

Resident Aliens in Mission: Missional Practices in the Emerging Church of 1 Peter

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The present study discusses the issue of mission in 1 Peter in light of the missiological model of “missional” church. The early Christian communities of 1 Peter are considered here as young emerging congregations living in a kind of liminal state. Being discriminated against in their local communities, they struggled for their own new Christian identity. In these circumstances, the phenomenon of intramural ethics is important, but so also are their missional good works. These are considered to be observed by “the others,” who are won over and ultimately give glory to God. Contrary to some recent interpreters, the present study argues that the readers are also admonished to be ready to preach and defend their faith, thus becoming a missional church of both works and words in their neighborhoods.

Key Words: mission, missional, preaching, good works, 1 Peter

INTRODUCTION

New Testament scholarship and missiology are usually understood as two different fields of studies. Few scholars are prominent in both fields.¹ Evidence of the wide separation between the two fields includes different chairs in distinct departments, different journals for the specialties, and the lack of awareness of the scholarship in the biblical discipline by missiologists and vice versa. On the other hand, some are also calling for closer cooperation between these two fields of studies, and in recent years we have seen a promising revival of NT studies dealing with issues of mission in the NT.²

1. An outstanding exception to this “rule” is David J. Bosch, whose dissertation (*Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu: eine Untersuchung zur Eschatologie der synoptischen Evangelien* [ATANT 36; Zürich: Zwingli, 1959]) was in the NT field. He later published on missiology (*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (American Society of Missiology Series 16; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).

2. A recent (2005) conference in South Africa on Missiology and New Testament studies is ample evidence of the interest in closer cooperation. See Willem Saayman, “New Testament Studies and Missiology in South Africa: Uneasy Bedfellows?” *Missionalia* 33 (2005): 205–13; and the response by Christoph Stenschke, “New Testament Studies and Missiology: Comfortable

In the following study I would like to investigate the missional aspects of 1 Peter. According to my reading, mission is much more integrated in the strategy and teaching of 1 Peter than is often recognized by NT scholars, and I want to argue for this by focusing on the role of mission in the letter as exemplified by the role and purpose of preaching (words) and good works in its teaching. It is my general thesis concerning the nature of this letter that 1 Peter is an exhortatory letter (see 1 Pet 5:12) in which the author tries to strengthen the Christian (1 Pet 4:16) identity of his readers in times of various cases of local harassments. As I have argued in another study, these Christians were considered by the author as first generation Christians, living in a kind of liminal state, and still in need of further acculturation into the Christian system of thought and ethos.³ The Christian communities of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1) were parts of the *emerging churches* of these areas. The missional practices of these Christians were crucially influenced by their social conditions; hence, the intense focus of the author on their local vocation and ethos as Christians. It is, furthermore, the specific thesis of this particular study that the missional attitudes of the recipients are integral to their Christian identity and calling, but as such they include both ethical behavior (good works) and verbal preaching (words).

However, before elaborating on these issues, I would like to expand a little more on some important presuppositions inherent in my procedure and understanding of the recipients of this letter and of my model of mission.

Bedfellows!" *Missionalia* 33 (2005): 214–33. For mission in the NT, see, e.g., P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993); William Larkin Jr. et al., *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (New York: Orbis, 1998); Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); John P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (WUNT 2/159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson, eds., *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, eds., *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (WUNT 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (2 vols.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); James Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (NovTSup 120; Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Wolfgang Reinbold, *Propaganda und Mission im ältesten Christentum: Eine Untersuchung zu den Modalitäten der Ausbreitung der frühen Kirche* (ERLANT 188; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

3. See my "'Conduct Yourselves Honorably among the Gentiles' (1 Peter 2:12): Assimilation and Acculturation in 1 Peter," in *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (BIS 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 168–69. See also Steven Richard Bechtler, *Following in His Steps: Suffering, Community, and Christology in 1 Peter* (SBLDS 162; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 109–78. My suggestions are now followed up by David G. Horrell, "Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate towards a Postcolonial Reading of First Peter," in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter* (ed. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin; Library of New Testament Studies 364; London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 116.

SOME FURTHER PRESUPPOSITIONS

The NT letters served hardly only one purpose: the letter of 1 Peter at least had not only one but several. There seems, however, to be no unanimous agreement in recent research as to what these purposes were and thus how they should be categorized and described.⁴ This situation might be illustrated by focusing on the issue of mission in 1 Peter. Several studies are concerned with this aspect but describe it differently and find it variously integrated and important to the letter. And after all, what is mission?

Some recent studies have dealt with the issue of mission of the early church as reflected in 1 Peter; some have also enlarged on the value of this letter for contemporary missionary activities.⁵ My focus here is on mission as perceived by the author of 1 Peter; however, I would like to substitute the terms *mission* or *missionary* with the more recent missiological term *missional*.

"Mission" is very often viewed as a model suitable for characterizing the purpose and activities of a church when it sends out people (missionaries) to evangelize or to preach the gospel abroad or in unevangelized areas, in order to win people for the faith of the missionaries. It thus denotes someone as sender and someone as being sent. The definition of Larkin and Williams is typical of this way of thinking in its heavy emphasis on a sender, a sending, and those sent.⁶

4. See the literature listed in the next footnote.

5. For mission in 1 Peter, see, e.g., H. Giesen, "Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde: Zum Verhalten der Christen in der paganen Gesellschaft (1 Petr. 2.11–17)," *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 23 (1998): 113–52; Joel B. Green, "Faithful Witness in the Diaspora: The Holy Spirit and Exiled People of God according to 1 Peter," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of J. D. G. Dunn* (ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 282–95; P. J. Robinson, "Some Missiological Perspectives from 1 Peter 2:4–10," *Missionalia* 17 (1989): 176–87; Larkin, et al., *Mission in the New Testament*, 200–206, and Armand Puig I Tàrrach, "The Mission according to the New Testament: Choice or Need?" in *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament* (ed. Anatoly A. Alexeev et al.; WUNT 218; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 231–47. For contemporary application, see Dan O'Connor, "Holiness of Life as a Way of Christian Witness," *IRM* 80 (1991): 7–15; Fika van Rensburg, "Christians as 'Resident and Visiting Aliens': Implications of the Exhortations to the 'Paroikoi' and 'Parepidemoi' in 1 Peter for the Church in South Africa," *Neotestamentica* 32 (1998): 573–84; Valdir R. Steuernagel, "An Exiled Community as a Missionary Community: A Study Based on 1 Peter 2,9,10," *EvRT* 10 (1986): 8–18.

6. See Larkin et al., *Mission in the New Testament*, 3:

The concept of mission comprises six elements. (1) There is a sender, along with the sender's purpose and authority in sending. That purpose is God's accomplishment of salvation for humans and God's application of it to them. (2) One must consider the act of sending, a commissioning or authorization that leads to movement. To be on mission is to respond to the sender's call and commission and go to those to whom one is sent. (3) Further, study must be done on "those who are sent": the various agents God employs, and about their stance: obedience. In the foreground of this study will be the church, that divinely ordained agent for applying salvation blessings to humanity. (4) Another element is the particular task of those on mission, which in the NT focuses primarily on the proclamation in word and deed of God's saving work. Especially important in this area is what the NT has to say about

However, a recent work by Francis A. Oborji⁷ demonstrates a variety of definitions of “mission” in vogue in recent literature. But the diversity of these definitions, if not to say the confusion, makes us turn to another definition current in recent missiological literature: the model of being a *missional church*. This model of being “missional” is a comprehensive way of describing the activities of the Christian churches and is becoming increasingly prevalent in both contemporary church life and in missiological literature.⁸

Inherent in the view of the “missional church” model is the issue of God being at work in the world and the church as participating in this work:

A church with a mission program usually sees mission as one activity alongside many activities of the church—Christian education, worship, acts of service, hospitality and other programs. A missional church focuses all of its activities around its participation in God’s mission in the world. That means, it trains people for discipleship and witness; it worships and practices mutual support before the watching world. A church with a mission sends others to witness on its behalf. A missional church understands that the congregation itself is sent by God to proclaim and to be a sign of the reign of God.⁹

In the present study, I will use this model for investigating the *missional practices* of 1 Peter. Central to this model is that the key to the identity of a missional church is their focus of being an alternative society within the dominant culture. When the church proclaims and is a sign of the reign of God—by living the gospel by words and deeds as parts of God’s mission in this world—it will be a contrastive community in the eyes of the world, thus being a missional church.¹⁰

that task’s universal scope. (5) The result of mission must be explained. How does the kingdom of God advance as the church fulfills its mission? What constitutes a completion of the task, and how are those successful results accomplished? (6) Finally, there is mission’s comprehensive historico-theological framework. The whole study must view mission within the framework of God’s salvation history, whereby God does the covenantal work of judgment or redemption.

7. See Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology* (New York: Orbis, 2006).

8. It received one of its strongest impetuses from a book by Darel L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). As for one of the more recent works following up these aspects, see Craig van Gelder, ed., *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), and the great work of Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006).

9. This quotation is taken from a web site that is to be considered rather representative of this way of thinking: “Frequently Asked Questions.” Accessed May 6, 2008. Online: <http://www.mennonitemission.net/AboutUs/FAQs/MissionalChurch.asp>.

10. See the web site in n. 9 and Guder, *Missional Church*.

The “Emerging Churches” of 1 Peter

We don't know much about the structures of the Christian communities emerging in the areas mentioned in 1 Pet 1:1. The mentioning of “elders” in 1 Pet 5:1, 5 may indicate some local church structures, but there is not much to be gained from this term alone. Relying on some other communities as mirrored in NT letters, some scholars would emphasize the associational nature of these early Christian communities; the Christians gathered in groups that reminded the onlookers of their local clubs and associations, and to some extent they also imitated some elements from the structures of the associations.¹¹ As such, they gathered in small groups in private houses.¹²

Further social descriptions may be found in the terms *ἄρροικος* and *παρεπίδημος* (1:1, 17; 2:11). The terms obviously have some social denotations, but the extent of these is contended. John H. Elliott has argued for a nonmetaphorical interpretation of these terms, reading them as signifying actual social strangeness and status as aliens grounded not so much in their status as Christians but in their actual displacement as strangers and temporary residents of the various cities both before and after they became Christians.¹³ Several scholars have followed his view or presented slightly revised versions of it.¹⁴ I have argued that their strangeness was grounded not so much in their former and/or general status as social resident aliens as in their status of being relatively recently converted Christians, a social status that was very much comparable to the status of Jewish proselytes, and as such they were suffering ostracism because of their new religious affiliations and identity. 1 Peter contains several remarks about the endangered situation of the recipients as Christians, and there are exhortations not to indulge in the excesses of the life of their neighbors. The terms *πάσχω* (12×) and *πάθημα* (4×) are used more times in this letter than in any

11. On the Christian communities as “associations” in Rome, see Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 38–40. Further, see Andrew D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 153–60. See also Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philipians and 1 Thessalonians* (WUNT 2/161; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), on other Christian communities and John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson, eds., *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 1995), on associations in general in the Graeco-Roman world.

12. Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004).

13. John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM, 1981); John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000).

14. See, e.g., Robinson, “Some Missiological Perspectives”; and Scot McKnight, *1 Peter* (The NIV Application Commentary Series; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996). For a recent discussion of the meaning of these terms, see my “ἄρροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος: Proselyte Characterizations in 1 Peter?” *BBR* 11 (2001): 239–68, now also reprinted in my *Strangers in the Light: Philonic Perspectives on Christian Identity in 1 Peter* (BIS 76; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 39–78.

other NT book. The Christians are suffering temptations or testings (1:6: ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς), and they are spoken against (2:12: καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν; cf. 3:16); they are reviled (3:9: λοιδορία), abused (4:4: βλασφημέω) and reproached (4:14: ὀνειδίζω). Theologically evaluated, these sufferings are characterized as testing and refining of the faith (1:7–8). As social phenomena, the sufferings seem to have been part of an ostracism of the Christians.¹⁵ It is in this context that the author of 1 Peter focuses on the preaching of the gospel and the ἀναστροφή, and thus the value of their missional practices as representative and as re-presenting the gospel to their neighbors.

THE ROLE OF GOOD WORKS IN 1 PETER

There should be little doubt that the way of life of the early Christians and their “good works” were important to the author of 1 Peter. A brief look at the statistics gives a clear indication of this preference: the term ἀναστροφή is used 13 times in the NT, and 6 of these are to be found in 1 Peter.¹⁶ No other NT author uses this term as often as the author of 1 Peter. Moreover, this term, most often lexicalized as “way of life, conduct, behavior” (BDAG 73), is often coupled with characterizations as “good” (καλός; 2:12), or the behavior concerned is encouraged to be “pleasant” (ἀγαθός; 3:16) or “pure” (ἀγνός; 3:2). Furthermore, we have the use of the verb “to do good” (ἀγαθοποιεῖν) frequently in the letter (2:15, 20; 3:6, 17); compare 3:13, του ἀγαθοῦ ζηλωταὶ γένησθε (“eager to do what is good”). The author also characterizes his work as written “to encourage you” (παρακαλῶν; 5:12), indicating the paraenetic nature of this letter.¹⁷ The ethical exhortations containing these terms comprise most of 1 Peter from 2:12 on and are concerned with submission to the authorities (2:13–17), admonitions to slaves (2:18), wives and husbands (3:1–22), and encouragements in face of tribulations and sufferings (4:1–11). Several of these paraenetic sections are related to correct ethical behavior in front of the Gentiles, and the author occasionally voices his concern with a view to the possible missional effect of this behavior on the onlooking Gentiles. 1 Peter 2:13–17 could, for example, be characterized as apologetic-missional (compare 3:15–16), while 3:1–6 is probably more explicitly missional.¹⁸

15. Seland, *Strangers in the Light*, 71.

16. See 1 Pet 1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16; 2 Pet 2:7; 3:11; then Gal 1:13; Eph 4:22; 1 Tim 4:12; Heb 13:7; Jas 3:13.

17. See here the good discussion of the paraenetic character of the letter in Karl-Olav Sandnes, “Revised Conventions in Early Christian Paraenesis: ‘Working Good’ in 1 Peter as an Example,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (ed. James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen; BZNW 125; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 374–81.

18. See W. C. van Unnik, “Die Rücksicht auf die Reaktion der Nicht-Christen als Motiv in der Altchristlichen Paränese,” in *Sparsa Collecta Part II* (NovTSup 302; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 317, where all these passages are characterized as “missionarisch”; cf. especially pp. 318–19. See here also W. Schrage, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament, NTD Ergänzungsreihe 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 279–81.

There is also, however, another thread of exhortations in 1 Peter that are of a somewhat different nature; that is, 1 Peter contains several paraenetic sections that deal with the Christians' relations to each other within their own in-group settings. Here we find another set of terms that should not be overlooked when looking for ethical issues in this letter. 1 Peter uses terms like φιλαδελφία (1:22), ἀδελφότης (2:17, 5:9), φιλάδελφος (3:8), and φιλοξένος (4:9). These terms and the inherent issues are sometimes overlooked in studies of the ethics of 1 Peter,¹⁹ but they are—as we shall see—integral and very important for understanding the ethical nature of 1 Peter. As admonitions concerning the intramural Christian community relations, they are important for understanding the author's emphasis on this aspect of the readers' social relations. This is a part of the identity forming and strengthening functions of the good works that should not be overlooked. These good works are for the unity of the community.

INTRAMURAL LOVE-ETHICS IN 1 PETER

Several of the terms used by the author concerning their intramural relations are only to be found here in the NT. This might indicate that the author is drawing on some particular traditions. Be that as it may, it might also indicate the importance of these specific issues for the author. J. H. Elliott has convincingly argued that the issue of being a household and family of God is important to the author of 1 Peter;²⁰ compare the οἶκος terminology of 2:5, 7 and 4:10, 17 with 1:17, 2:11. This aspect is probably part of the background for his predilection for some family terms such as ἀδελφότης (2:17; 5:9, 13) and φιλάδελφος (3:8), which are only to be found in 1 Peter in the NT. Read together with his use of φιλαδελφία, they strongly emphasize the author's focus on the coherence of the communities to which he writes. This is to be kept in mind when reading his in-group exhortations.

In 1:22 he says "Now that you have purified your souls by (your) obedience to the truth, to love your brothers and sisters from a sincere heart, then do love one another eagerly from a clean heart" (Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον, ἐκ [καθαρᾶς] καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς). The word φιλαδελφία is a hapax legomenon in 1 Peter (but cf. 2 Pet 1:7) but is used also in Rom 12:10, 1 Thess 4:9, and Heb 13:1, always denoting intragroup love and affection. In 1 Pet 1:22, this love is emphasized in several ways; first, it is seen as a goal of their initiation into the Christian faith (1:22a, 23; cf. 1:2, 14): "Rebirth in God's family brings with it familial obligations."²¹ Second, the intense nature of this

19. These issues are, e.g., left very much out of consideration by van Unnik in his well-known study about good works in 1 Peter, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik, Part Two* (NovTSup 302; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 83–105.

20. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 165–266. See also his commentary *1 Peter*.

21. *Ibid.*, 384.

love is strengthened by the adjective ἀνυπόκριτος and the adverb ἐκτενῶς. Comparably strong in-group love exhortations or descriptions can be found both in the Qumran literature (1QS 1,9–11) and in the Johannine literature (e.g., John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 2:9; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 20; 5:2; and 2 John 5).²² In 1 Peter, this is a very strong group-strengthening exhortation and is probably derived from the author's view of the Christians as a fictive family.²³ While admitting that this familial ethos and ethic is evident in most of the other NT writings, "in 1 Peter it receives an especially accented expression."²⁴

In 2:17, this in-group aspect comes as an integrated part of a summarizing statement of the paraenesis inaugurated in 2:11 when it is said (NRSV): "Honor everyone: Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor" (πάντας τιμήσατε, τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε, τὸν θεὸν φοβεῖσθε, τὸν βασιλέα τιμᾶτε). Various pairings of these four statements have been suggested, but no particular one seems to have won general acceptance.²⁵ The similar verb in the first and last catches the eye; some see an *abb'a'* structure. One could also say that the *a* is the most inclusive, *b* narrows the focus to the Christian in-groups, and *b'* and *a'* focus on the authorities; first the most high, that is, God, and then the emperor. Perhaps Jobes is closest to the author's intention when she pinpoints that "the statement is a comprehensive reference to all contexts in which a Christian lives: social, ecclesial, spiritual and political."²⁶ What's important here is the inclusion of the ecclesial in-group love among these other social duties.

1 Pet 3:8–12 exhibits a similar importance to the mutual familial in-group love: "Finally, all of you, have one unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart and a noble mind" (Τὸ δὲ τέλος πάντες ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχνοὶ, ταπεινόφρονες). In addition to the fact that four out of five adjectives used here are hapax legomena in the NT, the verse as such focuses on in-group ethical relations. Elliott suggests that if the adjectives are arranged chiasmically, the φιλαδελφία constitutes the central term.²⁷ Its structural role is also important: It brings to a close the exhortations concerning public and domestic conduct

22. Cf. F. F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition* (SBLDS; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

23. See C. Freeman Sleeper, "Political Responsibility according to 1 Peter," *NovT* 10 (1968): 276; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 137; Jacob Prasad, *Foundations of the Christian Way of Life according to 1 Peter 1:13–15: An Exegetico-Theological Study* (AnBib 146; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2000), 339–73.

24. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 385. He continues: "Here, more than in any other writing of the NT, the themes of God's fatherhood, the rebirth of the believers, their identity as children of God, the community as brotherhood and household of God, and the ethic of the household, its proper order, and the behavior contributing to its cohesion and reputation, are unified in one concerted message concerning dignity and honor of the household of God."

25. See, e.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 187–88; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 499–501; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 177–78.

26. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 177.

27. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 604.

begun in 2:13.²⁸ 1 Peter 3:8 focuses on the intramural attitudes, whereas v. 9 directs the reader's attention to his or her public behavior. 1 Peter 3:10–12 is a legitimating quotation from Ps 34:12–16.

The picture the author paints for his readers here is of an alternative society in which believers should not have to deal with the insult and hostility prevalent outside their community gatherings but enjoy an atmosphere of mutual love and compassion within the group. Only as such can they stand the discrimination from those outside. The terms heaped up in these brief verses are emotion-filled terms commonly used of family relationships, thus demonstrating the family-like nature of the Christian communities.²⁹

The final section in which this focus on intragroup familial love is emphasized is the important passage of 4:7–10(11):

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (NRSV)³⁰

The closeness of the eschatological end is used here as the legitimating basis for the succeeding exhortations. This eschatological issue should lead to mental sobriety and to a focus on their in-group love: "one should, above all else, cultivate love within the Christian community,"³¹ cf. 5:8. Achtemeier is probably also right when he states that this whole section concerns the Christian mutual in-group attitudes in a situation of "external and internal pressures exerted by the sporadic persecutions Christians were undergoing at this time."³² Several of the issues mentioned here are also found in the sections briefly dealt with above; for example, the importance of love (v. 8) and their mutuality (v. 8: εἰς ἑαυτοῦς; v. 9: εἰς ἀλλήλους; v. 10: ἕκαστος, εἰς ἑαυτοῦς). Hospitality and serving each other with the charismatic gifts provided by God are additional issues.

The issue of hospitality is found in several of the NT writings (e.g., Rom 12:13, Heb 13:2, 1 Tim 3:2, Tit 1:8) and was an important aspect of the

28. *Ibid.*, 600.

29. See further, on the individual terms, *ibid.*, 603–6. It is perhaps also relevant to consider the fact that several of these terms are also prominent in the martyrological sections of 4 Maccabees. This observation might strengthen the suggestion of N. Brox that "Man muss den 1 Petr im Rahmen der *praeparatio ad martyrium* lesen" ("Situation und Sprache der Minderheit im Ersten Petrusbrief" *Kairos* 19 [1977]: 9).

30. 1 Peter 4:7–10: Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν. σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς· πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοῦς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες, ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν. φιλόξενοι εἰς ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ, ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα εἰς ἑαυτοῦς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ.

31. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 294.

32. *Ibid.*, 295.

early Christian groups.³³ Many scholars interpret the kind of hospitality focused here as that of allowing travelers to stay overnight, while Jobs and others suggest that the author more expects his readers to open their homes for Christian worship and fellowship.³⁴ Others think both of these aspects may have been intended.³⁵ In both cases, however, it concerns hospitality toward fellow Christians, not strangers. This is also the setting for the following charismatic service suggested as good householders of the grace of God (v. 10). It might, however, seem strange to some first readers that the author then follows this up by providing advice concerning their preaching (v. 11): “Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God” (εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ).³⁶ Did the author here mean missional preaching to non-Christians or speech to Christian believers in a worship setting? Some nowadays read this as preaching in a worship setting only.³⁷ Others are more indefinite, such as Achtemeier when he reads it as denoting such “Christian activities as preaching and teaching.”³⁸ Here also one should not skip the ensuing purpose of these kinds of services listed: their purpose is “that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ” (4:11c). Hence, one might ask among whom God is to be glorified.

When answering a question such as this, it remains important that the main focus of 4:7–11 seems to be on devotional and interpersonal services carried out within the Christian community gatherings. These gatherings were not, however, as we can judge from other parallel NT descriptions, closed to non-Christians (see here 1 Cor 14:23, Jas 2:1–7). 2 *Clement* also provides evidence for the view that those outside were observers of the Christians and their gatherings. In 2 *Clem.* 13³⁹ the author warns the readers of being a cause of blasphemies and says (v. 3):

Wherein is it [that is, the name of the Lord] blasphemed? In that you do not what I desire. For when the heathen (τὰ ἔθνη) hear from your

33. See John Koenig, “Hospitality [Gk. *philoxenia*],” in *ABD* 3:299–301; and further his larger study *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (OBT 17; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). See also Bruce J. Malina, “The Received View and What It Cannot Do: III John and Hospitality,” *Semeia* 35 (1986): 171–94, who deals one-sidedly, however, with hospitality as accepting strangers.

34. For travelers staying overnight, see references in Jobs, 1 *Peter*, 280. For Christian worship and fellowship, see *ibid.*, 280–81; Birger Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet* (Kommentar till Nya testament 17; Stockholm: EFS-förlaget, 1982), 165.

35. Achtemeier, 1 *Peter*, 297; Joel B. Green, 1 *Peter* (Two Horizons New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 145; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (ed. F. Hahn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 299.

36. The use of *λαλέω* is most probably to be taken not as general talk but as explicit Christian preaching, as the additional and defining ὡς λόγια θεοῦ explicitly explain.

37. Just to mention one, Ramsey Michaels (1 *Peter* [WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1988], 250): “It is clear, however, that his focus is not on missionary proclamation (as, e.g., in Acts 4:1; 10:44; 13:42) but on the speech of Christian believers ‘to each other’ (v 10) in a setting of worship.”

38. Achtemeier, 1 *Peter*, 298.

39. I owe this reference to W. C. van Unnik, “Die Rücksicht auf die Reaktion der Nicht-Christen als Motiv in der altchristlichen Paränese,” 307–12.

mouth the oracles of God (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ), they wonder at their beauty and greatness; afterwards, when they find out that our deeds are unworthy of the words we speak, they turn from their wonder to blasphemy, saying that it is a myth and delusion.

One might also be reminded of A. von Harnack's famous statement about the missional value of the Christian worship services.⁴⁰ Hence, life within the Christian communities was not without missional value and implications. Their life was to some extent observable by outsiders, who not only observed that the Christians did no longer "join them in the same excesses of dissipation" (4:4) but might also have observed that the former partygoers now had their source of identity and fellowship in other distinctive settings. The attractiveness of new and hitherto unknown communal settings in which the participants seemed to experience mutual fellowships should not be underestimated. The contemporary Jewish synagogal settings might be considered an analogy, but the Christians were more inclined to open preaching, and 1 Peter explicitly exhorts its readers to do missional good works not only in order to gain a good reputation among their neighbors but, if possible, that some might be won and thus God be glorified—even by works.

Intermural Ethics in 1 Peter: Missional Good Works?

The good works are also to be carried out over against "the others," those outside (1 Pet 2:11–12, 13–17; 3:1–2, 13–17). These are good works that are considered to be observed by "the others" (2:12–15; 3:16; 4:4), and they are considered to stop the slandering of the others, to win the approval of those outside, and at the end to be to the glory of God (2:12).

The relevant exhortations here to do good are primarily to be found in 2:11–4:11, the main section of the letter. 1 Peter 2:11 urges the readers to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. In saying this, the author connects backwards to the admonition of 1:14 of not being conformed to the desires they formerly had in ignorance and thus also to the issue of being holy (1:15–16; cf. 3:15). 1 Peter 2:12–15 then focuses on doing good in front of those outside:

Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles (τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες καλῆν), so that, though they malign you as evildoers (ἵνα, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν), they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do good (ἀγαθοποιῶν). For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the

40. A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Wiesbaden: VMA-Verlag, 1924), 111.441.

ignorance of the foolish (ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθοποιούντας φμιοῦν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν).

The Christians are not to withdraw from societal life “among the Gentiles” but in their various public relations should be subject, or be subordinate (ὀποτάσσω), to the human institutions they have to deal with. The “Gentiles” may speak ill of them as people of poor behavior, but they will at the end have to glorify God.

Two issues in v. 12 might deserve some further comments. The first is the relation between the first and second part in the expression “though they malign you as evildoers (ἴνα, ἐν ᾧ καταλαλοῦσιν ὑμῶν ὡς κακοποιῶν), they may see your honorable deeds”; the second is the somewhat enigmatic expression ἐν ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς. Both commentators and modern translations reveal various understandings of what the Greek denotes here. Some interpreters, for example, distinguish between the works that lead to slander and those that lead to praise by taking ἐν ᾧ temporally, while others consider it to in fact refer to the same deeds but from different perspectives. Consider here on the one hand the NRSV translation, which has “though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge,” while Volf⁴¹ may be at the other end of the spectrum when he reads it as signifying “the very actions which the Gentiles malign as evil deeds, [which] will ultimately be recognized by them as good deeds if Christians do consistently what non-Christians malign.” Be that as it may, the main issue is that some aspects of the Christians’ lives are observable by the Gentiles and that this observance has a missional effect, namely the glorifying of God ἐν ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς. But what does that last expression signify? Some argue that, if it denotes a real missional (missionary) effect, it must refer to something that happens in the present time and life of the onlookers, thus representing for them an opportunity to react. So the expression might denote the conversion of the Gentiles and the resulting praise for their salvation.⁴² Others see it as clearly pointing to the final day of judgment.⁴³ The focus of the missional effect might point to a present “visitation,” while the author of 1 Peter’s concern with eschatological judgment (1:5, 7, 13; 4:7, 17; 5:1) and other passages such as Wisd 5:1–4 and Phil 2:10–11 might point to the eschatological future. The various arguments used for the present or eschatological “visitation” also make some scholars conclude that the expression is in fact ambiguous, and thus they leave it open.⁴⁴ I myself would argue

41. Miroslav Volf, “Soft Difference: Theological Reflections on the Relation between Church and Culture in 1 Peter,” *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 15–30.

42. See here E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: MacMillan, 1974), 171; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 472; Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde,” 128–31; Georg Schückler, “Wandel im Glauben als missionarisches Zeugnis,” *ZMRW* 51 (1967): 292–94.

43. E.g., Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 178; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 172: “. . . final judgment, by which time Peter hopes that unbelievers who have observed the good works . . . will have come to faith in Christ.”

44. E.g., Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 160; Olsson, *Första Petrusbrevet*, 116–17.

that those pointing to the present sense have strong arguments when reading the statement in its present Petrine context; cf. here especially 3:1 that is provided as an example of what 2:12 is all about. Hence, I read it as a missional text focusing on the present.

Furthermore, the good behavior of the Christians should silence the slander from "the others" (v. 15). 1 Peter provides a further exposition of these issues by commenting on the roles of slaves (2:1–25) and wives (3:1–6). These exhortations may remind one of the other household codes of Ephesians (5:21–6:9) and Colossians (3:18–4:1). The sections represent exegetical and not just hermeneutical problems of their own, especially for modern readers. However, they should be read and interpreted in light of the troublesome times and situations the Christians of 1 Peter were facing.⁴⁵ Women and slaves were especially vulnerable if they converted to the Christian faith and joined the Christian gatherings, as the women could probably no longer participate in the familial cults, and the slaves were facing problems of their own in the homes, especially related to their sexual vulnerability.⁴⁶

Yet the honorable and good deeds of 1 Peter are probably not to be restricted to slaves and wives alone; 2:11–12 (cf. 3:16) is more general and has in view the more general observable conduct of Christians in society. One might nevertheless ask if the issue of the good acts being observable by the general public might point to some very specific good works. What kind of works might these texts denote? Van Unnik is of the opinion that the indication that the ἀγαθοποιοί are praised (2:12) may have a more specific meaning, namely, that the good works were observed as distinguished in some way and may thus even point to special honor lists where εὐεργέται are praised for their work for the good of the community at large.⁴⁷ Such benefactors were often honored by tablets in the marketplace extolling the great services they had rendered to the city. Winter has carried this argument somewhat farther. He suggests that "Christians of substance were taught to seek the welfare of the city in the public domain by undertaking benefactions as part of their responsibilities in accordance with the will of God."⁴⁸ Winter argues this, inter alia, by pointing to the possibility that Jer 29:7 ("seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf") may have been central to these first Christians, motivating them to perform good works for the benefit of the city.

45. The study of Betsy J. Bauman-Martin, "Women on the Edge: New Perspectives on Women in the Petrine Haustafel," *JBL* 123 (2004): 253–79 is a good example of a competent reading of this sort in opposition to some feminists' rejection of the texts.

46. See here, e.g., *ibid.*, 265–74.

47. W. C. van Unnik, "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter," 93; Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 173.

48. See Bruce W. Winter, "The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13.3–4 and 1 Peter 2.14–15," *JSNT* 34 (1988): 87–103. Now also published in *idem*, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 25–40; cf. pp. 11–23. Quotation is from p. 26.

Benefactions were an important feature of Roman societies, and the suggestions by both van Unnik and Winter are refreshing. A closer reading of the texts, however, suggests to me that it remains to be proven that these texts of 1 Peter, in fact, really do encourage the Christians to be such benefactors. According to my reading, the following observations suggest that Winter is generalizing too much about the readers. First, the admonition of 1 Pet 2:13–17 is too general and thus not explicitly or especially directed to “Christians of substance.” Second, if these admonitions were related to benefactors and benefactions, one might have expected that some use of words from the important *εὐεργετέω* group would have been applied in 1 Peter.⁴⁹ But they are completely absent. Third, as Winter himself admits,⁵⁰ there must have been Christians of considerable means present if public benefactions were in focus here. However, because the exhortations in 1 Pet 2:13–17 are rather general with no further specifications of the addressees and because the readers of 1 Peter, when characterized, are described as *παρόικοις* and *παρεπιδήμιοις* (1:1, 17; 2:12), it seems somewhat farfetched to presuppose that rich benefactors are the focus of 1 Pet 2:13–17.⁵¹ Finally, while there are many explicit and implicit references to OT texts in 1 Peter, I don’t see any reference to Jer 29:7 in 1 Peter or in the rest of the NT. All this, taken together, does not make the interpretation of van Unnik and Winter impossible, but the cumulative effect seems to me to make it rather improbable or at least not necessary.

Furthermore, when reading this exhortatory section in light of its literary context, other interpretations of the good works concerned are more plausible. J. H. Elliott pertinently pinpoints that in the context here *ἀγαθοποιέω* is the positive antonym of *κακοποιέω* and should be read in light of the similar contrasts of right and wrong behavior found in the letter. The word *ἀγαθοποιέω* can hardly by itself refer to benefactions as in 1 Pet 2:20 it is used in conjunction with slaves. Finally, the right behavior suggested by the author is actions socially approved not so much by their coinhabitants or local authorities but by God as deeds in accord with the will of God.⁵² Admittedly, as K. H. Jobes⁵³ concludes, works of public benefaction cannot be excluded from the author’s intention, but it would hardly be the

49. On the importance of these words in contexts of benefactions/benefactors, see F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Greco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982); cf. his “Benefactor,” *ABD* 1:669–71.

50. Cf. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, 37; on p. 21, he even says that “in 2:14–15 Christians of substance were called upon to continue to be benefactors.” This seems to me to be an overstatement.

51. Winter reads 1 Pet 2:13–17 together with Rom 13; the warnings of J. J. Meggitt of his reading of Rom 13 might very well be relevant for 1 Peter too. See J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); concerning Rom 13, see pp. 127–28.

52. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 492; Similarly, also Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 129; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 175.

53. *Ibid.*, 176.

first “good work” that came to the readers’ minds as they struggled to survive and win their neighbors’ respect in their local communities.

But it remains that the author of 1 Peter suggests that these various good works are to have an impact on those observing them. However, their primary purpose is not to elicit praise of the Christians.⁵⁴ They may lead to Gentiles praising *God* (2:12; cf. Matt 6:16), they are “to silence the ignorance of the foolish” (2:15, cf. 3:16), and the unbelieving husbands of the Christian wives “may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct” (3:1). This is their anticipated missional effect.

A few decades ago there was a now well-known debate between David J. Balch and John H. Elliott on how to understand the Petrine author’s advice concerning the Christian attitudes to life: Was he in fact advocating a kind of assimilation to the culture of their societies (Balch), or was it rather the opposite (Elliott)?⁵⁵ We cannot review that debate here, but I have dealt with it in another work.⁵⁶ And I would still maintain that the author of 1 Peter is not arguing for assimilation; but neither is he arguing for isolation with regard to their compatriots in the villages, towns, and cities they inhabit. Volf characterizes the attitude suggested by Peter thus: “1 Peter stresses soft difference. I do not mean weak difference, for in 1 Peter the difference is anything but weak. It is strong, but it is not hard.”⁵⁷ What the author of 1 Peter is exhorting his readers to adopt is a way of living in which the life and strength of the Christian communities are the primary focus in light of local discrimination and harassment. But that being said, their lives are a kind of dialectic living. While promoting intragroup coherence and mutual love, their life among “the others” is to be blameless (i.e., holy; 1:16) in the eyes of their God and honorable in the eyes of their compatriots in their local settings. The honor of these Christians is important to the author.⁵⁸ Yet so also is the honor of God. And here is the core of the missional dimension of this letter; the church is to promote the mission of God in the world (2:6–9); its *raison d’être* is *Soli Deo Gloria*.

MISSIONAL PROCLAMATION AND THE ROLE OF THE WORD

I will now take a closer look at some passages in which the role of the “Word” or related concepts is central in 1 Peter. From this analysis I will

54. So correctly observed by Giesen, “Lebenszeugnis in der Fremde,” 129.

55. See on this debate D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); David Balch, “Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter,” in *Perspectives on 1 Peter* (ed. C. H. Talbert; Special Studies Series; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 79–101; and John H. Elliott, “1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch,” in *ibid.*, 61–78.

56. Seland, “Conduct Yourselves.” See also Horrell, “Between Conformity and Resistance.”

57. Volf, “Soft Difference.”

58. John H. Elliott, “Disgraced yet Graced: The Gospel according to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25 (1995): 166–78; and Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

argue that the role of preaching is important in the author's perception of the missional character of the life of the early Christians. Many studies have focused on the role of works, that is, ethics, in 1 Peter. I will here argue that the role of the "Word" was pivotal when the readers became Christians and that it is also considered crucial in their present missional strategies, together with "works." They are thus both central parts of the missional practices encouraged in 1 Peter.

The Missional Role of the "Word" in 1 Peter

According to my reading of 1 Peter, the author perceives the preaching of the Word to be pivotal in the lives of these Christians. The missional role of the Word is presented as crucial in three different contexts: (a) in the initial missional works of those who ministered the gospel to the readers (1:12, 25; 2:9), (b) in the Christians' present proclamation (2:9), and (c) in their apologetic efforts to their neighbors (3:15).

The First Missional Activities:

How They Came to Faith in the Gospel (1:12, 25)

The author of 1 Peter seems to presuppose that his readers have been exposed to some sort of preaching of the Word and that by way of that preaching they became "Christians" (1 Pet 4:16).

In 1 Pet 1:3–12 it is, *inter alia*, stated that they have been born anew (see also 1:23) to a living hope, to an imperishable inheritance kept in heaven. This great salvation is something about which the ancient prophets prophesied. It was revealed to them that they served not themselves but generations and times to come, that is, they were serving people like the readers, "in the things which have now been announced to you by those who have preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven (*ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισμένων ὑμᾶς [ἐν] πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ*). The author of 1 Peter is here anchoring the message proclaimed to the readers in the ancient Scriptures, in the message of the venerated prophets. The message is also linked to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1:3). This message, furthermore, has been "disclosed, announced, proclaimed, taught"⁵⁹ by those who "preached the gospel" to them (*διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς*). The use of this verb here is crucial, its being the most important term in the NT writings for proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ: "Εὐαγγελίζεσθαι is not just speaking and preaching; it is proclamation with full authority and power."⁶⁰ Hence, in using the verb *εὐαγγελίζομαι* (1:23) he uses one of the most common terms among the early Christians denoting the propagation of the gospel. Scholars often suggest that it was Paul who established the term in the vocabulary of the NT, but he was probably not the first to take

59. These are the terms suggested by BDAG 59.

60. TDNT 2:720.

up this phraseology because it was familiar to his readers. Its popularity can be gathered from its prevalence in most of the NT writings, the Johannine writings being the major great exception.⁶¹ The even greater prevalence of the noun in the NT confirms the popularity of the concept.

Much ink has been spilled on the investigation and description of the background of this “gospel” terminology, and it should probably be considered by now an established fact that it “carries two sets of resonances”⁶² in the world of these early Christians. On the one hand, both the noun and the verb were associated with the emperor and what we might call “the emperor cult.” On the other hand—and more important in our context—is the OT background.⁶³ To Paul, it probably meant that the gospel he proclaimed was the fulfillment of some important Isaianic passages; his gospel was the fulfillment of Isa 40 and 52. Even though the evidence is sometimes somewhat meager, one might surmise that the popularity of these terms outside the Pauline letters was partly due to their hermeneutical ability to provide associations to both the central Isaianic passages of Isa 40 and 52, while on the other hand they could also prove themselves functional in the wider Greco-Roman world due to the prevalence of these terms in contexts of emperor ideology and the related cult. The next occurrence of *εὐαγγελίζομαι* in 1 Peter at least supports an understanding of an Isaianic background such as this.

1 Peter 1:23–25 contains a description of the imperishable seed from which the readers have been born again; the living and enduring Word of God.⁶⁴ This description draws upon Isa 40:6–8. It breaks off, however, at v. 9, and in its place the author of 1 Peter offers a *pesher*-like comment: “And this is the word that was preached to you” (τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθῆν εἰς ὑμᾶς).⁶⁵ Here the reference to Isa 40:9 as its pretext is not to be mistaken as the author anchors the steadfastness and trustworthiness of the proclaimed Word to the words of this ancient prophet. While thus the point of the author of 1 Peter is to anchor the belief of his readers in the Scriptures, he also provides evidence to us as readers of the importance of the early preaching of the Word of God. The *διὰ* refers to the

61. We might also note that the verb is not to be found in Mark and the Pastoral Epistles.

62. I owe this expression to N. T. Wright, “Paul’s Gospel and Caesar’s Empire,” in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 164.

63. Cf. the older work of Einar Molland, *Das paulinische Euangelion: Das Wort und die Sache* (Avhandling utgitt av Det norske Videnskabs. Akademi i Oslo II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse. 1934. No. 3; Oslo: Dybwad, 1934), esp. pp. 14–38, who strongly downplays the impact of the emperor cult. See now also Peter Stuhlmacher, *Das paulinische Evangelium*, vol. 1: *Vorgeschichte* (FRLANT 95; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), and Graham Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9–62.

64. On the Word of God as the “Gospel,” see Michael W. Pahl, “The ‘Gospel’ and the ‘Word’: Exploring Some Early Christian Patterns,” *JSNT* 29 (2006): 211–27.

65. The verb *εὐαγγελιζεσθαι* in this statement is clearly taken from Isa 40:9: ἐπ’ ὄρος ὑψηλὸν ἀνάβηθι, ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Σιών· ὑψώσον τῆ ἰσχύι τὴν φωνήν σου, ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Ἱερουσαλήμ· ὑψώσατε, μὴ φοβεῖσθε· ἐπιπὼν ταῖς πόλεσιν Ἰουδα Ἰδοὺ ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν.

means of their rebirth, and the εἰς ὑμᾶς at the end of the statement also emphasizes the role of this preaching in their renewal. He could simply have written ὑμῖν, but the expanded form εἰς ὑμᾶς emphasizes the role of this preaching *to them*.⁶⁶

It is, furthermore, important to note what this preaching has brought forth. As the reference to the preaching of the Word of God to the readers is emphasized at the end of both 1:3–12 and 1:22–25, it underlines the Word in bringing forth the gifts of God here mentioned: by way of the Word, the readers are born anew to a living hope (1:3, 23); they have been partakers of an inheritance kept in heaven (1:4); and it has made them able to gain the salvation of their souls (1:9).

The author does not tell who these early preachers were or when they preached in these areas, but they are perceived to have been the primary means of the readers' conversion.⁶⁷ Three views have been in vogue in recent research concerning how the gospel was preached in the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1): Peter⁶⁸ or some of his collaborators may have been preaching in these areas, some of the Christians may have met the gospel in Jerusalem at the Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, or the Christians in the area may be the fruit of the missionary activities by Paul and his co-workers. In her recent commentary, however, Karen H. Jobes has offered another and more innovative theory; she argues that the Christians addressed in this letter were people deported from Rome by the emperor Claudius; that is, they were part of the peoples sent out from Rome in order to colonize these regions (1 Pet 1:1). This theory would then explain their status as παροῖκοι and παρεπιδήμοι (1:17, 2:11), it would explain how they had a relationship with Peter and even how they became Christians; they had been evangelized (1:25) in Rome and been in

66. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 392.

67. It might be a somewhat strange issue to some, that when considering the issue of traveling missionaries in the first century, we do not have much evidence to go by, especially not if we use the model of congregations sending out "missionaries." For a discussion of these historical issues, see now I. Howard Marshall, "Who Were the Evangelists?" in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein; WUNT 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 251–63; and Reidar Hvalvik, "In Word and Deed: The Expansion of the Church in the Pre-Constantinian Era," in *ibid.*, 265–87. Marshall (p. 263) concludes: "there is no doubt that the 'work' in which Paul found himself engaged in as an apostle along with his coworkers was for him the fundamental means of mission. Beside this the work of evangelism by the congregations which he had founded was of lesser importance. Nevertheless, such evangelism did go on, and when it happened Paul rejoiced in it. . . . Itinerant evangelism and local evangelism were carried on side by side." Hvalvik is somewhat more reluctant and sees the apostles (in a wide sense of the term) as the main missionaries in the first century. In the second and third centuries, according to Hvalvik, the "missionary" work was carried out primarily by the local congregations and their leaders. See also Tärrech, "The Mission according to the New Testament: Choice or Need?" 231–37. For a further discussion of this issue, focusing on the letter to the Philippians, see Ware, *The Mission of the Church*.

68. This is now strongly argued by Ben Witherington III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians 2; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007).

contact with Peter there. Jobes's theory is bold, but there is not much more substance in the letter for this theory than the theories that they were evangelized in situ, a view Jobes surmises "is based on sheer speculation."⁶⁹

Be that as it may, it remains that, according to 1:3–12 and 1:22–25, the preaching of the Word of God was the source of life for these Christians. The importance of the proclamation of the Gospel is also emphasized by the important saying of 1 Pet 2:9.

The Christians' Own Present Proclamation (1 Peter 2:9)

1 Peter 2:9 contains a lot of OT-based characterizations of the Christian readers. Most interesting in this context is the statement of v. 9b: "in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (NRSV; ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς). This passage represents a challenge to every reader who wants to dig into the meaning of its various parts. However, here we shall focus only on a single word and its meaning in this Petrine context: the possible missional denotation of ἐξαγγέλλω.

The translation of this term has been fairly unanimous in recent Bible versions. Most often it is translated as "declare" (NIV), "show forth" (ASV), or "proclaim" (NRSV).⁷⁰ BDAG (p. 343) also favors the translations "proclaim" and "report." The commentaries have likewise been quite unanimous; translations such as "proclaim" in a public setting dominate.⁷¹ D. L. Balch, however, in a small appendix in his study on the domestic code in 1 Peter, strongly argued for another understanding of the term. According to him, the verb ἐξαγγέλλω should not be understood so much as denoting public proclamation or praises as praises in worship *to God*. He states that, when considering the term in the Septuagint, he finds that "the proclaiming is always *to God* in worship."⁷² Hence, it should not be considered a missional term, denoting public proclamation. In this latter statement, Balch is followed by Ramsey Michaels.⁷³ Furthermore, according to Balch, there is no reference in 1 Peter to the "task" of all Christians doing missionary preaching.

69. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 26.

70. A review of the Bible versions on my own desktop shows very little variation in their translations: KJV, Darby, ASV: "show forth"; ESV, NRSV, NET Bible: "proclaim"; NIV: "declare"; Norwegian translations (NO) of 1930, 1973, 1978/85, 1988, 2005: "forkynne (preach)"; similar also in Danish and Swedish translations; German Elberfelder 1905 ("verkündigt") and Luther 1912: "dass ihr verkündigen sollt"; French Louis Segond 1910 has "annoncier"; cf. Spanish (Reina Valerea 1909 and 1989): "anunciéis."

71. See, e.g., Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 167; D. Edmund Hiebert, *First Peter: An Expositional Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 144; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 149; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 166; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 110, and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 439, 448. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 110–11; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 116; and Green, *1 Peter*, 62, try to combine both worship and cultic settings.

72. D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, 133.

73. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 110: "Whether directed to God or to the worshipping community, the "proclamation" involved in the verb ἐξαγγέλλειν belongs in the category of worship, not missionary activity."

Both of these interpretations are challenged here; the first is especially to be challenged in this section; the other is challenged by this study as a whole. Balch's main argument runs like this: "in contexts where ἐξαγγέλλω refers to proclaiming the praises, deeds, righteousness, or works of God, the proclaiming is always to God in worship (cf. Pss 9:15[14]; 55:9[56:8]; 70[71]:15; 72[73]:28; 78[79]:13; 106[107]:22; 118[119]:13, 26; Sir 18:4; also Philo, *Plant.* 128)."74

First, the verb ἐξαγγέλλω is found 12 times in the LXX, of which Balch lists 9 above. While some of those pointed out by Balch above probably point to a cultic setting, others are not that obvious. Psalms 9:15 and 72:28 contain the phrase "in the gates of daughter Zion" (ἐν ταῖς πύλαις τῆς θυγατρὸς Σιών), characterizing the location where this ἐξαγγέλλω is to be found.⁷⁵ Whether these gates are the gates to the sanctuary or the gates of the city,⁷⁶ the ἐξαγγέλλω probably should be understood as a kind of public proclamation, because the context is rather public (see vv. 12 and 16: "I will proclaim your praises").

Furthermore, there are two passages not mentioned by Balch, namely, Sir 39:10 and 44:15.⁷⁷ Here διηγέομαι and ἐξαγγέλλω are used together; the first denotes the proclamation of the Gentiles and the second of an assembly ("ἐκκλησία"—Israel?). Whether the latter is to be read as denoting a cultic setting is not obvious from the context, but even if it is, the proclamatory and public aspect of the ἐξαγγέλλω when used in this way together with διηγέομαι should not be overlooked because they are part of a parallel construction.

Second, 1 Pet 2:9 alludes to Isa 43:21, in which it is stated λαόν μου, ὃν περιποιησάμην τὰς ἀρετὰς μου διηγείσθαι. The author of 1 Peter has changed the verb from διηγέομαι to ἐξαγγέλλω: λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε. The reason for this change is not obvious. Balch would probably say that 1 Peter is thus emphasizing the cultic aspect of this act, but the reason could well be much simpler. The author saw the two verbs as synonymous (cf. here Sir 39:10, 44:15; and Philo *Plant.* 128).

74. D. L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, 133.

75. In Ps 9:15, this phrase is also to be found in the Hebrew text; in Ps 72:28 (LXX) it is an addition.

76. OT commentators vacillate here: H. J. Kraus (*Psalmen* [Biblischer Kommentar 15/1–2; Neukirchener Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966], 2:768) reads Ps 87:2 as relating to the temple, while others point to the gates of the city at large. On 9:14 (LXX 9:15), see P. C. Graigie (*Psalms 1–50* [WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1983], 120), who reads Ps 9:14 as concerning the gates of the city: "in the public concourses." Compare Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC; Nashville: Word, 1990), 391–92, on Ps 87:2. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger (*Psalmen 51–100* [HTKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2000], 556) vacillate: "Der Psalm lässt mit der Formulierung 'Tore Sions' eigenartig in der Schwebe, unter welchem Aspekt Jerusalem dieser seine dreifache Bedeutung verwirklicht."

77. These two texts are almost identical: Sir 39:10, τὴν σοφίαν αὐτοῦ διηγῆσονται ἔθνη, καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον αὐτοῦ ἐξαγγελεῖ ἐκκλησία, and Sir 44:15, σοφίαν αὐτῶν διηγῆσονται λαοί, καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἐξαγγελεῖ ἐκκλησία.

Then third, the dominating function in classical Greek literature of ἐξαγγέλλω is to denote “to tell out, proclaim, make known.”⁷⁸ Many see this as the best translation of 1 Pet 2:9 too and thus as a term signifying the missional, proclamatory act of the readers.⁷⁹

According to our reading of this text then, it most probably reveals that the author of 1 Peter envisioned and even encouraged his readers to proclaim the gospel to their neighbors and family. This is corroborated by 1 Pet 3:1 in which he says “Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct” (NRSV). This passage is most often read as focusing on the *behavior* of the women in order to win their men without words (ἄνευ λόγου). But one should not overlook the fact that the same passage also contains a conditional statement as a background for the admonition εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ. They should try to win their husbands by their behavior if the men were disobedient to the Word, that is, the gospel!⁸⁰ How could they be disobedient to the Word if they did not know it? How could they be disobedient to it if it had not been proclaimed to them (cf. Rom 10:14–16)? Hence, the behavior of the women is important, but that is as a secondary or supplementary way of winning their husbands; the proclamation of the Word is the primary way. The missional aspect of this passage is thus obvious, also being emphasized by the term κερδαίνω (cf. 1 Cor 9:19–23).⁸¹

Finally, in this section one should also point to 1 Pet 4:11, where those who “speak” are exhorted to speak as the word of God. Hence, the Word of God, that is, the gospel, is important for all the Christians as they are to proclaim the praises of God, and they are to have the gospel as the standard for their public witnessing.⁸²

78. LSJ 580.

79. For this translation of 2:9, see J. Schniewind, “ἐξαγγέλλω,” *TDNT* 2:69: “This word occurs only in 1 Pet. 2:9 in the sense of ‘publishing abroad.’” For the missional, proclamatory sense of the term, see Steuernagel, “An Exiled Community as a Missionary Community: A Study Based on 1 Peter 2,9.10,” 183; Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 134, 149–50; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 166; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 406, 439, 448; McKnight, *1 Peter*, 110.

80. See on this passage also W. Bieder, *Grundkraft der Mission nach dem 1: Petrusbrief* (Zürich: Zollikon, 1950), 6–9.

81. See David Daube, “κερδαίνω as a Missionary Term,” *HTR* 40 (1947): 109–20. Daube here substantiates his view by drawing upon several rabbinic terms.

82. For the Word of God as the gospel, see Pahl, “The ‘Gospel’ and the ‘Word.’” For the gospel as the standard of public witnessing, one could, perhaps, also point to the enigmatic verses 1 Pet 3:18–20 and 4:6. These are, however, not directly related to the proclamation of the Word by the early Christians, but 3:18–20 concerns Christ, and the latter is unspecified. But two observations might nevertheless strengthen our argument about the missional role of the proclamation of the Word: note here the important terms κηρῦσσω (3:19) and εὐαγγελίζομαι, and we should also read 3:18–20 in light of the exemplary role Christ has in the rest of the letter (1:15, 16; 2:21–24; 3:18a; and 4:1). For further study on these texts, see William Joseph Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6* (AnBib 23; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989), esp. 154–59; and now also Paul-Gerhard Klumbies, “Die Verkündigung unter Geistern und Toten nach 1Petr 3,19f und 4,6,” *ZNW* 92 (2001): 207–22.

The Missional Apologia of the Christians 3:15

Though the term ἐκκλησία is lacking, 1 Peter abounds in group-ideology-promoting characterizations, and the author obviously also presumes the existence of some form of group structures among its readers.⁸³ The readers are characterized as “chosen” (1:1; cf. 2:4–9), “beloved” (2:11), and “obedient children” (2:14), and they are given the name “Christians” (4:16).⁸⁴ For the first time the term *race* (γένος, 2:9) is applied to the Christians, a term much more prominent in the second century A.D., and it is said that “once you were no people (λαός), but now you are God’s people” (2:10). Most of these terms are taken from descriptions of Israel in the Hebrew Bible, and so they strengthen the feelings of belonging to a new group, perhaps understood as the new or restored Israel. A term such as “brotherhood” (ἀδελφότης; 2:17, 5:9) also affirms the group. Furthermore, the readers are exhorted to love one another (3:8), to serve one another (4:10), and to offer willingly hospitality to one another (4:9). Both their status as Christians and their present lives are rooted in the Christology; Christ is the one who ransomed them from “the futile life inherited from their fathers” (1:18) as well as being the paradigm for their lives (2:21–25).

Terms and descriptions such as these are not to be considered theological descriptions only. They also have important social significance: they provide an awareness and feeling of belonging to a group and are pivotal in forming an understanding of the nature of one’s group.⁸⁵ Descriptions of the “before and now” conditions of the readers (cf. 1:14), the author’s pinpointing of situations of “us” and “them” (cf. 4:3–4),⁸⁶ are also identity-forming characterizations.

This context is important to have in mind for understanding the admonition given in 1 Pet 3:15 (“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you”), and especially its last part; the Christians are to be ready to defend their faith (ἔτοιμοι αἰεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία πάντῃ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος). In a former

83. For group-ideology-promoting characterizations, I draw on some material from my own study “Conduct Yourselves” but also add some modifications on my view of mission set forth there. For group structures among readers, see Jürgen Roloff, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament* (NTD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 268–78; Horst Goldstein, *Paulinische Gemeinde im Ersten Petrusbrief* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1975); Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 36–37; Kevin Giles, *What on Earth Is the Church? An Exploration in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 161–68.

84. For more on the term *Christian* in 1 Peter, see David G. Horrell, “The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Peter 4:16 and the Formation of Christian Identity,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 361–81, and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 789–97.

85. On the importance of issues such as these regarding belonging, see K. Liebkind, *The Social Psychology of Minority Identity: A Case Study of Intergroup Identification, Theoretical Refinement and Methodological Experimentation* (2nd ed.; Helsinki: Department of Social Psychology–University of Helsinki, 1979).

86. This aspect is also clearly present in the descriptions of the readers in 1:1, 17, and 2:11 as παροίκους and παρεπιδήμιους, irrespective of how one wants to construe the meaning of these terms.

study,⁸⁷ I suggested that their “missionary” profile should probably be understood in analogy to the Jewish Diaspora communities, not being active as missionaries but welcoming proselytes to come in. I now have come to realize, however, that this is too weak a model. The Christians of 1 Peter are exhorted to have a much more active role in society concerning their faith. In addition to the texts dealt with above, the apologetic emphasis of 1 Pet 3:15 is another strong indicator of this missional attitude. In order to understand further the impact of this aspect, one should ask if this admonition is something given only to their leaders or to Christians in general.

When it comes to the social organizational structures of their communities as leadership and community centers, we are not very well informed. The author obviously presumes there are “elders” (5:1–5) and exhorts them “to tend the flock not by constraint but willingly” and to be examples for the flock, Christ being the “chief shepherd” (5:4). There is nothing in the letter dealing with places and times of gathering. Considered in light of the other NT writings and the fact that church buildings are not known from this century at all, they probably were supposed to—and most probably did—gather in private houses.⁸⁸ Furthermore, considering the general nature of the admonition in 3:8 (πάντες), it is most probably meant not only for the leaders of the Christian groups but for everyone. All are to sanctify Christ in their hearts (3:15a), and likewise they are all to be ready to give account of the hope they have; that is, they are to be able to explain the contents and the relevance of the gospel to those who ask.

One might, however, proceed a little further by asking whether the author here thinks about a judicial context, a trial “in foro,” or just the general and day-to-day experiences of being asked and questioned about their faith. The admonition of 3:15 may give occasion for some forensic associations to arise. The author seems to envision that the readers could be taken to court for being Christians, as indicated by 2:13–15, 20 and 4:15. The passage of 3:15–16 certainly has a forensic ring to it. The term found here (ἀπολογία) is used in other NT texts concerning formal defense in court against specific charges (Acts 22:1, 25:16; 2 Tim 4:16). On the other hand, “In a more general sense, ἀπολογία refers to an argument made in one’s own behalf of misunderstanding or criticism (1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11).”⁸⁹ Philippians 1:7, 16 may also be close to 1 Pet 3:15.

One might here think of the examinations of Christians as carried out by Pliny and recounted in his letter to Emperor Trajan. But this correspondence is late, and as stated by Pliny. It came into being because he considered the situation that had developed to be rather new. Furthermore, most

87. Seland, “Conduct Yourselves,” 185.

88. E. W. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 277–80; Gehring, *House Church and Mission*.

89. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 188.

scholars today do not see persecutions instigated by the Roman authorities evidenced in 1 Peter but rather situations of local harassments and discrimination. Looking for the social setting of this apology, one should probably not come down on the side of legal examinations in court only, though these situations cannot be excluded.⁹⁰ The specification of ἀεὶ, “always,” and the phrase “to everyone who asks” (παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι) suggest that this refers more to day-to-day questionings of informal social settings.⁹¹ Maybe Michaels is close to the intention of the author when he says that “Peter sees his readers as being ‘on trial’ every day as they live for Christ in a pagan society.”⁹²

We have thus demonstrated that, according to 1:3–12 and 1:22–25, the preaching of the Word of God was the source of life for these Christians. Furthermore, the importance of the proclamation of the gospel is also emphasized in this letter by the important saying of 1 Pet 2:9 (cf. also 3:1 and 4:1), according to which the readers are to proclaim the praises of him who called them out of darkness and into his marvelous light. The Christians of 1 Peter are, however, suffering various kinds of opposition and local harassments. In these conditions, they are exhorted to be constantly ready to give account of the hope of which they are partakers.

We thus find in 1 Peter that the author envisages Christians who have to stand up for their faith; we do not always get a clear picture of what kind of problems they have to cope with, but the author’s emphatic use of “sufferings” and his exhortations fully demonstrate the need for both theological and practical comfort. As aliens and temporary residents, they have a mission; as partakers of the grace of God they are missional witnesses by works and words.

CONCLUSIONS

Readers of 1 Peter have often been struck by the emphasis the author has on the value of good works. Our thesis is that words and works belong together as missional aspects of the lives of the Christians in the emergent church of 1 Peter. We started out with some comments on a model of mission, suggesting that there is not much to be found in 1 Peter that fits the more traditional model of someone as sender and someone as sent. Our

90. The question of the relevancy of Pliny’s letter for understanding 1 Peter has, however, been reopened in a new and interesting way by Horrell, “The Label,” 370–76. Horrell finds the type of conflict described by Pliny to be relevant for understanding the conditions of the Christians of 1 Peter, without at the same time stating that then 1 Peter must be close to the time of Pliny’s letter. See also J. Molthagen, “Die Lage der Christen im römischen Reich nach dem 1. Petrusbrief. Zum Problem einer Domitianischen Verfolgung,” *Historia* 44 (1995): 422–58.

91. Cf. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 243; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (Black’s New Testament Commentary; London: Black, 1969), 143; Green, *1 Peter*, 117; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter* (Reading the New Testament; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 149–50; Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter*, 179; and Elliott, *1 Peter*, 627.

92. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 188.

findings have supported that suggestion. Furthermore, I tentatively proposed to read 1 Peter as more in conformity with the model of being a “missional” church, a church representing God and his Gospel in daily life, thus participating in the works of God in the world.

The addressees of 1 Peter are characterized as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, in order (ὅπως) that they may proclaim the virtues of him that called them out of darkness into his marvelous light (2:9). Reading 1:12 and 25, 2:8–9, and 3:15, we found that not only was the preaching of the Word central when they came to faith themselves but proclaiming the Word was also important in their own witnessing and in the defense of their new faith. We did not find any suggestions about sending out “missionaries”; the letter focuses rather on the day-to-day witnessing to, proclaiming, and defending of the gospel. As aliens and temporary residents, they have a mission: as partakers of the grace of God, they are called to be witnesses by words and works.

Good works are also to be carried out toward “the others,” those outside (1 Pet 2:11–17; 3:1–2, 13–17; 4:4). The suggestion of Winter that these good works might be benefactions spent in their societies at large is hardly convincing. It presumes, *inter alia*, a level of economic means that is hardly conceivable as being the general situation among these Christians, and it does not convince in the light of the issue that the right behavior suggested by the author of 1 Peter is not so much social action approved by their neighbors as behavior resulting in praise to God.

The importance of the works of these early Christians has been the focus of several studies and is sometimes argued as being the primary if not the only way of witnessing. 1 Peter describes the situation of the Christians as being precarious because of their suffering from local harassments and discrimination. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising to find the author emphasizing the intragroup brotherly love and hospitality as important. Yet one should probably also keep in mind that in these close-knit societies the Christians were not living in isolation from neighbors and other onlookers. Hence, we suggested that the life within their communities was to some extent observable and thus also might be attractive to some.

1 Peter should thus be read as a missional letter, encouraging the members of the emerging churches—in spite of their perilous lives—to live the gospel by works *and* words, thus promoting the mission of God in the world and the praise due to him alone.