on suffering, submission and silence, as stated at the end of chapter four. 1 Peter calls believers to live in the living reality of hope and not to turn the “good news” of Jesus Christ into “bad news” by oppressing and ostracising people (Aageson, 2004: 48).<sup>187</sup>

The primary point of departure in this dissertation is a text that speaks to a first audience who lives in certain circumstances, whose narratives are shattered by trauma (keeping in mind the primary research question of this dissertation and the definition of trauma I chose to work with in chapter two). The argument and hypothesis here is that 1 Peter can be read, through the lens of trauma theory with the help of multidimensional exegesis (cf. chapter two) as a trauma text that reflects the

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<sup>187</sup> It is important to state at the beginning of this chapter that there are risks in terms of writing a chapter such as this. This dissertation is primarily a New Testament study (with multidimensional exegesis as methodology), whilst utilising trauma theory as theoretical lens (it is thus also interdisciplinary). In this chapter, it may seem as if I am moving away from the space of 1 Peter towards a more systematic theological subject, namely baptism and the Eucharist, where I attempt to bring different genres together (the document of 1 Peter, the shattered traumatised narratives of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE believers from Asia Minor and 21<sup>st</sup> century believers in South Africa, and the sacraments). This may happen whilst I do not necessarily completely account for the nature, origin, and thrust of these different genres. This, however, is not the intention, but I am aware and cautious of this risks involved in this chapter. Whilst I was attending the Bridging Gaps programme at the Free University, Amsterdam, from September to November 2017, I was challenged, especially by my supervisor there, to appropriate chapters three and four in a more pragmatic way. Dr. Srdjan Sremac, who supervised me during that time, is a practical theologian specialising in trauma studies, and he encouraged me to write a chapter on possible practical implications and applications of this dissertation in terms of my own context. Prof. Mouton and I agreed that this suggestion does not imply a specialised case study in the South African context or my congregational setting where I work part time, but to find a more “general” way of appropriating my findings. This needs to happen in such a way that leaves open-ended possibilities to the reader and “implied” audience of this chapter in terms of how the coping strategies of 1 Peter, that also reflects in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, may help present-day South African believers to cope with trauma. A further reason is also that I work in a congregational setting where I am interested in how biblical texts may transform people’s lives in practical ways, such as making use of the sacraments to cope with trauma. Therefore, I am not attempting to superficially draw these connections and turn this study into a systematic theological dissertation. I am writing this chapter because I am convinced that baptism and the Eucharist are tools that may help believers today to cope with trauma, as an analogy to the coping strategies of 1 Peter that are discussed in chapter four of this dissertation. I am also convinced that my journey with 1 Peter thus far has led me to it.

audience's traumatic realities (cf. chapter three) and that Peter gives the first audience coping strategies to help them survive their trauma (cf. chapter four). Peter does not tell them that their suffering will go away. Inherent to the definition of trauma (as discussed in chapter two), lies the reality that trauma is what *remains* – it never leaves the traumatised and it may come back again and again (Rambo, 2010: 18). To cope with and survive trauma means to live with the remnants of trauma, with the possibility that it may still return to haunt the person or group, as pointed out in chapter two.

Living with the remnants of trauma may be complex. Rambo (2017, intro.) states that the complex nature of a landscape of survival, presented by the aftermath of trauma, emphasises that it is impossible to know life beyond an event of death. The language that surfaces from life in the face of death turns to something that is more than just survival. Life can never be restored to its previous condition and life needs to be reworked in ways that press beyond descriptions of the aftermath of trauma. Thus, this demands a life-giving, life-affirming and community-forming language that will account for the shattering of narratives and ruptures of experience. The marks of death and trauma remain. Appropriating coping strategies in order to survive trauma focuses the attention on ways in which people may reconfigure and redefine their lives. Rambo asks a crucial question, whether life following trauma can be seen as “improved life” (Rambo, 2017, intro.). There are no easy answers to this.

There is a tension in the text of 1 Peter, especially if one reads the letter from a trauma theoretical perspective (as I attempt to do in chapters three and four). The first audience is encouraged to be true to their identity in Christ, even though they are regarded as strangers (1:1 and 2:11) and uprooted from their home land, as the one thing that they can cling to in life. Their identity as “elected strangers” implicates that they need to negotiate and sometimes resist the outside world (Horrell, 2007: 142–143). What Peter says, particularly to slaves and wives, concern ways to survive amidst their circumstances.<sup>188</sup> The main question in this chapter of the study is whether 1 Peter may be reread by traumatised faith communities, and individuals in such communities, in South Africa today (as reflected in research questions nine and ten in chapter one).

Whilst asking the above question, I once again wish to stress that in this chapter, like the rest of the dissertation, I am not searching for cheap answers to the complex and challenging questions of trauma. Trauma does not require cheap answers. It is possible that trauma does not even ask for

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<sup>188</sup> In chapter three, there is a discussion on the “first” audience and “implied” audience. Peter intended for his first audience (the real flesh-and-blood people he writes to), to become the “implied” audience that adhere to his advice. Today it is impossible to know whether they did follow his advice and survived their trauma. Analogous to the first audience, South African Christian believers may become the “implied” audience of 1 Peter and this chapter. Therefore, 1 Peter is being reread in a South African context today and I make suggestions in which ways the church today can cope with trauma. Cf. footnote 2 in chapter one and footnote 134 in chapter four.

any answers, but for a deep-felt journey with it, and ways to cope with and survive it. Trauma typically shatters people's narratives – the narratives of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE followers of Jesus, the narratives of Christian believers through the centuries, and those living in 21<sup>st</sup> century post-apartheid South Africa (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007: 6). The goal of this chapter is not to apply artificial ways of trauma survival for present-day circumstances from a text that was not even written for today.

The primary socio-religious context implied in this chapter is Christian faith communities or congregations – people who identify as followers of Christ in a world that has sunk into chaos and disorder. The text of 1 Peter leaves me with no other choice, since 1 Peter is written to faith communities (cf. chapter three). Striking similarities between the first audience and 21<sup>st</sup> century believers are the following: The first recipients were also people who lived within relationships, living and operating within a faith community, they identified with Christ, they had to endure and cope with trauma, they had to negotiate power and political-economic systems, they had to make sense of their identity within this world. There are commonalities, even though we are living twenty centuries later. A major difference, however, seems to be that the first audience thought differently about these things – especially because they did not necessarily use the word “trauma” to describe their experiences.

There is another reason for focusing on, and appealing to Christian communities in particular, which I would like to explain from a particular point of view.<sup>189</sup> Carr (2014: 168–169) points out that in the suffering servant hymn found in 1 Peter 2:21–25, which Peter appropriates regarding the suffering of Christ, there is a rare Greek word used that one can translate with “abuse”, namely *λοιδορέω* (1 Peter 2:23). This same word is used in the LXX to describe the “abuse” that Moses suffered at Meribah (cf. Numbers 20:3, 13). It may be possible that Peter sees Moses as the suffering servant who came before Jesus. In the same way that Moses is “abused” by his own people and prevented from entering the promised land, so Jesus suffers similar “abuse”. The first followers of Jesus probably used texts from the Hebrew Scriptures that were formed during exilic trauma (such as Isaiah 53 and the Moses story) to deal with the trauma of Jesus’ crucifixion, imposed by the Roman

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<sup>189</sup> Froma Walsh (2007: 210) suggests that there are four processes that communities (faith and others) can actively engage in in order to facilitate healing and survival of trauma: Firstly, there needs to be a shared acknowledgement of the reality of the traumatic event and the losses thereof. Secondly, there needs to be a shared experience of loss and survivorship. Active participation in memorial rituals and tributes may help, as well as shared meaning making, emotional expression and spirituality. Thirdly, a reorganisation of family and community needs to happen. The realignment of relationships and rebuilding of lives, homes, livelihood and community are important. Lastly, a reinvestment in relationships and life pursuits need to happen; constructing new hopes and dreams, revising life plans, finding new purpose from the trauma and loss. These suggestions also correspond to the way in which Claassens (2010:75) describes how the imagery of the wailing women in Jeremiah and their call for lament in the face of trauma may create communal spaces where people may share their grief.

Empire. In a way, they could have seen Jesus' death as empowering them by rereading texts about Moses and the suffering servant (Carr, 2014: 168–169).

There is another link to the Moses story that is important to mention here. There is nothing about Jesus' resurrection in the hymn in 1 Peter 2. This also parallels a gap found at the end of Mark's crucifixion narrative where it ends with the missing body of Jesus – the empty tomb. The first Jesus followers might have been challenged by the fact that they did not have an identifiable tomb for their Messiah, such as other heroes of that time who were honoured by burial places. Jesus had nothing. Here, the link with Moses comes to the rescue again – Jesus' empty tomb linked him to Moses, whose burial place is also unknown. It seems as if there cannot be a happy ending here – the suffering servant has suffered and died and traumatised his followers in the process (Carr, 2014: 169–170).

However, the Moses story also provides a guide for the Jesus followers, and this, for me, is the crux of a possible link between Moses and the suffering servant in 1 Peter. The vindication of Moses did not come in his own resurrection. Moses' life and death were vindicated by the continuing life of his people, who entered the promised land and lived on as the people of Israel. Jesus' resurrection is not emphasised in the gospel of Mark or in 1 Peter. "The suffering Jesus they depict is vindicated in the redeemed community that survives him," Carr states. The church's survival, ongoing life and flourishing, are the testimony and witness to the healing that Jesus' death accomplished. "Not only Jesus but the whole community, the whole Jesus movement, stands as proof of the failure of Roman imperial terrorism," Carr argues (2014: 170).

The survival and flourishing of the Jesus followers became a transformative response to the resurrection of Jesus. The early church survived *because* of Jesus' death and not in spite of it. "What the Romans intended as shameful, community-disintegrating, traumatic memory of crucifixion became the community-founding memory of the Christian community," Carr further argues (2014: 170). This is not to say that the story of Israel and the early church moves from suffering to redemption, from wilderness to Promised Land. Jesus' followers suffered more, at the hands of fellow Jews and Roman authorities, also dealing with other crises, such as the Jewish war, the destruction of the temple and later on state persecution (cf. chapter three). However, the crucified Jesus became what the suffering servant and other exilic figures were for exiles – a symbol of often unspeakable suffering, but a symbol also for the survival of suffering and trauma. The cross that the Roman Empire intended to bring despair and anguish became a beacon of hope instead (Carr, 2014: 171, 173).

Peter stresses Jesus' trauma on the cross, but also what happens after the cross (cf. 1 Peter 2:21–25). This is the space the first audience found themselves in, and this is, analogously, also the space

that 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians in South Africa find themselves in. Rambo calls it “the afterlife of the cross”. She states: “The return of unintegrated suffering as narrated in trauma not only sheds light on how we make sense of recurring, intrusive symptoms and the re-emergence of forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism; it also presents an invitation to reconceive the story that we tell about life in the aftermath of the cross – the story of resurrection” (Rambo, 2017, intro.). Jesus’ return reveals something about life that exists in the midst of death. Life is marked by wounds and those wounds stay. There is a need to imagine ways of resurrecting, not necessarily reaffirming the way of the cross (Rambo, 2017, intro.).

## 5.2 REREADING 1 PETER TODAY?

The question is: Does 1 Peter have anything to say to traumatised believers living in South Africa, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?<sup>190</sup> In chapters three and four of the dissertation it is established that 1 Peter is speaking to a traumatised first audience who are followers of the suffering Christ, giving them strategies to cope with and survive in the midst of, their trauma. A further question will be whether 1 Peter has anything to say to 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian believers who are experiencing trauma. From the survey on the reception history of the letter in chapter three, one can see that 1 Peter was read through the ages, yet often with other perspectives in mind. The contribution of this dissertation to the field of New Testament studies is to reread 1 Peter from a trauma theory perspective. It is, therefore, important to consider the letter’s voice to traumatised people today (as motivated in earlier in this chapter). It may be argued that this question is of importance and that 1 Peter indeed has something to say to traumatised believers today, even though the contexts of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries differ.

How to cope with trauma has been one of life’s existential questions and challenges throughout the ages, even though the term “trauma” was only coined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (as it is stated in chapter two). As said in chapter four, people tend to cope with the tools they have available in order for them to bring meaning to their lives and survive their trauma. Thus, coping through faith, particularly by reappropriating a text such as 1 Peter, seems to have the potential to continue to make sense to believers today.

In light of the previous statement, it is important to consider what Peter tells his audience. Firstly, he does not tell them that the trauma is going to go away. There are no quick fixes available in this letter. The emphasis on the suffering of Christ, the use citations and imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures, also to confirm the first audience’s identity and ethos, does not make room for an easy escape in the face of the Roman Empire. Secondly, Peter tells them that they are part of God’s

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<sup>190</sup> With this question I also acknowledge that 1 Peter was not originally written to 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians living in South Africa. However, it is considered as an authoritative text as part of the New Testament canon. Thus, I argue in this chapter that 1 Peter may have a valuable contribution to present-day realities of the survival of trauma.



people, particularly through the suffering of Jesus. This memory is nurtured, *inter alia*, by the rhetorical functioning of the Hebrew Scriptures in their thinking, and their identity as believers is what they are invited to hold on to. They belong to God, especially because of the suffering of Christ and by following him, even as foreigners who face the danger of being traumatised again.

Thirdly, Peter tells them that they are treading a fine line – they must look as if they accommodate certain aspects of the Empire, whilst at the same time resisting it by staying true to their identity and ethos as Jesus followers. This is to be done whilst they love and care for one another and show hospitality towards each other. Their love and care for one another and hospitality towards each other are signs of them living as the holy family of God (cf. 1 Peter 1:16; 2:9). They are to resist trauma, whilst creating togetherness and compassion for each other in order for them to survive their trauma.

Trauma can isolate an individual in a group very easily. Peter makes use of family and community imagery for a reason – seemingly with the purpose to cope with and survive, their trauma as a group in love and compassion for one another. Peter tells them that the potential is there still to be confronted with suffering and trauma (also in terms of submission and silence), but perhaps the key to understanding and appropriating 1 Peter's message to traumatised Jesus followers in South Africa today is exactly his use of family and community language and metaphors.

The ethos of Christianity is characterised by extensive images of the afterlife and accompanying practices and rituals that shape a vision of what lies beyond the experience of trauma. The afterlife of trauma presents signs of the otherworldly – of space and time that lie outside the present life with its traumatic experiences (Rambo, 2017, intro.). Even if it is good to talk about what happens after trauma as something “heavenly” or “otherworldly,” it is important to create spaces where people can come with their shattered narratives – in the midst of or in the aftershock of trauma – and survive their trauma together. Two of these spaces or practices (signs) will be discussed in the following section.

### **5.3 BAPTISM AND EUCHARIST AS COPING STRATEGIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCHES TODAY**

In chapter four of the dissertation it was established that people tend to cope with the tools and strategies that they have available to them. Thus, faith plays a significant role when it comes to coping with trauma. The purpose of this chapter is not to create new ways for Christian communities to cope with trauma they experience every day, but to take that which 1 Peter points towards and the church already has available and to reaffirm it as potentially powerful coping strategies. Despite the fact that there are many differences between churches today in terms of practices of baptism

and the Eucharist, these are two rituals that are present in most Christian denominations.<sup>191</sup> There are many different interpretations of the use of baptism and the meaning of the Eucharist, but that is not the focus in this chapter.<sup>192</sup> The focus of this chapter is how, from a trauma theory perspective, baptism and the Eucharist may be used as ways to cope with and survive trauma – to cope with life after death.

One may ask why these two sacraments were chosen for this task? Firstly, because I believe that the text of 1 Peter led me to this choice. The reference to baptism in 1 Peter is more explicit than that of the Eucharist. 1 Peter refers to baptism in 3:21-22. Notions of new life are also present in the text (see 1:3; 1:23; 2:1). Peter makes use of familial language, as pointed out in chapter three of this dissertation, to establish the new identity of the first audience as the household of God, in order for them to understand where and to whom they belong. Secondly, because baptism and the Eucharist present believers in South Africa today with coping mechanisms that already exist – yet, from a trauma perspective it can be viewed in new ways in order for believers to survive their trauma. These two existing sacraments present the potential to help believers cope with their trauma.<sup>193</sup>

As mentioned, the Eucharist does not feature explicitly in 1 Peter. However, the suffering and death of Jesus Christ are central to the letter, as established in chapters three and four of the study. Therefore, one could assume that the first audience would share the Lord's Supper together, since it was, together with baptism, an established practice in the early church. Memory and remembrance play an important role in the letter, especially to establish identity and ethos, but also to help the first audience to cope with their trauma. The Eucharist as a remembrance meal is very prominent within the Reformed tradition.<sup>194</sup> There are also references to the Passover and the Israelites' time of

<sup>191</sup> The use of baptism and the Eucharist as coping strategies for South African believers today can be seen as middle ground for appropriating the text of 1 Peter today. It is not so specific as doing a case study of a specific congregation and how 1 Peter may help them to cope with trauma. It is also not so general as just saying that 1 Peter can help believers cope today without giving any guidelines. It creates a creative middle ground that may help present-day believers to cope with their trauma. The subject matter of this chapter is reflected in questions nine and ten as stated in chapter one.

<sup>192</sup> The *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* document of the World Council of Churches (1982) is a good resource in terms of the meaning and practices around baptism and the Lord's supper. The focus of this chapter is, however, not to give a summary of this document but rather to see how the sacraments may function in processes of surviving and coping with trauma.

<sup>193</sup> As mentioned in chapter three, there is a generation of scholars who thinks of 1 Peter's genre as a baptismal homily with some characteristics of an epistle present, especially because of certain themes in the letter (such as new life and the mention of baptism in 3:21) (Ferguson, 2009: 189). The discussion of the genre in chapter three does not choose this view of 1 Peter being a baptismal homily as the genre of 1 Peter. However, it is useful for the discussion of this chapter to take note of this argument regarding the genre of 1 Peter.

<sup>194</sup> *Vir die erediens – 'n Handleiding* of the Dutch Reformed Church describes the Eucharist as a memorial in the following way: "Holy Supper is firstly a memorial meal. When He instituted the Supper, the Lord said: 'Do this in memory of me' (Luke 22:19). In the Lord's Supper we commemorate and proclaim the death of the Lord. By eating the bread and by drinking the wine, the congregation calls to mind all of the Passion of Christ: How He gave His life; how He fell to the ground like a grain of wheat and died; how He drained the cup of bitterness; how He was forsaken of God and called out: 'My God, my God, why did you forsake me?' (Mark 15:34), that we might never more be forsaken by Him" (*Vir die Erediens: 'n Handleiding in die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk*, 2007: 92).

slavery in Egypt in 1 Peter (see 1:13, 19). The Eucharist has strong ties with the Passover and the Exodus from Egypt. The memory of Jesus' suffering is historically and theologically tied to the memory of the Exodus and thus adopts important dimensions of the memory of the Exodus, something that is prominent in 1 Peter (Volf, 2007: 27).

Ultimately, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are embedded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ whose suffering, also portrayed through citations and imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures, stands central in the letter of 1 Peter. The symbol of the cross, that Carr describes as a symbol of unspeakable suffering but also is a symbol for the survival of suffering and trauma, stands central to baptism and the Eucharist (Carr, 2014: 171,174). Thus, in a sense, baptism and the Eucharist may be sacraments of suffering, but also sacraments of survival of suffering and trauma. N. T. Wright describes the Eucharist as a family meal and the family is constituted by baptism (Wright, 2009: 3). Thus, family and household language found in 1 Peter are important features that brings these two sacraments together in the letter, also in regard to the focus of this chapter of the dissertation.

Mouton (2014: 98) argues that religious communities have struggled in the past and is struggling now with the challenges of making sense of traumatising events. It is thus important to find ways of making meaning in such times (which is inherent to the definition of "coping"), despite suffering and trauma. Furthermore, it is important to find meaning, in order to survive and cope with trauma, to see whether life after trauma may become "improved life" as Rambo calls it (2017, intro.). Faith communities have the rituals and liturgical resources to potentially help people cope with trauma and imagine life beyond it (Claassens, 2010: 75).

### **5.3.1 Baptism: a coping strategy to survive trauma**

As stated, 1 Peter mentions baptism more explicitly than the Eucharist. New life in 1 Peter is associated with baptism. This may also be interpreted as a key towards the role that baptism can play in coping with trauma. In baptism, language and ritual are ascribed to new life and new hope (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; 2:2; 3:15). It is a sign or symbol of new hope and is meant to enliven people's memory of God's promises and faithfulness, as well as their belonging to a community. In this section, the manner in which baptism may function as a coping strategy will be examined by means of the three building blocks of trauma theory that serve as theoretical framework of this study.

When baptism occurs, whether it is a baby or an adult being baptised, the community of believers comes together. Whether it happens inside or outside a church building, in baptism broken bodies come together to welcome another broken body into God's household. Ultimately, baptism reinforces identity and belonging of people becoming part of the family of God (the traumatised body of Christ), which is also strongly emphasised in 1 Peter. This is where the sacrament of baptism is rooted.

The BEM document of the World Council of Churches (1982; cf. n.3) states that baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus, particularly in his death and resurrection (cf. chapter four on coping strategies in 1 Peter).<sup>195</sup> Through baptism, people are incorporated into Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. They are also brought into the new covenant between God and God's people – 1 Peter frames this in terms of the household and temple of God. Baptism is indeed a gift from God and it is administered in the name of the Triune God. The practice of baptism is universal. It was practised by the early church from its earliest days as attested in the letters of the New Testament, Acts and the writings of the early church fathers. Churches today continue to baptise as a ritual of commitment to God who bestows grace upon God's people.

Baptism is a sign of new life through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter stresses that new life is from God (cf. 1:3). Baptism unites the person who is baptised with Jesus and the believing community – Jesus followers who are to be built up as “living stones” (1 Peter 2:4). There are many images found in the New Testament in which the meaning of baptism is conveyed. These images reveal the following four truths about baptism:

Firstly, baptism means participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which stands central to the letter of 1 Peter. Jesus was also baptised, to live in solidarity with sinners and to fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Accordingly, this baptism led Jesus along the way of the Suffering Servant, which was made manifest in his suffering, death and resurrection (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-25). Through baptism, believers are immersed in the freeing death of Christ where their sins are buried and the power of sin is broken. Believers, therefore, live in freedom whilst identifying with the death of Jesus, his burial and his resurrection. They are now living a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 1; 1 Peter 1:1, 3). This may also be seen in connecting to 1 Peter, where Peter invites his audience to follow in the example of Christ's suffering (1 Peter 2:21).

In terms of trauma theory, one may argue that baptism not only means in participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that it also reinvokes memory – even traumatic memory. Baptism invokes memory of Jesus' suffering, but also memory of Jesus' living. It reminds the believer of Christ who suffered and died in solidarity with human suffering (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-25). Even though the memory of Jesus' traumatic death can break into the present and traumatise believers once again, the memory of Jesus' death and resurrection that is brought to the fore by baptism, may also bring about ways of coping with current traumas. Believers thus not only identify with Jesus'

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<sup>195</sup> The BEM document is used in this chapter to explain the significance of the sacraments as coping strategies for faith communities today trying to deal with trauma. References to 1 Peter will be made. However, this is not a chapter on 1 Peter's stance on baptism and the Eucharist. It is rather an attempt to see how two possible existing coping strategies in church life may help believers to cope with trauma. Cf. footnote 187 at the beginning of this chapter.

suffering, but their trauma is in a sense redeemed through the trauma of Jesus. The possibility of new life may thus arise from the ashes of shattered narratives coming together in the sacrament of baptism (cf. 1 Peter 3:21).

This new life that is constituted by baptism, has the potential to not only bring hope to the individual who is baptised and family and friends alongside that person, but also to the community itself. When I sit in church on a Sunday morning and parents bring their baby to be baptised, I am reminded of my own baptism (Van der Laan, 1998: 171). I remember that God first reached out to me, took the initiative to bring me into God's family, without me understanding anything about what is happening at my baptism. I remember that I was brought up in a loving home where my parents taught me about God and the Bible. I also remember that even though my life at times was shattered by the trauma that I experienced, God's promises that were made on the day I was baptised, still remains.

Another case may also be true. During the baptismal service, there may be a person sitting in the pew that experiencing the opposite of what have just been sketched. That person may remember his or her baptism, but not with such fond memories. S/he may think that, although God invited her/him into God's family, the family did not always fulfil their responsibility in caring for him or her. They might remember how their parents did not adhere to the promise they had made that day to love and cherish their child. They might remember that growing up in their parents' house caused much trauma in terms of abuse, poverty or neglect. They might remember, being baptised as an adult, that life often was traumatising and that things happened that made that person forget that they belonged to God through baptism. The trauma of life may in various ways come back to the person witnessing another's baptism (analogous to the way the traumatic memory of Jesus' death on the cross could have come back to haunt the early followers of Jesus such as the audience of 1 Peter).

It is possible that the coming together of a broken community to celebrate God's initiative to invite a broken body into God's household, may stir the memory of belonging in that person who experiences trauma in baptism (as this belonging and identity is stressed throughout 1 Peter). It may stir the fact that even though believers are seen as foreigners and strangers in the world and can become traumatised because of what happens in life, we belong to God and one another in such a way, that coping with trauma and the survival thereof becomes possible.

Secondly, according to 1 Peter and the BEM document, baptism involves conversion, pardoning and cleansing. The New Testament underlines the ethical implications of baptism by presenting it as something that washes the body with pure water, and cleansing sins (cf. 1 Peter 3:21). It is, therefore, seen as an act of justification. Accordingly, those who are baptised are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ and they are given a new ethical orientation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

(Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 1).<sup>196</sup> Peter in 1:16 invites his audience, accordingly, to live “holy” lives which reflect God who is described as being “holy” – they are to convey their identity as the family of God through their ethos.

From a perspective of trauma theory, baptism may help cope with the broken relationship with one’s physical body that is caused by trauma. Coming from a Reformed perspective, baptism in this sense acknowledges that humans come into the world as sinful beings. In a sense, humans also come into the world as traumatised beings – through in the process of birth, leaving a safe, comfortable space and entering the world of the unknown. Trauma causes a distortion within one’s physical body, but being incorporated into a “body” of other broken bodies, whether young or old, paves the way for coping with the brokenness of one’s own body, as well as that of the faith community. From a trauma perspective, it is not necessarily the sinfulness of an individual or group that is emphasised in baptism, but also the trauma caused by the sinfulness of others to one’s own body, to the faith community and that of Jesus.

In this way, baptism can become a ritual of healing. It is a ritual where the togetherness of a community becomes a place where individuals find a way to cope with the brokenness of their own bodies, the (metaphorical) body of Christ, as well as the brokenness of the world. One may never completely heal from trauma, and a community may never completely overcome the traumas of the past done unto them, but in baptism the belonging of broken bodies to each other and to God, may pose a way of dealing with life after trauma. If baptism constitutes new life for individuals receiving the sacrament, it may also constitute new perspectives on the faith community as the household of God, which offers space to heal, as well as perspectives on the outside world that may have inflicted the trauma. 1 Peter stresses, as it is argued in chapter four, that the believers are to come together in community in order to survive their trauma, to love and care for one another in their fellowship together.

Reading with a (Christian) trauma lens, the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in the maintenance and nurturing of the new life of believers, also in the coping of life after death and in the face of traumatic realities (cf. 1 Peter 4:14). The BEM document states (1982: 2) that the Holy Spirit, who is at work in the lives of those baptised, emphasises their belonging to the household of God (together with 1 Peter).<sup>197</sup> Indeed, baptism emphasises that life after trauma is possible, can be coped with, can be

<sup>196</sup> Cf. 1 Peter 1:13-14, 22; 2:1, 11-12; 3:8, 15-16; 4:8-10; 5:5-6 in terms of a “new ethical orientation.”

<sup>197</sup> According to the BEM document, the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of people before and after their baptism. It is the same Holy Spirit who revealed Jesus as the Son of God (Mark 1:10-11) and who empowered the disciples at the event of Pentecost (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is bestowed on all baptised persons – they are thus marked with a seal and they have the inheritance as daughters and sons of God. The Holy Spirit is the one who nurtures the life and faith in the hearts of the baptised until the day of final deliverance when they will fully inherit God’s inheritance to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14) (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 2).



survived with others, because of togetherness, and particularly of God's initiative in baptism. The resurrected life of Jesus and the disciples, even in the wake of trauma, embodies the possibilities of the work of God's Spirit in life after trauma. Baptism is thus also a sign thereof.

The Holy Spirit is the one who keeps the traumatised community together and points out the possibilities of new life in their midst (cf. 1 Peter 1:11; 4:14). New initiatives may spring from this and new opportunities may arise where people (in a congregation/community) share their experiences of trauma – such as a group that shares grief because of the passing of loved ones. There may be opportunities created where believers across cultural and language borders come together to share the traumas they are facing in their neighbourhoods and broader community. The Spirit emphasises the primary identity of a faith community, namely that they are baptised, that they belong to the broader household of God – even before they are aware of being male or female, black or white, rich or poor.

In the fourth place, baptism is also a sign of being incorporated into the body of Christ (or as 1 Peter phrases it, into the household or family of God). It is a sign of our common discipleship. Through the practice of baptism, believers are brought into union with Christ, with each other, and with the church of all ages and places. Baptism thus represents a bond of unity. The Christian church consists of believing people who are called to confess and serve one Lord all over the world (cf. 1 Peter 3:15). Christian witness, therefore, can be made to the healing and reconciling love of God. It also calls upon churches to overcome divisions and visibly act out their fellowship with one another ('Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 2). Baptism is the sign of our unity with Christ and with others – the sign of the kingdom of God (Burger & Cilliers, 2014: 148).

Baptism has the potential to restore one's relationship with the outside world by becoming part of a community that is constituted from a different point of departure – namely as followers in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, even if it may imply suffering, as 1 Peter argues. In baptism, whether one is baptised as a baby or an adult, the person becomes part of a household that is made up of traumatised narratives. In this way one's own shattered narrative becomes part of the church's collective story of shattered narratives. Nobody should be alone in coping with trauma, since there are others that journey along the same road. The primary identity of those who follow Jesus lies in the fact that they are baptised – that they belong (as emphasised by 1 Peter). All of Christian life springs from this point, a point where faith communities live in solidarity with Jesus' trauma, but also with one another's trauma. Life may be lived, because we belong.

Lastly, baptism is a sign of the reality of the new life that is given in Christ (cf. 1 Peter 1:13-21; 4:1-11). It allows participation in the community of the Holy Spirit and it is a sign of the Kingdom of God – the life of the world that is to come (cf. chapter three where the presence of eschatological language



in 1 Peter is discussed). Through faith, hope and love, baptism consists of a dynamic that embraces all of life. It extends to all nations and it anticipates the day that everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 2).

Baptism, in terms of trauma theory, thus becomes the symbol that there is life after trauma, because the baptised participate in the community of the Holy Spirit, and because it is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God. There can be life after trauma, because of the eschatological hope that lives in the baptised community of the broken Christ. 1 Peter affirms this hope in the letter and Peter asks his first audience to be vocal about this hope that lives in them if anyone should ask – also in a traumatic situation (1 Peter 3:15).

Naming trauma may be particularly challenging. It was, for example, emphasised in chapter three that slaves and women in the first audience of 1 Peter, maybe faced abuse in various kind of ways and that may have silenced them (Williams, 2012: 301–303). In similar ways, believers today are silenced in various ways and also cannot find the words to speak about their trauma. It is possible that in the sacrament of baptism, in hearing scripture and the words that are spoken to the adult or child receiving baptism, language may be restored. It is possible that the language used in baptism, may bring words that affirm the belonging of everyone present to the faith community and to God (as in 1 Peter). These words may affirm that no one is alone in their trauma, that God's covenantal story with Israel and Jesus Christ is extended to everyone who is invited to come into God's family with their broken and shattered narratives, as Peter does with his first audience. It has the potential to give words to the trauma that a person has faced in life, and may start to heal from that, because of God's grace and faithfulness, knowing to whom s/he belong.

Baptism has the potential to play a significant role in the life and ethos of a traumatised congregation – also together with other traumatised believers in a community. Baptism confirms the new life that Peter writes about. That is life embodied in belonging to a group that is different from the world ("resident strangers" as 1 Peter describes this reality), but unique in God's eyes), in the coming together of shattered narratives that welcome another shattered narrative in their midst and creating space where trauma can be coped with (as it is argued in chapter four). Baptism confirms that believers do not have to suffer submissively alone in silence amidst their trauma. In the following section the sacrament of the Eucharist will be discussed as a tool to cope with and survive trauma.

### **5.3.2 Eucharist: a coping strategy to survive trauma**

Karen O'Donnell states that the reception of the bread and wine in the Eucharist (which is central to the life of Christian communities), can be seen as a "gateway to recovery of trauma".<sup>198</sup> Central to

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<sup>198</sup> O'Donnell is a research fellow at St. John's College at the University of Durham in the United Kingdom.

the Eucharist is the suffering and death of Jesus (which is implied by 1 Peter). It is the trauma of the cross, the trauma that resulted into following in the example of Jesus by people (also the first audience of 1 Peter) who identified with this trauma, that stands central to the Eucharist (O'Donnell, 2015: 2394).

O'Donnell cites Serene Jones' suggestion that the cross of Jesus be seen as a "mirrored cross" (Jones, 2009: 75; O'Donnell, 2015: 2394).<sup>199</sup> The mirrored cross becomes a lens of trauma through which the cross can be interpreted. Through this, Jones also acknowledges that there is a variety of interpretations by Christian communities to explain how God saves the world through the events of the cross. The mirrored cross reflects our own stories of suffering and trauma back to us. For a woman suffering the trauma of the loss of a child, that experience is mirrored in the cross. The horror and violence of war and communities suffering from it, are mirrored in the cross. When a person or a group experiences trauma because of their identity, or because of institutionalised violence, the experience is mirrored in the cross (Jones, 2009: 75–83; O'Donnell, 2015: 2394).

Jones gives an example where a survivor of domestic abuse explained how she would imagine that if Jesus were physically there whilst her partner hit her, Jesus would have jumped in and taken the blows instead of her. She also imagined being held by God later when she cried. In her imagining, Jesus was enacting a self-giving sacrifice that included blood shed for her and that Jesus was holding her in an act of divine solidarity with suffering. Sacrificing, holding and grace are all able to exist within a space of the crucifixion. The experience of this abuse survivor's is mirrored by the cross, by the suffering and trauma that Jesus experienced himself (Jones, 2009: 82).

However, the notion of the mirroring cross is complex, more complex than a simple action of reflection. O'Donnell asks the question: Given the unstable nature of a theology of the cross, in what ways can the cross-centred Eucharist be an acceptable narrative to offer those who suffer from trauma? This may be difficult and complex. It is in the repetition of each celebration that the cross-centred Eucharist mirrors experiences of trauma and provides healing from trauma. Trauma experienced and recovered from in the Eucharist is the trauma of the body and household of Christ – in its particular and universal sense (O'Donnell, 2015: 2394). In what follows, I will discuss how the Eucharist may function as a coping strategy by means of the three building blocks of trauma that serve as theoretical framework of this study.

From a trauma theoretical perspective, believers come to the Eucharist with shattered narratives – with lives and hearts broken by many losses. These losses are our own, as well as those of the world. Henri Nouwen (1996: 28; 30) states that in a world where resentment is the obvious response

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<sup>199</sup> Serene Jones is currently professor and president of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, USA.

to our losses, the Eucharist and living a eucharistic life have to do with gratitude.<sup>200</sup> Living a eucharistic life is living life with gratefulness. However, gratefulness is not the obvious response to life and certainly not to trauma. Nouwen states that it is through the mourning of our losses, through grieving our trauma, that life can be seen as a gift. The beauty and worthiness of life is intrinsically linked to its fragility and mortality. 1 Peter attests that the grief of the disciples and early Jesus followers surrounding the suffering and death of Jesus are connected to evil and darkness in the world (also in the form of the Roman Empire).

Nouwen then states that when believers celebrate the Eucharist, it is important for them to accept co-responsibility for the evil that surrounds and pervades their lives. Nouwen (1996: 32) makes the following statement, which is considered as important when one looks at the function of the Eucharist as a coping strategy:

As long as we remain stuck in our complaints about the terrible times in which we live and the terrible situations we have to bear and the terrible fate we have to suffer, we can never come to contrition ... Indeed, the conflicts in our personal lives as well as the conflicts on regional, national, or world scales are our conflicts, and only by claiming responsibility for them can we move beyond them – choosing a life of forgiveness, peace, and love.

When believers celebrate the Eucharist together with others, they may also come to the realisation of the brokenness of their own lives, but also of those around them and of the world. Partakers of the Eucharist may come to the realisation of how others have been affected by trauma in different ways than themselves, even though a certain group may not have experienced the specific trauma another group has gone through, believers are compelled to stand in solidarity with others. Especially because this the reality of Jesus' experience with trauma and suffering – he suffered in solidarity with the world (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-25).

When one considers that trauma alters an individual's or community's use of language and words, it is important to consider the role that the Eucharist may play in naming – in giving language and words, also non-verbal communication to trauma. The functioning of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament in the celebration of the Eucharist stands central. Texts such as the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, the passion narratives of the Gospels and 1 Peter can play a significant role in naming suffering and trauma that otherwise cannot be uttered. Nouwen rightly states that the eucharistic presence of Jesus when breaking bread together (whether one considers the Eucharist as a physical or spiritual presence or as a sign of the presence of Jesus) begins with the presence of Jesus himself (as the word) and also the word as scripture (Nouwen, 1996: 44).

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<sup>200</sup> Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest, theologian, professor and author.

Nouwen rightly argues that believers today live in a world where words are cheap. Words are everywhere – the world gets bombarded by words, words that are supposed to inform. It is thus not surprising that the words in the Eucharist are listened to mostly as words that (only) inform believers. Hearers of these words and the stories surrounding Jesus' suffering and death, seldom pay attention to them, because it has become too familiar. It is the same old story and one doesn't expect them to surprise or touch anymore (Nouwen, 1996: 45). In terms of trauma theory, it is possible to argue that the words read during the Eucharist may give words and language to those who are experiencing trauma, analogous in the way the coping strategies in 1 Peter suggests (as discussed in chapter four). Analogous to what Jones argues in terms of the mirroring cross, words spoken about the suffering and death of Jesus have the potential to mirror every human experience of suffering back to the person or faith community who is experiencing trauma.

Nouwen further argues that believers today have a place in God's story of salvation. Put differently, God's words that become present to believers in the Eucharist, are not only words of the God of this generation of believers, but also the God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah and Rachel, the God of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the God of David and Solomon, of Peter and Mary and Paul, and of every other believer in the centuries thereafter. In a similar way that the first audience of 1 Peter became part of God's story that began with Israel, believers today and their shattered stories become part of God's story, especially through the Eucharist. The words of Jesus' suffering make believers see that their daily, shattered lives are sacred lives that play a crucial role in God's story – believers are part of the chosen people of God (cf. 1 Peter 2) (Nouwen, 1996: 48).

"This is my body, this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28) – these are words that express Jesus' own shattered narrative. When Jesus said these words to his disciples before his crucifixion, Jesus acknowledged that his own words, his own body would be broken, and that it would be difficult for the disciples to give words to the events that would follow. In similar ways, the letter of 1 Peter gives words to the trauma and brokenness of its first audience. The words spoken in the Eucharist, likewise become the words of our own shattered lives. In terms of trauma, these words are not mere lifeless words that are spoken routinely. These are words that can bring life, hope and language back to believers who have lost life, and hope and language, as it is argued in chapter three in terms of 1 Peter.

In a sense, the Eucharist has the potential to break the silence and submissiveness associated with trauma – that may be caused by a lack of words. In the Eucharist one may realise that Jesus stands in solidarity with trauma humans experience, whether it is structural, personal, political, cultural, sexual or economic trauma, or the trauma of betrayal. This may be seen in analogy to what Peter tells his audience in 1 Peter 2:18–3:7. Many of these elements are intertwined in the crucifixion of Jesus and, may thus challenge and even shatter the silence that comes with trauma, because of the

words “this is my body, this is my blood” (Matthew 26:26-28). Trauma, anybody’s trauma, is reflected in the trauma of the cross, and this is brought to the fore in the Eucharist.

In the Eucharist and the community that is formed around this celebration, one is confronted with one’s losses and trauma. There is a rawness present in the Eucharist that invites believers to look deeper at their own suffering and trauma than just celebrating a meal together for the sake of togetherness.

Whilst the Eucharist may give words to believers’ trauma, the Eucharist also embodies trauma. In the Eucharist, strangers (in a sense) come together to think about the strangeness of Jesus’ body being broken. Participants of the Eucharist are strangers who are invited into Jesus’ house, to his table and meal, but also Jesus, the broken one, is invited to share at our houses, tables and meals. Jesus does not force himself onto participants in the Eucharist, but without an invitation for him to stay, he and his broken body will remain a stranger to us (Nouwen, 1996: 55). It is thus important to see this in light of Peter inviting his audience to look closer at the suffering Christ and how this theme may help to survive trauma.

Nouwen (1996: 60) rightly states that the Eucharist table is a place where participants connect with God and each other. Around the table believers may rediscover one another. It is a place where believers can pray together. It is a place where compassion is shown to one another. It is a place where believers eat and drink and remember together. Ultimately, it is a place where words are provided to share their trauma with each other, as well as the trauma of the one crucified. This is seen in analogy to 1 Peter where Peter urges his audience to face their trauma in community.

The Eucharist can be a place where unresolved traumas enter, where sin and injustice are mentioned, where, as Nouwen says, “plates and cups become instruments of violence.” The table is supposed to be a place of relationship, of mutuality and safety where bodies come together to share the brokenness of Jesus’ body where all members of the household of God come together. It is however, also a place where the absence of those relationships, where believers acknowledges one another’s pain and brokenness, is most painfully revealed (Nouwen, 1996: 60).

At the celebration of the Eucharist, the household of God comes together to share and remember not only Jesus’ suffering and death, but also their own and each other’s suffering and trauma. It is a vulnerable space to be in, precisely because one can become more aware of one’s own vulnerability and brokenness, as well as those of one’s neighbours and friends. In the Eucharist, the participants are vulnerable together with Christ. Although trauma has the potential to distort relationships – our relation to our own body and the bodies around us, the Eucharist gives space for bodies to acknowledge one another’s suffering, to name it and to comfort each another, knowing that Christ’s

body was broken in order for us to find healing and survive our trauma, in analogy to what 1 Peter suggests.

The BEM document describes the Eucharist as a memorial of Christ (*anamnesis*). The Eucharist is the memorial of the suffering and risen Christ. It is therefore, a living and effective sign of his sacrifice. Christ himself is present in this anamnesis, giving communion with himself – it is thus also a foretaste of this *parousia* and of the final kingdom, which 1 Peter also points to (cf. 1 Peter 1:13).<sup>201</sup> This meaning of the Eucharist also entails that God's mighty acts and promises are remembered, in a similar way as Peter stirs the memory of his audience by making use of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Eucharist is thus the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ, who lives to make intercession for us. It is a memorial of all that God has done for the salvation of the world. The events of the passion of Jesus are unique and cannot be repeated – this is not how Peter possibly intends his audience to follow in the example of Christ (as stated in chapter four). In the memorial of the Eucharist, the church offers its intercession in communion with Christ, our great High Priest (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 1982: 9).

The third building block of trauma theory used in this dissertation suggests that trauma distorts time and memory. The Eucharist is helpful in this sense as it can help traumatised believers cope by remembering Jesus' suffering, as well as God's faithfulness in the past. 1 Peter emphasises memory and identity frequently to remind the first audience of their identity and that they have become part of God's story with Israel. In the Eucharist, believers are reminded of belonging to the body of Christ and that Jesus himself knows and understands humanity's suffering.

Binsar Pakpahan (2017: 236) states that the act of remembering Jesus in the Eucharist is a demanding remembrance.<sup>202</sup> The demand is three-fold: Firstly, believers are asked to remember the suffering as *memoria passionis* (memory of the suffering of Christ). This is also our responsibility towards others. Secondly, believers are asked to love their neighbours who come to the table as a consequence of God's command that we love (as Peter also encourages his audience to love one another in 1:22 and 4:8). Thirdly, believers also ask God to remember them. Every time we remember Christ, believers demand that God remembers the coming of the fulfilment of God's promise. Through the Eucharist, Pakpahan argues, believers are offered a chance to change the meaning of our painful and traumatic memories and even to remember them peacefully.

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<sup>201</sup> Whether Christ is physically present in the Eucharist or whether his presence is seen spiritually, is not the question of this chapter. What is important is to realise that in the Eucharist, Christ's suffering and death is commemorated.

<sup>202</sup> Pakpahan is associate professor in Ethics, Philosophy and Social Theology at the Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia.

Marcia Mount Shoop and Mary McClintock-Fulkerson (2013: 145) state that traumatic memory can only give way to transformative memory when silence surrounding trauma is broken.<sup>203</sup> Thus, like the task of theology that seeks to assign language and description to God's work, any healing liturgy around trauma "exalts full definition and demands embodied recognition". The Eucharist can thus play a crucial role in making way for transformative memory – through facilitating mysteriously new ways of imagining ourselves, the faith community, and our identity and role in society. In this way, the affirmation that we belong, by remembering our own suffering, as well as that of Christ, has the potential to play a crucial role in coping with and surviving trauma. This is the argument of chapter four – that Peter describes ways for his audience to transform their memory in order for them to live in the midst and beyond trauma.

When it comes to the Eucharist, trauma and traumatic memory, it is important to emphasise the fact that the Eucharist constitutes a public remembrance of Jesus' suffering and death.<sup>204</sup> Jesus' trauma is remembered in community – the Eucharist takes place in a public space, such as a church building. Therefore, the community's trauma is also remembered and thought of in a public space. Even though individual trauma may be deeply private, such as those of slaves and wives in 1 Peter who are confined to the private spaces of the household, in a sense a public space puts it out in the open. This happens, since others in the community or the community as a whole are now experiencing that trauma collectively. Whilst sharing publicly in Jesus' suffering, when sharing the Eucharist, we also share in each other's trauma and therefore the Eucharist may help a faith community to cope with and survive trauma.

Shoop and McClintock-Fulkerson (2013: 152) state that remembering is an embodied dynamic. Faith communities come to the Eucharist to remember their story and to remember the body or household of Christ. This happens in the communal act of sharing, proclaiming, eating the bread and drinking the wine whilst participants lean on the mystery of God's transformative power to redeem and heal anything that is broken. Such communal memory and remembering have the power to form and transform. The liturgy surrounding the Eucharist reveals the "already" and the "not yet" of Christian community and identity. "Trauma reveals and conceals the unavoidable disruption, aspirational integration, and strange conflation of past, present, and future," Shoop and McClintock-Fulkerson argue (2013: 152).

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<sup>203</sup> Shoop is a pastor, theologian and author from Asheville and McClintock-Fulkerson is professor in Theology at Duke Divinity School, USA.

<sup>204</sup> Emmanuel David points out, as Judith Herman also said, that public remembering is an important process that helps traumatised persons to voice their suffering. However, public remembering is not only concerned with the past (as embodied in public memorials, museums or anniversaries), it also confronts urgent needs in the present, and influences conditions in the future (David, 2008: 138). Thus, the Eucharist is such an event that may help traumatised people voice their suffering.



In a context such as South Africa, where churches have been segregated along racial lines for many years, trauma can complicate the possibilities and pathways of healing in liturgical practices. Experiencing the Eucharist across such humanly devised lines may thus become a serial re-traumatising of communities that are cut off from one another in daily realities. These experiences are always unique to particular cultural contexts and experiences that inform individuals and communities, even as everyone experiences the same (external) dynamic. However, traumatic memory can only make way for transformative memory when we tell the truth about ourselves – even if the truth may be almost impossible to name and articulate. Truth-telling has the potential to make space for communal flexibility, imagination and connection between communities (Shoop & McClintock-Fulkerson, 2013: 153–154).

This may be seen, for example, where Peter addresses his audience as “resident aliens” (1:1) and where he states in 5:13 that he writes from “Babylon”. Peter states at the beginning and at the end of his letter the realities of his audience and himself. Chapter three argues that these communities lived in traumatic realities. The truth is being told. However, Peter’s truth-telling does not stop there. He also tells them the truth (as he sees it in their historical and rhetorical situations) that may transform them into living lives that reflects realities beyond trauma.

It is not only important to remember the past and to bring back memories of God’s faithfulness amidst traumatic stories, but also to engage in imagining the future. Imagining that the church is and can indeed be the holy people of God (1 Peter 2:9), the kingly priesthood, loving one another, serving one another in hospitality whilst witnessing their faith (in humility) towards the outside world. It is in togetherness – facing the trauma, giving (verbal and non-verbal) expression to trauma, sharing in one another’s suffering, even if we do not understand the other’s suffering – that church communities are invited to walk the path together that Jesus walked alone.

One may argue that this is the thrust of 1 Peter’s argument in terms of trauma theory; that the household of God is to love each other, respect each other, be hospitable towards each other, to see and vocalise each other’s suffering in order to communally survive and cope with trauma. The believer’s survival of trauma does not lie in suffering submissively alone in silence, but in a community where they can walk together. The fact that the church is the household of God, creates a togetherness and vulnerable space where believers today can share experiences with one another whilst partaking in the Eucharist where the aloneness and brokenness of Jesus’ suffering are remembered and celebrated.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> There is an incident that happened one Sunday in the congregation where I work part time, that I would like to emphasise at this point. One this particular Sunday, my colleague preached on compassion. At one point in the sermon, he turned to someone in the congregation, saying: “I could sympathise with the passing of your father and I can give you a hug, but when I just turn around and go on with my life, I am not showing compassion.” He went on with his sermon. When he turned away from the congregant, she started to cry. After

Delroy Hall rightly states that the Eucharist connects with human agony, not to affirm, justify or sacralise human suffering, but to acknowledge the existence of trauma and attempt to invalidate it by the participation and empowerment of those who participate in the Eucharist. This, I believe, is also the argument that 1 Peter attempts to make. By participating in the Eucharist and reflecting on the body of Christ, that was chosen, blessed, broken and shared for all, a new future becomes possible for the believing community (Hall, 2016: 232).

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

The reality of trauma is the following: It is not the wounds of death that mark the bodies of those who return; it is the wounds of life that surface on the skin of those who remain. Although time has passed, the wounds of trauma are still present. Trauma that surfaces and the wounds that are revealed, show that attention is not being given to them and this makes the traumatised person or group vulnerable (Rambo, 2017, intro.).

In baptism and the Eucharist, traumatised bodies can be vulnerable together. These sacraments have the potential to create vulnerable spaces – spaces where there are no place for arrogance, but where anxiety and trauma can be met and survived together (Koopman, 2013: 46). In baptism and the Eucharist, community is formed and the believing community shares in each other's trauma. Believers are reminded that they belong to the household of God, they remember the suffering and trauma of Christ and of each other, but that new life is possible even as believers live as strangers and foreigners in this world. One may also argue that the example of the suffering of Christ, as it is reflected in the Eucharist and baptism, is not held up (especially by 1 Peter) as a way to trap people into suffering submissively in silence. The fact that Christ suffered, opens new ways of dealing with trauma and suffering, especially in and through the sacraments.

The two sacraments have the potential to create spaces where believers may come together, to share their trauma, despite human-made walls. South African churches are in the unfortunate situation where the church is still divided. The Eucharist and baptism, however, have the potential to bring people from different backgrounds together, not necessarily to cure each other's trauma, but to create spaces where these traumas can be remembered, expressed if possible, and survived

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a few moments, he again turned in her direction and saw her crying. We also celebrated the Eucharist that morning. When it came to the moment in the service where the Eucharist was to be served, he asked me and this lady, who started to cry, and her husband, to come and sit at the table. My colleague had a good relationship with her, especially after the passing of her father, so he knew it would be fine to invite her to the table. Again, she started crying at the table. After the service, many other congregants came up to her to speak with her. After the service she sent a message to us saying that something in her mind and heart changed that morning whilst partaking in the Eucharist. She was traumatised by her father's death, even though he was already an elderly man, and she was angry with herself that she could not help her father to escape death. However, when she ate the bread and drank the wine, she felt peace and that she could let go of her anger and look beyond her trauma. This incident illustrates something of what I attempt to argue in this chapter.

together. If churches in South Africa take 1 Peter's message seriously, we will look for opportunities to create communion with each other – even if it seems impossible in human terms.

In analogy to what Peter tells his first audience, the church and believers in South Africa today need to know to whom they belong, but also to carry the new life that has been given to them to others, even if it is painful and sometimes traumatising. This may be a way of dealing with the submissive silent acceptance of suffering and trauma in South Africa where believers may use tools already available, such as the Eucharist and baptism, to create and nurture new possibilities. The reality of the suffering of Jesus survives through the tangible signs of baptism and the Eucharist. It helps the church to remember the reality that 1 Peter is pointing to.

Ultimately, 1 Peter points to the transforming potential of the cross, which is recognised in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. I find that 1 Peter tries to address the question of how a Jesus follower may survive trauma, if trauma is a wound that does not heal over time and shatters one's life narrative into pieces. In baptism and the Eucharist, the transformative potential of the cross stands central. Firstly, the cross and the suffering of Jesus does not ignore the possibility and reality of trauma. Trauma is embedded in the suffering of Jesus Christ. Instead, the crucifixion of Christ looks trauma in the eye and confronts it whole heartedly.

Secondly, the cross confronts the reality of death as Jesus dies having suffered immense trauma in the process. Going through death, Jesus as the Christ confronts life in the face of death, namely the effects of trauma and trying to survive and cope with traumatic experiences. In the Gospel narratives documenting Jesus' suffering and death, it seems as if death has the last word. However, the resurrection of Jesus testifies to life in the face of death, that death may be overcome. Therefore, thirdly, one's own life and trauma are placed in a different perspective. Life may never be the same because of trauma, but there is life after trauma, life where there is hope, as 1 Peter testifies.

Lastly, faith and faithfully mimicking Jesus, are seen from a different angle because of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Jesus suffers out of love and not to be a martyr. This is also not what 1 Peter is expecting of the audience and believers today. We are not to be believers who seek martyrdom, but to follow the example of Christ in his life and ministry, even in the face of trauma. For it may be overcome, because of the transformative potential of the cross of Jesus Christ.

A recommendation that can be made from this chapter, is to do further research on how, from a systematic or pragmatic point of view, the survival of trauma by means of the sacraments, works in practice. Empirical research on this topic may prove to be helpful and go further than the scope of this chapter and dissertation. In the following chapter, the conclusion to this study will be presented.

## 6. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS TO AN ONGOING JOURNEY

Many conclusions may be derived from a study such as this. However, the road of trauma is an ongoing journey, as the title of the chapter suggests. It is one that is never completed. It is one that is never really concluded. This chapter is, therefore, considered to be the concluding chapter of the dissertation, yet preliminary in terms of the reality of trauma and the place of trauma studies in biblical hermeneutics.

In light of the previous paragraph, the following may be taken into consideration. Firstly, trauma does not ask for easy answers when facing life's toughest questions. The reality of trauma asks for an ongoing journey, for continuous wrestling with it, but also for a perspective that sees the possibilities of life after trauma. Trauma may scar a person or a group for life, yet at the same time calls for ways to live life after trauma, even in the face of ongoing trauma or death. This also seems to be the message of 1 Peter.

Secondly, trauma shatters the narratives of people (cf. chapter two of the study). According to 1 Peter, trauma shattered the narratives of early Jesus followers who experienced trauma because of their identity as followers of a man whom they claimed to be Lord, but who died the death of a slave. These believers – scattered across western Asia Minor – received a letter intended to help them cope with and survive their trauma (cf. dissertation chapters three and four). Trauma likewise shatters the narratives of traumatised believers in South Africa who struggle to cope with remnants of the past that influence their present (cf. dissertation chapters one and five). Trauma shatters the lives of battered women told that they should suffer in silence whilst submitting to their husbands (as some interpret 1 Peter 3:1-7). Trauma shatters the lives of people pushed out of church and society because of their social status, race, gender, disability, or being foreigners (even though Peter writes to “elected strangers”). The shattering effects of trauma often silence people, let them suffer alone, and subsequently lead to feelings of hopelessness. However, even if life after trauma is not the same as before, this space invites people to opt for life-giving perspectives that may help to make life more bearable.

Thirdly, trauma submits time and memory to an unclear past that comes back to haunt the future, and often silence victims to such an extent that they struggle to speak about it, and let them suffer distorted relationships with themselves and the social groups they belong to. The unsettling thing about trauma is its “double structure” (discussed in chapter two): An event that happened in the past comes back to haunt a person or a group time and again. It blurs minds, unsettles words and communication, and uncomfortably isolates and alienates individuals or communities.

In the fourth place, however, even though trauma may haunt a person or group for the rest of their lives, trauma can be survived and coped with. Chapters four and five of the study attempted to describe how Peter uses coping strategies to motivate his audience, and also in what ways coping strategies such as baptism and the Eucharist may be utilised by present-day believers to cope with trauma. There is hope, and sometimes it takes someone from outside a community to point out a rhetorical situation (cf. chapter three) in order for the traumatised to cope with and survive that trauma.

This study is an attempt to show how biblical texts such as 1 Peter may be read as documents reflecting and responding to situations of trauma. The argument of the dissertation is that such texts have to be read multidimensionally – both exegetically and in terms of the interdisciplinary theoretical framework that it proposes.

The title of the study, namely “Suffering, Submission, Silence? Rereading 1 Peter through a lens of trauma”, reflects the multidimensionality of its methodology and theoretical framework. The text of 1 Peter is exegeted by means of a multidimensional exegesis in chapter three where textual, historical and rhetorical aspects are examined to test the hypothesis (cf. chapter one) that 1 Peter needs to be read as a text reflecting trauma. The concepts of “suffering”, “submission” and “silence” appear in the letter, and if not read multidimensionally, can easily be mistaken for being enforced onto the first audience (as well as later audiences). The question mark in the title indicates that “suffering”, “submission” and “silence” is not all that can be said about 1 Peter as a whole. The methodology of the project attempts to look “behind” the layers of the three worlds of the text in order to see which alternatives interpretations may exist (cf. chapter four).

Trauma theory as theoretical framework of the study challenges the title “Suffering, Submission, Silence?” From the lens of trauma appropriated in the study, trauma theory analyses what trauma imposes on traumatised people, yet resists the notion that trauma has the final say (if one looks carefully at 1 Peter and the coping strategies suggested in the letter). The title also points to the multidimensionality of trauma – that trauma affects multiple areas of individuals’ and groups’ lives. Yet the question mark points to the possibility that trauma does not have the final say, but that life after trauma is possible (as argued in chapters four and five). Rereading 1 Peter from a lens of trauma suggests that a specific framework is placed on the text, a framework that is reflected in the text (as I became convinced of). As a biblical scholar and pastor who wishes to take hermeneutics seriously, I am convinced that biblical texts have much to offer to believing people who are struggling to survive in a traumatised and traumatising world.

To look deeper into the question and issue that the title of the dissertation poses, the following major research question is formulated in chapter one: *How can 1 Peter be read from a 21<sup>st</sup> century*

*perspective, so as to respect its nature and purpose as an ancient canonised text?* To further examine this question and to frame it within the scope of the study, chapter two discusses the theoretical framework and methodology of the study and their relation to one another. The first aspect addressed in this chapter, is definitions of trauma. The definition given by Gobodo-Madikizela and Van der Merwe (2007) were found to be most useful. Trauma shatters narratives and life can never be the same. Different causes of trauma contribute to the shattering of people's narratives. The effect of trauma is that it blurs lines. It is life in the face of death. And it does not go away.

The second aspect addressed in this chapter, is a brief history of trauma studies, how it came about and how it developed – also in biblical studies. Then trauma theory and the connection with 1 Peter are discussed. The argument of the study is that 1 Peter reflects a situation of trauma – it is a text that witnesses to trauma and invites a response to it. Trauma theory exposes certain “hidden” dimensions of texts – it tracks that which may evade interpretation. Trauma theory asks different questions to texts, it gives a different frame of reference. The readers are in a sense compelled to read between the lines, because texts do not provide all the information needed (also in the case of 1 Peter).

The study's theoretical framework and methodology are subsequently discussed as conversation partners. Trauma affects all aspects of life and is thus multidimensional in nature. It is, therefore, also important to read 1 Peter multidimensionally, as trauma requires from readers to look deeper and at different aspects, from different angles. All we have is the text of 1 Peter, which only partially reflects the lives of Jesus followers who have been shattered by trauma. Thus, Rambo's basic building blocks of trauma theory, namely that trauma alters word, body and time act as the theoretical framework of this study. Multidimensional exegesis, focusing on the literary, social and rhetorical aspects of 1 Peter functions as the methodology of the study. The theoretical framework and methodology is chosen as such, as they need to act as conversation partners in order to read 1 Peter as a trauma text.

Together with the main research question, there are ten sub questions that stem from this question within the methodological and theoretical framework of the study. Questions one to three, as well as seven and eight, are mainly examined in chapter three. This chapter contains an exegetical study of 1 Peter in search of trauma narrative(s). In other words, this chapter's objective is to see, through a multidimensional exegesis intertwined with the theoretical framework, whether 1 Peter can be read from a trauma perspective and whether any prominent (and perhaps new) strategies and themes would emerge from it. The findings of this chapter are that 1 Peter can indeed be read from a trauma perspective as a text reflecting a traumatic situation.

This may firstly be seen from a literary point of view. In this section of the chapter, different literary aspects were attended to. The genre of 1 Peter may be considered as a letter that is “naming”, that is language to traumatic experiences. Rhetorical strategies, God images, evidence of traumatic language (such as the different terms used for “suffering” and eschatological language) and honour and shame language are aspects that were focused on.

Secondly, from a socio-historical perspective it was seen that the historical situation of the first audience of 1 Peter reflects trauma. Firstly, attention was given to the authorship, date and identity of the first recipients. For the argument of the study, the author is referred to as “Peter” and the letter is considered to have been written between 64 and 80 CE. According to Jobes, the audience represented, people who probably have been relocated from their homeland to another province. They could have experienced trauma – as “strangers and exiles”, but also because of their Christian identity. Secondly, attention was given to the probable influence of the Roman Empire on people’s everyday functioning. It was established that daily life of many people in the Empire may have been traumatic because of systems that were in place, the values that were upheld, and how people were treated.

Another important part of this section, is where specific events that might have caused trauma to the first audience, were investigated. Jesus’ crucifixion, the expulsions of Jews and Christians from Rome, the great fire of Rome, the Jewish war and expulsion from the synagogues might have caused trauma to these early Jesus followers. Anti-Christian prejudice and conflict in the Empire where believers were subjected to slander, verbal and physical abuse and economic oppression, probably caused severe trauma to these believers. This part of the chapter argued that sporadic persecution and violence that these Jesus believers faced, as well as life in the Empire and social hostility, were repeating the events surrounding the cross of Jesus. Believers remembered and retold the story of their founder who suffered the worst death inflicted by the Roman Empire, and who survived it.

Thirdly, from a rhetorical perspective, it can yet again be argued that 1 Peter reflects a trauma situation. First, the “rhetorical situation” of 1 Peter was reflected on. The argument here is that the first audience was experiencing trauma in their “historical situation”. The rhetorical situation was constructed in this section by using Rambo’s basic building blocks of a trauma theory. 1 Peter makes use of rhetorical strategies to address the rhetorical situation, also to give the first audience alternative perspectives on their situation. Second, a history of reception was constructed – a history that does not necessarily reflect reading 1 Peter from a trauma perspective, although there is some emphasis on the suffering of Christ. Lastly, three themes or strategies were identified as alternative perspectives. These are discussed in chapter four of the study.



Sub questions four, five and six are the subject matter of chapter four. The emphasis of chapter four is to discuss the coping strategies identified in chapter three, how 1 Peter employs them. First, the term “coping” is defined as discussed in relation to trauma theory. It was established that people (and in the case of the dissertation, believers) tend to cope with what they have available. The argument of this chapter is that 1 Peter’s audience is suffering because of their identity – that is, their faith in the suffering and crucified Christ. 1 Peter utilises the example of Jesus’ suffering, along with the Hebrew Scriptures and reference to their identity and ethos, as coping strategies in the letter. The discussion of these strategies forms the core of the chapter, especially by making suggestions as to how the author might have wanted to change the perspectives of the audience, amidst their trauma.

Later in chapter four, the particular situation of slaves and wives in the first audience were discussed, also referring to the dangerous or risky side of these strategies. The emphasis here is on what these slaves and wives could have heard when they listened to the words of the letter. Two statements are important here: Firstly, the notion that God, having suffered and is suffering *with* the traumatised believers, does not deny the reality of suffering or reprimand people for their suffering. God, in Christ’s suffering, suffers with those experiencing trauma. A second aspect concerns the notion that some statements in the letter (such as imperatives towards slaves and wives regarding suffering, submission and silence) falls hard on 21<sup>st</sup> century ears. However, it seems to be precisely those things that might have helped the first audience, especially slaves and wives, to negotiate their situation in order to cope with their trauma.

Chapter five focused on sub questions nine and ten as stated in chapter one. Chapter five rereads 1 Peter in view of traumatised believers in South Africa today. Emphasis is placed on community and the experience of facing trauma collectively – as discussed in chapters three and four. The question is asked whether 1 Peter has something to say to 21<sup>st</sup> century (Christian) believers living in South Africa, whose lives are shattered by trauma. The chapter’s argument is that 1 Peter analogously also provide coping strategies for such contexts. The sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are discussed as possible coping strategies for believers today. This is also done in order to reach out to each other and other church communities. These are tools already available to them (as chapter four explains).

Baptism in 1 Peter is referred to explicitly, whilst the Eucharist is only referred to implicitly. However, these two sacraments are both embedded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The rest of the chapter explains in what ways baptism and the Eucharist may help traumatised believers survive their situations and cope with their trauma. These suggestions are made with the theoretical framework of the study in mind, namely that trauma alters word, body and time.

Taking into account the methodology and theoretical framework appropriated in the study, I am convinced that the hypothesis, as stated in chapter one, suggested a constructive response to the research problem. Multidimensional exegesis, in tandem with the three basic building blocks of trauma theory, has helped to see that 1 Peter reflects a situation of trauma, and that the author of 1 Peter provides alternative perspectives to his audience. This dynamic points in a direction of coping strategies that present-day churches in South Africa may use likewise towards surviving their trauma.

The most fundamental question of the dissertation is the following: Does life after trauma have the potential to become “improved life”? The study argues, in light of chapters four and five, that life can indeed become improved life after trauma. Trauma can be survived and coped with. This is probably the radical alternative that 1 Peter invites his readers to realise (cf. 1:3). The tension may still be there: On the one hand, there is trauma that may come back time and again, to distort relationships and language. On the other hand, audiences from 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Asia Minor and 21<sup>st</sup> century South Africa witness to the reality of faith that trauma can be coped with and survived.

1 Peter places great emphasis on hope, which is characteristic of (Christian) trauma literature. If the Christian faith would not be able to offer hope and give guidance in times of utter distress and trauma, what would be the sense of believing at all? The hope that this letter talks about emphasises identity. It goes to the centre of faith that springs from the suffering Christ, being part of God’s story with Israel, where Christian believers get their identity from, even as “chosen strangers”. This is the thrust of 1 Peter – that there is hope and an alternative, amidst suffering, submission and silence.

In this dissertation, especially in chapters two and three, the implications of trauma on individuals and communities are spelled out. Peter wants his audience to know what trauma does *not* do. Even though memory can become distorted and twisted, trauma cannot take away identity, or tradition. It cannot change the fact that God had compassion for the world and that God transcended boundaries of time and space to become human. Even though the first audience lived in the Roman Empire that used fear to keep citizens intact, the trauma of their daily reality could not cause them finally to lose their identity and hope. Trauma does not change the possibility of hope, of survival, of seeing the suffering of Jesus, and of being transformed by the realisation that Christ had become human, also in suffering.

Trauma can do many things, but it cannot reduce identity and it cannot nullify Jesus’ suffering. Jesus’ crucifixion, for Peter, becomes the final reality that he reminds his audience of. With the use of metaphors such as temple and household, Peter refers to the reality that God’s presence became visible in Jesus. Jesus is the new temple and household of God, showing compassion for those suffering and being treated unjustly. That is exactly where the power of a metaphor lies – in its reference. God raised Jesus from the dead as the new temple and household making it possible for

all human boundaries to fall away. Even though there were paradoxes and suffering involved with God becoming human, this points to the heart of God. Therefore, the possibility of endurance amidst suffering, that is also prevalent in other General Epistles such as James, becomes possible through the presence of Godself amidst trauma.

This also the mystery that 1 Peter is dealing with. This community's hope is not only hope for the future. 1 Peter spells it out. This eschatological hope is a present reality, and therefore it is possible to survive trauma. It is possible, because Jesus survived the cross. This event was traumatic and horrifying, but the instrument of shame that the Romans used to terrorise people, became a symbol of hope through the resurrected Christ and history of the Christian church. Therefore, believers today use the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist to remember Jesus' suffering, but also to acknowledge the transforming power of Jesus' suffering.

To bring this chapter to a preliminary conclusion, I would like to use the metaphor of a book I read recently, which was also made into a film – *Wonder* (Palacio, 2012). This is a fascinating story about a boy, whose narrative and those of his family members, were shattered by trauma at his birth. Auggie (August) Pullman was born with a rare condition called "Treacher Collins Syndrome", which causes facial deformities. He had various surgeries in order for him to hear, see and look more "normal". His parents, especially his mother, put their lives (and the completion of her master's thesis) on hold to take care of him. His older sister, Olivia, loves her little brother, but is irritated by the lack of attention that she is having in the household.

The day comes when Auggie can no longer be home schooled by his mother. On his first day of school, as he walks to class, his mother's words are (in the film): "Please dear God, let them be nice to him". Auggie's condition traumatises himself, but also others around him, to a certain extent. When he feels sad, lonely or frustrated, he puts his space helmet over his head and sometimes, especially in school and when people are rude to him, he dreams of being in outer space. This is also one of the reasons why he loves Halloween – he can be like everyone else whilst wearing a costume where nobody can recognise him. The playing field is levelled and he feels and looks like everyone else.

Auggie makes some friends along the way, but there is a boy named Julian in his class, who is always bullying him. One day, Julian and Auggie's friend, Jack Will, gets into a fight over Julian's bullying and their teacher, Mr. Brown, reports it to the headmaster of the school, Mr. Tushman. Mr. Tushman calls in Julian's parents who tries to defend their child, who "did not know what he was doing." It becomes clear that Julian has bullied Auggie with dozens of notes and pictures, as well as verbal abuse – repeating Auggie's trauma over and over again. There is a profound moment in the film where Mr. Tushman tells Julian and his parents: [A]uggie cannot change the way he looks. So, maybe we can change the way we see" (in the book, this problem is resolved via email).

This is a story about trauma coming into the lives of a family – everyday life is turned upside down by a traumatising birth and life that is lived in the face of death (that shows up in many forms such as alienation, loneliness and hopelessness). Analogous to the lives of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jesus followers in Asia Minor and South African believers trying to negotiate different empires and realities, stands the shattered narrative of Auggie Pullman that asks of others “to change the way they see”. The trauma of the audience of 1 Peter, 21<sup>st</sup> century South African believers and that of Auggie did not necessarily go away. However, similar to what Mr. Tushman tells Julian about changing his perspective on this boy, is what the author of 1 Peter tells 1<sup>st</sup> century CE believers. Their circumstances might never change, but there are alternative perspectives and ways to look at their trauma. There are ways to look beyond the trauma, and see life as God intends for them.

1 Peter brings in the shattered narrative of Jesus Christ to illustrate this in profound ways. They, the audience, belong to God, who bridged all borders possible to become human and to suffer with them, in order for them to have life (even after trauma). Even as a traumatised slave or wife facing abuse. Christ laid down everything for them to speak, humbly, about the hope that lives within them, even when they may struggle for words, even if the traumatic memories haunt them, even when they feel alone and isolated.

How did Auggie survive his ordeals and cope with his trauma? With the help of his imagination (providing him with alternative perspectives on himself and in the process on others as well), and the support of his family, friends and teachers. The Eucharist and baptism draws in present-day South African believers to believe that there are alternatives, especially in facing trauma together. First Peter situates community at the centre of the letter by using temple imagery, household and family language to express identity. However, 1 Peter places the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus at the centre of it. This is the key of 1 Peter’s message to trauma: It can be survived in community by trusting the One who came and suffered for humanity and with humanity, and by following his example together, even though endurance because of suffering is complex.

In the final analysis, this study has transformed my life, my understanding and service in church ministry, and being a believer in the crucified and risen Christ. Ironically, I wrote the dissertation in one of the most traumatising times of my life (specifically regarding ministry). I slowly started to make connections between the trauma I was experiencing and what I was writing in my dissertation. I did not know, and could not anticipate when I started the project, that it would have this effect on me, as well as how my surroundings and experience of trauma would impact my study. In a sense, this study represents my (ongoing) journey with trauma, that I did not see coming, but that I am extremely grateful for. This may be the end of my PhD dissertation, but it is not the end of what I have learned thus far and I hope that in a few years’ time, when I read my PhD dissertation again, I will be excited and inspired by it, even more than I am now.

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## ADDENDUM A – DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER

### A.1 INTRODUCTION

In the discourse analysis of 1 Peter that will be presented in the following section of this chapter, the following aspects will be focused on: (1) demarcation of the pericope, (2) metaphors and citations from the Hebrew Scriptures, and (3) rhetorical strategies present in the text.<sup>206</sup> The purpose of this section is to point out the rhetorical strategies that the author utilised, bearing in mind that this will be important when discussing the pragmatic aspects, including the rhetorical situation, of the text. In terms of the form of words that will be used; nouns, pronouns, et cetera will appear in their nominative form and verbs will appear in the praesens indicative active 1<sup>st</sup> person singular. However, if the syntactical use of a word is to be emphasised, it will appear as in the text. Phrases that are used will appear as they are in the text of 1 Peter.

### A.2 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

#### A.2.1 1 Peter 1:1-2

This opening pericope can be regarded as the greeting of the letter. The sender, Πέτρος, identifies himself in 1:1 as ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The addressees are identified as the ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς – already establishing their identity as “elected” (a theme the author elaborates on later in the letter). Consequently, the author specifies to which “elected strangers/exiles/aliens of the diaspora” he is writing to: Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ἀσίας καὶ Βιθυνίας. It is not clear whether διασπορά is referring to a place or region (then the genitive functions as a genitive of place) or whether it refers to people (then the genitive functions as an epexegetical genitive) (Dubis, 2010: 2).

In 1:2 the author then qualifies what he means with “elected strangers/exiles”. There are three prepositional phrases that modifies ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς in 1:1 (Dubis, 2010: 3). They are chosen by God the Father, to be obedient to Jesus Christ through the sanctification of the Spirit and to be sprinkled by the blood of Christ. This is followed by a further greeting that is prevalent in Paul’s letters: “Grace and peace to you in abundance”. χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη is fronted for

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<sup>206</sup> The Greek text that is used in this addendum is the Nestle-Aland nr 27. The English translation provided will be in some cases a direct translation of the Greek or reference to the New Revised Standard Version. Mark Dubis’ *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (2010) will also be consulted in regard to the discourse analysis.

emphasis. The optative *πληθυνθείη* indicates degrees of comparison and God is the implicit subject.<sup>207</sup> The optative is typically found in prayers in the New Testament (Dubis, 2010: 3)

In the first pericope of 1 Peter, the author follows a typical epistolary form. It is evident that the author is not writing to any exiles or strangers in the diaspora, but specific people, in a specific geographical area, with specific needs. The author identifies himself as being an apostle of Jesus Christ and thereby he is stating that this letter that is written to these believers, is written with authority.<sup>208</sup> Already in the beginning of the letter, the author wants to emphasise the audience's identity in Christ as the "elect", as well the reason why they are the elect of God.

1:2 is a clear marker of the end of the greeting of the letter and in 1:3 a new theme is introduced.

### A.2.2 1 Peter 1:3-12

1:3 starts with a new theme, where the author in the first place brings glory to God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given the recipients a living hope. This is done through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The phrase *εἰς ἐλπίδα ζώσαν* establishes the aim of God's actions. There is a contrast in this verse regarding the words *ἀναγεννήσας*, *εἰς ἐλπίδα ζώσαν δι' ἀναστάσεως* and *νεκρῶν*.

1:4 explains on what the recipients may have a living hope: Firstly, on an inheritance (*κληρονομία*) that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (*ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμόραντον*). These three words entail assonance and they form a doublet or a triplet.<sup>209</sup> This triplet adds rhetorical emphasis to emphasise the perfection of the inheritance. And second, the inheritance is kept in heaven for the recipients – adding to the idea that the inheritance is imperishable.

The word *φρουρουμένους* in 1:5 is a passive participle that has God as the implied agent. This verse stresses the idea that not only is the recipients' inheritance kept in heaven, but also they are being held safe by the power of God through faith for/with the aim of salvation (*διὰ πίστεως εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐτοίμην*). There are also reference to eschatological notions at the end of this verse *ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ*.

1:6 begins with *ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*, which mood is indicative, but it is used imperatively to give an exhortation to the recipients. The grounds of the rejoicing that the recipients must experience, is

<sup>207</sup> The optative appears frequently in prayers in the New Testament, as is the case here (Dubis, 2010: 4).

<sup>208</sup> Cf. footnote 139 on "authority".

<sup>209</sup> Dubis (2010: 7) explains that a doublet exists of two or more words or constructions, which appear together. They can be redundant and so for translation purpose, they may be reduced as a single term. The function of a doublet is to add emphasis to what the author is saying. A doublet or a triplet contains synonyms.

found in 1:5. In this verse, the first reference to trials (πειρασμός) in 1 Peter is made. The “now” (ἄρτι) of the recipients is contrasted with “in the last time” in 1:5 (Dubis, 2010: 9–10).

ἵνα in 1:7 gives the reason for the various trials (ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς) in 1:6. ἵνα and the subjunctive εὐρεθῇ expresses reason. In this verse, a comparison is found between faith that is more precious than gold (ὕμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσίου). The phrase ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου appears to be a rare construction that is a stylistic characteristic of 1 Peter (it is also found in 1 Pet. 2:10). This is an uncommon construction in which a single article modifies two participles that are joined by δέ. In 1:7 there are also allusions to three texts from the Hebrew Scriptures namely Job 23:10, Psalms 66:10 and Proverbs 17:3 (Dubis, 2010: 13).

The word ὅς in 1:8 is fronted for emphasis. The first two phrases in this verse is almost identical. Each one contains ὅς, followed by οὐκ or μὴ, in turn followed by two verbs. The switch of the negatives here may also be for rhetorical purposes (Dubis, 2010: 15). A chiasm is also visible: (a) ἀγαπᾶτε, (b) ὀρῶντες (b) πιστεύοντες (a) ἀγαλλιᾶσθε. The phrase ἀνεκκλήτω καὶ δεδοξασμένη form a doublet, emphasising the recipients’ joy (Dubis, 2010: 16). 1:9 then qualifies 1:8 by stating the reason for this joy – “the salvation of your souls” (τῆς πίστεως [ὕμῶν] σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν). Dubis (2010: 17) states that ψυχή is not to be understood to reflect Greek dualism between the soul and the body, but it must be seen in the Hebraic sense of the word referring to the whole person.

In 1:10 there is a reference to the prophets from the Hebrew Scriptures who prophesied about the salvation in 1:9. περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν is fronted for emphasis, as well as εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος. A doublet is seen in this verse: ἐξεζήτησαν and ἐξηραύνησαν. There are also two examples of poliptoton:<sup>210</sup> Firstly, σωτηρίαν in 1:9 and σωτηρίας in 1:10. Secondly, προφηῆται and προφητεύσαντες.

1:11 elaborates on the previous verse. Here, there is an allusion to Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. There is an example of poliptoton in the words Χριστοῦ and Χριστόν. The word δόξα appears ten times in 1 Peter, but it is only here that it is used in the plural form (Dubis, 2010: 20). In 1:6 the word πειρασμός was used to describe various trials. πάθημα is here used to describe “suffering”. The phrase εἰς Χριστόν expresses reason by modifying παθήματα.

<sup>210</sup> “Poliptoton” can be defined as a repetition of the same stem in different forms to bring a rhetorical effect about (Thom, 2010: 4).

The last verse in this pericope, 1:12, starts with οἷς that is fronted for emphasis. There are a few negative-positive constructions present in 1 Peter.<sup>211</sup> In this case, οὐχ ... δὲ organises the negative-positive construction in which the negative clause οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς (διηκόνουν) stresses the positive clause ὑμῖν ... διηκόνουν, introduced by δὲ. The pericope ends here, because verse 13 introduces the next step in the argument of 1 Peter.

### A.2.3 1 Peter 1:13-25

Verses 1:1-12 give the motivational grounds for what the author is going to say next in 1:13-25. The word διὸ introduces the next step in the argument, as well a new theme. The participles in this verse are used imperatively. There is also a chiasm present in 1:13: (a) ἀναζωσάμενοι (b) τὰς ὁσφύας (b) τῆς διανοίας (a) νήφοντες.

1:14 starts with an explanation of the way in which the audience is supposed to act: ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς. ὡς appears twenty seven times in 1 Peter.<sup>212</sup> There is also a contrast present between 1:14 and 1:15, where the “former desires” is contrasted with “holiness”. Dubis (2010: 25) identifies the words τέκνα ὑπακοῆς as a Semitism.

1:15 starts with ἀλλὰ providing the contrast to 1:14 and explaining the non-action of 1:14. Here is an example of poliptoton in ἅγιον and ἅγιοι. καὶ αὐτοὶ, that is fronted for emphasis, functions to help the recipients to make the connection between the holiness of God and the holiness that they are urged to display. 1:15 is followed by 1:16 that contains a quotation from Leviticus 19:2. This quotation is introduced by διότι, which is a marker used to indicate why the previous statement can be considered as valid.<sup>213</sup> γέγραπται is used as part of the introductory formula with [ὅτι] to introduce direct speech. Verse 15 and 16 echoes what the author says in 1:2 about being sanctified by the Spirit.

In 1:17, εἰ is placed in front for emphasis. There are allusions to Psalm 89:27, Isaiah 64:8, and Jeremiah 3:19. Ὁ παροικία brings 1:1 to mind. A chiasm adds to the rhetorical strategy of this verse:

<sup>211</sup> Dubis (2010: 20) explains that negative-positive constructions involve a negative phrase or clause that serves as a foil for a positive phrase or clause (that is introduced normally by δέ or ἀλλά). Thus, the function of the negative aspect is to emphasise the positive element.

<sup>212</sup> ὡς is employed in four ways in 1 Peter. 1. It introduces a comparative clause (2:2, 12, 25; 3:6; 4:11 (2 times), 12; 5:8); 2. To introduce a comparative phrase (1:19, 24 (2 times)); 3. To identify the capacity or role in which someone acts (1:14; 2:5, 11, 13, 14, 16 (3 times), 3:7 (2 times); 4:10, 15 (2 times), 16); and 4. To introduce other semantic relationships (such as manner in 5:3 and standard in 5:12) (Dubis, 2010: 24).

<sup>213</sup> In all three instances in 1 Peter where διότι appears, it is used to introduce an Old Testament quotation (1:24 and 2:6 as well) (Dubis, 2010: 28).



(a) ἐπικαλεῖσθε (b) τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον (b) τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν (a) ἀναστράφητε. The phrase ἐν φόβῳ is also fronted for emphasis.

1:18 picks up on the idea of 1:4-5 about the recipients' inheritance, but here it is used to refer to the "futile ways inherited from your ancestors" (ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαράδοτου). The participle εἰδότες introduces motivational grounds for the preceding imperative ἀναστράφητε in 1:17. Silver and gold is being compared to perishable things, in contrast to what is said in 1:19. Between 1:18 and 1:19 there is a negative-positive construction marked by οὐ ... ἀλλὰ.

1:19 is contrasted to 1:18 by the negative-positive construction and the emphasis is placed on the actions of Christ. Here, Christ is compared to a lamb that has no defect or blemish. The author is again utilising a concept from the Hebrew Scriptures in a new way. This verse echoes 1:2, where both mentions Christ's blood and the sprinkling of blood (1:2). There is a wonderful example of assonance here: ἀλλὰ ... αἷματι ... ἁμνοῦ ἁμώμου καὶ ἁσπίλου Χριστοῦ. The phrase ἁμώμου καὶ ἁσπίλου functions as a doublet that emphasises the lamb's perfection. It could be shortened in translation to "completely unblemished" (Dubis, 2010: 32–33).

1:20 contains for the second time in chapter one an eschatological reference. Μὲν introduces only part of the story, the rest will follow after δὲ (Dubis, 2010: 33). The two clauses in 1:20 thus stand in contrast. 1:21 builds on 1:20, but here the resurrection of Christ, mentioned in 1:3, is repeated. αὐτοῦ is placed in front for emphasis. A chiasm is seen here: (a) ἐγείραντα (b) αὐτὸν (b) αὐτῷ (a) δόντα.

The theme of obedience that is mentioned in 1:2 is reflected in 1:22 again. An exhortation to love one another is given here to the recipients. εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον provides the reason or purpose for the previous phrase. 1:23 contains a negative-positive construction by means of οὐκ ... ἀλλὰ. The word σπορά is only found here in the New Testament. Here is an example of paronomasia: φθαρτῆς and ἀφθάρτου. The words (a) ἀναγεγεννημένοι (b) σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς (b) ἀφθάρτου (a) ζῶντος form a chiasm within this verse. The phrase ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος can be considered as a doublet emphasising λόγου (Dubis, 2010: 39).

Διότι again introduces a quotation from Isaiah 40:6-8. There is a contrast visible between 1:24 and 1:25, where humanity's fleetingness is compared to the steadfastness of "the word of the Lord". A comparison is made where "all flesh" is compared to grass and wild flowers. A chiasm is also seen: (a) ἐξηράνθη (b) ὁ χόρτος (b) τὸ ἄνθος (a) ἐξέπεσεν. In the second clause of 1:25 the word ῥῆμα

is used and repeats the use of the word in the quotation for rhetorical effect. Τοῦτο is placed in front for emphasis. The next pericope focus on a new theme where the recipients are urged to growth and up building of their community.

Robert Cavin (2013: 49) suggests that εὐαγγελίζω forms a structural element in chapter one of 1 Peter.

1:3 – 9 *Inclusio*: “born anew” (ἀναγεννάω)

1:10 – 12	A	σωτηρία (1:10); τῶν εὐαγγελισμένων (1:12)
1:13 – 17	B	Believers’ behaviour – call to holiness
1:18 – 21	A	‘Encapsulated summary of ‘salvation’
1:22	B’	Believers’ behaviour – call to holiness
1:23 – 25	A”	Salvation as τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθέν (1:25)

1:23 *Inclusio*: “born anew” (ἀναγεννάω)

#### A.2.4 1 Peter 2:1-10

In the new pericope, at the beginning of chapter two, the author urges the recipients to lay the previous things down on the grounds of what has been said. The phrase ἀποθέμενοι οὖν is an indication of this. The participle ἀποθέμενοι takes the imperatival force of the main verb in 1:2, namely ἐπιποθήσατε (Dubis, 2010: 42). The vice list that the author employs here is presented in the plural form. Dubis (2010: 43) argues that the author wants to emphasise the many sins or vices that need to be layed off. Here is also an example of poliptoton by means of πᾶσαν ... πάντα ... πάσας.

2:2 starts with the comparison ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, which is fronted as a comparative frame. The phrase τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα is fronted for emphasis. The preposition ἵνα and the subjunctive αὐξηθῆτε expresses purpose for the imperative ἐπιποθήσατε. The purpose for this “longing” is growth into salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν) (Dubis, 2010: 43). In 2:3 there is a direct quotation from Psalm 34:9. The metaphor of milk that the author uses in 2:2 only involves taste. The author thus omits the LXX’s additional phrase “and see”. Dubis (2010: 45) argues that χρηστός may be a wordplay on Χριστός, especially when it would be read aloud.

The structure of 2:4-10, as suggested by Jobes (2005:142) is important for the argument of Peter:

2:4a Christ is described as a living stone

2:4b The believers are described as living stones

- 2:5 The believers are named a “spiritual house”
- 2:6a Christ is identified as the cornerstone of this house
  - 2:6b The believers are never to feel ashamed
  - 2:7a The cornerstone brings honour to the first audience
  - 2:7b – 8a Those who reject the Living Stone will fall
  - 2:8b Stumbling is the destiny of the unbelieving
- 2:9 The first audience’s new identity: they are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special possession of God

2:10 The first audience are the receivers of God’s mercy and are now God’s people. It may be argued that this structure was chosen on purpose to have the necessary rhetorical effect. By means of repetition, images and quotations, Peter invites them to understand the implications of his words for the first audience’s identity and lives.

In 2:4 the metaphor of Christ as a living stone is introduced. 2:4 starts with a new sentence, where *πρὸς ὃν* is placed in front for emphasis. The participle *προσερχόμενοι* functions as an imperative. There is an allusion to Psalm 118:22 in this verse and the last phrase reference Isaiah 28:16. The particle *μὲν* implies that the rejection of Christ by humans is secondary to God’s own view of Christ, because humans may reject this living stone, but this living stone is elected or chosen by God (like the strangers of 1:1).

2:5 continues with the metaphor of living stones, but now the author urges the recipients that they be built up as living stones. The metaphor has allusions to Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6. The word *αὐτοῖς* is fronted for emphasis and poliptoton is seen through the use of *λίθον* (2:4) and *λίθοι* (2:5). A chiasm is formed by the following words: (a) *οικοδομεῖσθε* (b) *οἶκος πνευματικὸς* (b) *ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον* (a) *ἀνευέγκαι*. Paronomasia is visible by the words *οικοδομεῖσθε οἶκος*.

In 2:6 the metaphor used in 2:4-5 is further stressed by a quotation from Isaiah 8:14. *Διότι* with the introductory formula *περιέχει ἐν γραφῇ* introduces the quotation. The focus particle *ἰδοὺ* is used to get the attention of the recipients. The idea of the living stone being elected and precious for God that is emphasised in 2:4, is repeated by means of the quotation from the Hebrew Bible. *ἀκρογωνιαίος* is considered as a LXX hapax legomenon and in the New Testament it only appears in Ephesians 2:20 as well.

In 2:7 there is a contrast between the believers considering the living stone as precious and the unbelievers, who have rejected it. *οὖν* introduces a conclusion grounded on the preceding scriptural citation (Dubis, 2010: 51). A quotation from Psalm 118:22 is given as reason for the unbelievers, but

in this quotation there is a contrast. This living stone that has been rejected, *he* is the one who has become the cornerstone. 2:8 further emphasises this by another quotation, this time out of Isaiah 8:14. καὶ marks the citation from the Hebrew Scriptures that follows as closely bound to the preceding citation in 2:7. Both use the catchword λίθος (also in the citation found in 2:6). In the citation from Isaiah 8:14 the synonyms λίθος and πέτρα are used.

1 Peter 2:9 stands in contrast with 2:7-8. The author emphasises the audience's identity by using the same words of 2:5, but now he is elaborating on this. These terms emphasise that God has elected and called the recipients. There is a contrast between light and darkness and the theme of God that calls the recipients in chapter one is repeated here. Dubis (2010: 55–56) argues that this verse contains what he calls a “chiastic fusion of texts” from the Hebrew Scriptures; γένος ἐκλεκτόν comes from LXX Isaiah 43:20 and forms the outer structure of the chiasm with λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν (also from Isaiah 43:20). βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον forms the inner structure of the chiasm and is taken from LXX Exodus 19:6. ἐκ σκότους is fronted for emphasis. Rhetorically, these various titles also have a cumulative weight that strengthens the reality of this identity (Dryden, 2006: 126).

1 Peter 2:10 contains allusions to Hosea 1:9 and 2:25. As with 1:7, this sentence is a unique feature of 1 Peter. The idea of not belonging before, and now belonging to God's people, who previously did not receive mercy, but now receives mercy, form contrasts in this verse. The words ἡλεημένοι and ἐλεηθέντες is an example of poliptoton. The next pericope starts in 2:11 with a new theme, starting with an exhortation and a vocative.

### A.2.5 1 Peter 2:11-17

The new pericope is introduced by the vocative ἀγαπητοί and followed by παρακαλῶ. Dubis (2010: 59) argues that παρακαλῶ introduces a “mitigated command”. That is a command that is made indirectly without using the imperative form. 2:11 echoes 2:1, but here the author calls on the audience to act in a certain way because they are παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους. 2:12 continues with this notion by urging them to show good behaviour in their dealings with the unbelievers. The phrase τὴν ἀναστροφὴν is fronted for emphasis. A chiasm is seen between the following words: (a) ἔχοντες (b) καλήν (b) τῶν καλῶν ἔργων (a) ἐποπτεύοντες. The phrase ἐκ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων is fronted for emphasis. The citation from Isaiah 10:3 at the end of the verse, gives an eschatological edge to what the author says.

2:13 begins with the imperative ὑποτάγητε. The author uses the word κτίσις to refer to human institutions. Elsewhere in the New Testament, this word refers to the world or beings that God created

(Dubis, 2010: 65). 2:14 continues with the exhortation. The word εἴτε introduces a phrase with an implicit repetition of ὑποτάγητε in the main sentence (2:13). The phrase εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον is a compound compositional phrase. Both accusatives serves as objects of εἰς, and this indicates the two-fold purpose of the “sending” (Dubis, 2010: 66).

In 2:15 the reason is given to the audience as to why they need to submit to these institutions (introduced by ὅτι). The word οὕτως is fronted for emphasis and modifies ὑποτάγητε in 2:13 (Dubis, 2010: 67). An example of assonance can be found in ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν. 1 Peter 2:16 starts with ὡς which also modifies ὑποτάγητε in 2:13 (Dubis, 2010: 68). Here, a negative-positive construction is present (μὴ ... ἀλλ’).

The last verse in this pericope, namely 2:17, emphasises what the author says in 2:11-16. Here, the author employs four imperatives. The direct object is fronted in each of the four phrases and in each case a topical shift is brought about. Dubis (2010: 68) argues that the four phrases form a thematic chiasm. Commands about relationships with the non-Christian society form the outer structure of the chiasm. The inner structure of the chiasm is formed by commands about relationships with believers and God. The two appearances by the verb τιμᾶω contributes to the chiasm.

This pericope ends here, because in 2:18 another group is given certain exhortations.

### **A.2.6 1 Peter 2:18-25**

In 2:18 the theme of “submissiveness” continues, but now the author addresses a different group. The household code of 1 Peter starts in 2:18 and ends in 3:7. 2:18 begins with the vocative οἱ οἰκέται and the participle ὑποτασσόμενοι that functions as an imperative. A contrast is formed by means of a negative-positive construction οὐ ... ἀλλὰ. In 2:19 τοῦτο, as well as διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ, is placed in front for emphasis. The reason for slaves to be obedient to their masters is given and the theme of suffering surfaces again.

2:20 builds on the previous verse by asking a rhetorical question and the idea of grace through righteous suffering is repeated. The phrase τοῦτο ... χάρις in 2:19 and at the end of 2:20 forms an inclusion. There is also a chiasm present here: (a) ποῖον γὰρ κλέος (b) κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε (b) πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε (a) τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῶ. In 2:21 the theme of Christ’s suffering is introduced, which will occupy the next four verse. εἰς τοῦτο is fronted and it introduces the purpose or reason of the previous statement. Χριστὸς is also fronted for emphasis, as well as ὑμῖν.

2:22-25 contains direct citations and allusions to parts of Isaiah 53. In 2:22 ὅς is fronted for emphasis. A chiasm is present here: (a) ἁμαρτίαν (b) οὐκ ἐποίησεν (b) οὐδὲ εὐρέθη (a) δόλος. Again, ὅς is fronted in 2:23 and a chiasm can be identified: (a) πάσχων (b) οὐκ ἡπείλει, (b) παρεδίδου (a) τῷ κρύνοντι. In 2:24 ὅς is fronted for the third time and the citation out of Isaiah 53:4 is placed in front. ἵνα and the subjunctive ζήσωμεν expresses purpose. In the last verse of this pericope, 2:25, ὡς πρόβατα is fronted as a comparative frame. A comparison is made by comparing the recipients to lost sheep. God is presented as a Shepherd and Safekeeper of souls. The temporal adverb νῦν highlights the contrast between the recipients' former and present circumstances (Dubis, 2010: 83).

The new pericope starts in 1 Peter 3, where a next group is addressed by the author.

### A.2.7 1 Peter 3:1-7

In this pericope the author addresses two groups in amongst the audience; believing wives and husbands. 3:1 starts with ὁμοίως, which can be translated as “in the same manner”. This reflects back to the exhortations given to the slaves. The vocative [αἱ] γυναῖκες shifts the focus from the slaves to the wives. The theme that the author addresses here is again submissiveness. The preposition ἵνα introduces a reason for the submissiveness towards their husbands. There is a poliptoton between λόγῳ and λόγου. A chiasm can also be identified: (a) ἀπειθοῦσιν (b) τῷ λόγῳ (b) λόγου (a) κερδηθήσονται.

The reason why the wives may win their husbands is explained in 3:2. 1 Peter 3:3 starts with imperative, followed by three genitival phrases. Dubis (2010: 87) suggests that it is rare to find an imperative in a relative clause. In these three genitival phrases, the first genitive of each phrase is expegetical and the second is an objective genitive. Together, these phrases are adjectival in function. 3:3 stands in contrast to 3:4.

In 3:4 ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος is fronted for emphasis. Together with 3:3, these two verses form a negative-positive construction (οὐχ ... ἀλλ'). 3:5 starts with the fronted οὕτως and here the author makes a general statement about the “holy women” in the past being submissive to their husbands (in terms of the Hebrew Scriptures). The phrase τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν that is seen in 3:1 is repeated here, as well as ὑποτάσσω. The phrase καὶ αἱ ἅγαι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσιν εἰς θεὸν is also fronted for emphasis.

In 3:6 the author names an example of such a “holy woman” and he uses Sarah to further enhance his argument. This is the first of two examples from the Hebrew Scriptures with specific people involved, that the author employs in this letter. Most scholars agree that this verse allude to Genesis

18:12 (Dubis, 2010: 90). The word ὑπῆκουσεν is here used interchangeably with ὑποτασσόμεναι in 3:5. τῷ Ἀβραάμ is fronted for emphasis. The last clause in this verse may suggest that these wives sometimes suffer at the hands of their (unbelieving) husbands.

The last verse of this pericope is an exhortation to the men amongst the believers in their relationships with their wives. The verse starts again with ὁμοίως, but this time οἱ ἄνδρες is fronted before ὁμοίως. It is not clear whether ὁμοίως refers back to 3:1. ὡς is repeated twice. εἰς introduces the reason for the previous statements.

This is the last of the exhortations that the author gives to specific groups amongst the audience. The household code in 1 Peter also ends here. In the next pericope, the author suggests guidelines for living together as believers.

### A.2.8 1 Peter 3:8-22

3:8 starts with τὸ δὲ τέλος, which indicates a shift in topic and pericope. Dubis (2010: 97) argues that this is an idiom that serves as a marker of a conclusion of the preceding argument, but it is not the conclusion of the letter. πάντες is followed by a list that consists of five nominatives, but it is imperatival in meaning. This list stands in contrast with the list given in 2:1.

1 Peter 3:9 contains a negative-positive construction (μὴ ... δὲ). There are two examples of poliptoton here: κακὸν ... κακοῦ as well as λοιδορίαν ... λοιδορίας. A chiasm can also be identified: (a) ἀποδιδόντες (b) κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ (b) λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας, (a) εὐλογοῦντες. The term ὅτι in the last clause introduces reason. The word τοῦτο is fronted for emphasis and ἵνα and the subjunctive κληρονομήσητε points to purpose.

In 3:10-12 the author uses a citation from Psalm 34:13-17. In 3:10 there is paronomasia between ἀγαπᾶν ... ἀγαθὰς. In this verse there are three infinitives and one imperative. The infinitives function imperatively in meaning. 3:11 continues with four imperatives. ζητησάτω ... διωξάτω can be considered as a doublet. ὅτι in 3:12 introduces the motivational grounds for the series of imperatives found in 3:10-11. 3:12 contains a contrast between “the Lord’s dealings with the righteous” and those who do wrong things.

Καὶ in 3:13 introduces a new topic that is still relevant to the previous one. There is a contrast between being treated badly because of “doing right” in this rhetorical question. In 3:14 some citations are made out of Isaiah 8:12-13. Here, an optative is seen. The theme of suffering is visible here again and the cause of the suffering may be “for doing what is right” (διὰ δικαιοσύνην).



Paronomasia is seen between φόβον and φοβηθήτε. Between 3:14 and 3:15 there is a negative-positive construction where the negative stresses the positive clause (μὴ ... μηδὲ ... δὲ). Since the beginning of this pericope, there is an interaction between doing good, having a good conscience, to work for what is good and to have good behaviour.

3:15 stands in contrast with 3:14 and the author use two imperatives. The phrase ἀπολογίαν ... λόγον display paronomasia. Dubis (2010: 110) suggests that κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν can be read in two ways: Firstly, it can be seen as an object-complement double accusative construction where τὸν Χριστὸν is the direct object of ἀγιάσατε and κύριον is the complement. Secondly, it can be read as appositional, with κύριον as the direct object of ἀγιάσατε and τὸν Χριστὸν in apposition to κύριον (it will then be translated as “honour the Lord, that is Christ). This verse alludes to 2:13. 1 Peter 3:16 gives a further explanation of what the author intends. ἵνα and the subjunctive καταισχυνθῶσιν expresses the purpose for why they must act in this manner.

3:17 gives a further explanation. The word πάσχειν is used with ἀγαθοποιῶντας and κακοποιῶντας. These two words stand in contrast with one another. Alliteration is seen between in the phrase θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ. This verse is comparative, introduced by κρεῖττον. The phrase ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς at the beginning of 3:18 suggests that the believers experience suffering in the same way that Christ did. The phrase καὶ Χριστὸς is fronted as a topical frame. There is a poliptoton between πάσχειν in 3:17 and ἔπαθεν in 3:18. δίκαιος is contrasted with ἀδίκων. The last part of the verse also echoes chapter one, where there are references to the resurrection of Christ. There is an interaction between σαρκὶ (3:18), πνεύματι (3:18), πνεύμασιν (3:19) and ψυχαί (3:20).

In 3:19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ is placed in front. There is a poliptoton between πνεύματι in 3:18 and πνεύμασιν in 3:19. Ποτε in 3:20 refers back to πνεύμασιν in 3:19. Here, the second example from the Hebrew Scriptures where a specific person is mentioned is used. In this verse the author refers to the “days of Noah” and the building of the ark (this reflects Genesis 6:1-7:24).

In 3:21, baptism and the ark (and floodwaters) are put on the same level. The word ὑμᾶς is fronted for emphasis. Again, the resurrection of Christ is mentioned. The term ὅς in 3:22 is fronted, and it refers back to Christ. The theme of submissiveness surfaces again here, but this time it refers to the angels and powers that is submissive to Christ. ἀγγέλων ... ἐξουσιῶν ... δυνάμεων is a triplet that serves rhetorically to emphasise that all kinds of angelic or demonic beings are subject to Christ (Dubis, 2010: 128).

Although chapter four's theme is similar to the pericope that has been discussed in this section as far as suffering goes, there is a topical shift visible.

### A.2.9 1 Peter 4:1-6

In 1 Peter 4:1 Χριστοῦ is fronted for emphasis and also points to a new topical frame. The theme of suffering is being addressed again (πάσχω). A form of πάσχω together with σαρκί is seen twice in this verse with παθόντος and παθών forming a poliptoton. καὶ ὑμεῖς is fronted for emphasis. 1 Peter 4:2 contains a negative-positive construction (μηκέτι ... ἀλλὰ). The phrase θελήματι θεοῦ, that is also used in 3:17, is present here and it is fronted for emphasis. At the end of 1 Peter 3 and beginning of 1 Peter 4, the emphasis was on Christ's bodily suffering. This is contrasted with the bodily desires of 4:2 (echoes 2:1).

The reason for 4:2 is given in 4:3, introduced by γὰρ. The words Χρόνον and χρόνος form a poliptoton. A (vice) list is given by the author to describe the recipients' previous engagement with these things: πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. Dubis (2010: 133) suggests that this is an idiom where life is lived that characterises the vice list. οἰνοφλυγία is considered as a New Testament and LXX hapax legomenon. κῶμος is only present at two other places in the New Testament namely Romans 13:13 and Galatians 5:21.

In 4:4 there is a chiasm: (a) συντρεχόντων (b) ὑμῶν (b) τὴν αὐτὴν (a) βλασφημοῦντες. The term ἀνάχυσιν is considered as a LXX and New Testament hapax legomenon. In 4:5 legal language is used with the expression ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον. There is a contrast an oxymoron between ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς (Dubis, 2010: 136). The reason is given in 4:7 with εἰς τοῦτο introducing it, as well as the presence of ἵνα κριθῶσι. ἵνα also introduces a clause that is exegetical to τοῦτο. There is a contrast between living according to a human or godly standard. Again, life and death is contrasted (as in 4:5).

In 4:7 a new pericope starts again with a statement about the end times.

### A.2.10 1 Peter 4:7-11

1 Peter 4:7 starts with a new topical frame with the word πάντων. Here is an allusion to the end times. This statement is modified by the second clause where the author uses two imperatives. In this exhortation the author reference back to 2:1. σωφρονήσατε ... νήψατε serves a doublet which

emphasises the need for “eschatological clear-headedness” (Dubis, 2010: 140). This verse also stands in contrast to what 4:3 describes.

4:8 starts with the repetition of πάντων (which is also fronted for emphasis). The words ἀγάπην ... ἀγάπη forms a poliptoton. The participle ἔχοντες is imperative in meaning. The citation that the author uses here, is from Proverbs 10:12. In other citations that the author employs in the rest of letter, the citation is nearer to the LXX. In this case the citation is nearer to the Masoretic text. In 4:9 the author continues with the exhortation. An example of onomatopoeia is found in γογγυσμοῦ which refers to an utterance made in a low tone of voice (Dubis, 2010: 142). In 4:9 the word ἀλλήλους is used to refer to “each other” where 4:10 the word ἕκαστος is employed.

In 4:10 there is a reference back to the discussion that the author had about the audience being part of the household of God. Now he refers to them as καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι (good managers). In 4:11 there are two clauses that starts with εἴ τις followed by a genitive and θεοῦ or ὁ θεός. The clause that ἵνα introduces with the subjunctive δοξάζεται expresses the purpose for the previous statements. The phrase ᾧ ἔστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν gives an ending to the pericope.

### A.2.11 1 Peter 4:12-19

4:12 starts with the vocative ἀγαπητοί (like in 2:11) and introduces the theme of suffering amongst the believers. The word πειρασμός echoes its use in chapter one. Here, a negative statement is made and together with 4:13 it forms a negative-positive construction (μὴ ... ἀλλὰ). A chiasm is also present between 4:12 and 4:13: (a) ξενίζεσθε (b) γινομένη (b) συμβαίνοντος, (a) χαίρετε.

In 4:13 the suffering of Christ is again mentioned (τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν). The themes of suffering, glory and the end times frequently features in 1 Peter. χαίρετε ... χαρῇτε underline the contrast between the present suffering and future glorification. χαρῇτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι serves as a doublet that emphasises the single idea of future joy (Dubis, 2010: 148). 1 Peter 4:14 echoes 3:14, especially with the use of μακάριοι. The phrase ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ is the reason for the slander that may occur. ὅτι introduces the reason for μακάριοι. There are echoes of Psalm 89:51-52 and Isaiah 11:2 in this verse.

1 Peter 4:15 echoes the idea posed in 3:12-14. τις ὑμῶν is fronted for emphasis. The verse is structured to form a negative-positive construction with 4:16 (μὴ ... δέ). The author employs a list of

nominatives here. 4:16 is contrasted with 4:15. The term Χριστιανός in the New Testament is only found here and in Acts 11:26 and 26:28. In this verse, the author appeals to the audience to not be ashamed of “that name” – this is contrasted with 3:16 where the author exhorts them to live so that those who slander them, can be ashamed. The phrase τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ here refers to Χριστιανός, whereas in 4:14 it refers to Χριστοῦ.

1 Peter 4:17 again has eschatological undertones and ὅτι is used to explain 4:16. Here, there is again a reference to the “household of God” and that the judgement will start there. The author also employs a rhetorical question. There are allusions to Jeremiah 25:29 and Ezekiel 9:6. 4:17 is qualified by a citation from Proverbs 11:31. 3:12 is echoed here with the idea that the righteous have advantage with God. A chiasm can also be identified: (a) σφύζεται, (b) ὁ ἀσεβής (b) ἀμαρτωλὸς (a) φανεῖται. The citation as a rhetorical question repeats the rhetorical question in 4:17. Dubis (2010:156) suggests that ὁ ἀσεβής καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς form hendiadys and is fronted as a topical frame.

The last verse in this pericope, 4:19, ends this pericope with a statement that summarises its argument. This is seen with the use of ὥστε καὶ that introduces an exhortation that is grounded in the preceding 4:12-18. This verse echoes Psalm 31:6.

### **A.2.12 1 Peter 5:1-11**

The phrase Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν at the beginning of 1 Peter 5 introduces a topical shift and frame. Here the author does not begin with a vocative like in the previous pericopes. In 1:1 the author identifies himself as ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In 5:1 he identifies himself as ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός (...as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, NRSV). The theme of ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης, that featured previously, is repeated again.

Now the author proceeds by giving certain instructions to the elders. Here, he uses a shepherd metaphor and the “household of God” is compared to a flock of sheep. Echoes of Ezekiel 34 can be found here. ποιμάνετε ... ποιμνιον form paronomasia here. There are three negative-positive constructions in this verse (two in 5:2 and this is continued in 5:3). Firstly: μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλὰ ἑκουσίως κατὰ θεόν. This construction utilises the negated adverb ἀναγκαστῶς that emphasises the positive adverb ἑκουσίως introduced by ἀλλὰ. Secondly: μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως. In this construction the negated adverb αἰσχροκερδῶς is used in order to emphasise the positive

adverb προθύμως. Thirdly: μηδ' ὥς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου (which is a longer sentence than the previous two). In this construction the negated adverbial phrase ὥς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων is used to emphasise the positive adverbial phrase that follows ἀλλὰ. The elders are exhorted in 5:3 to be an example to the “flock”.

In 1 Peter 5:2-4 there is a wordplay between ποιμάνετε ... ποίμνιον ... ποιμνίου ... ἀρχιποίμενος. Here, in 5:4, as in 2:25 God is described as a shepherd, but the word ἀρχιποίμενος (Great Shepherd) is used here. In 5:4 the shepherd and flock metaphor ends. 1 Peter 5:5 starts with Ὅμοίως (just as in 3:1 and 3:8). The theme of submission surfaces again – this time it is the young ones that need to submit to the elders. ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην is fronted for emphasis. ἐγκομβώσασθε is only found here and nowhere else in the LXX or the rest of the New Testament. Then the author employs a citation from Proverbs 3:34 to qualify his argument.

1 Peter 5:6 starts with an imperative followed by οὖν, which qualifies the following exhortation. ἵνα and the subjunctive ὑψώση expresses purpose. There is a contrast between ταπεινώθητε and ὑψώση. In 5:7 πᾶσαν is fronted for emphasis. Here, a reference to Psalm 55:27 is made. ὅτι introduces reason. αὐτῷ is also fronted for emphasis. There is also a chiasm visible here: (a) ὑμῶν (b) αὐτόν, (b) αὐτῷ (a) ὑμῶν. 1 Peter 5:8 starts with a doublet, the two imperatives νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε, emphasising the urgency that the author tries to convey. The “devil” is here compared to “a roaring lion” (which echoes Ezekiel 22:25 and Psalm 22:4). In other place in the New Testament where διάβολος is used, it appears with an article. Here it is not the case (Dubis, 2010: 168).

ᾧ in 5:9 is fronted for emphasis referring back to διάβολος in 5:8. Here, there is a reference to suffering, but this time the author makes an universal statement, probably referring to the other congregations and region that this letter will be circulating to. In 5:10 ὁ δὲ θεὸς is fronted as a topical frame. This verse also displays eschatological undertones. Here again suffering, glory and the end times feature in one statement. καταρτίσει, στηρίξει, σθενώσει θεμελιώσει may function as a doublet. In 5:11 the author ends with a doxology. αὐτῷ is fronted for emphasis.

### A.2.13 1 Peter 5:12-14

The last pericope of this letter contains the greeting of the letter. In 5:12 διὰ σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι is fronted for emphasis and as a topical shift. In this verse the author gives the reason why he has written the letter: δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν

ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε. In 5:13 the author refers to himself as συνεκλεκτῇ, echoing 1:1 in terms of the recipients' own identity. Here, he mentions a place (βαβυλῶνι) and another person (Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου). 5:14, the last of the verse in this letter, ends with εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πασιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, referring back to 1:2.

### **A.3 CONCLUSION**

The discourse analysis of 1 Peter as presented in Addendum A, is a helpful tool in regard to literary and rhetorical aspects of the text, especially in terms of rhetorical strategies and the rhetorical situation of the letter.