THE ROLE OF PETER IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

P J HARTIN

ABSTRACT
The Fourth Gospel highlights two characters, Peter and the Beloved Disciple. The question of their relationship is investigated to discover the roles they play in the narrative. In particular an examination is made of the texts where the Beloved Disciple and Peter occur together. The question of the contrast between them and its purpose is discussed. Finally, the possible symbolic roles they exercise is considered.

1 INTRODUCTION
Currently among scholars two opposing attitudes are evident on the role of Peter within the context of the Fourth Gospel. The one upholds a distinction between the roles of Peter and the Beloved Disciple and attributes a more important role to the Beloved Disciple; nevertheless, it rejects any anti-Petrine approach in the Gospel. As Brown writes: 'But Peter is not the special hero of the Johannine writer. The Beloved Disciple has that role; and the writer takes special interest in showing the Beloved Disciple's "primacy of love", a superiority that does not exclude Peter's possessing another type of primacy' (Brown 1971: 1006-1007). Other prominent supporters of this approach include Cullmann (1962:28-29) and members of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue group (see Brown, Donfried & Reumann 1973).

An opposite approach emphasises a strong anti-Petrinism in the Fourth Gospel together with a refusal to attribute any special role to him. Instead, he is replaced by the Beloved Disciple. As Snyder (1971:15) says: 'Into such a milieu the author of the Gospel of John puts forward another authority whose power depends on the reception of life from the incarnate Son and not on historical witness, or deification, or apocalyptic visions.' Important supporters of this approach include among others Titus (1957:220), Bacon (1910), Hoskyns & Davey (1958) and Maynard (1984: 531-548).

It is the intention of this article to examine those passages where Peter is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel and from this to discover the role that he exercised within this writing.

2 TABULATION OF PETER'S APPEARANCES IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL
The appearances of Peter in the Fourth Gospel occur in the following major sections:

1 The call of the disciples 1:35-51
2 The confession of Peter 6:66-71
3 The washing of the feet at the Last Supper 13:1-30
In most of the above narratives the person of the Beloved Disciple appears as well. Attention will be given first of all to the picture that is presented of Peter in the Gospel itself. Then, attention will be given to the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Snyder (1971:10) has noted how the narratives indicated above are in fact an outline of the major events in the life of Jesus.

3 THE OVERALL PICTURE OF PETER IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

3.1 The call of the disciples (Jn 1:35-51)
In many ways this is a Johannine parallel to the call of the disciples in the synoptic Gospels, although there are marked differences. In the Synoptic accounts two sets of disciples are called: Peter and Andrew, James and John (Mk 1:16-20). In contrast the Fourth Gospel records the call of an unknown disciple and Andrew. The latter in turn calls his brother Simon. What is noteworthy here, is that (1) Simon is not the first disciple to be called. His call is narrated, but it is indirectly mediated by his brother, Andrew. (2) The first two disciples to be called are an unnamed disciple and Andrew. This unnamed disciple is to be identified with the later unnamed disciple of John 18:15-17, who in turn is to be identified with the Beloved Disciple. 'One of the literary characteristics of the Fourth Evangelist is to mention in a casual and almost off-hand manner ideas which he intends to develop later, and it therefore seems very probable that the unnamed disciple is identical with the later "Beloved Disciple" ' (Maynard 1984:533). (3) In the call of Simon, Jesus changes the name of Simon to Peter. This change of name parallels the saying of Matthew 16:17-18: 'Blessed are you Simon, Bar-Jona....you are Peter.'

From this, two points emerge quite clearly. In the realm of discipleship, the first call of Jesus is now addressed to the Beloved Disciple. This is clearly intended to highlight his importance, to show that in the realm of following Jesus his position assumes the role that is given to Peter in the Synoptic tradition. However, at the same time the Fourth Evangelist does not refuse to give a special position to Peter. He acknowledges the change of name of Simon to Peter, an event that does not take place with any of the other disciples. This change of name, which comes from Jesus himself, is clearly meant to indicate some special function that Peter is to perform. The fact that it is mentioned at the very beginning of the Fourth Gospel, shows that the Evangelist does not intend to deny this function to Peter. Cullmann (1962:28) supports this perspective in that he says that the Evangelist 'nowhere attempts to deny directly the special role of Peter within the group of disciples.'

3.2 The confession of Peter (6:66-71)
While the change of name of Simon to Peter occurs early in the Fourth
Gospel, the account of the actual confession of Peter only takes place in chapter six. This parallels the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi in the Synoptic tradition (Mk 8:29; Mt 16:13-20; Lk 9:18-21). This is the only text in the Fourth Gospel which makes reference to the twelve, which gives evidence of its connection with traditional material (O'Grady 1979:62).

The context of this pericope is that of the Bread of Life discourse, where many of Jesus' disciples turned away from him because they found his teaching too strange and difficult to accept. Jesus turns to the twelve, and asks whether they too will abandon him. Again, as with the previous pericope discussed, the question relates to discipleship. The twelve are shown as remaining faithful to Jesus; they remain as true disciples. Peter appears in the way in which he occurs in the Synoptic tradition, as the spokesman of the twelve. At the same time Jesus acknowledges that one of them will betray his role as disciple, and refers to him as 'a devil'. Judas Iscariot is identified by the Evangelist as the person to whom Jesus is referring (Jn 6:71). In the confession of Peter, related in Matthew 16:13-20 and Mark 8:27-33, Peter fails to understand fully the nature of the Messiahship that Jesus has revealed, which leads to the rebuke of Jesus addressed to Peter: 'Get behind me, Satan!'

What is noteworthy about this comparison between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is that Peter is presented here in a good light. Whereas the Synoptics have presented Peter receiving a rebuke, the Fourth Evangelist does not mention it at all. If the Fourth Evangelist had taken an anti-Petrine stand, as authors like Snyder (1971:5-15) maintain, surely the Fourth Gospel's account would have developed the rebuke more fully. Instead, it omits it completely and redirects the rebuke of Jesus to Judas Iscariot. While in the Synoptics Peter is cast in the role of Satan, in the Fourth Gospel Judas Iscariot exercises this role.

At the same time Jesus' reaction to Peter's confession is much more neutral than occurs in the Synoptics. He does not praise Peter as he does in Matthew nor does he confer on him ecclesiastical authority. This is omitted. What is of concern to the Fourth Evangelist is the role of discipleship and not the role of authority. Peter as the spokesman of the twelve shows their acknowledgement of Jesus as the Holy One and their continued allegiance to Jesus, while others deserted him. This is the role that Peter exercises in this scene, and this is what the Fourth Evangelist wishes to focus upon.

3.3 The washing of the feet at the Last Supper (Jn 13:6-11)

Although there is no parallel in the Synoptic tradition, nevertheless the impulsive character of Peter that appears in this account of the Fourth Gospel is easily recognisable (Brown 1973:132-133). Peter does not understand the significance of what Jesus is doing, and in characteristic style he says: 'You shall never wash my feet' (Jn 13:8). When Jesus emphasises the necessity of this washing for salvation, Peter overreacts by asking for Baptism: 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' (Jn 13:9).

To my mind, Brown (1971:568) gives the most clear explanation of the meaning of this passage: 'The simplest explanation of the footwashing, then, remains that Jesus performed this servile task to prophesy
symbolically that he was about to be humiliated in death. Peter's questioning, provoked by the action, enabled Jesus to explain the salvific necessity of his death: it would bring men their heritage with him and it would cleanse them of sin.'

Peter appears here in exactly the same role as he did in his confession of Jesus where he failed to understand the full significance of what Jesus was teaching. When he does come to this realisation, he overreacts by asking to be washed all over. Jesus corrects Peter's overenthusiasm by making it clear that the footwashing alone is sufficient for having 'eternal life with Jesus' (Brown 1971:566).

3.4 Peter cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant (Jn 18:10-11)
All three synoptic Gospels mention the incident of the cutting off of the ear of the high priest's servant (Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:50). Only the Fourth Gospel identifies Peter as the swordsman. Peter's character emerges quite clearly here. His impetuosity is once more in evidence. At the same time he has succumbed to the violence against which Jesus had warned him at his confession at Caesarea Philippi. 'We are distantly reminded of Peter's failure to understand when Jesus spoke of the suffering Son of Man after the Caesarea Philippi confession and of Jesus' reprimand to him (Mk 8:31-33; Mt 16:21-23)' (Brown 1973:133). Once again the picture of Peter is in harmony with that presented in the Synoptic Gospels. Nothing more is being said here than was said in the Synoptic Gospels. This is a point that commentators such as Maynard (1984:538) fail to perceive. They try to overstate their case for the anti-Petrinism of the Fourth Gospel. The rebuke of Peter here finds its counterpoint in the rebuke of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Peter still shows he has failed to understand the teaching of Jesus as regards his Messiahship.

3.5 The predictions of the denials of Peter (Jn 13:36-38)
The account is very similar to that found in the Synoptics. However, John 13:36 has no Synoptic parallel: 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.' This verse foreshadows Jesus' final words to Peter on the manner of his death (Jn 21:18-19). This fits in well with what has been illustrated above on the Johannine stress on discipleship. Throughout Peter has been presented as the impulsive disciple. Now a further characteristic of his discipleship is revealed - he will fail in that he refuses to bear witness to Jesus. Consequently, his following of Jesus, his discipleship of Jesus, is something that is weak. At this point he is unable to follow Jesus to death on the cross. Later, after the resurrection, the situation changes where Peter comes to full discipleship.

From the picture that has emerged of Peter in the incidents where he appears alone, it is clear that Peter is called to discipleship, but his discipleship is one that does not fully understand the implications of the teachings of Jesus. He is the impetuous one, who acts as the spokesman of the twelve. His discipleship is weak and will ultimately lead to his inability and refusal to bear witness to Jesus. This picture of Peter presented by the Fourth Evangelist adds nothing new to the Synoptic tradition's picture of Peter. All the elements correspond to what is found
in the Synoptics, although perhaps presented with a somewhat different emphasis.

4 PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

Here attention is focused on those occasions in the narrative where Peter and the Beloved Disciple are mentioned together. The question that has to be answered is: What is the attitude of the Evangelist to these two characters? Is there such a rivalry between them that ultimately supports an attitude of anti-Petrinism on the part of the author?

4.1 Prediction of the betrayal (Jn 13:23-26)

Here the disciple 'whom Jesus loved' is named for the first time. The incidents of verses 23 and 24 are special to the Fourth Gospel and are significant for this investigation. Jesus had foretold that one of his closest associates was to betray him. This leads to confusion among the disciples. But, only two characters are named in their questioning of Jesus: Peter and the Beloved Disciple. The positions of these two disciples at the meal is significant. The Beloved Disciple is 'lying close to the breast of Jesus' (Jn 13:23). His intimacy with Jesus is stressed. Just as in John 1:18 Jesus is described as being in the Father's bosom, so too is the Beloved Disciple pictured in close relationship to Jesus. 'In other words, the Disciple is as intimate with Jesus as Jesus is with the Father' (Brown 1971:577). This disciple becomes the symbol for the true disciple of Jesus in that Jesus prays in John 17:20-23 that all believers should participate in such intimacy 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee... I in them and thou in me...'

True discipleship is presented as a discipleship of love.

Peter is presented as having a secondary role in this scene. He is at a distance at the meal. He has to nod to the Beloved Disciple to ask Jesus whom he meant. Peter here exercises his usual role of spokesman for the disciples. The Evangelist notes that 'the disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke' (Jn 13:22). It is Peter, then, who takes the initiative to find out to whom Jesus was referring. What is not noted sufficiently by the anti-Petrine scholars is the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Instead of an aspect of rivalry or opposition, it is clearly one of friendship and trust. Peter nods and the Beloved Disciple asks in compliance.

For the Johannine community who handed on these traditions the two most important disciples of Jesus were the Beloved Disciple and Peter. Peter was clearly the spokesman for all the disciples. Yet, the Beloved Disciple was the closest to Jesus' heart and mind. For this reason, he is the one who mediates the thoughts of Jesus. Without doubt the Beloved Disciple can be said to be the disciple who enjoys the primacy of love. His is a discipleship of love, and true discipleship is based on love. In this way he becomes the ideal of every disciple. This, however, does not take away from the role of Peter and his position within the group of Jesus' disciples. By giving attention to the discipleship of love exercised by the Beloved Disciple, the Evangelist does not imply that an opposition or rivalry exists with regard to Peter. His role is exercised in another direction.
4.2 Peter's denials (Jn 18:15-16)

In this episode a disciple appears who is known to the high priest. He went with Jesus into the court of the high priest (Jn 18:15), while Peter is refused admittance. Only when this unnamed disciple went outside and spoke to the maid at the gate was Peter allowed to enter. This sets the picture for Peter's denials of Jesus.

The identity of the unnamed disciple is much disputed. Lindars (1972:548) denies that one should connect him with the Beloved Disciple. However, there are very good reasons for making this identification. Above all, the only disciple who did not desert Jesus but remained faithful was the Beloved Disciple who is alone with Jesus' mother at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:25-27). It seems logical to presume that the same Beloved Disciple who alone remained faithful to Jesus is the only one to be with Jesus when he enters the high priest's courtyard. If the Beloved Disciple is not the unnamed disciple here, then it would mean that in fact two disciples did not abandon Jesus. This is somewhat difficult to harmonise with the saying of Jesus: 'The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone' (Jn 16:32). From the time of Jesus' passion he continued to remain faithful. At the same time, this disciple knew Peter very well and was concerned to see that he was admitted to the place of Jesus' suffering. This is another reason for arguing that the unnamed disciple was the Beloved Disciple.

In the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple no hint of rivalry or opposition between them is expressed. The point at issue is their discipleship. The Evangelist contrasts them in the way in which they fulfilled their discipleship of Jesus. The Beloved Disciple is the one who remains faithful. In fact he invites Peter into the courtyard and in this way extended to him the invitation to remain faithful. Instead, Peter failed dismally, as the Synoptic account also indicates.

4.3 At the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:25-27)

This is one account where the presence of the Beloved Disciple is central to the narrative. The absence of Peter is particularly noteworthy. This lends further support to the picture presented in the previous example. As a disciple the Beloved Disciple has remained faithful, while Peter has deserted Jesus. Much symbolical representation has been given to the figures of Mary and the Beloved Disciple over the course of the centuries. Without going into all the various suggestions and insights that have been offered, the view (evident in the writings of Origen [Brown 1971:924]) that presents the Beloved Disciple as an example for every Christian to emulate is worth noting. He is the true disciple who remained loyal to Jesus. Every Christian is to follow this example. Once more it is in the realm of discipleship that the Beloved Disciple emerges as primary.

Mahoney (1974) in his work on John 20:1-10 gives attention on a number of occasions (82-95; 228-237; 289-295) to the role of Peter within the Fourth Gospel and his relationship to the Beloved Disciple. I agree totally with Mahoney in his refusal to see a rivalry between Peter and the Beloved Disciple as well as to interpret them as merely symbolical characters (1974:248). It is certainly not the primary intention of the author to use his characters in this way and least of all to establish a rivalry between them. However, I feel that Mahoney tends to overstate his
case. While the author does not intend to establish a rivalry between Peter and the Beloved Disciple, this does not mean that there is no contrast at all between them, something which Mahoney tends to imply. The contrast lies on the level of their discipleship of Jesus. This is certainly the main concern of the author, and for him the persons of Peter and the Beloved Disciple demonstrate a contrast (not a rivalry) in the way they exercise their discipleship.

When Mahoney (1974:236) states that 'we have even less reason to regard the scene beneath the cross having anything at all to do with Peter' he rejects categorically what to my mind is the normal reading of this pericope. I agree that there is no intention to propose a rivalry with Peter in this passage. The main focus of attention is on the discipleship of Jesus to which the Beloved Disciple has remained faithful. To any reader the scene of the lonely disciple at the foot of the cross implies the absence of the other disciples of Jesus, in particular Peter to whom reference has been made more often than to any of the other disciples. The contrast that emerges in discipleship is inevitable.

4.4 The empty tomb (Jn 20:1-10)
In this narrative Peter retains his traditional role. When the women see that the stone has been rolled away from the tomb, they immediately return to report it to Peter and to the Beloved Disciple, referred to here as 'the other disciple'. This latter reference adds weight to the previous identification that had been made between the unnamed disciple and the Beloved Disciple.

The same relationship that was noted previously between Peter and the Beloved Disciple is evident here. They appear as friends, not as rivals between whom there is opposition and conflict. The Beloved Disciple is in Peter's company when they hear the news, and together they set out to see for themselves. Not too much should be read into the fact that the Beloved Disciple arrived at the tomb before Peter did. It is merely part of the dramatic effect of the scene. It serves as a way of highlighting what is in fact significant, namely the contrast in the reaction of Peter and the Beloved Disciple to what is seen. Peter entered and saw everything. Then, the Beloved Disciple entered 'and he saw and believed' (Jn 20:8). While no mention is made of the belief of Peter, it is the belief of the Beloved Disciple that is stressed.

Nonetheless, he wants to state in a dramatic context that the facts at the empty tomb demand the response of faith. The obvious character for this self-effacing role is he who performed like service in other contexts: the disciple whom Jesus loved.

(Mahoney 1974:260)

While drawing attention to the difference in the responses of Peter and the Beloved Disciple to the events in the tomb, Mahoney again refuses to acknowledge a contrast between them. I do agree that the contrast is not between Peter and the Beloved Disciple per se, nevertheless there certainly is a contrast in the way in which they responded to the events. This is again a contrast in discipleship.
Something similar takes place in John 21:4 and 7 where the Beloved Disciple recognises Jesus and says to Peter: 'It is the Lord.' 'The lesson for the reader is that love for Jesus gives one insight to detect his presence. The Beloved Disciple, here as elsewhere the ideal follower of Jesus, sets an example for all others who would follow' (Brown 1971:1005). For the Johannine community the Beloved Disciple shows what true discipleship entails. Through love one is led to true perception of the person of Jesus. This community saw its hero, the Beloved Disciple, in this role as the authentic disciple, the first one to come to faith in the risen Lord. While the Synoptic tradition (Lk 24:34) and Paul (1 Cor 15:5) present Peter as the first major witness to the risen Lord, what is stressed here is the faith that the Beloved Disciple demonstrates in the resurrection: he is the first to believe in the risen Lord. Whereas the Synoptic and Pauline traditions laid stress upon seeing, here the Evangelist emphasises belief in the resurrection. The first one to truly believe is the one who showed a special love for the Lord.

4.5 The appendix (Jn 21)
This chapter is highly significant. The characters of Peter and the Beloved Disciple are essential to the entire narrative.

4.5.1 The miraculous catch of fish (Jn 21:1-14)
In the narrative Peter takes the initiative in a number of ways: he is the one who says he is going fishing; he jumps first into the water to meet Jesus; and finally, when Jesus asks for some fish, he goes to bring the net ashore. What is significant is the interplay between Peter and the Beloved Disciple. As with the empty tomb, it is the Beloved Disciple who recognises that it is the Lord. It is not Peter. Instead, Peter again shows his impetuosity by jumping into the water to meet the Lord. It is significant that once again the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple is not characterised by rivalry: they are friends. The Beloved Disciple communicates his understanding to Peter. What ultimately emerges is that the Beloved Disciple, not Peter, is the one who is attuned to the Lord (Brown 1973:141). While the Beloved Disciple shows that it is love which leads to faith (which means he holds a special position in the realm of discipleship), the figure of Peter is presented more clearly as operating in another role. At Jesus' request, he goes to haul the net ashore, and the Evangelist comments 'and although there were so many, the net was not torn' (Jn 21:11). Many commentators have drawn attention to this image as a restoration of Peter to the primacy of 'the pastoral work of the Church' (Maynard 1984:541; cf also Bultmann 1971:709, 711; Barrett 1962:480; and Titus 1957:247). Here, the roles of Peter and the Beloved Disciple emerge more clearly. They are not to be seen in opposition, but as complementary. The Beloved Disciple is the one who exercises a primacy of a discipleship of love, while Peter exercises a primacy of pastoral care for the disciples.

4.5.2 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep' (Jn 21:15-17)
In this specific instance Peter is alone and the figure of the Beloved Disciple is not introduced. Maynard (1984:541) summarises the meaning of the particular passage very well when he says: 'Most feel that the matter
of the forgiveness of Peter for his denial is dealt with in this second unit of the chapter. All agree that the threefold question: "Do you love me?" reflects Peter's threefold denial of Jesus, and see in the charge to "Feed my lambs" or "my sheep" a restoration of Peter's pastoral authority. The command by Jesus to feed the sheep recalls to mind the Old Testament designation of the king as the shepherd of the people of Israel. Consequently, the image of shepherd bears with it an authority. But, the type of authority implied in John 21 is not that of a king, but an authority of care for the sheep which emanates from the love Peter has professed for Jesus. Throughout the Fourth Gospel the love of the Beloved Disciple has been stressed and has resulted in the picture of his emerging as the true and ideal disciple. Now, with regard to Peter, the very basis for his role of leadership and pastoral authority lies once again in his love for Jesus.

4.5.3 The death of Peter and the Beloved Disciple foretold (Jn 21:18-24)

Firstly, Peter's death is described in terms of a martyr's death. One can in fact connect this prophecy of Jesus with his teaching elsewhere in the Gospel. He had indicated in John 10:11 that part of the responsibility of a shepherd was that of laying down his life for his sheep. Consequently, when Peter is instructed to feed the sheep of Jesus the implication of laying down his life for them is already contained in his appointment by Jesus as shepherd. The conclusion 'Follow me' reminds one of Jesus' prophecy regarding the denials of Peter: 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward' (Jn 13:36). As shepherd Peter will follow Jesus into a martyr's death.

As regards the Beloved Disciple, Peter asks the question: 'What is to happen to him?' A number of important aspects emerge from this passage. It is to be noted that the Beloved Disciple was following Jesus and Peter. This is a characteristic way of illustrating discipleship. In this instance it refers to discipleship not only of Jesus, but also of Peter. Now, that Peter has been reinstated in his role of leadership within the community of believers, the Beloved Disciple is represented as being within this fold. While a confession of love was demanded of Peter, no such demand is made of the Beloved Disciple because he had always remained true and firm in his love for Jesus. His was the ideal discipleship of love. The type of death he is to die is not the same as Peter, but it is no less important. His witness to Jesus was not to be by a martyr's death, but it was to remain as a life in loving service and discipleship of Jesus.

The redactor concludes in John 21:24 by acknowledging that the Beloved Disciple had remained true to the commission of Jesus. He had continued to bear witness to the love of Jesus and the events and teachings of his ministry. The community of the Beloved Disciple in their turn bears witness to the role that the Beloved Disciple had exercised in bearing witness to this discipleship of love. Consequently, his witness is not inferior to that of the witness of Peter, 'neither is the community that depends on his witness' (Brown 1973:146). One could say that the Beloved Disciple had been established in an office of witness, a function which reaches its culmination in the emergence of the Fourth Gospel.

Here, ultimately lies the whole purpose in the mind of the Fourth
Evangelist: to show that the community of the Beloved Disciple is in no way inferior to the communities of the apostolic churches. Just as the apostolic churches trace their inspiration and authority to the person and witness of Peter, so does the community of the Beloved Disciple trace the authority and witness to that of this Beloved Disciple, who is the authentic witness established in this role by Jesus himself.

4.5.4 The purpose of chapter 21
The picture painted of Peter and his relationship with the Beloved Disciple remains consistent throughout the entire Gospel, including the appendix of chapter 21. Firstly, the picture agrees with that of the Synoptics, as has been indicated. Secondly, the importance of chapter 21 emerges only when one goes back through the Gospel and sees how in fact it has been prepared for. ‘The very fact that, in order to interpret chapter 21, we have constantly needed to refer back to the earlier chapters suggests that the thought pattern is not so markedly different’ (Brown 1973:146).

In upholding the pastoral authority of Peter, the Evangelist wishes in turn to place alongside it another disciple who exercises a discipleship which is equally important. In chapter 21 Peter has been rehabilitated. Previously in the Gospel Peter had shown that as a disciple he was lacking in much, whereas the Beloved Disciple pointed out from the very beginning of the Gospel what authentic discipleship entailed. Now at the end of the Gospel Peter has come to true faith, commitment and love in Jesus and is rehabilitated to the role of pastoral leader of the believers. This does not take away from the Beloved Disciple. The latter still retains his authentic role as witness to true discipleship of love. While Peter has shown vacillation, impetuosity, doubt, denial and ultimately returns to love and commitment, it is the Beloved Disciple who has remained firm and true in his witness to faith and love in the Lord Jesus. At the conclusion to the Gospel Peter stands as the one entrusted by Jesus with the role of pastoral primacy; while the Beloved Disciple remains entrusted with a long life that is dedicated to witnessing to the authentic discipleship of love. ‘Chapter 21 is not an attack on the pastoral authority of Peter; it is a demand for the recognition of another type of discipleship, just as authentic as that of the best known of the traditional apostles’ (Brown 1973:147).

5 CONCLUSION
In analysing the roles of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel, one has seen that it is not a role of rivalry, nor of opposition (Mahoney 1974:236). Instead, as friends each has a distinctive function to perform which is not lessened by the function that is given to the other. For Peter the function is that of exercising a pastoral authority. For the Beloved Disciple it is an exercise of discipleship of love and witness. For Peter one could speak of a primacy of pastoral leadership; for the Beloved Disciple it is a primacy of a discipleship of love and witness. Cullmann (1962:31) has rightly drawn attention to the fact that in the Fourth Gospel ‘the Risen One assigns a unique position to each of them for the future, but gives each of them a different role. Peter is installed in the office of shepherd; to the Beloved Disciple...he will have to fulfil a
task which, though similar, is nevertheless, as in the entire Gospel, of a somewhat different kind.'

Mahoney (1974:248) has rightly resisted every attempt to interpret Peter or the Beloved Disciple in terms of symbols because 'the possibilities are practically unlimited.' The importance of Peter and the Beloved Disciple comes not from the symbolism that one attributes to them, but from the roles that they play in the narrative (Mahoney 1974:261). This distinction must be faithfully observed. One can view the importance assigned to these respective roles of Peter and the Beloved Disciple from the perspective of the community of the Beloved Disciple. Why did they feel it necessary to emphasise these roles? Attention has been drawn by scholars such as Maynard (1984:545-546) and O'Grady (1979:62-63) to view the background of the Johannine community, as is evidenced by 3 John, as a possible scenario for this contrast. 3 John clearly bears witness to tension that is evident in the leadership of certain areas of the Christian church. In particular it concerned the way in which the authority of this leadership was being exercised. In 3 John a certain Diotrephes is exercising an authority in which he 'likes to put himself first' (3 Jn 9) and refuses to acknowledge the authority of the elder. There is clearly tension here arising from the way in which Diotrephes was exercising his authority, and refusing to acknowledge the authority of the elder (the Beloved Disciple? or at least someone from the Johannine community).

Further evidence of the way in which authority in the early church was being abused arises from 1 Peter where it is necessary for the author to issue advice on how authority is to be exercised: 'Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock' (1 Pt 5:2).

In this context the Fourth Gospel emerges. Institutionalisation had started within the early church as is evidenced by the Pastorals. At the same time some leaders were exercising their authority in a dominating manner as both 3 John and 1 Peter bear witness. Against this background the Fourth Gospel emerges and shows two important lessons. Firstly, the way in which the claim to authority should be exercised, and secondly the fact that another equally important authority exists in the early church, the authority of the Beloved Disciple.

In regard to the way in which the authority should be exercised, the Fourth Evangelist shows through the role of Peter that although he struggled in his adherence to Jesus, eventually he was rehabilitated. This was due to two factors: his love for Jesus, and his willingness to witness to Jesus through his death. Any claim to apostolic office in the early church must illustrate both these aspects of love and willingness to die a martyr's death. Consequently, as we have argued throughout this paper, the Fourth Evangelist is not opposed to Peter, neither is he opposed to the apostolic churches and offices that derive from him. What, however, he does emphasise is that if they are to make a claim to be in line with the mind and will of Jesus, they must illustrate forcefully the two conditions of love of Jesus and a willingness to witness to this love through death.

Secondly, the role of the Beloved Disciple shows that there is an equally important function that is exercised that does not deny the
authority of the apostolic churches, but makes a claim to an equal recognition of his function. The Beloved Disciple has shown what authentic discipleship is; it is based upon love. This love demands an authentic witness to the truth of the person of Jesus. This discipleship and witness has born fruit in the community of the Beloved Disciple. Consequently, this community lays claim to an equal recognition alongside those of the apostolic churches for their traditions as an authentic witness to the teachings of Jesus. The crisis in the Johannine community is even more acute in that the Beloved Disciple had already died.

Consequently, the community shows that whereas Jesus gave the Beloved Disciple the role of an authentic witness to the person of Jesus, he still exercises this function in the Fourth Gospel which continues to bear witness to his teaching.

The Beloved Disciple also illustrates the role of a discipleship of love as the authentic discipleship. The promise is made that the Paraclete will be given to all those true disciples of Jesus, to all those who love Jesus and keep the commandments (Jn 14:15-17). It will be this Paraclete who will bring all disciples into the truth (Jn 16:13). Consequently, one can agree with the conclusion of Brown (1979:84) who says that 'The Johannine Christians, represented by the Beloved Disciple, clearly regard themselves as closer to Jesus and more perceptive than the Christians of the Apostolic Churches.'

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Prof P J Hartin, Department of New Testament, University of South Africa, P O Box 392, PRETORIA, 0001, Republic of South Africa.