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Introduction to the Volume

Benjamin L. Merkle

STR Editor

This volume is dedicated to the study of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). The first three essays focus on the household metaphor or familial language. Paul uses many metaphors to describe the church. Perhaps the most common images are the church as the people of God, the body or bride of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The metaphor that is mostly used in the Pastoral Epistles, however, is that of the family or household. For example, in 1 Tim 3:5 and 12 a person qualified to be an overseer or deacon must know how to manage his household well before he is fit to hold an office in the church. An overseer is also said to be God's steward or manager (Titus 1:7)—one who manages the affairs of God's household or family. In 1 Tim 3:15 Paul explicitly calls the church the "household of God." The attitude toward different age groups in the church is likened to familial relationships (1 Tim 5:1–2). The church is to care for widows who are truly in need because they are part of the spiritual family (1 Tim 5:3–16). The metaphor of a house containing honorable and dishonorable vessels is used to encourage Timothy (2 Tim 2:20–21). Finally, Paul refers to Timothy and Titus as sons (1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1; Titus 1:4). Thus, it is fitting that several essays highlight this important theme.¹

The first essay is by Chuck Bumgardner, PhD student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this essay, "Kinship, Christian Kinship and the Letters to Timothy and Titus" he argues, contrary to a more critical approach of the Pastoral Epistles, that the kinship terminology does not invalidate the letters' claim of Pauline authorship. Instead, the sibling language is compatible with similar language used in the undisputed letters of Paul and is therefore not an indication of pseudonymity. Any dissimilarities in usage can be attributed to various scenarios Paul was addressing.

The second essay, by Greg Couser of Cedarville University, is a study of 1 Tim 5:1–2 and the nature of God's household. After a careful investigation of the passage, Couser maintains that Paul is not merely conforming to the social norms typical of Greco-Roman households but is extending a pre-existing and theologically-shaped concept of appropriate living in the household of God.

In the third essay, Greg Stiekes, professor of New Testament at Bob Jones

¹ Most of this paragraph comes from Benjamin L. Merkle, "Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry J. Wilder (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 174–75.

Seminary, addresses the question as to whether Paul's family metaphors are prescriptive and thus suggest a particular organizational structure as advocated by the Family-Integrated Church movement. After examining the metaphor of God's family in the Old Testament, the teachings of Jesus, and the writings of Paul, Stiekes concludes that Paul's use of familial language is not intended to instruct individual churches how they must organize their churches.

In the fourth essay, Tim Swinson of Liberty University examines the five uses of the phrase *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* ("the word is faithful") in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; and Titus 3:8). Swinson challenges the traditional interpretation that asserts that the phrase signals a distinct saying in the immediate context, usually occurring directly before or after the phrase. Instead, Swinson affirms the view that the "faithful saying" signals a reminder and affirmation of the fundamental, apostolic gospel message.

The next essay is a literature review of the Letters to Timothy and Titus (LTT) by Chuck Bumgardner. This essay provides a nearly comprehensive review and bibliography of literature on the LTT from 2009–2015. Bumgardner discusses scholarly commentaries, highlights important works on key topics (authorship, reception, language and structure, background, opponents, theology, Scripture, the church and ministry, and gender issues), and offers an extensive bibliography (commentaries, other works, and unpublished dissertations).

The final essay in this volume is an interview with Professor Ray Van Neste of Union University. Dr. Van Neste wrote an MA thesis under Grant Osborne (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) and a PhD dissertation under I. Howard Marshall (University of Aberdeen), both related to the Pastoral Epistles. In addition, he helps lead the ETS study group on the Pastoral Epistles, manages the website *PastoralEpistles.com*, and is currently working on the Pastoral Epistles volume in the *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (B&H). Thus, he proves to be an ideal conversational partner when it comes to the study of 1–2 Timothy and Titus.

Kinship, Christian Kinship, and the Letters to Timothy and Titus

Charles J. Bumgardner

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After a brief discussion of Paul's use of the family as a metaphor for the church, this essay addresses two points regarding Paul's use of this metaphor of church as family as it is used in the Letters to Timothy and Titus (LTT). First, over against the recent argument of Raymond Collins, it is argued that the way that kinship terminology is used in the LTT does not invalidate the letters' claim to have been written by Paul. Second, the essay demonstrates that Paul's use of the metaphor in juxtaposition with his references to physical family in the LTT provide significant insight into the interplay between the two.

In his letters, Paul uses a number of metaphors for the church—body, bride, building—but a convincing case can be made that the most foundational metaphor he has in mind for the church is that of a family.¹ The metaphor of church as family may also be considered from the perspective of a number of what we might call sub-metaphors, other metaphors that contribute to the larger one. Several of these sub-metaphors are conveniently given in 1 Timothy 5:1–2, where Timothy is instructed to treat older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. The metaphor of church as family may also be considered in connection with the idea of the church as the *household of God*.

This metaphor of church as family is particularly noteworthy when it comes to the Letters to Timothy and Titus (LTT) for several reasons, and two of those will be addressed in the present essay.² First, family metaphors have been engaged in discussions of the authorship of the letters and related

¹ Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting* (rev. ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 55–56. From his own research in Paul, Trevor Burke is inclined to agree that “the family is not only an important metaphor but is the most pervasive one that [Paul] employs in describing the Church” (*Family Matters: A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians* [JSNTSup 247; London: T&T Clark, 2003], 9 n. 25).

² While the term “Pastoral Epistles” (“PE”) has been for some time the traditional designation of the three canonical letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus, the nomenclature is not without its concerns. These are detailed perhaps most helpfully in Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 83–89, esp. 88–89. Notably, Towner asserts that the term “Pastoral Epistles” has become “something of a restraining device” (88) which encourages a corpus-reading of the three epistles.

matters. In this regard, some see a shift from the church in other Pauline epistles as *a brotherhood* (with connotations of equality and a broad egalitarianism) to the church in the LTT as *household* (with connotations of structural hierarchy). Second, these letters (and 1 Timothy in particular) touch on relationships of physical family (i.e., not ones which are solely Christian) more than is usual in a NT epistle. This in turn provides opportunity to examine real kinship and Christian kinship in juxtaposition, an exercise which is helpful both theologically and practically. The purpose of this essay is to provide an overview of the metaphor of church as family as it is used in the LTT. More specifically, the greater part of this essay will argue that the way that kinship terminology is used in the LTT does not invalidate the letters' claim to have been written by Paul. In addition, some initial soundings will be taken of the intersection of Christian kinship and physical kinship, as these two are juxtaposed in the LTT.³

Introduction: Paul and the Church as Family

Before we engage the two areas of interest mentioned above, we will briefly discuss Paul's use of family metaphors in relation to the church. It was noted above that the metaphor of church as family may well be the most foundational metaphor Paul has in mind when he thinks of the church. This is suggested perhaps most strongly by his pervasive use of sibling terminology when he addresses and refers to believers in Christ. Paul sprinkles his letters liberally with ἀδελφός (brother) and ἀδελφοί (brothers, or brothers and sisters), and ἀδελφή (sister) is also found a few times. This sibling language is used far and away more frequently in terms of Christian kinship than it is used in terms of physical kinship.⁴ It should be noted that this use of Christian sibling terminology is by no means an exclusively Pauline phenomenon

³ As a brief note on terminology, for the purposes of this essay, the terms "kinship" and "family" are used as roughly equivalent in a broad sense, and "household" and "family" as roughly equivalent in a narrower sense. So in common English, we might speak of "family" as a broad relational concept and also more specifically of "a family" or what might be called a "family unit." Similarly, the term "kinship" will be used as a broad relational concept and more narrowly "household" as a sort of "kinship unit," although in NT times, households might include slaves as well as those related by blood or marriage. As well, "Christian kinship" will indicate a relationship between Christians described *in terms of* a kinship relationship, though it is not necessarily one, as when Paul calls Timothy "his son," although Paul is not Timothy's physical father. On terminology for "family" in antiquity, see the important essay by Halvor Moxnes, "What Is Family? Problems in Constructing Early Christian Families," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; London: Routledge, 1997), 13–41; and the discussion in Burke, *Family Matters*, 5–7.

⁴ Aasgaard has noted that "the sibling metaphor is Paul's most frequent way of speaking of his co-Christians, and almost his only way of addressing them directly"

in the NT: every other NT writer and every NT book not written by Paul—except for Jude and his short epistle—employs sibling language for followers of Jesus, whether vocatively, descriptively, or both, reflecting a widespread conception among early Christians of the church as family.

This ubiquitous use of family metaphor is doubtless grounded in Christ's own teaching, as the Evangelists show us. Each of the Synoptics, for instance, relates an incident in which Jesus teaches us something about priorities when it comes to physical vs. Christian kinship. Here is Mark's account:

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31–35)⁵

Grounded in this passage and others, the broad NT theological perspective is that followers of Christ comprise a new family over against their blood family. As disciples of Jesus, they were considered to be children of God the Father, and thus brothers and sisters of each other, and even at one level, of Christ himself, whom Paul reminds us in Romans 8 is the firstborn among many siblings.⁶

By one count, Paul uses sibling terminology for other believers vocatively 71 times and descriptively another 64 times, totaling 135 times in 13 epistles or an average of 10–11 times a letter. While this is an average—Titus has no uses at all and 1 Corinthians has 39—it gives an idea of how frequently Paul uses this sort of metaphorical language.⁷

Family Metaphors and Pauline Authorship

Some scholars have suggested that the question of authenticity for a given letter in the traditional Pauline corpus is connected with how often and in what ways metaphorical family language is used in that letter. This is particularly the case with the language of Christian siblingship; since Paul so commonly uses ἀδελφός to refer to fellow believers, a correspondence is often

(Reidar Aasgaard, "My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!" *Christian Siblingship in Paul* [JNTSup 265; London: T&T Clark, 2004], 309).

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

⁶ The NT use of Christian kinship language is somewhat flexible, and although this pattern (God = father; Christ = son; Christians = brothers and sisters) seems to be the most pervasive, it is not the only one. In 1 Tim 5:1–2, Paul uses a different pattern (older men and women in the church = fathers and mothers; younger men and women in the church = siblings). One might think of the first pattern as more ontological and the second as more functional.

⁷ Note the helpful and detailed charts of sibling terminology usage in the NT in Aasgaard, "My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!" 313–14.

drawn between how many times this happens in a given letter and the likelihood that the letter is pseudonymous. A look at Paul's use of the sibling metaphor does show noticeable differences between those letters of his commonly accepted as authentic and those that are often considered inauthentic. For instance, Paul uses the plural vocative ἀδελφοί fairly regularly in Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. He does not use it at all in Ephesians, Colossians, or the LTT, all letters which are often deemed inauthentic. But statistics are often a rather blunt instrument by which to determine authenticity, and in this case the general pattern is marred by 2 Thessalonians, more often than not deemed inauthentic by critical scholarship, but with the second-highest frequency of the plural vocative ἀδελφοί among the letters attributed to Paul.

In discussing this connection between Christian sibling terminology and the question of the authenticity of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, we should note a recent article by Raymond Collins. Collins has made a number of significant contributions to the study of the letters to Timothy and Titus, culminating in his commentary in the NTL series by Westminster John Knox, which came out in 2002, a few years before his retirement.⁸ In his retirement, however, he has contributed to a *Festschrift* for Jerome Murphy-O'Connor and Joseph Fitzmyer an essay entitled "Where Have All My Siblings Gone? A Reflection on the Use of Kinship Language in the Pastoral Epistles."⁹

As one would expect from a scholar of Collins's stature, his essay is nuanced and thorough. He suggests that the question in his title, "Where have all my siblings gone?," would have been on Paul's lips, so to speak, if Paul had read the LTT, which in Collins's judgment he did not write.¹⁰ This question would be forthcoming from Paul for two reasons, Collins suggests. First, though Paul uses the designation "brother" for both Timothy and Titus in other letters, he does not use it for them in the letters addressed to them. Second, these letters do not engage the sibling metaphor for believers in gen-

⁸ Raymond F. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

⁹ Raymond F. Collins, "Where Have All My Siblings Gone? A Reflection on the Use of Kinship Language in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Celebrating Paul: Festschrift in Honor of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P., and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.* (ed. Peter Spitaler; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2011), 321–36. There are some similarities between this essay and one Collins wrote previously: "Timothy and Titus: On Reading the Pastoral Epistles," in *Forschungen zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Albert Fuchs* (ed. Christoph Niemand; Linzer Philosophisch-Theologische Beiträge 7; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), 367–81.

¹⁰ Collins summarizes his case for pseudonymous authorship of the letters to Timothy and Titus in *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 2–9.

eral to the extent that other letters from Paul typically do, and in this particular regard, Collins avers, Paul would find them lacking.¹¹ Is Collins's judgment accurate? Or does he perhaps overstate his case?

Addressing the second reason first, we observe that Collins is certainly correct to note the reduced amount of Christian sibling language in the LTT. Paul engages this language only four times in the three epistles: three times in 1 Timothy, once in 2 Timothy, and not at all in Titus. From a strictly statistical viewpoint this is indeed at variance with the letters commonly accepted as authentically Pauline by critical scholarship. However, three points should be urged against Collins's working assumption that infrequent Christian sibling language reflects pseudonymity.

First, it should be noted that even if this metaphor were entirely absent from the letters, such absence would not necessarily indicate inauthenticity. The metaphor of the church as family, and specifically as siblings, seems to be very much a live metaphor for Paul,¹² and when he uses it, he tends to use it with a purpose.¹³ Put another way, Paul may choose to use or not to use the metaphor as he sees fit in a given writing; it is not simply an unconscious way of speaking—though it is a common one.

Second, the simple fact is that the language of Christian siblingship is not entirely absent from the LTT. Further, where this language *is* used, it is compatible with Paul's use in his other letters.¹⁴

The first use is in 1 Tim 4:6, where Christian sibling language that is descriptive (not vocative) and plural is used, and this is common in Paul.¹⁵ Here,

¹¹ It should be carefully observed that Collins by no means rests his entire case for inauthenticity on the lack of sibling language; it is one factor among others which to him reflect pseudonymity.

¹² See, e.g., Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 51.

¹³ Aasgaard notes that Paul often simply uses the metaphor as an implicit way "to arouse a family 'feel' in his co-Christians," but in more pointed ways as well ("*My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*" 310–12).

¹⁴ Collins does admit that "the Epistles to Timothy use the plural ἀδελφοί in a way that retains something of Paul's rich metaphorical use" ("Where Have All My Siblings Gone?" 334).

The fact must be acknowledged that the Christian sibling metaphor is not used in Titus. At the same time, even with a working assumption of pseudonymous authorship, it is commonly acknowledged that the letters to Timothy and Titus all appear to have been written by the same author, and on this datum certain points predicated on one or two of the letters may have application to all three. For the view that the epistles have more than one author, see, e.g., Michaela Engelmann, *Unzertrennliche Drillinge? Motivsemantische Untersuchungen zum literarischen Verhältnis der Pastoralbriefe* (BZNW 192; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); Jens Herzer, "Rearranging the 'House of God': A New Perspective on the Pastoral Epistles," in Empsychoi Logoi—*Religious Innovations in Antiquity: Studies in Honour of Pieter Willem van der Horst* [ed. Alberdina Houtman et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2008], 564–66).

¹⁵ Rom 8:29; 16:14; 1 Cor 6:8; 8:12; 15:6; 16:11, 12, 20; 2 Cor 8:23; 9:3, 5; 11:9;

in reference to the creation theology Paul has just given against the false teaching at Ephesus, he says:

If you put these things before the brothers (τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς), you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

The Ephesian congregation as a whole may be in view here.¹⁶ Given the discourse of the entire chapter, “the brothers” here could be seen as parallel to Timothy’s envisioned audience described in other ways in the context: “those who believe and know the truth” (v. 3); “the believers” (v. 12), “all” (v. 15), and “your hearers” (v. 16).

It is also possible that “the brothers” is a reference not to the entire congregation but to a subset within it—its leaders.¹⁷ Paul does seem to use the designation “the brothers”—ἀδελφοί with the article—at times to refer specifically to congregational leaders or missionary co-workers in contradistinction to the church as a whole,¹⁸ and that may be the case in the present passage.¹⁹ If this is true, then the instruction here would be along the lines of that in 2 Tim 2:2, where Timothy is to pass along Paul’s instruction to faithful men who will be able to teach others as well.²⁰ In either case, however, whether the entire congregation is in view here in 1 Timothy 4 or only its leaders, the use of “brothers” is compatible with what we find elsewhere in Paul.

Another Christian sibling reference is found in 1 Tim 6:2:

Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers (ἀδελφοί); rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service

Gal 1:2; Phil 1:14; 4:21; 1 Thess 4:10; 5:26, 27.

¹⁶ So I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 548–49. Paul is likely using “the brothers” in this sense in 1 Thess 5:27.

¹⁷ E. Schlarb, *Die gesunde Lehre: Häresie und Wahrheit im Spiegel der Pastoralbriefe* (Marburg: Elwert, 1990), 282, 289.

¹⁸ See esp. E. Earle Ellis, “Paul and His Co-Workers,” in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (WUNT 18; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1978), 13–22. Note, e.g., Phil 4:21–22: “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household” (emphasis added).

¹⁹ If Paul does indeed use “the brothers” in a specialized sense to refer to Christian leaders at times—and it seems that he does—this consideration would affect the statistical comparison of Christian sibling terminology among letters attributed to Paul and provide additional hesitation for putting a great deal of weight on such a comparison in matters of authorship. This is a point for further research.

²⁰ Considerably less likely, but perhaps still possible, “the brothers” here might include elders who have bought into the false teaching themselves.

are believers and beloved. (1 Tim 6:1–2)

This interesting passage will be examined more closely later, but it may simply be noted here that in the particular situation at Ephesus, the immediate and pressing need was for slaves to do what was appropriate in their present circumstances: to relate to their believing masters with respect and good service. Apparently, Paul had knowledge that this was not consistently happening. He, of course, elsewhere enjoins slaves to obey their masters, but the connected caution here not to presume wrongly upon the notion of Christian brotherhood is admittedly rather unique in Paul. Some have contrasted it with Paul's use of "brother" in his implied request to Philemon that he free his slave Onesimus,²¹ but the two situations are not actually incompatible.²²

A third reference to Christian siblingship should briefly be noted in 2 Tim 4:21:

Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

The similarity to Pauline final greetings elsewhere is immediately apparent.²³

Finally, Paul refers to Christian siblings in his instructions to Timothy in 1 Tim 5:1–2:

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Oddly, Collins disallows this instance. That is, he sees only the three references already mentioned (1 Tim 4:6; 6:2; 2 Tim 4:21) as "sibling language used to identify a member of the believing community."²⁴ Collins discusses this passage, but insists that it does not count as a passage of Christian siblingship because, considered in isolation, the terms "brothers" and "sisters" must, strictly speaking, refer to biological siblings: Timothy is to treat younger

²¹ See esp. David G. Horrell, "From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianity," *JBL* 120 (2001): 307. Note also Aasgaard, "My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!" 258–59 n. 129; Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*, 564 n. 53; Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, vol. 1: *Kommentar zum 1. Timotheusbrief* (HThKNT 11/2; Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 267 n. 13.

²² For one thing, Paul addresses the *master*, Philemon, in the one case, and *slaves* in the other case, and in each case engages the notion of Christian siblingship as appropriate to the addressee. As well, to uncritically equate *siblingship*, Christian or not, with unqualified *equality* is not justified by the evidence, as shall be seen. Finally, the sort of thing Paul enjoins upon slaves here seems to cohere with his teaching in 1 Cor 7:21–24.

²³ E.g., 1 Cor 16:19–20: "The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss."

²⁴ Collins, "Where Have All My Siblings Gone?" 335.

men and women *as if they were* biological sisters and brothers.²⁵ But surely this is too fine a distinction. The fact that Paul uses a simile here, not a metaphor, does not negate the larger point: that the language of siblingship is being used for Christians who are not actually siblings.

More to the point, though Collins does not discuss this, Paul here speaks of the congregation in Christian kinship terms not only as brothers and sisters, but also as fathers and mothers, and this is not typical of Paul (though it is also not incompatible with Paul). This is balanced, however, by Paul's flexibility in his use of family metaphors. He can, for instance, speak of himself as being like a mother to the Thessalonians, and in the next breath call them brothers, then note how he was like a father to them, and immediately after this call them brothers again—all in the span of eight verses (1 Thess 2:7–14).²⁶ A writer who can do this can certainly speak of an entire congregation as siblings in one place and in one sense and speak of them in terms of being fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters in another place and in another sense.

A third reason weakens the case that infrequent Christian sibling language fails to convincingly support pseudonymity for 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: Paul is writing to individuals, his delegates, and this naturally has implications for the mode of address he uses.²⁷ Over half of the instances of Christian sibling language in Paul's epistles are used in direct address, and in the LTT, Paul simply chooses to address his delegates (not all the Christians in a given congregation, the recipients of most of his other letters) in filial terms like "son" and "child," not in fraternal terms like "brother." David Horrell considers this explanation and rejects it, pointing out that in the other epistle where Paul writes to an individual, Philemon, he uses "brother" as a vocative three times in a very short letter.²⁸ That observation is certainly true, but the situations are clearly different, and Paul's rhetorical strategy varies correspondingly. He has a point in calling Philemon "brother" and a point in calling Timothy and Titus "son" and "child,"²⁹ and this necessitates neither inconsistency in Paul nor pseudonymous authorship of the letters to Timothy

²⁵ Ibid., 334.

²⁶ See Raymond F. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2008), 13–19.

²⁷ Campbell highlights recent studies in register, noting that while letters may share the same genre, "they nevertheless exhibit a certain amount of register variation as a result of their being written at different times in the apostle's life, for different purposes, and to different audiences. Letters written to individuals, for instance, clearly differ from congregational correspondence" (Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015], 142).

²⁸ "From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ," 306. Horrell is followed in this argument by Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 561–62.

²⁹ Paul is not appealing to *Timothy* as the head of household to free a slave, nor is

and Titus.

It has been shown above that infrequent Christian sibling language is not determinative of pseudonymity in the LTT. As noted, however, Collins also thinks Paul would ask of these letters, "Where have all my siblings gone?" because of a particular shift of language: in certain of his epistles, Paul speaks both of Timothy and of Titus as "brother" and of Timothy as "child." In 1–2 Timothy and Titus, however, the filial language remains for Timothy and Titus, but the fraternal language is absent, so that Collins observes, "since neither Timothy nor Titus is described as a sibling in the Pastoral Epistles, the apostle might well have asked, 'Where have my siblings gone?'"³⁰

This objection is even less problematic than the question of *overall* frequency of Christian sibling language. When considering individual letters of Paul and not a particular subcorpus—such as writings deemed authentic—this perceived problem vanishes. In 1 Corinthians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians, Paul speaks of Timothy as child and not as brother;³¹ in 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and Philemon, he speaks of Timothy as brother and not as child;³² and in 2 Corinthians, he also speaks of Titus as brother and not as child.³³ So, in no single epistle does Paul use *both* filial and fraternal terminology for either Timothy or Titus which, even given Paul's inclination to mix metaphors at times, should not be particularly surprising. Thus, in this regard the LTT actually fit quite well with all the other letters attributed to Paul—which should also not be surprising.

It has been shown in this essay's first major point that the use of Christian sibling language in the LTT is compatible with Paul's use of this language elsewhere and not indicative of pseudonymity. The use or non-use of Christian kinship language in the LTT might simply be considered a curiosity, but it actually proves to be a key piece of evidence for some theories of the development of the early church.

It is common to read that the LTT are pseudonymous and reflect a distinctly later stage in the development of the early church, generally involving a decline in vitality and an increasing institutionalization.³⁴ This shift is often spoken of in terms of moving from an egalitarian to a hierarchical church.³⁵

he instructing *Philemon* on rooting out false teaching in the church.

³⁰ Collins, "Where Have All My Siblings Gone?" 333. He also notes, "Given Paul's predilection to call Timothy his brother, it is striking that neither the author of First Timothy nor the author of Second Timothy uses the vocative ἀδελφέ in appealing to 'Timothy,' the purported recipient of these missives" (326).

³¹ 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22; 1 Thess 3:2.

³² 2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; Phm 1:1.

³³ 2 Cor 2:13.

³⁴ See esp. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalism in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (SNTSMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

³⁵ See, e.g., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological*

From another perspective, and of greater interest for our examination of kinship language in the LTT, this shift is also spoken of in terms of moving from siblingship to patriarchalism, or as David Horrell has succinctly put it, “from brothers to household of God.”³⁶ In one of the more nuanced treatments of this position, Horrell acknowledges that Christians are “described both as siblings and as household members throughout the Pauline corpus,” but he sees differences in how this language is *used* that reflects a shift “from the model of an egalitarian community of ἀδελφοί toward the model of a hierarchical household-community,” that is, “from a loosely organized sectarian-type movement where the language of brotherhood predominates, into one that is more structured and ‘churchlike,’ which mirrors the conventional household hierarchy in its own internal organization.”³⁷

Horrell takes pains not to overstate his case. For instance, he acknowledges that (the “authentic”) Paul uses metaphors for the church other than that of siblings, and thus sibling language “should not be taken to imply that Paul’s vision is unambiguously that of an egalitarian community”; in this vein, he recognizes that even in the earliest Christian communities, “there were people in positions of leadership and power, both resident members of the congregations and itinerant leaders such as Paul himself.”³⁸ Additionally, and importantly, while he sees Paul’s use of the Christian sibling metaphor as essentially implying equality, he admits that “distinctions can be, and are, made among the ἀδελφοί (cf. Gal 6:6; 1 Thess 5:12), and Paul certainly does not restrict himself to a role as an ἀδελφός among equal siblings.”³⁹

While the nuance of Horrell’s treatment is appreciated, his thesis still must ultimately be rejected. As a general flaw, articulations of this egalitarian-to-hierarchical model of development in the early church tend to rely upon a non-Pauline reading of 1–2 Timothy and Titus. While this position prevails in the broader academy, those who are convinced the letters are authentic will have corresponding objections to theories grounded in pseudonymity. As well, in seeing language of brotherhood as indicating a greater egalitarianism, Horrell seems to tie the notion of brotherhood too tightly to that of equality (though he acknowledges exceptions). To the contrary, Trevor Burke has shown that “hierarchical relationships were an important feature of brotherly relations in antiquity.”⁴⁰ Similarly, in an important essay, John Elliot

Reconstruction of Christian Origins (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Klaus Schäfer, *Gemeinde als “Bruderschaft”: Ein Beitrag zum Kirchenverständnis des Paulus* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/333; Bern: Peter Lang, 1989).

³⁶ Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ,” 293–311.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 303, 304.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁴⁰ Burke, *Family Matters*, 231. Within Burke’s primary source research on this point, he helpfully cites Plutarch regarding brothers: “it is impossible for them to be on an equal footing in all respects” (*Frat. amor.* 484C). See further, Andrew D. Clarke,

has asserted that “brothers can be quite unequal in terms of position or privilege.”⁴¹ And in his thorough study of Christian siblingship in Paul and the ancient world, Reidar Aasgaard notes,

Contrary to the view of many scholars, neither Paul nor the other sources appear to stress ideas of equality. Although some sources have a thrust towards a levelling of sibling relations, this tendency is not very pronounced. Differences among siblings arising from age, disposition, and status, from varying degrees of strength or weakness, appear to be viewed as given and acceptable. Hierarchy seems to have been inherent in the sibling relationship as well, although to a lesser degree than in other relations within the family. Generally, such an idea of sibling equality appears as a modern construct, which is not grounded in the classical sources. At most we may speak of elements of equality within siblingship, along with elements of hierarchy.⁴²

Hence, even though sibling language is used more in some of the writings attributed to Paul than in others, it is more likely that this reflects various scenarios he was addressing rather than a broad egalitarian-to-hierarchical shift.

The Interplay between Christian Kinship and Physical Kinship in the LTT

In the letters to Timothy and Titus, what was the interplay like between one’s role in the Christian family on the one hand and one’s social family on the other hand? Or to put it another way, what happened when household life in antiquity intersected with the Christian household in the LTT? This is a significant question. Reidar Aasgaard’s monograph on fictive siblingship in Paul addresses the interplay between one’s role as a Christian *sibling* and one’s role in the social family;⁴³ it is helpful and thought-provoking as far as it goes,

“Equality or Mutuality? Paul’s Use of ‘Brother’ Language,” in *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 151–64.

⁴¹ John H. Elliot, “Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian: A Critique of an Anachronistic and Idealistic Theory,” *BTB* 32 (2002): 82.

⁴² Aasgaard, “*My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*” 307.

⁴³ See “Brothers in the Flesh and in the Lord: Family Role Encounters in Paul (Philemon *et al.*),” in Aasgaard, “*My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*” 236–60. Along with his major case study in Philemon, he also mentions several other specific instances of “family role encounters”: Paul’s speaking of one having “a sister, a wife” (1 Cor 9:5); Rufus’s mother, whom Paul says was a mother to him as well (Rom 16:13); the mixed marriages of 1 Cor 7:12–15, where Paul specifically refers to believers as “brother” (vv. 12, 14, 15) and “sister” (v. 15) over against an unbelieving spouse.

but because Aasgaard's project concerns Paul and he views the LTT as inauthentic, he does not engage them in any significant way in the study.⁴⁴

The LTT provide a number of scenarios illustrating this intersection between Christian family and social family. One might consider:

- An overseer or deacon in the church needing to be faithful to his wife and to manage his own household well (1 Tim 3:2, 4–5, 12; Titus 1:6).
- Christian (grand)children who are to care for their widowed Christian (grand)mother (1 Tim 5:4).
- Any Christian who might need to provide for their own relatives, especially those of their own household (1 Tim 5:8).⁴⁵
- An “enrolled widow”⁴⁶ needing to have been faithful to her husband and to have brought up children (1 Tim 5:9–10).
- Younger widows who should not be “enrolled” because they will want to marry when their passions draw them away from Christ, but who instead should marry, bear children, and manage their households (1 Tim 5:11–14).
- A Christian woman who is to care for her widowed relative (1 Tim 5:16).
- Christian slaves (who would have been part of the “social family”/household) who were not to be disrespectful to their masters if (and because) their masters are Christian brothers, but who were to

⁴⁴ Engaging Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, he characterizes this interplay in (the undisputed) Paul as “a dialectical interaction between the old family with its manifold expectations of its members’ rights and obligations, and the Christian groups as communities in the making,” and argues that Paul doesn’t see Christian siblingship as a new family which replaces the old, but “simply employs and adapts the notions generally associated with social siblingship and living in a family to that of Christian relations.” On the other hand, Aasgaard views the LTT as belonging to the next generation of Christianity, and in that context, “the new family of Christians has superseded the old family . . . the Christian siblingship of Paul has been turned into the Christianized household of the Pastorals” (ibid., 311–12).

⁴⁵ This item is particularly interesting: in his rhetorical motivation, Paul asserts that the one who will not do this “has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” “That such a one would be counted ‘worse than an unbeliever’ . . . indicates that even outside the Christian group such sharing of possessions and coming to the aid of kin in need would be the expected norm” (David deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000], 171).

⁴⁶ A “true widow” (v. 3) who is simply supported by the church, or who is part of an official “order of widows,” depending upon one’s reading of the passage.

serve them all the more because their masters are brothers (1 Tim 6:1–2).

- Possibly, Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice teaching him the Scriptures from his earliest days (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15).
- Older Christian women who are to train younger Christian women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be submissive to their husbands (Titus 2:4–5).
- Christian slaves who are to be submissive to their masters (Titus 2:9).

These intersections of Christian family and social family are, of course, of varying sorts. We might place them into several categories, though there is some overlap here:

1. Fulfilling one’s role in the social household as significant for a role in the Christian household (overseer, deacon, enrolled widow).⁴⁷
2. Providing for needs in one’s social household (and beyond) to lessen the burden on one’s Christian household (1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16).
3. Not allowing one’s status in one’s Christian household to bring one to go beyond appropriate bounds in one’s social household (1 Tim 6:1–2).
4. Training those in the Christian household to fulfill their role in their social household (Titus 2:4–5). This is also, in one sense, the burden of much of 1 Timothy as a letter, probably in response to the false teaching in Ephesus.⁴⁸

It can be immediately seen that many of these intersections of one’s role in the Christian household with one’s role in the social household simply come down to the need to properly fulfill one’s responsibilities in the social household. Why should this be done? Paul generally connects the proper

⁴⁷ A man must lead his household well to be qualified to be an overseer. Paul is very explicit about this in 1 Tim 3:4–5 and alludes to it in Titus 1:7 with ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον. An overseer must also be faithful to his wife and keep his children in subjection (similarly, Titus 1:6). Further, a man must lead his household well to be qualified to be a deacon (1 Tim. 3:12) and must also lead his children well. Finally, an “enrolled widow” must have been faithful to her husband and have brought up children.

⁴⁸ The frequent mention of role interactions between Christian and social households, and of social family references in general, may well be a result of the emphases of the false teaching in Ephesus. After all, the opponents were “forbidding marriage” (1 Tim 4:3), and this sort of asceticism is suggestive of forbidding childbearing as well. See recently Dillon Thornton, *Hostility in the House of God: An Investigation of the Opponents in 1 and 2 Timothy* (BBRSup 15; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 251–52.

navigation of these “intersections” with missionary concern for what those outside the church will think,⁴⁹ likely because false teaching and its results in households have damaged the church’s reputation. So,

- the overseer is to fulfill his responsibilities in the social household so that he may be beyond reproach and well thought of by outsiders;
- deacons by doing likewise will gain a good standing for themselves before the outside world.⁵⁰
- Young widows need to properly fulfill their responsibilities in the social household so as “to give opponents no occasion for criticism.”⁵¹
- Young wives are to be taught to love and to submit to their husbands, and to love their children, so that in properly fulfilling their responsibilities in the social household “the word of God [the gospel message] may not be reviled” (Titus 2:4–5).

This missionary concern for outsiders is helpful in considering one final example of intersection between Christian household and social household: the situation of a Christian slave who is part of a household led by a Christian *paterfamilias*. Although it happens a number of times in other Pauline writings, this is the single time in the LTT that Christian sibling language is juxtaposed directly with the language of the social household. In this case, the Christian *paterfamilias* has a dual role as regards his slave: he is both a brother and a master. Both roles are clearly affirmed in 1 Tim 6:2:

Those who have believing *masters* must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are *brothers*.⁵²

As mentioned earlier, some have found this passage to be incompatible with the letter to Philemon, reflecting a post-Pauline stage of the early

⁴⁹ The missionary orientation of Paul’s concern for the opinion of outsiders is brought out in Chiao Ek Ho, “Mission in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul’s Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder; Nashville: B&H, 2010), 241–67; see also Andrie B. du Toit, “Sensitivity Towards the Reaction of Outsiders as Ethical Motivation in Early Christian Paraenesis,” in *Sensitivity to Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (ed. Jacobus Kok et al.; WUNT 2/364; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 340–56.

⁵⁰ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 205–6.

⁵¹ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 604. The ἀντικείμενος could be the devil. However, as Marshall notes, it is the majority opinion that “a human adversary of the gospel” is in view; additionally, this coheres more tightly with other statements of concern for outsiders in the LTT.

⁵² Emphasis added here and in the following English Bible citations.

church,⁵³ but this is not actually the case. Care must be taken not to neglect v. 1 when we read v. 2, for it says something very much like the other passages just perused:

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, *so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.*

Here again, slaves are to fulfill their role in the social household in light of missionary concern for outsiders. And it is important to realize that v. 1 *governs* v. 2: “Let *all* Christian slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor *Those who have believing masters* must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers.”

It will be helpful at this point to compare this passage with Paul’s guidance in 1 Cor 7:17, 20–24:

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. *This is my rule in all the churches.* . . . Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

Note carefully Paul’s strategic use of ἀδελφοί: After *directly addressing* slaves and telling them that they should be unconcerned if they must remain slaves, he *directly addresses* them as “brothers.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

This essay has examined Paul’s use of family as a metaphor for church in the LTT. It has demonstrated that the way the metaphor is used in the letters is compatible with its use in other Pauline letters and thus provides no sure indication of pseudonymous authorship of the LTT. Indeed, Paul’s engagement of this metaphor in the LTT, in connection with the many references to physical family contained in the letters, provides insight into the relationship between one’s Christian family and one’s physical family.

⁵³ David Horrell makes a strong contrast between (1) Paul’s use of “brother” where Philemon receiving Onesimus as “a beloved brother” implies “a real change in the social relationship between slave and owner, and not merely a spiritual revaluation in the sight of God” (“From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ,” 302), and (2) the exhortation of 1 Tim 6:2, where “slaves are warned *against* drawing from [the fact of their spiritual kinship with their masters] any ideas about the restructuring of the social relationship between slaves and masters” (307).

⁵⁴ I acknowledge that this passage is a bit different than 1 Tim 6:1–2 in that the slaves of 1 Cor 7:21–24 are not explicitly said to have believing masters and to be brothers *with those masters*—but neither are they said *not* to.

Divergent, Insurgent or Allegiant? 1 Timothy 5:1–2 and the Nature of God’s Household

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This study asks how Paul’s household conception of the church in 1 Tim 5:1–2 compares to the social norms characteristic of the Greco-Roman household. First, 5:1–2 is set within the overall flow of the book’s argument to show how this passage rests on a carefully developed theological substructure. Second, the passage itself is closely examined to delineate the social norms that emerge in the manner of engagement urged upon Timothy with respect to the various strata of the household. This study argues that Paul is extending a pre-existing, theologically-shaped notion of God’s household as he guides Timothy. Drawing on the OT as mediated through Jesus and his own earlier apostolic reflection, Paul determines the character and manner of Timothy’s interaction within the family of God. It is this theologically-shaped conception of God’s household which drives the re-appropriation (or reclamation) of the social spaces in the secular household toward the fulfillment of God’s purposes in and through his family. Contacts with Greco-Roman social norms are incidental and not fundamental.

Throughout 1 Timothy the central metaphor Paul chooses to inform and drive Timothy’s mission at Ephesus is the church as God’s household (1:4; 3:15; cf. 3:5, 12).¹ The household owes its existence to God’s saving work in Christ by the Spirit (esp. 3:15–16). In addition, God’s household takes its shape (on the personal and corporate level) and its mission from God’s saving mission in Christ (2:1–7).² The problem that brings Timothy to Ephesus at the behest of Paul is that God’s “household rules,” his saving purposes for

¹ The following assumes that the apostle Paul is the author of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. However, space prohibits a defense of Pauline authorship as the most *historically* plausible and convincing explanation for the production, content, and canonical status of these letters. For a robust defense, see W. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), lxxxiii–cxxix. For an important recent treatment of pseudonymity and these letters, see T. Wilder, “Pseudonymity, the New Testament and the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul’s Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (ed. A. Köstenberger and T. Wilder; Nashville: B&H, 2010), 28–51.

² For the relationship of 2:1–7 to the household material generally, see G. Couser, “‘Prayer’ and the Public Square: 1 Tim. 2:1–7 and Christian Political Engagement,” in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church’s Mission* (ed. J. Laansma, G. Osborne, and R. Van Neste; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 278–81.

his people, are effectively being re-written.³ The over-realized eschatology of the erring elders has essentially distorted the way in which God saves in the present.⁴ Inept, speculative (yet confident) OT eisegesis abounds (1:7) as the false teachers have abandoned the “gospel” as the norming norm for their reading of the OT.⁵ Consequently, their affirmations are anything but “sound” or “healthy” (1:10). The already/not yet tension of Paul’s eschatology has been resolved decidedly in favor of the already.⁶ Hence, the theology that regulates the members of the household and the household as a whole—with respect to its creation, internal life, and mission in the world—has been gravely distorted. The family of God has been turned away from the life of love. Instead, it has been turned against itself and away from its mission through the influence of false teachers (1:3b–4).

Within this broader context of family dysfunction, in 5:1–2 Paul instructs Timothy on how to approach the various strata of the family. A harsh, stinging rebuke is prohibited. Rather, Paul wants him to “exhort” or “appeal” (he uses *παρακαλέω*). However, BDAG holds this passage together with two other Pauline texts (1 Cor 4:13 and 1 Thess 2:12) and cannot make up its mind about how to render the word in these texts. It lists three possibilities: (1) “invite” in the sense of asking someone to come and be where the speaker is; (2) “invite in, conciliate, be friendly to or speak to in a friendly manner” in the sense of “treat someone in an inviting or congenial manner”; or (3) “to

³ *Οἰκονομία* θεοῦ carries a salvation-historical emphasis along the lines of Eph 1:10; 3:9, namely, God’s arrangement for the redemption of mankind. See L. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986), 133; F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 55; and Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (NIBC 13; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 42, 48, 92.

⁴ For fuller treatments of the over-realized eschatological dimensions of the false teaching assumed here, cf. P. Towner’s seminal study, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTS 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 21–45 and G. Couser, “The Sovereign Savior of 1 and 2 Tim and Titus,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 119–22. For helpful insights on the issue of over-realized eschatology generally, see A. Thiselton, “Luther and Barth on 1 Corinthians 15: Six Theses for Theology in Relation to Recent Interpretation,” in *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church* (ed. W. P. Stephens; JSNTSup 105; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 258–89.

⁵ Cf. G. Couser, “Using the Law Lawfully: A Short Study on Paul and the Law in 1 Timothy,” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 2.1 (2003): 47–52.

⁶ G. Knight, commenting on 2 Tim 2:18, describes the theological aberration succinctly: “The error can affect how one regards Jesus’ resurrection and its significance for one’s future standing and hope for eternity, and thus also how one thinks of the Christian’s present relationship to Christ and one’s perspective on the body and conduct in this life and attitude toward material creation. Therefore, Paul regards it as striking at the heart of Christianity and thus a departure from the truth” (*The Pastoral Epistles* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 414).

urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage.”⁷ Beyond the contrast with a “harsh rebuke,” the manner of address envisioned by παρακαλέω is to be conditioned by the family status of the individual(s) receiving it. As a result, the manner of address is shaped not only in contrast to a harsh, stinging rebuke but also by accepted norms with respect to the treatment of fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

It is here that the present investigation gets its focus. What does this understanding of the church as a household and of Timothy’s approach to its dysfunction say about the cultural forces shaping the church itself? Is this an example of where the prevailing conceptions surrounding the Greco-Roman household are re-shaping the ecclesiology, and the families making up the *ecclesia*, along lines discordant with earlier Pauline conceptions?⁸ Though it is not possible to thoroughly answer these questions from two verses, this text is directly related to the issue and provides us with a genuine point of entry into the discussion. In the end, this study hopes to determine the points of overlap and/or discontinuity with contemporary secular household norms assumed or commended in 1 Tim 5:1–2. This will be accomplished through attention to the social norms that emerge in the manner of engagement urged upon Timothy with respect to the various strata of “God’s household.” Ultimately, this study hopes to give greater definition to the contours of Paul’s conception of the church as the “household of God.”

Contextual Topography

First Timothy 5:1–2 marks the resumption of Paul’s guidance meant to go through Timothy to the (house) churches at Ephesus (“in every place”; 1 Tim 2:8). Paul hopes to realign God’s family with his saving purposes in response to the present crisis. Paul initiated this guidance in 2:1–3:13, directly linking it to Timothy’s commission and God’s saving purposes (specified in 1:3–20 and tied in by the οὗν of 2:1).⁹ Similar to this earlier section, he resumes his guidance in chapter five with general advice for dealing with the

⁷ BDAG, 617.

⁸ According to R. W. Gehring, the fact that the churches met in the homes of their wealthy members led to those members naturally assuming leadership within the church itself. As they came in, “it was quite natural that household patterns impressed themselves upon the social reality of the congregation” (*House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 298; cf. also R. A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity* [SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 153 and D. C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* [SBLDS 71; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983], 160).

⁹ In 1:3–20 God’s redemptive work in Christ forms the backdrop of Paul’s instruction to Timothy concerning his service at Ephesus (1:1, 4, 12–17, 18). This redemptive work is then concisely recapitulated in 2:1–7, even while it is more fully elaborated and further authorized by tradition (“the testimony,” v. 6). This brings

whole of the household before turning to the needs of particular social groups (widows [5:3–16], elders [5:17–25], and slaves [6:1–2]). However, in 3:15–4:16 Paul interrupted this line of thought by a return to Timothy’s commission so that he might further define and ground it in light of God’s saving work in Christ and the circumstances of the current dysfunction in Ephesus. This interplay between sections which recall God’s saving work and Timothy’s commission borne out of a desire to promote that work and those sections which re-order the community as a whole in light of God’s saving work (with particular emphases for certain social strata), forms a pervasive conceptual environment where theology, particularly soteriology, interpenetrates ethics. This is further confirmed as the book concludes with Paul yet again recalling Timothy’s commission while restating and further elaborating on the circumstances and theology driving and shaping Timothy’s commission (6:3–19; cf. Figures 1 and 2 below).¹⁰

Not only does 1 Tim 5:1–2 resume the household material from 2:1–3:13 but it could be seen as a hinge passage which looks both backwards and forwards. It is not hard to see its relevance for Paul’s instructions in 2:1–3:14 where Timothy is called upon to deal with the body as a whole (2:1–7), adult men and women in particular (2:8–15), as well as with any man (and his wife and family) who aspires to the offices of elder or deacon (3:1–13). More directly, perhaps, it provides a fitting preface to the household material to follow.¹¹ The difficult dynamics of the issues surrounding widows (5:3–16), especially from the perspective of dealing with them as a young man,¹² readily make sense of Paul’s guidance for dealing with older and younger women. In particular, Paul’s concern for sexual purity in Timothy’s interaction with the young women anticipates the dangers of the sexually charged situation among young widows intimated in 5:11–13, 15 (cf. 4:3).¹³

God’s saving work in Christ explicitly into contact with Paul’s realignment of the community as a whole. It further suggests that this theology is driving all of the instruction directed at the various segments of the household of God.

¹⁰ For the argumentation behind these figures, see G. Couser, “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles,” *NovT* 42.3 (2000): 262–68.

¹¹ P. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 330.

¹² Discussions on the definition of “youth” in the first century range from the twenties (R. Overstreet, “The Greek Concept of the ‘Seven Stages of life’ and Its NT Significance,” *BBR* 19 [2009]: 543–45, 559–61) to early forties (E. Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome* [trans. Patrick Daly; London: Rutledge, 1993], 6–9). Plausibly, Overstreet suggests that Timothy was in his late twenties in the mid-sixties AD (561).

¹³ With regard to *κατασπρηνιάω* in 5:11, Winter notes that it “does not occur elsewhere in Greek but the meaning is clear from *σπρηνιάω* = ‘to run riot, become wanton’ and the use of *κατά* simply enforces it” (B. Winter, “Providentia for the Widows of 1 Timothy 5:3–16,” *TynB* 39 [1988]: 97). Winter sees this unbecoming behavior as most likely tied to the way certain young widows were pursuing another marriage.

FIGURE 1	
1 Timothy Structure and Inter-relationships	
<p>Greeting: Authoritative, Soteriological Focus with a Hint of Opposition (1:1–2)</p> <p>Timothy's Commission 1: Oppose False Teaching so that God's Saving Work can be Promoted (1:3–20)</p> <p>Commission Recalled: Nature and Cause (1:3–11)</p> <p><i>Attacks Confident Perversion of OT (source of false teaching; 1:3, 6)</i></p> <p>Paul as Encouragement and Counter-Example (1:12–17)</p> <p>Commission Strongly Restated (1:18–20)</p> <p>God's Salvation Plan & Family Adjustments Required (2:1–3:13)</p> <p>A Corporate Focus on God's Purpose in Salvation: Paradigmatic Instruction (2:1–7)</p> <p>Men: Don't Detract from God's Purposes through Competitive, Theological Squabbling (2:8)</p> <p>Women: Don't Detract from God's Purpose in Your Adornment or by Your Relationship to Leadership (2:9–15)</p> <p>Choose Leadership that Is Focused on God's Purposes (3:1–13)</p> <p>Elders (Teacher/Overseer; 3:1–7)</p> <p>Deacons (Helper/Assistant; 3:8–13)</p>	<p>Timothy's Commission 2: Oppose False Teaching so that God's Saving Work can be Promoted (3:14–4:16)</p> <p>Commission Recalled: Nature and Cause (3:14–4:5)</p> <p><i>Attacks Asceticism (effect of OT Perversion; 4:3)</i></p> <p>Timothy as Encouragement and Counter-Example (4:6–10)</p> <p>Commission Strongly Restated (4:11–16)</p> <p>God's Salvation Plan & Family Adjustments <i>Cont'd</i> (5:1–6:2a)</p> <p>Appropriate Family Relationships in General (5:1–2)</p> <p>Appropriate Care of Widows (5:3–16)</p> <p>Appropriate Approach to the Appointment, Assessment, & Discipline of Leadership (5:17–25)</p> <p>Appropriate Behavior for Slaves (6:1–2a)</p> <p>Timothy's Commission 3: Oppose False Teaching so that God's Saving Work can be Promoted (6:2b–21)</p> <p>Commission Recalled: Nature and Cause (6:2b–10)</p> <p><i>Attacks "Money-love" (effect of Immaturity; 6:3, 10)</i></p> <p>Timothy as Encouragement and Counter-Example (6:11–16)</p> <p>Commission Strongly Restated (6:17–21a)</p> <p>Closing Wish-Prayer for Grace (6:21b)</p>

At the same time, given that family members are abrogating their responsibilities to their widowed parents (5:8, 16) and that some young widows are a community-wide destructive influence (5:13), there is little doubt that Timothy would be interacting with every social strata in order to address these issues. Additionally, assuming that those who functioned as elders in Ephesus would be drawn both from the ranks of older men as well as peers,¹⁴ Paul's

¹⁴ The term *πρεσβύτερος*, "elder," as a designation of office primarily conveyed "the idea of a wise, mature leader who was honored and respected by those of the

instructions here would certainly be needed to accomplish what he calls for in 5:17–25. Finally, to engage household members who are slaves (6:1–2) calls for a type of interaction within the community that would be no respecter of age, gender or stage of life. In particular, his ability to model brother to brother behavior with a sensitivity to appropriate family dynamics would be crucial for teaching the slaves how to respond to their “brothers” whom they serve (6:2).¹⁵

“Exhort” or “Encourage”:

What Is the Nature of Action Envisioned in Παρακαλέω?

Παρακαλέω is the governing verb in 5:1–2. It is contrasted with ἐπιπλάσσω and it is the expressed or understood verb shaping Timothy’s engagement with each age/gender grouping. As intimated above, there is a diversity of opinion about how this term should be understood. Just what type of interaction is depicted by this term in this context? Does Paul’s counsel reflect an indebtedness to the Greek moral tradition? Would Timothy’s actions be commonplace given contemporary social norms?

R. Mounce contends that Paul is not envisioning Timothy’s interaction with the opponents. In that setting Timothy is to be “firm and commanding, a figure of authority.”¹⁶ Instead, παρακαλέω takes on a gentle tone as Paul prohibits “rebuke.” For Mounce, this seems to “indicate that these instructions apply not so much to the refutation of heresy and the opponents as to Timothy’s general conduct within the church.”¹⁷ In sum, Mounce, citing the secular social customs of the time and the broader biblical mandate (cf. Lev 19:32; Lam 5:12; Sir 8:8), calls for an approach that involves “gentle persuasion rather than browbeating,” a demeanor and approach that grants him (or

community” (B. Merkle, “Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 190). It cannot be merely equated with “old man.” Yet, given that age was venerated within the Christian (cf. 1 Tim 5:1; Titus 2:3–4) and secular culture (cf. J. Barclay, “There is Neither Old Nor Young? Early Christianity and Ancient Ideologies of Age,” *NTS* 53 [2007]: 234) and that Timothy’s youth was apparently at issue (1 Tim 4:12), there is little doubt that some of the elders were men older than Timothy as well as men esteemed more highly than Timothy in their respective settings. Their older age also would be likely if some of the wayward elders Timothy is to silence were drawn from the ranks of the established local elites (cf. R. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles* [SBLDS 122; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990], 97–100).

¹⁵ For the relational dynamics here in light of the letter’s backdrop, see Couser, “The Sovereign Savior of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 122–23.

¹⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 269.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; cf. also I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1999), 573.

her) “respect, dignity, and honor.”¹⁸ In terms of BDAG’s aforementioned options, this sounds closest to the sense of “invite in, conciliate, be friendly to or speak to in a friendly manner” so that Timothy might treat the respective parties in “an inviting or congenial manner.” In this light, Timothy’s actions would mark a convergence between secular and biblical social norms.

At the same time, contextual factors seem to demand a stronger rendering for παρακαλέω here. First, the relationship of 5:1–2 to the wider context is important. As discussed above, it functions as a hinge or, perhaps more fittingly, as an introduction to 5:3–6:2. There seems to be no reason for not envisioning what follows in 5:3–6:2 as the content and manner of delivery envisioned by the παρακαλέω of 5:1. This is especially so as the ταῦτα of 6:2b that Timothy is to “teach and urge” (παρακαλέω) looks backward.¹⁹ In other words, the fact that his duties do involve the rebuke and correction of men and women of all ages and positions of authority, makes it harder to see “gentle persuasion” as a necessary or sufficient rendering. Second, the cognate noun (παρακλήσις) in 4:13 accrues strong overtones of authoritative exhortation from the surrounding context. Its goal, when done in conjunction with reading the Scriptures publicly and teaching doctrine, is conformity to the correct teaching and, thus, the promotion of God’s saving purposes in and through Timothy (cf. 4:11–16). Earlier (1 Tim 1:3; 2:1), παρακαλέω itself occurs in contexts urging the subjects enjoined to take action. With Timothy as the subject (1:3), Paul recalls the moment when he “urged” him to take up the prophetically assigned “mandate”²⁰ for the churches at Ephesus (cf. 1:18). In 2:1 the use of παρακαλέω finds Paul, through Timothy, urging those churches toward a communal posture in the world that is consistent with their role in the outworking of God’s saving purposes in Christ. Moreover, the παρακλήσις of 2:1–7, where the re-ordering requested is explicitly grounded in God’s saving work in Christ, is likely intended as a paradigmatic introduction to the whole of the household material that re-orders the various social strata of God’s household affected by the false teaching (i.e., the material in 2:8–3:13 and 5:1–6:2).²¹ And here, the activity envisioned by παρακαλέω involves taking shared doctrine, envisioning the type of action needed by the listeners to appropriately respond to that doctrine, and then urging movement toward that response (cf. also 6:2).²² Also, the extreme harshness of what is prohibited in 5:1 (μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς) creates ample semantic

¹⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 270.

¹⁹ “As before (3:14; 4:6, 11; 5:7, 21), these things refer to what has already been said, in this case at least to 5:3–6:2, although given the concluding nature of what follows it may go all the way back to 2:1” (G. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 140).

²⁰ On this term, and its relationship to παρακαλέω, see C. Spicq, “Παραγγελία,” *TLNT* 3:11.

²¹ Cf. Couser, “Prayer and the Public Square,” 280.

²² Cf. C. Spicq, “Παραμυθέομαι,” *TLNT* 3:33.

FIGURE 2		
1 Tim 1:3–20	1 Tim 3:14–4:16	1 Tim 6:2b–21
Key Aspects of the Defection and Pointed Response		
1:3–11	3:14–4:5	6:2b–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks OT perversion of “some” (vv. 3, 6) • Promotion of God’s <i>οἰκονομίαν</i> (“saving plan”; v. 4), with its christological core (v. 15), as the alternative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks asceticism of “some” (4:1–5) • Instruction for living <i>ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ</i> (“house of God” = <i>ἐκκλησία θεοῦ</i> [“church of God”]), which is grounded in the christologically-focused <i>το τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον</i> (“the mystery of godliness”; 3:15–16), as the alternative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks “money-love” of “some” (vv. 3, 10) • <i>Εὐσέβεια</i> (“godliness”), set alongside the “words of Christ Jesus,” as the alternative (vv. 3, 5, 6).
Personal Call/Charge from God		
1:12–17	4:6–10	6:11–16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul placed <i>εἰς διακονίαν</i> (“into ministry”) by Christ Jesus (v. 12) • God’s goal for Paul in God’s saving work (vv. 11, 15, 17): to be a <i>ὑποτύπωσιν</i> (“pattern”) of Christ’s patience for those yet to believe <i>εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον</i> (“unto eternal life”). This also makes Paul an encouragement for Timothy and the reverse image of the OT-based antagonism, i.e., he used to be a blasphemer (v. 12) like Hymenaeus and Alexander (v. 20). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy exhorted to be a good <i>διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ</i> (“minister of Christ Jesus”; v. 6) • God’s goal for Timothy in God’s saving work (vv. 10, 14; cf. 1:18): to be a <i>τύπος...τῶν πιστῶν</i> (“pattern...for the believers”; v. 12) in his pursuit of <i>εὐσέβεια</i> (“godliness”), for it alone holds God’s promise of <i>ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης</i> (“life now and to come,” v. 8; cf. v. 16). This makes Timothy, in his steadfast, holistic adherence to the truth, the reverse image of the ascetics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy exhorted to confess Christ’s <i>καλὴν ὁμολογίαν</i> (“good confession”; vv. 12, 13) • God’s goal for Timothy in God’s saving work (vv. 11–13, 15–16): “Keep the commandment spotless” (v. 14), which the context suggests is equivalent to the <i>ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς</i> (“lay hold of eternal life”; v. 12) or the <i>εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας</i> (“godliness with contentment”; v. 6). This makes Timothy, in his focus on “real life”/“godliness with contentment,” the reverse image of the wealth-obsessed antagonists.
Stand Strong in Your Opposition by Holding to Your Call		
1:18–20	4:11–16	6:17–21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge at Ephesus enjoined (<i>ταύτην τὴν παραγγελίαν παρατίθεμαι σοι</i> [“I entrust the aforementioned command to you”], v. 18) with an explicit reference to the antagonists (v. 20). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to fulfill the charge at Ephesus (<i>παραγγελλε</i> [“command”], v. 11) with an implicit reference to the antagonists (v. 12). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to fulfill the charge at Ephesus (<i>παραγγελλε</i> [“command”], v. 17; cf. 13) with an explicit reference to the antagonists (vv. 17–19, 21).

space to contrast such treatment with παρακαλέω without necessitating a sense that moves it outside the sphere of urgent, authoritative direction.²³

In the end, with Mounce, this passage can be partially accounted for as a caution to Timothy not to overreact given the disrespect he is receiving from some because of his youth (4:12; cf. 2 Tim 2:22–26). However, by all indications, παρακαλέω still involves an exercise of authority, though one that should be conditioned to some degree by the social circumstances. Importantly, as G. Knight notes, this is where parallels to Greek moral teaching differ significantly. Timothy is not just to honor but to instruct those older than himself. The former is a commonplace in the Greek moral tradition,²⁴ but not the latter. He writes, “The keynote of this passage is the responsibility and authority of the minister of God to give such instruction, albeit to give it with respect, and this makes it different from those accounts in its most central aspect.”²⁵ Paul’s admonition does not treat social boundaries as sacrosanct. The household of God privileges truth, centrally in 1 Timothy, the promotion of God’s saving purposes in Christ by life and word (cf. esp. 3:15–16). Aspects of behavior proper to the social space of the “older man” (father-figures) are shockingly taken over by the “younger” Timothy. Even Timothy’s interaction with the other social strata, older women and male and female peers, gets re-ordered as son/brother. Timothy stands in a position of authority over the whole family.²⁶ Social norms for ages/stages are relativized and/or re-appropriated without abolishing them in some senses.²⁷

²³ “[I]t suggests a very severe censure” (Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 573).

²⁴ Cf. M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress), 72 and Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 573–74.

²⁵ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 215.

²⁶ At the same time, this is not wholly distinct from first century understandings of “brother.” Contra D. G. Horrell (“Disciplining Performance and ‘Placing’ the Church: Widows, Elders and Slaves in the Household of God,” in *1 Timothy Reconsidered* [ed. K. P. Donfried, Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum 18; Leuven: Peeters, 2008], 116), brother connotes relationships of mutuality rather than equality. The relationship depicted is one that implies a close bond and a solidarity but would not preclude distinctions in status and authority within the home (A. D. Clarke, “Equality or Mutuality: Paul’s Use of ‘Brother’ Language,” in *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65th Birthday* [ed. A. D. Clarke et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 164). Timothy’s function here is still striking with respect to older men and maintains its distinctiveness from the broader secular culture in terms of the gospel basis of his authority (cf. 4:10) and, thus, the direction toward which his authority is exercised (cf. 1:4–5; cf. A. Mahlerbe’s related comments in “Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* [ed. J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen; BZNW 125; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004], 316–17).

²⁷ For similar conclusions with particular reference to 1 Tim 4:12, see D. Pao, “Let No One Despise Your Youth: Church and the World in the Pastoral Epistles,” *JETS* 57.4 (2014): 743–55. Note also, M. Y. MacDonald who notes that “there is a

Exhorting Family Members

What is the impact on παρακαλέω when it is conditioned by the conceptions of the recipients as fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters? In 1 Tim 5:1–2, παρακαλέω carries the sense of authoritative exhortation that has conformity to the correct teaching as its goal. Yet, Paul goes on to call for this activity to be further conditioned by the age and gender of those addressed. In doing so, Paul does not define how this would condition Timothy's exhortation. What this would mean is assumed. Does Paul simply assume distinctly Christian or broadly secular ideals here? If it is the latter, does he do it because they conform to a (partially) pre-existing, theologically-shaped notion of the household of God? Or, does he transform/conform God's household to the household conceptions expressed in Greek moral teaching?

As previously suggested, Mounce sees two streams converging in the family emphasis. Paul's "teaching not only builds on the social custom of the time that demanded a high degree of respect and honor for one's parents, but in a much more significant sense it is an extension of the gospel teaching that all believers are fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters (Mark 3:31–35)."²⁸ Although Mounce claims it is reminiscent of "common Greek instruction," he agrees with Knight that "the motivation and ultimate truth of the teaching is based not on social custom or etiquette but on the reality of the corporate nature of Christian salvation, that all who are in Christ are part of the same body."²⁹

Towner, however, sees a more thoroughgoing indebtedness to "Greek moral teaching." With "as" (ὥς) Towner contends for a "fictive" view of the relationships depicted here ("as if"). Paul's instructions call into play the relational dynamics proper to a family without arguing that this is indeed what the church is. Nonetheless, this "dynamic of kinship," though fictive, serves to "strengthen the cohesion of the otherwise diverse group of believers and provide the church with the structural and behavior paradigm of family responsibilities and rules for relating."³⁰ There is a transference of the carefully patterned behavior related to age, gender, and role for those related by blood to those related by faith. This is something Towner once again traces back to Greek moral conventions. In sum, this backdrop can account for both facets of Paul's instructions to Timothy. Not only does Paul help Timothy conform to what "Greek moral teaching" specifies with respect to appropriate demeanor toward age groups, but he also helps him navigate the tensions arising from that teaching due to his youth (cf. 4:12).³¹

sense that the Pastorals leave room for younger men exercising authority in surprising ways" (*The Power of Children: The Construction of Christian Families in the Greco-Roman World* [Waco, TX; Baylor, 2014], 125; cf. also 145). MacDonald, however, leaves this observation largely unexplored.

²⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 269.

²⁹ Ibid.; cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 215.

³⁰ Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 330.

³¹ Ibid.; cf. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 572–73.

At the same time, given the previously argued force of παρακαλέω and the pervasive, developed theological backdrop (which is itself a response to an OT-infused distortion of the way God saves in the present), it is at least fair to ask if the contact is essentially incidental or fundamental. This line of enquiry gains additional traction when the OT backdrop of the teaching concerning widows and elders is noted, as will be seen below.

What is often left out of the discussion of 5:1–2 is that it is followed by two sections of exhortation (as 6:2 indicates) where Paul develops his thought with strong ties to the OT. It is likely that Paul's exhortation concerning widows is an elaboration on the implications of the fifth commandment (Exod 20:12).³² B. Winter argues that Paul is applying the commandment to the current problematic situation of providing *providentia* for widows in the church.³³ As with the fifth commandment, this passage makes explicit the necessity of proper respect (5:3; LXX, τιμάω) for parents, although coopting contemporary terminology to elaborate on it (εὐσεβέω; v. 4a).³⁴ Honoring one's parents now includes satisfying the demands of godliness with respect to them. Additionally, it is this mode of conduct which meets with God's approval, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God" (v. 4b; God's approval is expressed in Exodus by the promise of blessing from God for the obedient). Consequently, the indebtedness to OT ethical structures is evident both in the allusion to the fifth commandment and by the way the exhortation is grounded. It is a commonplace in OT ethics that conduct finds its determinative ground in the expressed will of God, which is in essence a call to conformity to his own character (e.g., Lev 19:2, 9, 14). As W. Kaiser states regarding OT ethics: "The standard for the good, the right, the just, and the acceptable is nothing less than the person of the living God . . ."³⁵

An even stronger tie to OT ethical thought is evident in Paul's exhortation regarding the handling of elders (5:17–25). W. Fuller's study takes its key from the "two or three witnesses" principle quoted in 5:19.³⁶ Fuller submitted Deut 19:15–20 and 1 Tim 5:19–25 to a thoroughgoing comparison. Conceptually, as in Deuteronomy, he noted that 1 Tim 5:21 lies within an "ethico-legal" context where the concern revolves around "the obligation of the community to ensure a fair examination of the man accused of 'sinning'" (cf. Deut

³² So C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NCB; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 74.

³³ Winter, "Providentia," 83–99, esp. 98. The concern for widows is commonplace in Jewish and Christian piety (cf. Deut 14:29; Job 31:16; Ps 146:9; Isa 1:17, 23; Luke 2:36–38; Acts 6:1; Jas 1:27).

³⁴ Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74.

³⁵ W. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 6.

³⁶ W. Fuller, "Of Elders and Triads in 1 Timothy 5. 19–25," *NTS* 29 (1983): 258–63; cf. also P. Wolfe, "The Place and Use of Scripture in the Pastoral Epistles" (PhD dissertation; University of Aberdeen, Scotland, 1990), 43–48 and G. Couser, "God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus" (PhD dissertation; University of Aberdeen, Scotland, 1992), 57–64.

10:15 and 1 Tim 5:20). Moreover, in both passages fairness is assured through witnesses (Deut 19:15; 1 Tim 5:19); the desired effect is fear (Deut 19:20; 1 Tim 5:20); and there is a warning against partiality in judgment (Deut 19:21; 1 Tim 5:21). Finally, structurally, he contends that both in Deut 19:17 and 1 Tim 5:21 “there is a triad of persons whose job it is to make sure that the trial is fair to those being examined”; the triad in both passages results from the outworking of the “two to three” principle.³⁷ Fuller concludes that there appears to be more than a casual dependence on the Deuteronomy passage as “the argument seems to have been developed almost step for step with the development of the argument of Deut 19,” pointing to a single common “OT seed-bed.”³⁸ Though Fuller’s work may overstate the OT connections at some points and may miss other factors at play,³⁹ his work is still significant. It suggests that Paul’s exhortation concerning elders has strong, substantial ties to the OT ethical tradition

In addition to the OT underpinnings, an additional supporting thread for Paul’s exhortations emerges explicitly in 5:17. Paul’s exhortation regarding elders involves something similar to what he does in 1 Cor 9:8–14. There, Paul appeals to the teaching of Jesus (v. 14)⁴⁰ in conjunction with OT teaching (vv. 9, 13). In 1 Tim 5, he offers an explicit source of what he essentially credits to Jesus in 1 Corinthians. Alongside Deut 25:4, he appeals to Jesus’ teaching as relayed in Luke 10:7: “the worker deserves his wages.”⁴¹ This tie to Jesus suggests another possible influence that could account for what is assumed in Paul’s use of family terminology. When Jesus’ teaching is brought into view, his teaching on the impact of the kingdom on family ties seems especially relevant. Jesus relativizes the blood family but co-opts the social institution of family in order to structure and define the nature of the relationships within the people of God. Jesus’ family is made up of “whoever does God’s will” (Mark 3:35, *par*). At the same time, for those who give up family as a consequence of embracing Christ, they will receive a family in

³⁷ Ibid., 260.

³⁸ Ibid., 260–61.

³⁹ Fuller’s work presses the correspondence between 1 Tim 5 and Deut 19 to a breaking point at times. E.g., the tribunal of “the Lord . . . the priests and the judges” (Deut 19:17) functions to ascertain the veracity of the witnesses, while the tribunal of “God, Christ Jesus and the elect angels” in 1 Tim 5:21 functions as witnesses to the admonition given in order to encourage the individual concerned (Timothy) to act impartially in his role as judge. Timothy’s witnesses will hold him accountable for his actions. Similar to Paul’s approach in 1 Cor 6:1–6, it seems better to see Paul drawing from a number of relevant OT texts (e.g., Exod 18:15–27 and Deut 1:15–18) to guide Timothy in this difficult matter (cf. B. Rosner, “Moses Appointing Judges: An Antecedent to 1Cor 6,1–6?” *ZNW* 82 [1991]: 275–78).

⁴⁰ “In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (cf. Matt 10:10; Luke 10:7).

⁴¹ See the convincing case for a connection to the Lucan Jesus in P. Wolff, “The Sagacious Use of Scripture,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 211–16.

return—not just in the age to come but for the present age as well. Should faithfulness forfeit a relationship with a father, mother, sister or brother, the believer will find many a mother, brother, or sister to stand in their place (Mark 10:29–30). Even beyond providing a family for those socially orphaned, the new family relativizes the old so that the primary loyalties now shift to God’s family in Christ. Additionally, Paul frequently uses family terminology to describe his relationships to his coworkers (e.g., 1 Tim 1:2; Phil 2:22, 25) and to the church (e.g., 1 Cor 4:14–15; 1 Thess 2:11–12), as well as the relationship of the members of the church to each other (e.g., Gal 6:10; Rom 16:13).⁴² In fact, B. Witherington argues that “Paul by no means simply Christianized or baptized the Greco-Roman household structure, nor did he take his cues from that structure when he exhorted the body of Christ.”⁴³ And J. Hellerman adds, “For both Jesus and Paul, commitment to God was commitment to God’s group. Such an outlook generates a rather different set of priorities, one that more accurately reflects the strong group-perspective of the early Christians: (1st) God’s Family—(2nd) My family—(3rd) Others.”⁴⁴ In sum, there is a rich source of background material to inform Paul’s approach here. Moreover, since this manner of treating the various genders, ages, and roles is not absolutized (i.e., these relationships shape the way Timothy brings the truth to these groups but does not call for him to subordinate his message or ministry to those who stand above him in the social hierarchy), the biblical tradition coming through Jesus makes for a more likely backdrop to Paul’s instruction here.

Any consideration of the biblical tradition as the backdrop for the sub-

⁴² See Clarke, “Equality or Mutuality,” 152.

⁴³ Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 268.

⁴⁴ J. Hellerman, *When the Church was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 94. It is important to note here that this does not call for a paradigm that encourages a believer to sacrifice their family on the altar of ministry, as if the call of Christ justifies an abrogation of one’s role as father, mother, etc. This is to assert that the reality of membership in God’s family provides the potential, shapes the direction and prescribes the limits of how one lives out their role within the biological family. E.g., what it means for a father to love his family as a father is driven by God’s expectations for fathers within his family, not by cultural expectations. This holds true for whatever social space a believer might occupy and it holds true for believers whether they are in believing or unbelieving households. This does mean, as Jesus taught (cf. Matt 10:21–33) and Paul reflects (cf. 1 Cor 7:15), that believers may not be able to preserve their relationship with their biological family. Relationships to biological family members stand subordinate to a believer’s commitment to Christ. Believers are obligated to stand over against family if to maintain their relationship would mean that they must deny or reject their primary identity as a member of the family of God. Likewise, believers may have to accept the dissolution of their relationship with their biological family if their biological family rejects them because of their commitment to Christ.

stance of what is assumed by father, brother, mother, sister raises the question as to whether “fictive” is an appropriate descriptor (i.e., “exhort . . . as if . . .”). God’s saving work in Christ has constituted his people as a family. They are the “assembly of the living God” (3:15).⁴⁵ In saying that they are the “assembly of the living God” this means that they are a people among whom God dwells, manifesting his presence for their blessing and thrusting ethical obligations upon those vouchsafed with his glory and mission (cf. Eph 2:19; 3:15; 5:1). There is something substantive and real to their family bonds effected by God’s saving work in Christ by the Spirit (1 Tim 3:16). This household is made up of all the sinners from every corner of the world that have believed on Jesus (cf. 1:15–16; 2:5–7; 3:16). There are real bonds in Christ that unite the various ages and genders. Paul can truly call Timothy “a genuine child in the faith” (1:2; cf. 2 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:4). In the light of the family bonds effected by God’s saving work as illustrated in Paul’s designation of Timothy as his “genuine son in the faith,” it seems fair to see Paul’s use of ὡς as a way to draw on a rich vein of an established redemptive reality. Paul’s designation of Timothy as his “genuine son in the faith” conditions the exhortation consistent with someone who occupies the social space of a father (or mother, brother, sister) *within God’s household*.⁴⁶

This, of course, does not mean that Timothy’s treatment of the various age/gender strata would be wholly incommensurate with what one would find in the Greco-Roman surrounding culture. The following exhortation gives examples of Paul doing what he is admonishing Timothy to do in 5:1–2, i.e., exhorting various strata within the household with an appropriate sensitivity to the social space they occupy given their age/gender. Paul’s παρακλήσις to the widows and the elders can be taken as a sub-species of what he wants Timothy to do in any encounter with the various strata of the household.⁴⁷ Paul treats these strata against the backdrop of what is expected

⁴⁵ The indefinite relative, ἥτις, which links οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ with what follows, is feminine by attraction to ἐκκλησία. Attraction “occurs when the focus of the discourse is on the predicate nom.: the dominant gender reveals the dominant idea of the passage” (D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 338; cf. also J. Roloff, *Die Erste Brief an Timotheus* [EKK 15; Zürich: Benziger, 1988], 199). Thus, grammatically, ἐκκλησία stands as the controlling metaphor for Paul’s use of the preceding οἶκῳ θεοῦ. Moreover, its controlling function is reinforced contextually by the extensive elaboration in the following phrase, “belonging to the living God, a support and pillar of the truth.” The οἶκῳ θεοῦ is nothing other than the ἐκκλησία, the people who experience God’s active presence which both constitutes them as a people and drives and constrains their life as a people. Once again, this points away from the surrounding culture as the driving force shaping Paul’s conception of what it means to be in “God’s household.”

⁴⁶ For the importance and theologically shaped nature of “social spaces” for Paul’s re-ordering of God’s household in 1 Timothy, see discussion of the “quiet and tranquil life” in Couser, “Prayer and the Public Square,” 291–93.

⁴⁷ J. Quinn and W. Wacker (*The First and Second Letters to Timothy* [ECC; Grand

of members of God's household so that his affirmations, corrections, or rebukes are driven by who they are as members in God's family. There is overlap with Greek moral tradition where that tradition complements or corresponds with expectations for God's family, e.g., as suggested by Winter's work with respect to secular concepts of *providentia* and Paul's teaching on the care of widows.⁴⁸ Yet, given the extensive OT backdrop of Paul's teaching, one should not read 1 Tim 5:8 as implying that Paul's teaching is merely a recapitulation of the accepted ethical expectations of the surrounding culture, much less that those expectations are reshaping God's family into the mold of the secular household. While a believer's neglect of their widowed mother would make them "worse than an unbeliever," what it means for a believer to care for their widow is driven and uniquely shaped by the demands of "godliness" (εὐσεβεῖν), the manner of life throughout these letters that is driven and shaped by God's saving mission in Christ.⁴⁹ The driving forces giving shape to what is assumed for "exhort older men as a father, older women as mothers, etc." are coming from above (OT teaching mediated through the teaching of Jesus and, now, Paul), not from below. In fact, this is the only way to account adequately for the appropriateness of Timothy's activity with any of the age groups/genders. Taking an authoritative posture toward those above him in the social hierarchy as well as toward his peers, especially in regard to the basis of his authority and the direction toward which it is exercised, puts him outside secular cultural expectations.

Conclusion

It seems clear that Paul's direction to Timothy in 5:1–2 goes against the cultural grain. Indeed, the role that he plays at Ephesus would be shocking on many levels. It is hard to account for Timothy's prescribed pattern of behavior given contemporary cultural norms. And, alongside Pao's work on 1 Tim 4:12,⁵⁰ the role that Timothy plays adds additional reasons for seeing Paul's ethic as *fundamentally* driven from "above." Paul seems to be extending a pre-existing, theologically-shaped notion of the character and manner of life appropriate in the household of God. Drawing on the OT as mediated through Jesus and his own earlier apostolic reflection, Paul determines the character and manner of Timothy's interaction within the family of God.

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 411) suggest that the singular suggests a man-to-man encounter and separates it from the public admonishment required for the sinning Elder (5:19–20). However, this reading seems hard to sustain. Rightly, Towner sees Elders as at least a part of the group envisioned here. 5:1–2 are intended to shape the envisioned correction so that it is "done in a conciliatory and positive way, one that seeks to restore fellowship rather than to isolate those in error" (*Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 331).

⁴⁸ Winter, "Providentia," 83–99.

⁴⁹ P. Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 150; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 83; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 117; and Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 142–43.

⁵⁰ Pao, "Let No One Despise Your Youth," 743–55.

God's saving purposes are primary for God's household. It is only those purposes which can sufficiently account for its creation, for the shape of its internal life, and for its mission in the world. It is those purposes which drive the re-appropriation (or reclamation) of the social spaces in the secular household toward the fulfillment of God's purposes in and through his family. As such, they are co-opted and reinvested with new norms which both overlap and diverge from their secular counterparts.

Paul's Family of God: What Familial Language in the Pastorals Can and Cannot Tell Us about the Church

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Some authors, especially among the Family-Integrated Church movement, have sought to draw practical implications for the administration of the church from Paul's family language. But does Paul use family metaphors to prescribe or even to suggest specific organizational structure within church body life? The purpose of this essay is to help establish to what extent Paul's use of the family metaphor is able to instruct us about how to organize and govern the church's worship and ministries. The essay traces the development of the concept of family from Genesis to the Pauline letters as a theological backdrop to Paul's family language. From the Old Testament to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, the Bible appears to present a single "family of God" comprised of believers who are devoted to him, in contrast to those who reject him. Reading Paul against this theology brings us to the conclusion that the church is not a "family of families," but that the church actually is God's "family," more significant than any human family. So while family language certainly has important implications for church body life, this essay concludes that Paul's use of family language is quite fluid, allowing for flexibility among churches in how they flesh out their identity as the "family of God."

The apostle Paul uses an abundance of familial terminology to speak of the relationship of believers to Christ and to the church. Beginning in his earliest letters, he assumes that the church is God's *family* by referring often to believers as "brothers" (19 times in 1 Thessalonians) and to God as "Father" (multiple times in Galatians and in the Thessalonian letters).¹ Paul is

¹ Abraham J. Malherbe, "God's New Family in Thessalonica," in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (ed. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 116–25. The fact that the family relationship occurs to Paul in his earlier letters indicates that the inferences from family to church were intuitive. The same family imagery continues to pervade Paul's writing. Joseph H. Hellerman, *Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why It Matters Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 190, identifies nine times in Philippians that Paul refers to the believers using the term ἀδελφός (brother), six of them in the vocative case, and that he also refers to God as Father and believers as God's children. In fact, Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as*

also the only biblical author to develop the first-century concept of adoption as a metaphor for becoming a member of God's family.² Furthermore, although Paul apparently never had children of his own, his letters are full of references to the parent-child relationship, both literal and metaphorical.³

The most overt examples of Paul's employment of family language to speak of the church, however, are found in his Pastoral Letters, especially in 1 Timothy. Here Paul refers to the church explicitly as the οἶκος θεοῦ (1 Tim 3:15), most likely a reference to "God's household," since the phrase is immediately identified with the ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, the "assembly of the living God."⁴ In God's "household," the ἐπίσκοπος ("overseer") is to be evaluated in part by his competence as a good husband and father (3:2, 4–5). Mature men (or ἀνὴρ, husband) rather than women (or γυναῖκα, wife) are to lead in matters of authority (2:8, 12–14). Paul also instructs Timothy to address older men as fathers, "younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, [and] younger women as sisters, in all purity" (5:1–2).⁵

Interpreters of the Pastorals have rightly concluded that Paul's family language ought to nuance our understanding of the nature of the church. However, some authors have pressed the application of Paul's family language further than others. A number of years ago, for example, Vern S. Poythress argued that Paul intends for readers to draw specific doctrinal inferences from the family to the church.⁶ When Paul says that the ἐπίσκοπος must be a good manager of his own household (1 Tim 3:4), Poythress observes, the apostle adds to this qualification a reasonable explanation, stating, "[F]or if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (1 Tim 3:5). This explanation, says Poythress, allows the reader to understand the essence of Paul's logical use of the family metaphor.

Paul in effect presents an argument: good family leadership must be one of the criteria for appointment to a position of overseer because the same skills and competencies are required for overseeing "one's own house" and the Christian "house." Paul does not expect Timothy simply to take Paul's

Social Reality and Metaphor (ed. Halvor Moxnes; New York: Routledge, 1997), 174, states that over sixty times in his letters Paul refers to believers using brother/sister terminology.

² Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (NSBT 22; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 194.

³ O. Larry Yarbrough, "Parents and Children in the Letters of Paul," in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* (ed. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 126.

⁴ Jürgen Goetzmann, "House, Build, Manage, Steward," *NIDNTT* 2:249.

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

⁶ Vern Sheridan Poythress, "The Church as Family: Why Male Leadership in the Family Requires Male Leadership in the Church," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991; repr. 2006), 237–50.

word for the fact that such-and-such a criterion is suitable for elders. He expects Timothy to see the wisdom—yes, the inevitability—of this criterion on the basis of the validity of the analogy.⁷

By this same analogy, Poythress explains, Paul is asking the church to come to conclusions regarding the role of women in God's household. Because male headship is the God-ordained standard for the family, he argues, it must be the same for the church.⁸

Through this reading of Paul, Poythress suggests a hermeneutical principle for drawing doctrinal conclusions from the apostle's family language using a type of categorical syllogism. Simply stated, Poythress says that A (the church) and B (the biblical family) are both common to C (the divine order according to God's design).⁹ Put in these terms, Poythress's syllogism runs like this: All churches are (biblical) families; all (biblical) families have male headship; therefore, the church must also have male headship.

This same hermeneutical principle suggested by Poythress, however, has also impacted the life of the American church on the popular level, especially through churches participating in the so-called "family-integrated church" (FIC) movement. The FIC structures its practical ecclesiology on the premise that church life should model family life. Moreover, there has been a growing appeal of this particular church model, especially among home school families, because of its strong ethos of traditional family values.¹⁰ Therefore, the hermeneutical model upon which the FIC bases some of its decisions deserves scholarly attention. As a clear example of the hermeneutical process of the FIC movement, Voddie Baucham is one who argues for complete integration of all age groups within the local church. Baucham eagerly describes his own church in this manner:

Our church has no youth ministers, children's ministers, or nursery. We do not divide families into component parts. We do not separate the mature women from the young teenage girls who need their guidance. We do not separate the toddler from his parents during worship. In fact, we don't even do it in Bible study.¹¹

What leads Baucham and others in the family-integrated church to the

⁷ Ibid., 239.

⁸ Ibid., 241–42.

⁹ The terminology "biblical family" is used here simply to signify the family order normally depicted in the Bible and taught by the apostles (e.g., Eph 5:22–6:4; Col 3:18–21; 1 Pet 3:1–7) in which the husband is the loving authority in the marriage relationship, the wife is the submissive helper, and the children honor their parents.

¹⁰ The influence of the Family-Integrated Church movement is noted in Andreas J. Köstenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 249–68. In this edition the authors felt the need to add an evaluation of the FIC movement.

¹¹ Voddie Baucham, Jr., *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 191.

conclusion that the church must function this manner? “We see the church,” he explains, “as a family of families.”¹² Here is the same syllogism seen in Poythress. Only, in this application, Baucham deduces ecclesiological principles not only from the text of Scripture, but also from the model of the patriarchal family which was common in the culture from which the Scriptures were written. The syllogism in Baucham’s case may run like this: All churches in the Bible are (patriarchal) families; all (patriarchal) families reflect a collectivist society with a strong sense of corporate community; therefore, the church should reflect this same community (i.e., never segregate its members).¹³

These applications of Paul’s family language have serious implications, for they bring the authority of the Scripture to bear upon the conduct of the local church. As such, Poythress and Baucham raise an important hermeneutical question. *How far can we press Paul’s familial language into service for interpreting the nature and function of the church?* We could also state the question this way: *Can we draw from Paul’s familial language authoritative doctrinal and even practical implications for the administration of the church that go beyond what the apostle has already stated?* An essential step toward answering these and similar questions is to let the Scriptures themselves demonstrate how the concept of “family” is used to define the contours and practices of God’s people throughout redemption history. Toward that end, this essay will apply a biblical theology of God’s “family” to the hermeneutical syllogism suggested by Poythress and Baucham.¹⁴ The following major sections, therefore, will trace the development of God’s revelation concerning his “family” throughout the Old Testament, in the teachings of Jesus, and finally in the writings of Paul.

God’s “Family” in the Old Testament

From the beginning of human creation there has always been a divinely

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For other examples of this same hermeneutical process, see also Eric Wallace, *Uniting Church and Home: A Blueprint for Rebuilding Church and Community* (Round Hill, VA: Hazard Communications, 1999), 89, who explains, “God uses ‘household’ terminology to reveal how the church is to function”; and Dustin Guidry, *Turning the Ship: Exploring the Age-Integrated Church* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2006). See also Jason Webb, “The Family-Integrated Church Movement: An Exploration in Ecclesiology” (M.A. Thesis, Cedarville University, 2002), https://www.rts.edu/sharedresources/documents/global/Student_Theses/Webb-Family_Integrated_Church_Movement.pdf, who explores many aspects of the FIC online because the movement is largely unpublished.

¹⁴ The approach taken here is reminiscent of the one in Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 8. Scobie explains that biblical theology is a *bridge discipline*, for it stands “in an intermediate position between the historical study of the Bible and the use of the Bible as authoritative Scripture by the church.”

ordained, theologically definable “family,” upon whom alone God has poured out his divine grace, seen in both his blessing and chastening as a Father (cf. Ps 103:13; Prov 3:11–12; Jer 31:9). Indeed, the Old Testament record recounts the history of God’s creative and redemptive purposes regarding his family.

The Essence of “Family” in the Old Testament

In light of the ubiquitous and fluid use of familial terminology in the OT, it is important at the outset of this project to delimit the meaning of “family.” In this essay the term “family” will refer to *a kinship group, whether fictive or actual, to which members belong because they share a uniqueness that sets them apart from everyone else in the world.* While this definition may appear reductionist, it is intended to capture the essence and flexibility of familial terms as they are used in the biblical text.¹⁵ For example, the Hebrew word אָח, most commonly translated “brother,” designates several wider relationships within the solidarity of the kinship group.¹⁶ The word אָח is used to speak of a blood brother (e.g., Cain and Abel, Gen 4:2, 8), half-brother (e.g., Joseph and his brothers, Gen 37:2, 4), uncle and nephew (e.g., Abraham and Lot, Gen 14:12, 14), members of the same tribe (e.g., Levites, Num 16:10; Danites, Judg 14:3), and countrymen (e.g., a fellow-citizen of Israel, either male or female, Deut 15:12; one from among the men of Israel, 17:15).¹⁷ Yet, אָח can also refer to a unique relationship that is outside the tie of blood, most notably in the formation of ANE covenant treaties between nations (e.g., Moses’ entreaty to the king of Edom, Num 20:14; cf. Obad 10),¹⁸ but also in the relationship shared by Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:13). Furthermore, the relationship defined with the nominative אָח can mark a relationship which takes precedent over immediate familial bonds, as seen for example in Jonathan’s friendship with David, which eclipsed his relationship with his father, Saul (2 Sam 1:26). In each of these examples, the term אָח is used to speak of the relationship between members of a unique social group, whether such uniqueness is due to near or distant kinship, or to exclusive political or philosophical ties. In short, the term is remarkably fluid, having currency in a multiplicity of close relational contexts.

We see the same fluidity in other common family terminology such as אָב, “father,” which can refer to an immediate or distant ancestor, and בֶּן, “son,”

¹⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, “Family,” *ABD* 2:761 points to the “terminological fluidity” of family language, which is complicated by cultural changes over many centuries.

¹⁶ J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 167.

¹⁷ Victor P. Hamilton, “אָח,” *NIDOTTE* 1:345–46.

¹⁸ John Priest, “The Covenant of Brothers,” *JBL* 84 (1965): 400–2. Priest demonstrates with reference to Hittite and Achaean covenants the language of brotherhood which was used to define the covenant relationships between two parties.

which can refer to any immediate or distant descendant.¹⁹ Larger social units include the **בֵּת־אָב**, or “father’s house,” the foundational social unit which could range from a nuclear family to a large dwelling of fifty to one hundred people presided over by a single patriarch.²⁰ Beyond the **בֵּת־אָב**, the **מִשְׁפָּחָה** is often used to designate a “clan” comprised of several patriarchal units, which together make up the **מִטָּה**, or “tribe.”²¹

Once again, although these social family units are comprised most obviously of blood relatives, membership is not based exclusively upon human descent. For instance, the law of Moses offered Gentile sojourners (**גֵּרִים**) the opportunity to become proselyte members of the religious community through their submission to the word and ordinances of Yahweh.²² Ruth, a Moabite woman, became a celebrated member of the tribe of Judah, not merely because she married into a Judahite family, but because she renounced her former way of life and pledged her fidelity to God and his people (Ruth 1:16–17; cf. Matt 1:5). Nevertheless, ANE people groups also considered themselves to be part of a collective whole, descended from a common ancestor. Israelites, for example, would have thought of their nation as “one large extended family.”²³ In summary, therefore, family language in the OT does not necessarily refer to a specific family dynamic, but to the loyal bond that members of a specific group share with one another, based upon a strong, common experience which unites them, most often related to ancestral ties.

The Creation of God’s Family Tree

The family, this loyal bond created through strong, common experience, is not an accident of the human race but is part of the very fabric of God’s created order. That God purposefully formed the “family” as defined above is reflected in a helpful overview by J. Gary Millar, in which he summarizes the consensus among those who reflect upon a whole-Bible biblical theology. Millar writes,

¹⁹ Wright, “Family,” 762.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robert H. O’Connell, “מִשְׁפָּחָה,” *NIDOTTE* 2:1140. An example of the arrangement of these terms can be seen in the apprehension of Achan in Josh 7:14, 16–18, 24–26, first by his **סִבָּת**, then by his **מִשְׁפָּחָה**, and finally by his **בֵּת**. Again, however, this terminology is quite flexible. For example, there is no clear example of the use of **מִשְׁפָּחָה** to speak of a hierarchy within tribes until the organization of the nation of Israel after the exodus (p. 1141).

²² Paul F. Stuehnenberg, “Proselyte,” *ABD* 5:503. The Pentateuch details several ways in which the proselyte can participate in the covenant blessings, including circumcision and integration into community life (Exod 20:10; 22:21; 23:9, 12; Deut 5:14; 16:11, 14; 29:11; 31:12; Num 15:14–16).

²³ R. R. Wilson, “Israel’s Judicial System in the Preexilic Period,” *JQR* 74 (1983): 232.

The message of the Bible, in essence, is that God is at work to bring into being a people under his rule in his place. The idea of the people of God, therefore, stands at the heart of biblical theology. This is where the Bible starts and ends. In the Garden of Eden . . . God creates the first couple, the protological people of God, and invites them to live under his rule. All too quickly they refuse to accept God's terms, and so are excluded from his presence. By the closing chapters of Revelation, however, the wheel has turned full circle. The story has returned to a "garden" (comprising a new heaven and a new earth), which bears a striking resemblance to Eden. The primary characteristic of this new place is that here God's servants live in intimacy with him forever, as his people, under his rule (Rev 22:3–4). This is the overall trajectory of biblical theology.²⁴

Where Millar uses the phrase "people of God," we may justifiably substitute the phrase "family of God" for at least three reasons. First, the "protological people of God" are not merely "the first couple" but the first *family* (Gen 2:24). Second, as the first family, Adam and Eve serve as a nascent example of our definition of the essence of family; that is, the fact that they are created by God in his image sets them apart from everything else in the created order and therefore binds them together uniquely in loyal fellowship (cf. Gen 2:18–25). Third, the Hebrew word **עַם** ("people"), though it has a broad semantic range, often "implies a sense of ethnic community based on blood relationship."²⁵ In fact, God famously refers to his "people" using familial language. For example, God's repeated warning to Pharaoh is, "Let my people go that they may serve me" (Exod 5:1; 7:16; 8:1). God's ultimate warning, however, shows that he looks upon his "people" as a father to a son: "Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me'" (Exod 4:22–23). Also, in the prophecy of Hosea, God plays the part of both father and husband to his "people," prophesying that "in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God'" (Hos 2:10).

Broadly speaking, it may be argued that the entire human race is a "family" (cf. Eph 3:15) in the sense that all people have descended from the same human parents. But this definition does not capture the close relational essence inherent in the concept of family. People form a family when, *among* the sheer number of descendants from the first human parents inhabiting the fallen, divided world, they find their place of community within *definable limits* of a population. That is to say, when they *identify with* a specific part of the whole. What the OT actually demonstrates is that, *since the fall of the original family, God has himself delimited from among all the inhabitants of the world a distinct*

²⁴ J. Gary Millar, "People of God," *NDBT*, 684.

²⁵ Daniel I. Block, "Nations/Nationality," *NIDOTTE* 3:966. Millar, "People of God," 684, would seem to concur, noting that Abraham's family is referred to with the word **עַם** ("people"), which, in context, often emphasizes kinship.

family, one that shares the uniqueness of knowing him, one that identifies with him and with others who know him. Furthermore, God's loving purpose in electing a lineage of people is ultimately to redeem a *family* to inherit the new heaven and earth in the final state (Revelation 21–22), calling this *family* back into the fellowship that the entire creation was originally created to enjoy with God forever.

Millar continues to trace the people (family) of God, leaping ahead from the Garden of Eden to God's call to Abram, through whom he "begins to create a people for himself."²⁶ Remarkably, however, Millar's treatment ignores multiple generations of salvation history, namely Genesis 4–11, in which God demonstrates the redemptive process of choosing a unique family even in the second generation. Without probing the details and questions surrounding the offerings of Cain and Abel, the heart of the difference between the two men is seen in the implication of God's challenge to Cain in Gen 4:7. God essentially says to Cain, "If *you* do well (like your brother, Abel), will you not (also) be accepted (like he has been)?" Nevertheless, Cain does not "do well." He murders his brother and God drives Cain far away from the other members of his family (Gen 4:13–16).

This rift in the second generation of the human family provides the theological basis for the distinction of the family of God in the OT. As is commonly recognized, Genesis 4 immediately follows Cain's judgment with a stark contrast between his own ungodly lineage (Gen 4:17–24) and the godly lineage of Eve's third son, Seth (4:25–26).²⁷ The genealogy which begins with the murderous Cain climaxes with the taunt of the murderous Lamech (4:23–24), whom Gordon Wenham refers to as "the most vicious man in Genesis."²⁸ By contrast, the genealogy which begins with Seth is immediately marked by a distinct connection to Yahweh with the declaration, "At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD" (4:26).²⁹

It is the godly line of Seth upon which God explicitly sets his approval, singling out Seth and his descendants as a family distinct from the line of Cain. In the *Toledoth* formula which begins Genesis 5, the author recapitulates the creation of humankind (Gen 1:26–28) in order to mark Seth with the

²⁶ Millar, "People of God," 684.

²⁷ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 279–94, has an excellent treatment of the significance of these two genealogies.

²⁸ Gordon Wenham, "Family in the Pentateuch," in *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 26.

²⁹ Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 292–93, says that the phrase "unites the Lord of the patriarchs and of Moses with the Lord of the antediluvian line of promise through Seth and shows thereby that the spiritual ancestors of Abraham's family were those descended through Noah, the survivor of the flood's purge."

original creation blessing.³⁰ Genesis 5:1–2 reads, “When God created [*Adam*], he made him in the likeness (דְמוּת) of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named (קרא) them [*Adam*].” In Gen 5:3, God’s creation of Adam is mirrored in Adam’s procreation of Seth: “Adam . . . fathered a son in his *own* likeness (דְמוּת), after *his* image (צֶלֶם; cf. Gen 1:27), and named (קרא) him Seth” (emphasis added). The striking verbal parallels between these three creation/procreation accounts—Adam in Genesis 1 and 5/Seth in Genesis 5—provides a theological connection between God’s original creation of humanity and his continuation of blessing upon a specific family *within* humanity, to the exclusion of others.

The Creation of Adam (Gen 1:26–28)	The Creation of Adam (Gen 5:1–2)	The Procreation of Seth (Gen 5:3)
God created (ברא) Adam	God created (ברא) Adam	Adam fathered (ילד) a son
In his likeness (דְמוּת)	In his likeness (דְמוּת)	In his likeness (דְמוּת)
In his image (צֶלֶם)	-----	In his image (צֶלֶם)
-----	He named them (קרא)	He named him (קרא)

Claus Westermann is right to remark that the true significance of the creation of humankind in Gen 1:26–28 is unclear until “generation follows generation according to the rhythm of begetting and birth, life-span and death, as presented in Gen 5.”³¹ In other words, human creation is left unfulfilled until it continues in successive generations. As we follow the generations which flow from Adam through Seth, we observe that God continues his redemptive program through singling out a specific family line marked by those who continue to “call” upon him (Gen 4:26).

The line of Seth leads to Noah, who alone upon the earth, now filled with violence and wickedness (Gen 6:5–8), is described as “a righteous man, blameless in his generation” and one who “walked with God” (Gen 6:9). After God protects the lineage of Seth by saving Noah and his family from the judgment of the flood (Gen 6–8), he again places his divine approval on the lineage of a single son, Shem. The blessing upon the descendants of Shem is presented in bold relief against the judgment pronounced upon the line of Canaan, the son of Ham, because Ham dishonored his father, Noah (Gen 9:20–27). Once again, therefore, the distinct blessing of one genealogy is highlighted following a rift within a family. Furthermore, the contrast between Canaan and Shem anticipates the distinction which will later provide

³⁰ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (The JPS Torah Commentary 1; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 40.

³¹ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion, S.J.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 348.

the backdrop for God's people dwelling as his "family" among the Canaanite nations.

From Adam to Noah, the genealogical record is presented as ten generations (Gen 5:1–32). Likewise, from Shem to Abram there are ten generations (Gen 11:10–26). This literary symmetry calls special attention to God's blessing on the family line which begins with Adam and climaxes with Abram.³² The Babel narrative (Gen 11:1–9) which precedes the genealogy of Shem again places the call of God upon a particular family, delimited among a world population living in rebellion against him. Abram receives the call of God while living among pagans in Ur. Significantly, the call to Abram begins with the words, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:1–3). Here, God asks Abram to break familial ties in order to journey by faith to a promised land, where he would create from Abram's lineage a nation/family who would provide blessing for all families of the earth.

The Theological "Family of God"

The rest of the OT may be briefly summarized as the witness to God's dealings with the specific family line from Abraham whom God chose to be his own people.³³ Within this line, God chooses Isaac rather than Ishmael (Gen 16–18, 21–22) and Jacob rather than Esau (Gen 27). Ultimately, God grows Jacob's (Israel's) family in Egypt into a mighty nation and brings this nation to Sinai where he formally constitutes them as his people by establishing a covenant with them (Exod 19–20).³⁴

It is the Sinai covenant which forms the basis for further development in the meaning of God's "family" theologically defined. For the covenant introduced the idea that those who were truly members of the covenant community—who were in the "family"—would obey the covenant commands. The inherent understanding of the Sinai covenant has been well-articulated by Scott W. Hahn. According to Hahn, the covenant formed between God and his people at Sinai was a "kinship covenant." Hahn explains,

In a kinship covenant, kinship bonds are extended to bind two parties in a *mutual* relationship based upon a *joint* commitment under divine sanctions. The purpose of this type of covenant is to draw others who are potentially at enmity into a family circle where amity might prevail. It may also serve to reinforce already existing familial relations.³⁵

³² Sarna, *Genesis*, 40.

³³ Scobie, *The Ways of Our God*, 470.

³⁴ Millar, "People of God," 684.

³⁵ Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (AYBRL; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 37 (emphasis original).

It is on the basis of this covenant that God refers to his people in familial terms, most notably using language of a father to a son.³⁶ God would later say through Hosea, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). In constituting the nation as his own "people" or "family," God made them, in the words of Moses, "distinct . . . from every other people on the face of the earth" (Exod 33:16). By remaining in fellowship with their "Father," Israel, his son, would enjoy the Father's blessing in the land of promise.

Nevertheless, since obedience was a part of the covenant agreement within the family, the same covenant which served as a basis for Israel's blessing was also the mechanism whereby the nation could be disinherited from the family of God. This notion is made plain in God's response to the horrific idolatry of his newly-covenanted people in Exodus 32. On this occasion, God threatens to exterminate the entire nation and again place his blessing upon the lineage of a single individual, Moses, in order to reconstitute the family of Israel (Exod 32:9–10). In Deuteronomy 28, the blessings enumerated for those who faithfully obey Yahweh are paired with curses for disobedience. These curses climax with the judgment of exile back to Egypt, the reversal or undoing of the kinship covenant God had established with his people (Deut 28:68). Later in their history, as the nation's unabated idolatry worsened and the time of God's exilic judgment drew near, there was a ready distinction that the prophets were able to draw between *ethnic Israel* and *true Israel*, between those who were merely descendants of Abraham and those who were faithful to the covenant (cf. Rom 2:28; 9:6).³⁷ For example, God renounces his fatherhood of Israel with the words, "You are not my people, and I am not your God" (Hos 1:9). Obedience was required to truly belong to the family.

Alongside this devastating language from the heart of God, however, the idea of a restored kinship emerged, known as the "remnant," or the core of those in the family who remained faithful, especially the small group who survived God's catastrophic judgment on their idolatry.³⁸ At times, the "remnant" consisted of those few who remained faithful in the face of idolatry, such as Elijah (1 Kgs 19:9–18), Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:7–28), and Jeremiah (Jer 1:17–19; cf. 23:3; 33:1–22). Micah ends his prophecy with the promise of God's "passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance" and renewing his compassion and faithful love to Abraham (Mic 7:18–20). When the last OT prophet, John the Baptist appears, calling for Israel's repentance, he sternly warns those who would excuse themselves by saying, "We have Abraham as our father," who would ignore the spiritual implications of what it means to truly belong to Abraham (Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8). However, the prophets leave God's true family with great hope. Though God says to Israel,

³⁶ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

³⁷ Millar, "People of God," 685.

³⁸ Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," *ABD* 5:670.

"You are not my people," he also promises that he will gather Israel together once more and call them, "Children of the living God" (Hos 1:10).

Summary

In this brief treatment of the concept of "family" in the OT, several factors may be observed. First, beginning with Adam and Eve, a tangible lineage of human descendants is marked out by God as *his* people. There is hardly a place in the OT where this lineage is not clearly identifiable. Second, these "people of God" constitute his "family" in that they share a unique bond of loyalty and obedience to God which brings them into fellowship with one another and sets them apart from everyone else in the world. Third, this exclusive relationship which God shares with his people is highlighted explicitly with familial language, such as the father/son language of the covenant. The language does not indicate a specific family dynamic but speaks to the *kind* of relationship that God and his people share with him and with one another. The bonds of kinship are also reflected in the familial language used throughout the OT. Fourth, after God chooses the line of Israel for his special family, he continues the process of delineating from among ethnic Israel both those who *are* and who *are not* part of *his* "family." Those who are truly in the family are those who follow God. Finally, we should note that, by implication, being set apart as a member of *God's* "family" necessarily means being disenfranchised from *other* "families" or people groups upon the earth, even sometimes being separated from other members of the same ethnic community who are in rebellion against God.

The Family of God in the Teaching of Jesus

The concept of God as Father of his children, which is explicit in only a handful of OT texts (e.g., Deut 1:30–31; Ps 103:14; Prov 3:11–12; Hos 1:10), comes alive in the Gospels through the teaching and prayers of Jesus, who continually refers to God as "Father." In fact, there is a newness in Jesus' teaching regarding God as Father due to the sheer emphasis he places upon this relationship for his followers. Beyond this general observation, however, one of the seminal passages in which Jesus speaks of the family appears in Mark 3:31–35 (par. Matt 12:46–59; Luke 8:19–21). The evangelist narrates,

And [Jesus'] mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you." And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" and looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

In the context of first-century Jewish culture, the contrast in this passage between the crowd of Jesus' followers and his mother and brothers could

hardly be more palpable.³⁹ Where it was expected that the members of Jesus' own family would surround him while others listen in, here we find just the opposite. The followers of Jesus are gathered around him while Mary and his brothers are alienated.⁴⁰ Jesus' family is left standing on the outside, while the followers of Jesus are seated on the inside.

What is the significance of Jesus' declaration that his *true* family consists not of those who are tied to him by blood, but of those who do the will of God? One common view of this pericope is that Jesus is pronouncing a radical "redefinition" of the very notion of "family." Namely, whereas the Jewish people are used to thinking of family in terms of blood ties to a common ancestor, Jesus profoundly rejects this notion in order to recast the family in terms of spiritual ties to him.⁴¹ This view, however, may be somewhat near-sighted. The idea that Jesus is newly introducing the concept of a spiritual family in contrast to a mere human family ignores the OT stream of God's revelation to his people about what being in his "family" means, a stream which, as we have seen, has its headwaters in the opening pages of Genesis and was articulated until the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8). Therefore, it is better to interpret Jesus' teaching about the "family" on this occasion in at least two ways. First, Jesus may not be introducing a new concept of spiritual family in this teaching, but he is certainly taking advantage of a teaching moment in order to remind his followers what it means to be in the true "family" of God. In fact, Jesus offers a similar reminder to the Pharisees who depended spiritually upon their human descent from Abraham (John 8:37–42). He cautions them, "If you were [truly] Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did" (John 8:39) and, "If God were [truly] your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here"

³⁹ William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 147, remarks, "Those who sat before [Jesus] felt compelled to call his attention to the persistent outcry, for in their thinking both the Law of God and common piety demanded that he respect the request of his mother."

⁴⁰ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 179.

⁴¹ Those who interpret Jesus' words as a "redefinition" of the family include, for example, James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 125; Pheme Perkins, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIB; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 566; and Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26* (WBC 34A; Dallas: Word, 1989), 182. Additionally, Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 109, says that the "redefined family" is a "major image employed by Mark for the eschatological community" and that "this new definition of family [is] in terms of the Christian community." Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, "'Who Are My Mother and My Brothers?': Family Relations and Family Language in the Gospel of Mark," *JR* 81 (2001): 14, also explains, "Jesus *redefines* his family not just as those around him but as those who do the will of God" (emphasis added). Lane, *Mark*, 148, refers to Mark 3:34 as "the new family which Jesus calls into being."

(8:42). Moreover, Jesus continues to warn the Pharisees that their murderous disobedience proves they have no pedigree in God's family at all but are actually children of the devil (8:44–47). Yet as shocking as this verdict may have sounded to the ears of the self-righteous Pharisees, Jesus' teaching is entirely consistent with the theology of the family which God had already been revealed in the OT canon.

Secondly, we may interpret Jesus' words about family, if not as a *redefinition* of family in general, as a *reorientation* of the true family of God.⁴² In other words, Jesus may not be introducing the family of God as a new concept, but he is certainly reorienting the family around himself as the obedient Son of the Father. Whereas spiritual obedience would have previously placed one in God's family, Jesus may refine doing "the will of God" (Mark 3:35) more specifically as that which signifies a family relationship with Jesus himself. Thus, Jesus is not rejecting his mother and his brothers in this narrative but drawing a contrast which advances OT revelation. Though Jesus' own kinship group in Nazareth misunderstood him and even rejected him (cf. Mark 3:20–21; 6:1–6), his true "family" gave evidence of their spiritual kinship by sharing in the common family trait, illustrated by Jesus, of faithful obedience to the Father.

It is also important to mention that the implications of Jesus' teaching in Mark 3:31–35 extend to other events and sayings in the ministry of Jesus as he urges his followers that they must be willing to forsake all to follow him. While continuing to confine our observations to Mark's Gospel, we first notice that Peter and Andrew leave their livelihood in order to follow Jesus (Mark 1:16–18). Next, James and John, in order to answer Jesus' call, leave behind even their father, Zebedee, who remains sitting in the boat with his servants (1:19–20).

Later in Jesus' ministry, Peter compares himself with a rich young man whose grasp of possessions prevented him from following the Lord. Peter declares, "See, we have left everything and followed you" (Mark 10:28). Jesus replies, "There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life" (10:29–30). Two aspects of Jesus' teaching in this passage are especially significant. First, although Jesus is not teaching that one *must* forsake all family ties in order to follow him, Jesus recognizes that loyalty to the family of God—shown through obedience to the will of God—will sometimes mean a separation from blood kinship, and implies that persecution is a normal part of this separation.⁴³ Second, Jesus teaches that what may be

⁴² Mark L. Strauss, *Mark* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 174, uses this similar terminology when interpreting Mark 3:31–35. He says, "... the radical values of the kingdom of God demand new allegiances and a new orientation in human relationships." A *new* orientation is a *reorientation*.

⁴³ France, *Mark*, 408–9.

painfully lost in terms of human kinship will be gained in terms of multiple family members who are brothers and sisters with Christ and that this new family has an eternal quality.

In summary, the teaching of Jesus demonstrates a strong continuity between the family of God in the OT and the family of God reconstituted around himself as the Son of God. First, in both the OT and in the teaching of Jesus, the true members of the "family" are those who are obedient to God. Jesus' ministry served to call attention to the distinction between those who were only Jews by race and those who were truly in God's "family." Second, just as God communicated to his people in the warm, familial language of a father to a son, so Jesus speaks ubiquitously of God as his Father and refers to his followers as brothers, sisters, and mothers. Third, just as faithful believers found themselves marginalized from society in the OT, Jesus teaches that this persecution is a normal expectation for those who choose to follow him.

The Family of God in Paul

We return at last to Paul's use of family language in his letters. Before we note the continuity of familial terms among Paul, the OT and teaching of Jesus, however, we must explore a fundamental question. Poythress and Baucham have suggested syllogisms which conclude that the relationships within the family must inform the proper relationships within the church. Moreover, at least in Baucham's view, family language in Paul must even inform the organization of the church. It is necessary, therefore, to identify what, if any, particular family structure Paul has in mind when he refers to the church as a family. To this question we will now turn before examining Paul's family language itself.

Paul's Perception of the Family Structure

To begin with, we must recognize that the ANE family model differs in substantial ways from the nuclear family in the modern West. Therefore, any attempt to understand Paul's use of family terminology to describe the church must start with the recognition that the modern family structure which most people think of in the West when they think of a "family" was unknown to Paul.⁴⁴ Because the ANE family dynamics are quite complex, however, the following is a brief summary relying on the excellent work of Joseph H. Hellerman.

Hellerman explains the ancient family as a patrilineal kinship group in which the members view their participation "not primarily in terms of *relationship* but in terms of *consanguinity*, that is, in terms of a blood connection with a common ancestor."⁴⁵ There are at least two aspects of the patrilineal

⁴⁴ John W. Drane, "Family," *NDBT*, 494.

⁴⁵ Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Augsburg

family which are significant for an understanding of family in the NT. First, ancient families were highly corporate, valuing the group over the individual, willing without question to come to the aid of one another, and unbending in their loyalty.⁴⁶ This means that the needs and interests of the group always took priority over that of the individual.⁴⁷ Second, in ancient families, it was not marriage, but the priority of blood relation—especially between siblings—which formed the strongest bonds of loyalty.⁴⁸ In fact, among the members of the immediate family, the wife/mother was considered an “outsider” from the standpoint that she was the only person not connected by blood to the ancestor. Furthermore, the father and sons were the most important by virtue of the fact that they were the only members who could continue the bloodline. Consequently, father-son/daughter and brother/sister language represent the most loyal expressions of familial ties.⁴⁹ One example in which Paul appears to reflect an understanding of this faithful sibling loyalty is found in 1 Cor 6:1–8, where Paul is aghast with the knowledge that one of the believers was taking the other before the courts. “[Y]ou yourselves wrong and defraud,” he scolds them, “even your own brothers!” (1 Cor 6:8).

But does the patrilineal kinship model fully explain Paul’s perception of the family model, or are there other ways to approach this question? For example, Abraham J. Malherbe demonstrates how Paul refers to the Thessalonian believers as being in the “family” of God although the apostle never uses this term explicitly.⁵⁰ According to Malherbe, Paul builds upon the idea

Fortress, 2001), 29 (emphasis original). See also idem, *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 36–38.

⁴⁶ Hellerman, *Ancient Church*, 214–15.

⁴⁷ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 50.

⁴⁸ Hellerman, *Ancient Church as Family*, 35–51.

⁴⁹ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 41–50, offers special insight into the aspect of sibling ties in particular. He gives several examples from Second Temple literature and from the Bible which demonstrate absolute sibling loyalty, which takes priority even over the marriage relationship. For example, Herod murders his beloved Mariamne in loyalty to his sister, Solome (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.185–240); Octavia leaves her husband Antony and returns to her brother, Octavian, when the two men clash in war (Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 35); Simeon and Levi slaughter the men of Shechem to defend their sister’s honor (Genesis 34), and Joseph forgave his brothers and took them back into fellowship (Genesis 37–50).

The emphasis on father-son/daughter and brother/sister language should not ignore, however, that the bond between husband and wife was also celebrated and used as a picture of the relationship between God and his people, speaking in terms of love and fidelity (e.g., Hos 2:14–23; Eph 5:25–32).

⁵⁰ Malherbe, “God’s New Family in Thessalonica,” 119–24. Among other evidences, Malherbe points to Paul’s addressing the Thessalonians as a people group,

that God is Creator, and therefore "Father," and that this idea already existed in Platonic and Stoic philosophies present in the culture.⁵¹ "It is possible," explains Malherbe, "that Paul derived this description of God as Father who creates and sustains the church from such traditions, which were indebted to Stocism."⁵² Likewise, Reider Aasgaard attempts to explain Paul's use of brother/sister language by way of philosophical ideas as seen specifically in a comparison of Paul with Plutarch's *Philadelphias*.⁵³ At the least, these authors have recognized the wide range of familial terms and adjacent philosophical concepts that may have been in Paul's vocabulary when interacting with Gentile believers.

Furthermore, it should occur to us that, as a Roman citizen, reared in Judaism but with knowledge of Roman family customs, Paul would have been fully aware of both Jewish and pagan traditions with respect to the household. Paul knew of the Jewish family, rich with ancient customs which flowed from honor to the Torah, and he also knew of the pagan family, where the hearth was the site of the shrine that brought the members of the household together for veneration of the family god.⁵⁴ When we read the letters of Paul, we note that he can organize his ideas around the Greco-Roman *Haus-tafel* when giving instructions concerning relationships within the family (Eph 5:22–6:9; Col 3:18–25), and he can also draw upon patriarchal kinship texts of the OT (Rom 9:6–13; 2 Cor 6:18).

To the various dynamics of family life which Paul could have drawn upon, Eva Marie Lassen adds the fact that family metaphors were ubiquitous in ancient Rome and that these metaphors were not always used the same way in pagan society as they were by the writers of the NT.⁵⁵ Her observation may suggest why family metaphors would have been attractive for Paul to use in describing the church to Gentile people, but it does not illumine what family system, if any in particular, Paul is using to describe the church, especially in the Pastorals. Furthermore, Karl Olav Sandnes touches on some of the intricacies of the patrilineal family detailed by Hellman when he warns that brotherhood and family terms are not necessarily to be used in the same category. Sandnes explains,

rather than using their place name, Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:1); addressing the believers several times as "brothers"; and referring to himself as a nursing mother and as a father in chapter 2.

⁵¹ Ibid., 118–19.

⁵² Ibid., 119–20.

⁵³ Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul," 166–82.

⁵⁴ John Barclay, "The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; New York: Routledge, 1997), 67, 73.

⁵⁵ Eva Marie Lassen, "The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; New York: Routledge, 1997), 114–15.

[H]ousehold terms cover relationships between superior and subordinate, between genders, and roles within the household, as well as the relationship between close and more distant relatives. Brotherhood terms, however, apply only to the relationship between siblings, who are usually considered to be equals, although there may be differences between younger and elder brothers.⁵⁶

The difficulty in approaching familial language used by Paul should by now be self-evident. Given that Paul was situated among a melting pot of various cultures and given the various familial terminology that would have been available to him, we are hard pressed to say for certain if there was a single family paradigm he would likely have drawn upon for all purposes in his letters. Therefore, it is probably best to view Paul's use of familial language in the following manner. First, we must observe that most of Paul's family metaphors use imagery that transcends many specific cultures. Who in Paul's culture could not relate, for instance, to the image of the tender, nursing mother caring for her children as an example of the apostle's affection for the members of a young church (1 Thess 2:7)? Or the image of the wise father patiently exhorting his children (2:11)? Or the honor that one should show to a mother or father as an example of deference to older believers in the church, or the familial bond between siblings (1 Tim 5:1–2)? Such imagery is still largely accessible even in the modern West. Second, when Paul desires to be specific in his application, he will couch his ideas in the teaching of the OT. For instance, when Paul addresses the subject of marriage in Eph 5:22–33 he defines marriage against the textual background of Gen 2:24. When he is explaining the roles of men and women in the church, he draws upon the created order from Genesis 1 and 2 (1 Tim 2:8–15). Third, the fluidity of much of Paul's language should not discourage the investigation of terminology that he may be using in a technical manner. For instance, the metaphor of adoption into God's family will be severely misunderstood by those outside of his culture unless one understands the process of adoption in the ANE. Finally, it is best to see Paul's use of family structure such as the Greco-Roman *Haustafel* as reflecting the common family structure of his readers. Therefore, we must be cautious about insisting that the apostle has one particular structure in mind when he speaks of the family. It may very well be that he uses the image of the household in the most fundamental sense of the concept only.

Examples of Familial Language in Paul

Despite the fact that Paul appears at times to draw upon Greco-Roman imagery which was unknown in the OT (e.g., the *Haustafeln* and his adoption

⁵⁶ Karl Olav Sandnes, "Equality within Patriarchal Structures: Some New Testament Perspectives on the Christian Fellowship as a Brother- or Sisterhood and a Family," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; New York: Routledge, 1997), 150.

language), his use of familial language shows a strong continuity with the general theological idea of God's "family" in the OT and in the teaching of Jesus. First, Paul agrees that those who are in the "family" are unique in that they obey the word and will of God. This teaching in Paul is seen in a striking passage in 2 Cor 6:14–18. Paul writes,

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

The overall message that Paul is urging upon the Corinthian church is to separate themselves as holy people unto God from their pagan culture.⁵⁷ But in making this appeal, Paul speaks in terms of partnership, fellowship, accord, portion, and agreement. The church is not to share these familial virtues of oneness with those who are unbelieving or in darkness, or who practice lawlessness and idolatry, but they are to find their closest fellowship with those who are living in obedience to God. Why is it important for the church to live holy lives, distinct from the culture around them? The answer is discovered in the tapestry of OT texts which Paul quotes freely in this passage (Lev 26:12; Isa 52:11; Ezek 20:34; and 2 Sam 7:14); in short, because believers in the church are "the people of God."⁵⁸ One of Paul's OT allusions in particular, however, is quite unique. In its original context, 2 Sam 7:14 was God's promise to David that his royal lineage would be preserved. Speaking of David's descendant (Solomon), God says, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." In order to make this OT text fit its present context, Paul must alter it in three significant ways. First, he must take a passage that originally applied to an individual and make it plural. Second, he must take a passage which applied to a single person or, arguably, a single lineage (David's heirs) *among* the people of God and apply it to *all* the people of God. Third, in order to encompass all of God's people, Paul must also include "daughters" with sons. That Paul recasts this important OT text highlights his theology of being in God's "family." At the fundamental level, being in the "family" of God means faithful obedience to God.

⁵⁷ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco, TX: Word, 1986).

⁵⁸ Peter Balla, "2 Corinthians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 773.

A second significant passage illustrating a remarkable continuity between Paul and the OT is Romans 9, where he makes explicit the remnant theology of the OT. In answer to those who would accuse God of not fulfilling his promise to save Israel, Paul argues, “but it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named” (Rom 9:6–7). With a keen eye toward the progression of God’s “family” in Genesis, in which Isaac was chosen instead of Ishmael (9:7–9), and Jacob was chosen instead of Esau (9:10–13), Paul sets forth the theological concept that membership in the “family” is not tied to blood, but to faith and obedience.

Third, the tender and strong images of family that Paul uses to speak of the church and their relationship with one another in Christ—as well as his own relationship with them—have already been cited above (e.g., 1 Thess 2:6–12). This is yet another way we observe demonstrable continuity between the OT, Jesus, and Paul. As mentioned before, brother/sister language is ubiquitous in Paul. To offer another example, Paul considered himself a “father” to the Corinthians. “I do not write these things to make you ashamed,” says Paul, “but to admonish you as my beloved children. . . . For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (1 Cor 4:14–15). Likewise, Paul continues to think of himself in this relationship to the Corinthians, even after much strife between them: “I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children” (2 Cor 12:14b).

Conclusion

How, then, does a biblical theology of the “family” in the Old and New Testaments inform our understanding of how far to press Paul’s family metaphor? At the most fundamental level, being a member of God’s “family” means that one is faithful and obedient to God and is therefore separated unto God in a visible community, whether it is the nation of Israel in the Old Testament or the church in the New Testament. On this basis, the idea of a family remnant was formed, comprised of those faithful in contrast to those who were unfaithful, even if the unfaithful had a claim to family ties at the biological level (e.g., Jewish descent). Furthermore, this “family” has always existed, protected by God’s grace, which means that we should expect to see it continue, even if in remnant form, until the end of the age. In the OT, the metaphor of being in the family, with God as Father, was often overshadowed by the more prevalent language of the “people of God.” But with the coming of Jesus, the language of God as Father came into prominence.

In his letters, however, Paul draws upon the full range of familial terms in order to communicate the idea of being in God’s household, or *οἶκος θεοῦ* (1 Tim 3:15), using family imagery in unprecedented ways. For instance, he equates *ἐπίσκοπος* with a father as a test of his qualification (1 Tim 3:5–6) and uses family relationships to explain to Timothy his behavior among his

brothers and sisters in Christ (5:1–2). But these examples are not radical departures from the trajectory of familial terms used by God to identify his community. Paul's use of οἶκος θεοῦ is a natural implication arising from reflection upon the church as the faithful members of God's "family" and the long-time use of strong family terms, such as "brother," to refer to the members of the family. It is also quite possible that, as Christians were pushed out of the temple court and the synagogues and began to gather more often in their own villas, the rise of the "house church" coupled with the familiar, OT family language made the term οἶκος θεοῦ practically intuitive.⁵⁹ As for Paul's equating the ἐπίσκοπος with a father, this application could also be seen as a natural extension from his own ministry, particularly the way he regarded the members of the Corinthian church as his "children" (cf. 1 Cor 4:14–15, 17; 2 Cor 6:13; 12:14). Given the organizational development in the church by the time 1 Timothy was written and the fact that Paul is writing specifically to instruct Timothy how to establish church leadership, Paul's means of describing the pastoral role should not be surprising. And, of course, his instruction to Timothy regarding the way he should treat other members of the "family" would also be a natural development of his references to church members using common, familial terms.

Moreover, it does not appear that the apostle Paul is drawing on a particular family model but is speaking of the family in universal terms. In fact, as we have seen, in both the Old and the New Testaments, the language the authors use to speak of the family is so fluid, and applied with such diversity, that it is impossible to insist upon one family model that Paul may or may not have had in mind when speaking of the church as a "household." This point must be made specifically with reference to Baucham's insistence that churches must never segregate age groups on the basis of the family model. How do we know which particular model of the family, if any, that Paul has in mind? Furthermore, if we begin to arbitrarily apply a family model to the church, where are the boundaries governing how far to take the application of ancient household paradigms? Are wives, for instance, to be marginalized as not being truly part of the "household" (church) based on the patrilineal model? Of course not. So as much as a biblical theology of the family *informs* our understanding of the *relationship* the members of Christ's church share with him and with one another, the same theology *limits* how far we can *apply* the dynamic of the family in practical terms.

But what about Poythress's belief that Paul is drawing upon implications of family for the church because believers are members of the same spiritual household? First, there is nothing that Poythress suggests Paul is saying in the Pastoral Epistles that the apostle has not already stated clearly on his own. In particular, Poythress's argument that male leadership in the home implies male leadership in the church simply offers another explanation for something Paul himself has already argued based on the created order in the first

⁵⁹ Goetzman, "House, Build, Manage, Steward," 249.

family (1 Cor 11:8–9; 1 Tim 2:13–14). Poythress's essay is helpful in terms of suggesting further insight into the thinking of Paul on the matter of establishing relationships in the church. But his approach does not suggest *new* relationships or organizational structures within the church.

Baucham, however, insists that the family metaphor informs church polity and structure. Moreover, to Baucham's credit, his application of the family metaphor has something to commend, for it augments the role of fatherhood and brings God's people together for greater fellowship in the body of Christ. The question here, however, is not whether such church structures can be helpful. The question is whether Paul's use of familial language is prescriptive, whether it is intended to instruct us how we *must* organize our churches, whether this prescription is binding upon God's people. I conclude that the Scriptures do *not* bind the church to such structures. Family language in Paul tells us who is a member of God's family by virtue of faith and obedience, and it suggests to us the unity and closeness of our fellowship with God and with one another. On that basis, one may certainly make a good argument for the organization of the church. For instance, if familial unity is a picture of the closeness of our fellowship, it is reasonable that we should organize our church life and worship in a way which reflects and encourages this quality of unity in the body. In some churches, therefore, God's people may choose to accomplish this visible, family-like unity by having everyone, no matter how young or old, gather together for study and worship. In other churches, the congregation may find this kind of organization disruptive but seek for other ways to foster the visible oneness of the body. But there is no formal structure delineated in the Scriptures by virtue of family metaphor.

In short, Paul's family language helps us to understand the *kind* of church Christ has in mind. But it stops short of prescribing for us the *organization* or *structure* of the church beyond what the New Testament has already clearly told us. Therefore, it is inaccurate to use the phrase "family of families" to describe the structure of the church.⁶⁰ This expression forces an emphasis that Paul does not make, an emphasis on the individual families whom God has brought together to build his church. Instead, the pervasiveness and flexibility of Paul's familial language should lead the reader to a more significant conclusion about the relationship between church and family. The church is not a "family of families," but the church is "a family." A particular family model cannot drive the organization of the church with any authority for the very reason that the "family of God" in the Scriptures *transcends* all models. The "household of God" (1 Tim 3:15) is the New Testament expression of the one, true family that God, in his wisdom and sovereignty, continues to call out from among all nations for his own glory.

⁶⁰ Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 191. I have been careful to use the expression "family of families" in the way that Baucham uses the phrase, as relating to the *structure* of the church, not its ecclesiology. Cf. Scott T. Brown, "Is the Church a 'Family of Families?'" *Scott Brown Online*. <http://scottbrownonline.com/is-the-church-a-family-of-families/>.

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος: An Alternative Analysis

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This article offers a literary analysis of the elliptical clause πιστὸς ὁ λόγος (“the word is faithful”) that appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles. Nearly every modern study of this clause operates from the premise that each instance of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος must refer to a distinct “saying” that occurs in the immediate context, either preceding or following the clause in question. Consequently, the referent of ὁ λόγος changes with each occurrence, and interpreters often must disregard the syntax of the immediate literary context so as to accommodate their construals, while the clause itself conveys no consistent message. As an alternative to the majority opinion in its various presentations, it will be argued that, in 1 Tim 1:15, 3:1, 4:9, 2 Tim 2:11, and Titus 3:8, the reader is expected to understand πιστὸς ὁ λόγος as a recollection and reminder of the fundamental, apostolic gospel.

Introduction: Contentions and Thesis

As even a cursory survey of the literature on the subject will indicate, while New Testament scholars and exegetes exhibit virtually universal agreement in their analyses of the occurrence of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 1 Tim 1:15a, no such consensus exists with respect to the referent of the clause in its remaining occurrences. R. Alistair Campbell summarizes the current situation in the following manner:

Five times in the PE the phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος rings out like a fanfare of trumpets, as if to direct the attention of the reader to some significant truth, and yet, despite this evident intention on the part of the author, scholars ancient and modern have been uncertain where they are supposed to be looking. Thus, although it is a natural assumption that the fanfare will precede the appearance of the important saying, in two cases at least the words that follow present such an anticlimax that most scholars have felt obliged to look for the referent of the phrase in something that has just been said and to understand πιστὸς ὁ λόγος as a sort of belated tribute to it, while a few have counselled [*sic*] abandoning the search for sayings altogether.¹

In spite of the uncertainty that attends conventional construals of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, most of the sources consulted in this study share at least three premises, upon the basis of which they propose their solutions to the riddle of

¹ R. Alistair Campbell, “Identifying the Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles,” *JNTS* 54 (1994): 73.

πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. First, nearly all of them seem to assume that the referent of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος must either precede or follow the formula in the immediate literary context.² Two complications arise as a result of this starting point. One of these entails determining how to treat the conjunctions that occasionally follow instances of the formula, the opinions regarding which vary significantly and often seem arbitrary.³ The other and more obvious difficulty concerns the previously noted and conspicuous divergence of the solutions that stem from this initial premise. Second, most interpreters appear to operate according to the implicit assumption that all five occurrences of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, and thus all three epistles, may be treated collectively, as if they were

² See, for example, Bover, who asks, “¿Se refiere a lo que antecede, o bien a lo que sigue?” (José M. Bover, “Fidelis Sermo,” *Bib* 19 [1938]: 74). See also Norbert Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag G. M. B. H., 1975), 112; Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ed. by Helmut Koester; trans. by Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 28; George W. Knight, III, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1968; repr., Nutley, NJ: P&R, 1979), 50, 62, 112; Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe: Zweiter Timotheusbrief* (HTKNT XI/2 Zweiter Folge; Freiburg im Briesgau: Verlag Herder, 1995), 83; Louis Pirot and Albert Clamer, *La Sainte Bible: Texte Latin et Traduction Française d'Après Les Textes Originaux avec Commentaire Exégétique et Théologique* (vol. 12; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1946), 216; Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (ed. by David Noel Freedman; ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 234; E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936; repr., 1957), 14; Ceslas Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres Pastorales* (Paris: Librairie LeCoffre, 1947), 76; H. B. Swete, “The Faithful Sayings,” *JTS* 18 (1916): 1.

³ For example, with regard to 1 Tim 4:9, C. K. Barrett views the γάρ of 4:10 as an introductory particle that best remains untranslated in his English version, while Donald Guthrie hypothesizes that the saying comes from a prior source. As a result, he suggests, “The conjunction forms part of the saying,” with γάρ standing as a remnant from the original citation. However, neither Barrett nor Guthrie provides data or arguments that justify these treatments (C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], 70; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* [INTC 14; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 107). See also Knight, *Faithful Sayings*, 63, 113; I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1999; repr., 2004), 555; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946), 637. On the other hand, see Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy*, *2 Timothy*, *Titus* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 84. See also, Patrick Fairbairn, *A Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 183; Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984; repr., 1988), 105; Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 107; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 35a; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 250; Quinn and Wacker, *Letters to Timothy*, 648–49; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 309, especially n. 28, 31.

composed together and with reference to one another. This assumption significantly circumscribes the evaluation of individual occurrences of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος.⁴ Third, in the process of formulating their solutions, most interpreters seem to be guided by prior and subjective notions of what kind of saying or theological or ethical concern best qualifies as a “faithful saying,” a quality that proves difficult to define, and once again, opinions vary significantly.⁵ These prevailing assumptions and approaches result in a lack of consensus and a multitude of treatments of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος that often come across as arbitrary, that leave more questions than answers, and that lead to the occasional counsel of despair to which Campbell refers.

As an alternative to the conventional approach with its various solutions and attending uncertainties, it will be demonstrated through this study that

⁴ While this is implicit in Bassler (*1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61), Hanson (Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters: Commentary on the First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus* [CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966], 77–78), and Quinn and Wacker (*Letters to Timothy*, 629), Marshall explicitly makes this a key point in his discussion of authorship. Indeed, he writes, “Despite some dissent, the three letters are by one author. Any differences in character between them are due to the different situations addressed rather than to differences in authorship or thinking. This means that the letters can be considered together as a group of writings” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 1). See also Campbell, “Identifying the Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles,” 77–78. On the other hand, Johnson opposes such a premise (referring to it as, “grouping”) explaining, “The consequences of this grouping have too seldom been noted. The first consequence is that characterizations are drawn from the evidence provided by all three letters as a whole and then (inappropriately) applied to each of them individually, even though a particular letter may lack a trait entirely These composite characterizations are then compared and contrasted with an equally abstract characterization of the ‘authentic Paul.’ Once more, the failure is to recognize the intractable diversity of even the undisputed letters” (*The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 63).

⁵ Bover comments regarding 3:1, “No se ve razón por qué haya de aseverar San Pablo tan enfáticamente que las función episcopal sea excelente. Es una verdad de sentido común, que no merece una fórmula tan solemne de aseveración” (“Fidelis Sermo,” 77). On the other hand, Fee defends his preference for 3:1 as the referent, arguing, “2:15 does not have the characteristics of a ‘saying,’ and 3:1 does—despite its noncreedal content” (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 79). See also, Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 61; J. Garrow Duncan, “ΠΙΣΤΟΣ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ,” *ExpTim* 35 (1923): 141b; Ernest Evill, “The Faithful Sayings,” *ExpTim* 29 (1918): 443; Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 90; Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters*, 40; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (2nd ed.; BNTC 14; Nashville: Hendrickson, 1998), 73; George Knight, III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992; repr., 1999), 401–2; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 475; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 48, 247; Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 29; Swete, “The Faithful Sayings,” 2; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 248.

πιστὸς ὁ λόγος plausibly may serve as a concise summation and commendation of the apostolic proclamation of the gospel⁶ and that it relates to the basic content of that proclamation while permitting the content to assume various forms. The interpretation proposed here honors both the arrangement of the texts as they stand and the grammatical cues given by Paul, the author of record for each letter.⁷ Furthermore, it satisfies the need for coherency within the context of each instance of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. Finally, while it presents a consistent treatment of the formula throughout the PE, it does not present a forced reading in any instance. In addition, the solution for

⁶ Largely ignored in modern PE scholarship, this basic idea was proposed and defended formally by both Frederic Rendall in 1887 and Jakob van Bruggen in 1984 (Frederic Rendall, "Faithful is the Word," *Exp* 3/5 [1887]: 314–20; Jakob Van Bruggen, "Vaste grond onder de voeten. De formule pistos ho logos in de Pastorale Brieven," in *Beziëld verband: opstellen aangeboden aan prof. J. Kampuis bij gelegenheid van zijn vijftienvijftig-jarig ambtsjubileum als hoogleraar aan de Theologische Hogeschool van De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland te Kampen op 9 april 1984* [Kampen: Uitgeverij Van den Berg, 1984], 43–44; cf., Jakob Van Bruggen, *Paul: Pioneer for Israel's Messiah* [trans. by Ed M. Van Der Maas; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005], 177). See also, W. Ernest Evill, "The Faithful Sayings," *ExpTim* 29 (1918): 442–46. Without targeting any particular advocate, Jürgen Roloff objects to the hypothesis generally (*Der Erste Brief an Timotheus* [EKKNT 15; Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988], 88). On the other hand, Towner writes, "The 'trustworthy saying' formula is a technique by which Paul, in one motion, rearticulates his gospel (and corresponding aspects of his teaching), asserts its authenticity and apostolic authority, and alienates the opposing teaching that, by implication (and this is the polemical significance of the πίστις word group), does not belong to the category denoted by the term πιστός ('trustworthy')" (*The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 143–44). Elsewhere, he also suggests that the concern at this point in the history of the church lay in "the careful preserving and transmitting of the apostolic tradition (2 Tim 2.2; 1.13–14; 1 Tim 6.20)" [Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTSup 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 13].

⁷ For instance, by the author's own reckoning the conjunction γάρ occurs thirty-three times in the three letters. All of the sources consulted construe every occurrence as causal, apart from those instances associated with attempts to make the material following the formula in 1 Tim 4:10 and 2 Tim 2:11 fit the requirements of a "faithful saying." Furthermore, in the one instance in which Paul may have cited a pre-existing source that contains γάρ (1 Tim 5:18, which reflects the axiom found in Luke 10:7 exactly), the original γάρ is *not* carried over into the citation in 1 Timothy. Thus, the evidence would seem to tell against a "remnant" theory, such that the writer fails to discriminate between traditional material and the conjunctions that connect it to the original text. In view of these considerations, attempts to account for γάρ by appealing to unconventional functions appear to be instances in which grammar is subordinated to a prior determination of what constitutes the most suitable or plausible interpretive option. However, it is one of the contentions of this study that this process itself is based upon an unnecessary limitation of interpretive options.

which this paper argues does not rely upon hypotheses regarding pre-existing traditions or literary dependence between the three epistles, nor does it limit the interpreter to an artificial choice between the material that immediately precedes the formula or that which follows it.

The Apostolic Gospel Proclamation: Instances Surveyed

In the following investigation of the occurrences of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, each letter will be treated as a stand-alone document. A key element in this approach entails tracing occurrences of λόγος, a term that anchors the most significant semantic thread running through all three letters. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate that the analysis of each instance of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος rests firmly upon its exegesis within each document and the context in which it occurs, as opposed to having been derived from a projection of readings borrowed from other instances in the PE, the survey will begin with Titus, it will proceed to 2 Timothy, and then it will conclude with an analysis of the occurrences in 1 Timothy.

Titus 3:8

Λόγος appears five times in Paul's epistle to Titus; in four of these occurrences it is accompanied by the definite article. Since the context of the letter indicates that the one anarthrous example of λόγος in 2:8 probably refers to Titus' own speech and instruction,⁸ the analysis of Titus will concentrate upon the four literary units that contain λόγος with the article. The first instance occurs in 1:3, in the midst of the introduction to the letter that occupies 1:1–4. Tracing the syntax of this first literary unit, one may observe that Paul's apostleship is described by means of the preposition κατά, which is governed by two different objects, πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ and ἐπιγνῶσιν ἀληθείας τῆς κατ'εὐσέβειαν. Thus, Paul's apostleship exists for the sake of the "faith of the elect of God" and for the sake of their "knowledge of the truth." The feminine singular genitive article that follows ἀληθείας introduces an appositional phrase, probably best translated, "that is in accordance with godliness."

With respect to the complex prepositional phrase that effectively covers the remainder of the first three verses, what does ἐπ'ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰωνίου modify? The nearest preceding idea that the prepositional phrase might modify coherently is the substantive, ἀληθείας in verse 1.⁹ This would mean that

⁸ Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 135; J. H. Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 169. Collins goes a bit further, writing, "A third quality of Titus's teaching is that it should present a sound and irreproachable message (*logon hygie akatagnoston*)" (Raymond F. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* [NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002], 344).

⁹ Towner writes, "The phrase used to describe the salvation process at the close of v. 4 (*eis epignosis aletheias elthein*; cf. 2 Tim 2.25; 3.7; Titus 1.1) also corresponds to

it describes “the truth” as something that “concerns the hope of eternal life.” In other words, the knowledge of the truth among God’s elect, which Paul’s apostleship serves, entails the knowledge of the hope of eternal life. In the subsequent relative clause (1:2), ζῶης is represented by ἦν, which serves as the explicit direct object of ἐπηγγείλατο and the implied object of ἐφάνέρωσεν.¹⁰ Αὐτοῦ in the next phrase (τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ) refers back to “the unlying God,” the subject of both ἐπηγγείλατο and ἐφάνέρωσεν. It is proposed here that τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ stands in apposition to the whole of the idea expressed in [ἦν] ἐφάνέρωσεν, while the antecedent for [ἦν] remains ζῶης. Thus, τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ refers to the manifestation of ἐλπίδι ζῶης αἰωνίου.¹¹ Τὸν λόγον is expressed, Paul says, ἐν κηρύγματι, ὃ ἐπιστεύθην ἐγὼ κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ. This would mean that, in this letter, when Paul first mentions “his word” (as in “God’s word”) he refers to the manifestation or revelation of “the hope of eternal life,” realized in the preaching entrusted to him by God, which entrusting and commissioning serve as a vital element of his apostleship.¹² In other words, according to the first literary unit containing an occurrence of λόγος, Paul’s apostleship exists for the

the polemical thrust of the passage. It emphasizes the rational aspect of belief, in keeping with the close connection drawn in the Pastorals between ‘belief’ and apostolic doctrine” (*The Goal of Our Instruction*, 84); cf. *ibid.*, 122. See also, Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 182; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 131; Ben Witherington, III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 96, 102–3.

¹⁰ While concurring with the association of ἦν with ἐπηγγείλατο, most sources find the direct object of ἐφάνέρωσεν in τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, attributing the shift in subject matter to anacoluthon. Marshall reflects the opinion of the majority. However, he also states, “The construction of the sentence encourages the reader to think that the object is still ἦν (sc. eternal life), but there is anacoluthon, and a fresh object, τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, is added after the verb. It is possible that the fresh object is added loosely in apposition to the clause. But it is better to assume that the relative clause has been unconsciously replaced by a main clause at this point” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 127). See also, Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 182; Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 156; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 169; Cesare Marcheselli-Casale, *Le Lettere pastorali. Le due lettere a Timoteo e la lettera a Tito: Introduzione, versione comment* (Scritti delle origini cristiane 15; Bologna: Dehoniane, 1995), 461; Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, 222.

¹¹ Bassler writes, “The ‘word’ is thus the gospel message (see 2 Tim 2:9), which reveals and actualizes the eternal promise when it is proclaimed by Paul, by Titus (3:8), or by appointed church leaders (1:9)” (*1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 183). Knight also writes, “God makes known the truth about eternal life in what is called here τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 285).

¹² Fee writes, “Paul simply brings his sentence back to its point of origin, his apostleship. The revelation of the promised life has actually taken place in Paul’s proclamation of God’s word, as attested by the Cretans’ faith (v. 1). As always for Paul, such preaching, hence his apostleship itself, is not of his own choosing but is a sacred trust” (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 169). Spicq states simply, “Telle est la fonction

sake of “the knowledge of the truth,” as apprehended by God’s elect, which truth itself concerns “the hope of eternal life,” the very content of God’s word.¹³

The second occurrence of λόγος lies in the latter portion of the very next literary segment of the epistle (1:5–9) in which Paul justifies his stipulations regarding those whom Titus is to appoint as elders, or overseers. In 1:9, λόγος occurs in the wider construction τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου. This construction is an intrinsically suggestive expression, with πιστοῦ modifying λόγου in a first attributive construction, and the prepositional phrase κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν functioning adjectivally, also modifying λόγου. It may be cast quite literally as, “the according-to-the-teaching faithful word,” which runs more smoothly, “the faithful word that is in accordance with the teaching.” While Paul supplies the adjectival expressions πιστοῦ and κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν to describe λόγου, he provides no other material that would specify the substance or origin of that “faithful word.” Because of this, along with the relatively close proximity of this occurrence to the first instance of λόγος, the most coherent understanding entails reading this as the very same “word of God” mentioned in 1:3, the word that concerned the hope of eternal life and that found expression in Paul’s apostolic proclamation.¹⁴ Consequently, based upon the data given up to this point in the epistle, to describe the “faithful word” as something that stands “in accordance with the teaching” would suggest that “the teaching” consists in God’s revelation of the hope of eternal life. The “faithful word” then comprises the word or message that bears witness to this hope, the apprehension of which message on the part of God’s elect people stands as a key objective behind Paul’s appointment as an apostle.

The expression, τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, lies in the midst of a clause specifying the criteria by which men are to be appointed to eldership or oversight. They are to be men who exhibit all of the character traits and behaviors listed in 1:7–8, while, at the same time, they hold firmly to “the

des Apôtres” (*Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 222). Van Neste likewise, while offering a different analysis of the prepositional phrases in 1:1–4, nevertheless states, “Paul has a divinely authorized position, for the cause of salvation, which has been promised in the past and is now revealed in a message which has been entrusted to Paul . . . It was just mentioned that the three prepositional phrases in 1.1 are concerned with salvation and that 1.2–3 are concerned with the revelation of salvation” (Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles* [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 235).

¹³ Kelly presents his analysis differently but arrives at the same conclusion, stating, “[Paul] is suggesting that it is his function to promote that hope” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 227).

¹⁴ Bernard writes, “The phrase πιστοῦ λόγου suggests the ‘Faithful Sayings’ of the Pastoral Epistles (see on 1 Tim 1:15). Κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν must mean ‘in accordance with the [Apostolic] doctrine,’ διδαχὴ being taken objectively, and not in the active sense of ‘teaching.’ Hence the whole clause indicates the function of the ἐπίσκοπος as the guardian of the ‘deposit of faith’” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 159).

faithful word that is in accordance with the teaching.” The point behind this latter criterion would appear to consist in qualifying the would-be elder or overseer so that he *δυνατὸς ἢ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν*.¹⁵ Thus, one is qualified to “exhort in the sound teaching and reprove those who oppose” by “holding fast to the faithful word that is in accordance with the teaching.”¹⁶ Furthermore, the most natural reading of *τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ* in 1:9 would entail understanding this as another description of *τὴν διδαχὴν*, which appears previously in the same verse.¹⁷ Consequently, Paul not only has given his readers two references to a specific body of teaching, also designated “sound,” he also has strung these ideas together such that “the teaching,” or “sound teaching,” also corresponds to “God’s word,” or “the faithful word.”¹⁸

In the longest literary unit containing an occurrence of *λόγος*, 2:1–10, Paul instructs Titus with respect to the kind of directives that he is to administer to the believing body on Crete. These directives concern the character and conduct of the community at-large and are presented in an array that reflects the various segments of that community: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves. Upon close examination, one first may observe the conspicuous occurrence of *τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ* at the beginning of the passage, a virtual replication of the expression found in 1:9. Because of the inherently exclusionary function of the adjectival participle (*ὑγιαίνουσῃ*), *τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ* in this passage most probably corresponds to the very same referent as that expressed in 1:9, in *τὴν διδαχὴν* and *τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ*. Furthermore, this entire literary unit is framed by references to “the teaching,” for we see *τὴν διδασκαλίαν* also at its conclusion. Thus, not only does this unit reflect an abiding concern to ensure that the teaching is commended by means of conduct and character that will

¹⁵ Collins writes, “In addition to using the trustworthy word for the salutary purpose of encouraging believers, the overseer is also expected to use it to confront the naysayers. He must disprove and correct those who oppose the sound teaching of the Pauline gospel” (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 326).

¹⁶ Such qualification may rest upon meeting all of the required traits of 1:7–8. However, at the very least, the trait specified in the temporal participial clause, *ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου*, would seem to be essential for the distinct tasks of the elder-overseer. See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 294.

¹⁷ Lock writes of this as “the body of doctrine,” but thought of as embodied by the *ἐπίσκοπος* in his own ‘teaching’” (*Pastoral Epistles*, 132).

¹⁸ Regarding this point, Collins writes, “For the Christian message [the pastor] uses the language of ‘teaching’ [*te didaskalia*] and the metaphor that his circles have borrowed from the domain of health care, that which is ‘sound’ [*hygie*]” (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 344). Dibelius and Conzelmann propose, “The Pastorals designate with ‘sound teaching’ [*ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία*] or ‘sound words’ [*ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι*] the loftiest and holiest things they know: the true faith, the true message about faith. According to the Pauline use of language one could [e.g. in 1 Tim 6:3] substitute a phrase containing the term ‘gospel’ [*εὐαγγέλιον*]” (*Pastoral Epistles*, 24).

not dishonor it, it also sustains a tight connection to the specific teaching of which Paul has been writing from the earliest portions of the epistle—the teaching expressed in God’s word by means of the apostolic proclamation, the teaching concerned with “the hope of eternal life.”

In addition, 2:5 features an explicit reference to ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, which occurs as part of an expressed concern that no dishonor be brought to “the word of God.” This comment is similar those expressing concern for the correspondence between character and conduct issues and “the teaching” (2:10), or “sound teaching” (2:1). The similar formation of these three expressions and the parallel ideas expressed in them suggest that they may function interchangeably. Thus, as in previous sections of Titus, to speak of “the sound teaching” is to speak of “the word of God,” which also is to speak of “the teaching.”¹⁹ Further, this “teaching” is comprised of the same body of instruction also designated as “the faithful word” in 1:9.²⁰

Τὴν διδασκαλίαν in 2:10 is modified by the appositional phrase τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ. Here, the link between “God’s word” and the “sound teaching” is made explicit, for just as the first occurrence of λόγος was designated “his [God’s] word,” so now “the teaching” is designated as “the teaching of God, our Savior,” or “God’s teaching,” most likely indicating that it originates with God and is authorized by him.²¹ This is where the text has led from the beginning of the epistle, and these connections would seem to be the ones most natural for the original reader or readers to make, as the study now turns to the final occurrence of ὁ λόγος.

In Titus 3:4–7, Paul rehearses for Titus an account of God’s mercies and work in saving those who would come to believe. Whereas, in 1:9 Paul used the first attributive construction, τοῦ . . . πιστοῦ λόγου, to denote that to which a prospective elder or overseer must adhere firmly, here in the very first clause of 3:8 he casts the same words in a second predicative construction, so as to make the assertion πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, “the word is faithful.”²² Since

¹⁹ Spicq writes, “Ils ont à représenter par toute leur conduite sous sa forme authentique et le «nom» de Dieu, sa personne, et son message (ὁ λόγος, cf. I, 3, 9; τὴν διδασκαλίαν, II, 10) de salut universel” (*Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 253).

²⁰ Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 134; Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 28, 165; Lenski, *St. Paul’s Epistles*, 913; Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 141; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 728–29.

²¹ Holtz refers to this as, “Genitivus auctoris” (Gottfried Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe* [THNT 13; rev.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1986], 225). See also, Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 141; Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, 56. As witnesses for an objective reading, see, Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 346–47; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 191; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 250.

²² While Lock views this as a reference to a cited saying, in company with the majority, his opening remark is telling, for he writes, “If this phrase stood here alone it might well be ‘faithful is the whole gospel message entrusted to me’” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 155). Not only is his impulse in keeping with the reading advocated here, his reasons for deciding differently also confirm the tendency to treat all occurrences of

in 1:9 the “faithful word” serves to bear witness to God’s revelation of “the hope of eternal life,” it would be natural to suppose that such remains the case in 3:8a. However, one might justly inquire into the point of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος here.

In the material leading into the assertion of 3:8a, Paul has constructed one long sentence bursting with information pertaining to the “faithful word.” The main clause of 3:4–7 is found in the statement [θεός] ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς occurring in the middle of 3:5. This affirmation is modified by preceding material, found in the temporal clause of 3:4, ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, and in the two prepositional phrases set over against one another in the first part of 3:5, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἀ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος. It also is modified by a lengthy and complex prepositional phrase that extends from the last half of 3:5 to the end of 3:7.²³ Because of the grammatical dependence of 3:4–5a and 3:5c–7 upon the main clause of 3:5b, one may suppose that all of 3:4–7 constitutes a unified complex of information.²⁴

In addition to the corresponding instances of τοῦ . . . πιστοῦ λόγου and πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, two other features strengthen the link between 3:4–7 and 1:1–4. The first is found in the final prepositional phrase of 3:7, κατ’ ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου. Here, in a comment that speaks to the nature of the inheritance awaiting those who stand justified, Paul reprises the expression that he used in 1:2 to denote the content of what God has revealed in his word: namely, the hope of eternal life.²⁵ Second, one may note the use of the phrases τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ (3:4) and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν (3:6) to speak of God and Christ Jesus, again expressions used together in the same sentence only here and in 1:3–4. Together, these three elements, the designations of God and Christ Jesus as “Savior,” the double occurrence of “the hope of eternal life,” and the corresponding instances of τοῦ . . . πιστοῦ λόγου and πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, may indicate an *inclusio*. The *inclusio* would be formed by these two clusters of shared expressions that bracket the document, from the opening salutation through the main body of the letter, and suggests that the prevailing concern of this letter consists in preserving the message of “the hope

the formula collectively. See also, Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 328.

²³ Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 178.

²⁴ Knight, after offering an extensive discussion upon the various proposals regarding the range of the material comprising an intact unit, concludes, “It must be further emphasized that verses 4–7 do constitute a unit both in form and in content, and may aptly be designated a saying” (*Faithful Sayings*, 85). See also, Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 144; Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 179; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 360–61; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 202; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 161–62.

²⁵ While Paul refers to the believers’ anticipation of the “hope” also in 2:13, only in 1:1–4 and 3:4–7 does the exact phrase, ἐλπίς ζωῆς αἰωνίου, occur. See, Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 325; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 788.

of eternal life.”²⁶ Furthermore, just as Paul refers to the word of God that speaks of the hope of eternal life as “the faithful word,” so here in 3:8a, he concludes the main part of his epistles with an affirmation of the faithfulness and trustworthiness of that very same word. In doing so, Paul most probably refers to the gospel generally, not a literal “saying” or specific formulation. At the same time, while this instance of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος could pertain to the immediately preceding material, this follows, not from the placement of the material (before or after the formula) but from the textual details traced through Titus: on the one hand, the consistency with which λόγος forms a clear reference to the gospel message and, on the other hand, the absence of any unambiguously designated “saying” or citation formula. Faithful is the apostolic proclamation of the hope of eternal life, “the teaching of God our Savior.”²⁷

2 Timothy 2:11

There are seven occurrences of λόγος in 2 Timothy. In this analysis, only five of these will be addressed, four of them in some detail.²⁸ The first appearance of λόγος in 2 Timothy occurs in 1:13. The literary unit of which it is a part lies in 1:8–14 and reduces to three major propositions, the longest of which occupies 1:8–12. The remaining two propositions are found in 1:13 and 1:14. The main idea in each of these propositions is expressed by a second person active imperative, though in the first instance the reader is prepared for the positive command by the preceding and corresponding prohibition μή . . . ἐπαισχυθῆς.

The first of the positive imperatival expressions, συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, is modified by the prepositional phrase κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ, which itself is modified by a complex relative clause that runs from 1:9 to the end of 1:12. The subject matter of the clause concerns God, τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς καὶ καλέσαντος κλήσει ἀγία. As this relative clause progresses, the description of God develops into a rich exposition of what he has done to and for believers by means of τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. At the end of 1:10, the relative clause finds its resolution in the designation of the means by which this work has been brought to light by Jesus (φωτίσαντος), namely, διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. This entire proposition up to 1:10 virtually opens and closes with a form of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. Between these two occurrences in 1:8 and 1:10, Paul has crafted one expression of the teaching that comprises τὸ

²⁶ As observed also by Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 269.

²⁷ See Rendall, “Faithful is the Word,” 319; Van Bruggen, “Vaste grond onder de voeten,” 43.

²⁸ The remaining two instances occur in 2:17 (referring to the teachings of the opposition) and 4:14, in which Paul admonishes Timothy to be on guard against Alexander, *λίαν γὰρ ἀντέστη τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις*. This latter instance may reflect a function similar to those treated more fully above.

εὐαγγέλιον.²⁹

Within the proposition containing the second imperative, ὑποτύπωσιν ἔχε ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων, lies the first occurrence of λόγος in 2 Timothy. The logical connection between this proposition and the preceding one may be found in 1:11. In the prepositional phrase lying there, εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος, the relative pronoun ὃ corresponds to τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in 1:10. Here, Paul indicates his own apostolic appointment in the ministry of, and responsibility for, the proclamation of the gospel. In the process, 1:11 also anticipates his reference in 1:13 to λόγων ὧν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας, for he states plainly that his apostolic task lay in preaching and teaching "the gospel."

Consequently, with respect to the proposition of 1:13, it is the position of this study that ὑποτύπωσιν . . . ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων ὧν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας corresponds to the teachings associated with τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. The prepositional phrase εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος indicates that τοῦ εὐαγγελίου represents a particular set of ideas or teachings that Timothy received and learned from Paul directly, and which are authorized or authenticated by him.³⁰ So far, then, Paul has written two imperatives to Timothy: "Suffer with [me] for the gospel . . . for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher," and "hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me" (author's translation throughout).

Concluding the literary unit of 1:8–14, the third imperative reads, τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον. Since this clause follows hard upon the previous two imperatives, and in the absence of data pointing in any other direction, the most obvious referent of τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην would seem to be the previously mentioned ὑποτύπωσιν . . . ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων. In other words, rather than being ashamed of Paul and Christ Jesus, Timothy must stand prepared to suffer for the gospel, which is expressed in the pattern of sound words that he learned from Paul and to which he is to adhere. Now Paul urges him to guard this pattern of sound words, also called, "the good trust."³¹ In view of the data surveyed through 1:8–14, it seems most probable

²⁹ Towner infers from the final reference to διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, "This activity is clearly perceived as the normative way of mediating salvation" (*The Goal of Our Instruction*, 95; cf. idem, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 466–67).

³⁰ Oberlinner, while maintaining that the situation and authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is fictive, nevertheless recognizes the tradition as apostolic and Pauline (*Zweiter Timotheusbrief*, 51).

³¹ Likewise, Mounce states, "The παραθήκην, 'deposit,' is the gospel . . . Its emphatic position before the verb φύλαξον, 'guard' (on which see v 12) and its description as καλὴν, 'good' (see 1 Tim 1:8), roughly paralleling ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων, 'healthy words,' firmly separate it from the opponents' teachings" (*Pastoral Epistles*, 494). Similarly, Towner maintains, "*Paratheke* is closely associated with *euangelion* in 2 Tim 1.6–14. The emphasis in this term is more on the preservation and accurate transmission to succeeding generations of 'the gospel' that was entrusted to Paul. In

that the plural form of λόγος used in this passage denotes the teachings or words that comprise the message, or gospel, entrusted to Paul, who was appointed to proclaim it and teach it to others. As a final note regarding this section and its terms, it would appear that Timothy was intended to pass on to others the “sound words,” or the gospel that he learned from Paul, for Paul writes in 2:2, ἀ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ . . . ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται καὶ ἐτέρους διδάξαι. Therefore, it is understood that the “sound words” of the gospel proclamation comprise a body of teaching to be embraced, protected, and passed on or entrusted to others.³²

The main ideas of 2 Tim 2:8–15, the next literary unit containing some form of λόγος, once again are carried by three imperatives: μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, ταῦτα ὑπομίμησκει, and σπούδασον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ. This section features three instances of λόγος, including one that forms a part of the single occurrence of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 2 Timothy. The imperative that opens this unit admonishes Timothy, μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγγεγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου. While Paul previously has referred to the gospel entrusted to him as “the sound words, which you heard from me,” and as “the good trust,” he now writes of it as “my gospel.” In the process, he also discloses additional details regarding the material that contributes to the make-up of “his gospel,” or the “sound words,” namely, μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγγεγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ.

Paul has indicated in earlier remarks, such as ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμον αὐτοῦ (1:8), and δι’ ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ ταῦτα πάσχω (1:12), that he suffers on account of the gospel. Also, he twice has urged Timothy to suffer for the sake of the same gospel, writing, συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (1:8), and συγκακοπάθησον ὡς καλὸς στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (2:3). Now he explicitly states again in 2:9 that he suffers for that gospel, writing of τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου, ἐν ᾧ κακοπαθῶ μέχρι δεσμῶν ὡς κακοῦργος. However, at this point (2:9), he also

terms of content, *paratheke* may be generally described as *euangelion*, but greater precision is probably implied” (*The Goal of Our Instruction*, 123). See also, Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 381; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 714; Marcheselli-Casale, *Le Lettere pastorali*, 679; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 478–79; Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 156; Alfons Weiser, *Der Zweite Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT 16; Düsseldorf un Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003), 135.

³² Collins writes, “The ‘model of sound words’ is the precious treasure that had been entrusted to Timothy. That treasure, whose import is emphasized by the adjective ‘precious’ appropriate to the metaphor ‘treasure,’ is the treasure that had been entrusted to Paul (v. 12). Acting to ensure the proper transmission of the treasure for safekeeping from one generation to the next is the Holy Spirit” (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 213). Johnson also points out “This phrase echoes 1:13, where Paul speaks of the healthy words ‘which you heard from me’ . . . The real key to the passage is 2:1–2. Indeed, it is the key to the function of the Pastorals as a whole: Timothy is instructed to ‘entrust’ the things he heard from Paul to other faithful men, who, in turn, can teach them to others” (*The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 364, 369).

takes the unprecedented step in 2 Timothy of referring to the gospel entrusted to him as the “word of God,” writing ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται. In other words, Paul points out that, while he suffers imprisonment for the gospel, the gospel itself (“the word of God”), unlike Paul, is neither imprisoned, bound, nor constrained in any way.³³

The correspondence between Paul’s remarks concerning ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:9 and τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου in 2:8 is ratified in his comments in 2:10, διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. While in 1:8–10 one reads of τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν that is associated with θεοῦ, τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς and with τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, now in 2:9–10 it is ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ that stands in conjunction with σωτηρίας . . . τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. After declaring that he stands ready to endure any difficulty for the sake of God’s elect and their attainment of salvation, Paul delivers the affirmation, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. By virtue of the semantic thread just traced, there can be little doubt that this λόγος is precisely ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ of which Paul has just written, which in turn represents τὸ εὐαγγέλιον with which he has been entrusted. The affirmation of the trustworthiness of the apostolic word of God is then justified (γάρ) by a series of conditional expressions that serve as truths deriving from the implications of that “faithful word,” for indeed, “if . . . we die with him, we also shall live with him; if we endure, we also shall reign with him; if we deny him, he shall deny us; if we prove faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot deny himself” (2:11–13)³⁴

As if to confirm the determination that the referent of the predication, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, truly consists in the apostolic proclamation of the gospel, the word of God, Paul urges Timothy in 2:15, σπούδασον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ, ἐργάτην ανεπαίσχυντον, ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας. The “word of God” and “faithful word” now is designated “the word of truth”; it testifies to the activity of “God who saves us,” and it is comprised of “the sound words.”³⁵ Naturally then, it would be a matter of great importance that one who would be a “worker unashamed” also would prove anxious to handle correctly this precious “word of truth.” Finally, one also should note the exhortation in 4:2 (κήρυξον τὸν λόγον). What else would Timothy be instructed to proclaim if not “the word of truth” he learned from Paul, that is, “the good trust,” “the word of God,” indeed, the faithful

³³ Oberlinner is unequivocal in equating τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν with ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (*Zweiter Timotheusbrief*, 80).

³⁴ See Rendall, “Faithful is the Word,” 319. Once again, honoring the typical causal force of γάρ not only permits the text as it stands to read coherently, it also tells in favor of the construal of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος proposed here.

³⁵ While he does not make these connections explicitly, Marshall nevertheless arrives at the same conclusion here, writing, “The object is ὁ λόγος, i.e. the orthodox Christian message” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 749). Mounce also writes, “The λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, ‘word of truth,’ is the gospel” (*Pastoral Epistles*, 526).

word?³⁶ As in the case of Titus, a careful tracing of the ideas as Paul has strung them together in 2 Timothy leads naturally to the conclusion that “the word” by which he is so captivated consists precisely in the apostolic trust given to him: again, referring most probably not to a specific “saying” or formulation, but to an essential proclamation that may assume various forms or expressions. Truly, faithful is the word.

1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9

One first may gain a reasonable feel for the likely agenda of 1 Timothy by noting the *inclusio* framing the body of the document, formed by two instances of *ἐτεροδιδασκαλέω*, as found in 1:3 and 6:3.³⁷ Second, after the introduction of 1:1–2, a directive given to Timothy dominates the remainder of the first chapter: namely, that he remain in Ephesus, *ἵνα παραγγείλῃς τισὶν μὴ ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις*.³⁸ The command that Timothy is to deliver emerges again as the primary point of reference in 1:5 and 1:18. In 1:5, Paul discloses the goal or purpose of the command not to teach other teachings. In 1:18, he indicates that entrusting this command to Timothy effectively enlists him so that he might fight *τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν*, or, as he writes later in 6:12, *τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως*. Additionally, judging from Paul’s reference in 1:10 to *τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ*, which “lawless and rebellious men” oppose, the “sound teaching” would seem to authorize one specific teaching that is set over against any “other teaching.” Furthermore, this teaching stands *κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ*, which corresponds to the gospel message to

³⁶ Marshall indicates a similar conclusion: “ὁ λόγος by itself is ‘the Christian message’; it is usually qualified in some way as ‘the word of God’, ‘the word of truth’, etc. [2.9, 15; 1 Th 1.6; Gal 6.6; Acts 8.4; 10.36–44; 14.25; 16.6, *et al.*], but by this point in the letter no fuller description is needed” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 800). See also, Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 453; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 572–73; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 600; Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 184–85. Furthermore, it is significant that Van Neste identifies *ἡ γραφή* and *τὸ γράμμα* as two other elements in the “semantic chain” of terms running through 2 Timothy that pertain to or designate the apostolic proclamation. He writes, “Related to the chain concerning salvation is the recurrence of terms related to the basic message which Timothy is to preserve and proclaim. Already in the prescript there is reference to ‘the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,’ concerning which Marshall writes, ‘the phrase sums up the content of Paul’s gospel.’ There follows then throughout the letter a stream of words such as gospel, word, teaching, etc., that refer to the Pauline message” (*Cohesion and Structure*, 216).

³⁷ Regarding this, Van Neste writes, “This abandonment of the faith is perceived as primarily a doctrinal problem. In 1.3 and 6.3 the opponents are introduced as ‘certain ones’ who ‘teach wrongly’ [*τις ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖ*]. This doctrinal problem is seen as well in the basis of the opponents’ teaching” (*Cohesion and Structure*, 117).

³⁸ Bernard writes, “The purpose of Timothy’s continued residence in Ephesus was that he might check the progress of heretical doctrine” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 23).

which Paul refers as that $\delta \epsilon \pi \iota \sigma \tau \epsilon \upsilon \theta \eta \nu \epsilon \gamma \omega$.³⁹ Thus, through the first chapter, the reader may observe that the prevailing concern of this letter consists in retrieving and reinforcing in Ephesus the “sound teaching” of the gospel and correcting those who teach falsely, which corrective labor constitutes one significant aspect of “the good fight” to which Timothy is summoned.⁴⁰

In view of the preceding general observations, the “faithful word” in 1:15, which testifies $\chi \rho \iota \sigma \tau \acute{o} \varsigma \iota \eta \sigma \circ \upsilon \varsigma \eta \lambda \theta \epsilon \nu \epsilon \iota \varsigma \tau \acute{o} \nu \kappa \acute{o} \sigma \mu \omicron \nu \acute{\alpha} \mu \alpha \rho \tau \omega \lambda \omicron \upsilon \varsigma \sigma \acute{\omega} \sigma \alpha \iota$, provides the first explicit indication of the content of the “sound teaching” and “the gospel” of which Paul speaks in 1:10–11.⁴¹ However, by reflecting as well upon the personal remarks that lead into and derive from the affirmation $\pi \iota \sigma \tau \acute{o} \varsigma \delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$, one may surmise that this “faithful word” also bears witness to $\eta \chi \acute{\alpha} \rho \iota \varsigma \tau \omicron \upsilon \kappa \upsilon \rho \iota \omicron \upsilon \eta \mu \acute{\omega} \nu$ (1:14) and to the fact that the sinners whom Christ Jesus came to save include $\tau \acute{\omega} \nu \mu \epsilon \lambda \lambda \acute{o} \nu \omicron \tau \omega \nu \pi \iota \sigma \tau \epsilon \upsilon \epsilon \iota \nu \epsilon \pi' \alpha \upsilon \tau \acute{\omega} \epsilon \iota \varsigma \zeta \omega \eta \nu \alpha \iota \acute{\omega} \nu \iota \omicron \nu$ (1:16). Therefore, $\delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$ most likely cues, not the exact citation of a fixed expression, but a report of a basic gospel truth; $\chi \rho \iota \sigma \tau \acute{o} \varsigma \iota \eta \sigma \circ \upsilon \varsigma \eta \lambda \theta \epsilon \nu \epsilon \iota \varsigma \tau \acute{o} \nu \kappa \acute{o} \sigma \mu \omicron \nu \acute{\alpha} \mu \alpha \rho \tau \omega \lambda \omicron \upsilon \varsigma \sigma \acute{\omega} \sigma \alpha \iota$ serves as one expression of this word or proclamation.⁴² Following Paul’s personal reflection upon his status as a beneficiary of “the grace of God” in 1:14, the formula, “the word is faithful and worthy of full acceptance” would seem to function as an emphatic confirmation, as if he were saying, “in view of the blessing of God’s grace that saves

³⁹ Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 34; Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 171–72; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 90; Roloff, *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus*, 63, n. 44.

⁴⁰ Towner proposes, “The purpose of this sort of polemic was apparently more to create a general impression than to itemize the failings of the opponents . . . it is clear from the verbal assault that the false teachers rejected, undermined, diluted, or otherwise perverted the apostolic gospel” (*The Goal of Our Instruction*, 25); cf. idem, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 108. Similarly, Van Neste writes, “The letter opens with a reminder that Timothy’s role is to ‘command’ [$\pi \alpha \rho \alpha \gamma \gamma \acute{\epsilon} \lambda \lambda \omega$] and the ‘command’ [$\pi \alpha \rho \alpha \gamma \gamma \acute{\epsilon} \lambda \iota \alpha$], or basic message, is summarized. A chain of related words then runs through the letter, signifying the message which Timothy is to proclaim in contradistinction to the opponents” (*Cohesion and Structure*, 109).

⁴¹ Knight states regarding this occurrence, “This saying as a whole summarizes and epitomizes the Gospel” (*Faithful Sayings*, 47); cf. idem, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 99–100.

⁴² Rendall writes, “On the first occasion [Paul] added a definition of the Word by way of explanation [1 Tim 1.15]: it was ‘the word, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ Now this definition does not point to any single message of grace and mercy elsewhere recorded, but to the Gospel as a whole. It thus furnishes a key to St. Paul’s conception of the Word, as the entire revelation of the Father’s love manifested in the incarnation” (“Faithful is the Word,” 316). This also seems to argue for $\delta \tau \iota$ as an indicator of indirect discourse, rather than direct discourse, contra Knight, who identifies the $\delta \tau \iota$ -clause as one indicating direct discourse (*Faithful Sayings*, 32; cf., idem, *Pastoral Epistles*, 100). See also, Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 145–46.

even me, indeed, the word regarding this grace is faithful!”

Assuming another form, that same gospel appears in 2:5, in the testimony εἷς . . . θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων. Furthermore, it is significant that Paul follows this formulation with the remark in 2:7, εἷς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος, . . . διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. Considering that Paul already has stated that he was entrusted with “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God (1:11),” and considering that he now claims that his apostolic appointment exists for the sake of advancing this most recent formulation (2:5), the only way to reconcile these two claims made by Paul lies in construing the “faithful word” as a reference to the basic apostolic gospel proclamation, which, in less than two full chapters, has assumed at least two different though very compatible forms.⁴³ Accordingly, whether one writes, Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι, or εἷς . . . θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, either of which may serve as a reasonable expression of the gospel, “the word” remains “faithful.”

With respect to the most widely disputed instance of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, found in 1 Tim 3:1a, a sense of what Paul is doing in the second chapter of the letter may help one come to terms with his usage of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. In 1:15a the expression πιστὸς ὁ λόγος came after, and likely in response to, Paul’s reflections upon his own position as a beneficiary of God’s grace. Likewise, in 3:1a, there is a similar reflection or assertion in close proximity that pertains to the gospel proclamation and that may account for the affirmation πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. From the beginning of chapter two, Paul urges Timothy to call the believers in Ephesus to a renewed focus upon what they must be doing as a matter of course. To the community at-large, he issues a summons to prayer for “all peoples.” Then, Paul addresses two distinct segments of that community. First, the men are to pray with holy hands, as opposed to hands polluted by “anger or quarreling.” Next, the women are instructed to concentrate upon the faithfulness and holiness to which they are called. Then they are assured that, if they do so, they will not lose the promised salvation brought to light in the gospel proclamation. Here then, in the words of assurance to the women of Ephesus, lies the remark that triggers the statement of confirmation, for “the word is faithful,” and they too may rely upon it.⁴⁴

The third occurrence of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 1 Timothy lies in 4:9, near the conclusion of a literary unit that occupies 4:6–11. In 4:6, Paul gathers all of the teaching of 4:1–5, if not previous material as well, into the pronoun,

⁴³ Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 42–43; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 65–66; Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 28–29; Quinn and Wacker, *Letters to Timothy*, 188–89; Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 22; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 216.

⁴⁴ Rendall, “Faithful is the Word,” 319; Van Bruggen, “Vaste grond onder de voeten,” 44. See also Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 39.

ταῦτα and encourages Timothy to remind the body of “these things.”⁴⁵ If Timothy carries through with this reminder, Paul writes that he shall show himself to be καλὸς . . . διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐντρέφόμενος τοῖς λόγοις τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας ἣ παρηκολούθηκας. In this statement, Paul explicitly links “the words of the faith” with “the good teaching,” which corresponds to the “sound teaching” that stands in accordance with τὸ εὐαγγέλιον of 1:11. Consequently, one may surmise that “the words of the faith” also correspond to this same gospel, with which Paul was entrusted and which he proclaimed.⁴⁶

Paul then admonishes Timothy to keep himself clear of “profane and silly myths” and instead to γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν. The justification for this admonition lies in the principle ἡ γὰρ σωματικὴ γυμνασία πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος, ἡ δὲ εὐσέβεια πρὸς πάντα ὠφέλιμός ἐστιν ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχουσα ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης.⁴⁷ Consistent with what we have seen in previous instances of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 1 Timothy, the formula materializes here as if to confirm the assertion regarding the timeless worth and promise of godliness.⁴⁸ In the absence of any kind of citation indicator, and in view of the causal link with the subsequent clauses (εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι), it seems most plausible to construe πιστὸς ὁ λόγος as a reference to the apostolic gospel proclamation in which Paul and Timothy have labored and in which they have placed their hope. Thus, as with the previous occurrences, ὁ λόγος here most likely does not *refer back to or forward to something cited*, though the affirmation πιστὸς ὁ λόγος surely does *pertain to* adjacent material. In this case, the promises that attend godliness also are witnessed in the apostolic message, namely “the life to come” (4:8), or “eternal life” (1:16).⁴⁹ Once again, “the

⁴⁵ Ταῦτα possibly may reach further back to include Paul’s instructions in 3:1–16 as well. This extended reference is the position taken by Bassler (*1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 83), and Collins (*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 120), though Bernard limits the range to 4:1–5 (*The Pastoral Epistles*, 68). See also, Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 193.

⁴⁶ Johnson writes, “So Timothy is to shape the community ethos according to the ‘words of faith’ that come from the Scripture and the Gospel” (*The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 243). Reflecting upon the whole of 1 Tim, Towner remarks, “The closing instruction of 1 Tim 6.20 urges that he ‘guard the deposit [*paratheke*], that is, the core of the apostolic tradition” (*The Goal of Our Instruction*, 30).

⁴⁷ See Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 84; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 104; Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 250; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197.

⁴⁸ See Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 31, 69; Bover, “Fidelis Sermo,” 75; Duncan, “ΤΗΣΤΟΣ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ,” 141a; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 42, 121, 126; Fairbairn, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 182–83; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 105; Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 250; Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 49, 51; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 201; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 554.

⁴⁹ Indeed, Van Neste writes, “4.8 provides a ground for 4.7b, a reason for exerting oneself in training for godliness, namely that εὐσέβεια brings with it the promise

word is faithful.”⁵⁰

Conclusion

Two things warrant mention at this point. First, while the analysis proposed in this essay has not proceeded from the premise that each occurrence of *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* *must* pertain to salvation or salvific material, it has been argued that, in all five occurrences, the formula probably *does* pertain to such concerns. Second, while internal coherency does not necessarily translate into the most compelling interpretation, the question of coherency nevertheless must be satisfied in order for any proposed interpretation to receive adoption. On this point also, it must be acknowledged that the approach and interpretation proposed in this study does result in a coherent reading of each text in which *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* occurs. Consequently, the construal advocated here, that *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* serves as an affirmation and confirmation of the firm reliability of the apostolic gospel message, at the very least may stand as a plausible solution to the riddle of the formula and its referent in each instance and in each letter.

of eternal life” (*Cohesion and Structure*, 49). See also, Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 250; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 200–1.

⁵⁰ Van Bruggen writes, “Opnieuw geeft Paulus de uitroep in 4,9. Hij heeft zojuist gezegd dat de godsvrucht een belofte van leven inhoudt voor heden en toekomst. Godsvrucht behoudt. Waarom? Omdat Christ behoudt. Betrouwbaar is het woord van het evangelie en volkomen geloofwaardig!” (“Vaste grond onder de voeten,” 44). Rendall’s stirring summation applies his proposal to each instance of *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* accordingly, “In the First Epistle to Timothy the remembrance of God’s personal mercy in committing that glorious Gospel to a blasphemer and persecutor like himself calls forth this first outburst of thankful adoration. ‘Faithful is the Word, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief’ (i.15). Thoughts of God’s all-embracing love and of the Gospel’s saving power for all classes of society, for all men, for woman as well as man, run in succession through the second chapter, till at its close he winds up with his apostolic amen, ‘Faithful is the Word’ (iii.1). The pernicious delusions of the latter times rise up before his prophetic eye and call forth his apostolic warning; but he is inspired with a new courage by the thought, ‘Faithful is the Word’ (iv.9). The second epistle dwells with equal earnestness on the value of the Gospel whereunto he had been appointed a preacher and an apostle, on the sound words which Timothy had heard of him, and the good thing committed to Timothy, which he charges him to commit in his turn to faithful men who should be able to teach others also. For its sake he gladly suffers as an evildoer, even unto bonds: he exults in the contrast between his own bonds and the freedom of the Word of God, which is not bound, but has power to save; and breaks out once more into the ejaculation, ‘Faithful is the Word’ (ii.11). The Epistle to Titus, though largely occupied with the practical requirements of Christian life, strongly urges the importance of sound doctrine as the basis of Christian morals, and couples the duty of holding fast the faithful Word with blamelessness of life: here again St. Paul’s faith in the Word finds fit expression in his favourite ejaculation, ‘Faithful is the Word’ (iii.8)” (“Faithful is the Word,” 318–19).

More importantly, unlike conventional construals of πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, the analysis offered in this study achieves coherency within the texts of the three letters on their own terms: without forcing texts, without disregarding the syntax of the text of the letters (especially the conjunctions), and without treating all three documents or all five instances of the formula collectively. At the same time, all five occurrences of the clause—each interpreted within its own discrete context as it is—nevertheless exhibit a consistent function and sound a consistent message; the word of God, the gospel entrusted to his apostolic servants, is a faithful and reliable word. Therefore, we who profess to be his people have every reason to hold fast to that word, to all that it promises, and to all to which it calls us, even at great cost.

Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus: A Literature Review (2009–2015)

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Introduction

The late I. Howard Marshall provided an extremely helpful service with his incisive overviews of recent scholarship on the Letters to Timothy and Titus (LTT).¹ These bibliographic essays are essential reading for students of the LTT, providing judicious summaries of trends and research in the letters,² with the latest of these state-of-research essays focusing on works from 1999–2008. The present treatment—more a literature update than a state-of-research essay—will cover English-language works on the LTT published from 2009–2015.³ I will discuss scholarly commentaries, highlight a number of important works on the LTT, and provide a bibliography.

Interpreting the LTT has always had its challenges, and particular texts in the letters have provoked contention when intimately connected with ongoing ecclesial issues.⁴ Roughly a decade ago, at a meeting of the Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum tasked with discussing 1 Timothy, Karl Donfried noted that “as one today looks at the literature dealing with the so-called ‘pastoral epistles’ one finds a state of utter disarray.”⁵ My own bibliographic

¹ I. H. Marshall, “Prospects for the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer* (ed. D. Lewis and A. McGrath; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); idem, “Recent Study of the Pastoral Epistles,” *Them* 23:1 (1997): 3–29; “The Pastoral Epistles in (Very) Recent Study,” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 2 (Fall 2003): 3–37; “The Pastoral Epistles in Recent Study,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel* (ed. Köstenberger and Wilder; Nashville: B&H, 2010), 268–324.

Due to space constraints, I will typically refer to a work in the essay by author and short title, or by author alone, where it is included in the bibliography.

² One should also note in this vein Genade, “The Letter to Titus in Recent Scholarship”; Mark Harding, *What Are They Saying about the Pastoral Epistles?* (New York: Paulist, 2001) and his more recent “The Pastoral Epistles”; and Aune, “The Pastoral Letters.”

³ Space considerations force me to exclude much of the work on the LTT outside the English language, though I have noted most foreign-language monographs.

⁴ As noted below, 1 Tim 2:4 was quite controversial in theological debates centuries ago, and in more recent history, discussions of inspiration and inerrancy have wrestled over 2 Tim 3:16. At the present time, debate over 1 Tim 2:9–15 shows no signs of stopping.

⁵ Karl Donfried, “Rethinking Scholarly Approaches to 1 Timothy,” 179.

research has convinced me that the situation has not noticeably improved, and the sheer diversity of approaches to the LTT is reflected in the work which here follows.

Commentaries

Several pre-modern commentaries on the LTT have been newly published in English translation, including those by Ambrosiaster (Bray), Aquinas (1–2 Timothy only; Baer), Jerome (Titus only; Scheck), and Theodore of Mopsuestia (Greer). Excerpts from numerous patristic commentators on the letters may be found in Twomey and especially Gorday.⁶ As well, from the early modern period, a new edition of Calvin's sermons on 1 Timothy has been produced by Van Neste and Denker.

A spate of scholarly English-language commentaries on the LTT appeared around the turn of the millennium, with many major series obtaining a volume (or two) on the letters in a span of less than a decade.⁷ This outpouring is reflected in the lack of any heavyweight technical English-language commentaries on the LTT in this essay's timeframe. A number of other volumes are forthcoming,⁸ but I will here note a number of briefer commentaries on the LTT which have recently appeared and warrant mention.

Robert Wall

Perhaps most notable in recent English-language commentaries is the contribution of Robert Wall (with Richard Steele) in the Two Horizons series. Without ignoring linguistic and historical considerations, Wall engages a "canonical approach to theological interpretation" (1), emphasizing the letters' connections with the church, the rule of faith, and the broader canon of Scripture. Wall does not appear to clearly state his opinion on the question of whether Paul wrote the LTT; though he finds typical arguments for pseudonymity unconvincing, his concern is much less with the "actual" author

⁶ Twomey, *The Pastoral Epistles through the Centuries*; P. Gorday, *Colossians, 1–2 Thesalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (ACCS 9; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000). L. T. Johnson's "History of Interpretation of 1 and 2 Timothy" in his AB volume (pp. 20–54) is still unmatched in its overview of patristic commentary on the letters.

⁷ Marshall (ICC, 1999); Mounce (WBC, 2000); Quinn/Wacker (ECC, 2000); Johnson (1 and 2 Tim only; AB, 2001); Collins (NTL, 2002); Quinn (Titus only; AB, 2005); Towner (NICNT, 2006); Witherington (SRC, 2006); Fiore (SP, 2007).

⁸ David Pao is contributing the volume on the LTT to the new Brill Exegetical Commentary series; Stanley Porter to BECNT; Robert Yarbrough to PNCT; and Greg Beale to ZECNT. At the time of his passing in 2012, Abraham Malherbe was writing a new volume on the LTT in the Hermeneia series to replace Dibelius/Conzelmann; the volume has now been reassigned to John T. Fitzgerald who, like Malherbe, is well-known for his work in NT backgrounds.

and much more with the “canonical” author, leaving the historical question more or less open (4–7). In his introduction, he concludes that “the Pastoral Epistles were known as a collection and used throughout the second century, but only with limited circulation (principally among groups of the Pauline mainstream),” and were only later added to the standard ten-letter Pauline corpus “to form a coherent witness to Paul’s persona and proclamation as exemplary of Christian faith for the whole church” (22–23). The way he presents the role of the LTT as a canonical capstone to an accepted Pauline collection makes it likely that he views the letters as post-Pauline,⁹ but in the end he judges the apostolicity of the author to be irrelevant for the letters’ canonicity: the LTT are to be read as apostolic and canonical not so much because historical analysis can prove beyond doubt that Paul wrote the letters, but because of their effect in and acceptance by the church “as a means of divine grace” (7).¹⁰

The LTT are “letters of succession,” paraenetically instructing those who continue the work of a departed leader, here both in ordering a congregation (1 Timothy & Titus) and in ordering a new leader’s life (2 Timothy) (9–11). Hermeneutically, the addition of the LTT to the accepted ten-letter Pauline collection provided “an intellectual rejoinder to competing [and apocryphal] interpretations of the Pauline apostolate in a way that fixed a normative understanding of his memory and message according to which the Pauline corpus is read” (34, *italics removed*). In other words,

Not only does [the epistles’] portrait of a canonical Paul . . . respond decisively to the battle over Paul’s legacy within Pauline Christianity, the canonical sayings and the theological formulas that fashion a Pauline rule of faith, along with the instructions about personal and congregational practices that illustrate how the rule is applied, are spread across its pages to commend a particular version of Pauline Christianity that chooses sides—I would argue at the Holy Spirit’s bidding—in a challenging and contested succession. (35)

Wall finds “three important themes that are emphasized in the Pastoral Epistles and that reconceive the Pauline apostolate as important for the future of the church” (27): (1) the church as “the household of God,” a metaphor which evinces a concern not so much with “social structure” but with “the protocol and importance of Christian formation”: “the congregation functions as a household of believers who receive the apostolic word and practice its truth in an orderly, caring manner” (28–29); (2) the performance

⁹ In addition, Wall deems anachronistic the typical argument that an inauthentic letter would have been rejected by the church due to its deceptive nature (6).

¹⁰ See the conversation between Stan Porter and Wall on this point in *BBR* 5–6 (1995–1996): Stanley E. Porter, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 105–23; Robert W. Wall, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to S. E. Porter,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 125–28; Stanley E. Porter, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to R. W. Wall’s Response,” *BBR* 6 (1996): 133–38.

of good works as the test of the real Christian; good works in the LTT are “the effective moral yield of receiving God’s grace” and serve to aid the missionary work of the church (31–32); and (3) the robust portrayal of the apostle Paul, “intended to secure a particular portrait of the canonical Paul for subsequent generations of believers” (32).

A unique feature of the commentary is Wall’s transparent use of the apostolic *regula fidei* (as set forth by Tertullian, *Praescr.* 13) to regulate his reading of the LTT. After an exegetical treatment of each letter, Wall examines it through the lenses of five “rule of faith” themes: (1) “The Creator God,” (2) “Christ Jesus the Lord,” (3) “The Community of the Spirit,” (4) “Christian Existence and Discipleship,” and (5) “Consummation in a New Creation.” As another unique feature of the commentary, the treatment of each letter ends with a case study from Methodist history by Richard Steele, meant to concretize the rule-of-faith reading.

Andreas Köstenberger

Forthcoming in 2017 is Köstenberger’s contribution to the new Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation series (B&H).¹¹ The volume consists of a thorough but concise introductory section (each letter also has its own introduction), an exegetical section, and a section on biblical-theological themes in the letters (about two thirds the length of the exegetical section); each section is thoroughly cross-referenced to the others. Köstenberger defends authenticity, dating the letters to c. AD 62–66. He self-consciously designates the letters as “the Letters to Timothy and Titus” over against “Pastoral Epistles” (à la Towner) and emphasizes the need to avoid undue corpus-reading, treating the letters as a cluster: related, but distinct. Other important discussions in the introductory material cover Pauline chronology and the social setting of the letters. The introduction to Titus is particularly well-done (including a comparison between Paul’s approach in this epistle and his missionary strategy in Athens), given that the letter often receives short shrift in treatments of the LTT. Of note is the commentary’s very thorough engagement with secondary literature, especially given its size—it is what one would expect from a much larger technical commentary—and students of the letters will find significant help for further research in the footnotes and bibliography. As is common among conservative students of the LTT, Köstenberger rejects the “bourgeois Christianity” (*bürgerliches Christentum*) reading of the letters popularized by Dibelius and Conzelmann and instead finds an underlying mission motivation driving the paraenesis.

The biblical-theological treatment is surprisingly thorough and is longer than Francis Young’s standalone *Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (which treats the letters pseudonymously), making it one of the lengthiest treatments of the theology of the LTT available and the most robust treatment of the LTT’s

¹¹ In the interest of full disclosure, I note here that I aided in the production of this volume as Köstenberger’s research assistant.

themes (as a collection) I have seen. Here, I simply give the themes and sub-themes treated:

1. Mission (the Pauline mission, apostolic authority and suffering, apostolic delegates, Paul's larger mission theology and strategy and the LTT)
2. Teaching (healthy teaching, the truth, the faith, the Word of God, the deposit, trustworthy sayings, Scripture)
3. God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and salvation (God, Christ, God and Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit, salvation [need, provision, recipients, nature, reception, results, preservation of believers])
4. The church (church as household of God [order and authority, responsibilities: older and younger men, older and younger women, widows, slaves, the wealthy], church as pillar and foundation of the truth, church and its ministry [tasks: ministry of the word, ministry of caring, ministry of prayer; officers: elders/overseers, deacons; goals of ministry])
5. The Christian life (Christian virtues [love, faith/faithfulness, godliness, self-control], good works [witness, labor/striving, endurance/suffering], good citizenship)
6. The last days (Satan/demons/angels, false teachers and the tribulation of the last days, virtues/vices, need for perseverance, resurrection of believers, appearing of Christ in final judgment and salvation)
7. The LTT and the canon (OT [pattern of . . . apostolic mission, righteous apostolic suffering, apostolic succession, human relationships], Pauline writings [need for balance, congruence with the Pauline mission, similarities and differences], Acts, non-Pauline NT letters)

The value of this work is immediately evident. Each of these treatments is the sort of thing that would comprise an excursus in a typical commentary, or a brief essay in a journal. Here, however, they are an interrelated body of work which also connects with the previous exposition of the letters. The sections on mission and Scripture are particularly robust, but each section is valuable in its discussion of a particular theme in the LTT along with its larger biblical-theological connections.

Michel Gourgues

Although not an English-language commentary, I briefly mention here the recent work by Michel Gourgues in the *Commentaire Biblique* series.¹²

¹² Prof. Gourgues has noted in personal correspondence that he is also working on the LTT for the *École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem* project

While not as robust a volume as, say, Marshall or Mounce—or that most notable of French commentaries, Spicq's *Les épîtres pastorales*—its particular importance is recognized by no less than Phil Towner, who deems it the first significant commentary in French on the LTT in thirty years.¹³ Like Spicq, Gourgues writes from a Roman Catholic perspective. He is concerned to treat the LTT as *un corpus diversifié*, recognizing the similarities among the letters but examining each on its own terms (38–41). Gourgues considers most of 2 Timothy to be authentic, dating the majority of the letter to the second half of the 60s; however, 1 Timothy and Titus (1 Timothy's *jumelle en format réduit*—"twin in reduced format") were pseudonymously authored "somewhere between Paul and Ignatius," drawing on and developing 2 Timothy and other Pauline material (57–59). One of the key aspects of his methodology in coming to this determination is a fairly sophisticated analysis of the vocabulary of the letters, tabulated by pericope and compared both among the letters and with the less-disputed Pauline corpus (48–55). In his review of the work, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor finds "perhaps the most original contribution" of Gourgues's commentary to be his tripartite structural analysis of 2 Timothy: the first and last portions (1:1–2:13 and 4:6–22) are "I-you" (*je-tu*) sections in that nearly every sentence uses those pronouns, while the middle portion (2:14–4:5) is a "you" (*tu*) section in that it is characterized by numerous imperatives.¹⁴ Gourgues helpfully provides a brief bibliography for each textual unit of his exegesis; this is preceded by his own translation with text-critical observations and is followed by a running "interpretation" and more technical "notes."

Linda Belleville/Jon Laansma

The Cornerstone series (Tyndale) has added a volume by Linda Belleville (1 Timothy) and Jon Laansma (2 Timothy, Titus); because of the relatively uncontroversial nature of Laansma's contribution, I will focus on Belleville here. Her introduction serves all three letters, defending authenticity (3–9) and appearing to agree with the traditional dating of the letters from 62–67. While Timothy and Titus were primary recipients of the LTT, their churches were secondary recipients. Though citing only Acts 19:28–41, Belleville asserts that the Ephesian church "continually" battled the influence of the Artemisian cult (12), apparently grounding this judgment in the connections with Artemis she posits in 1 Timothy. Regarding external evidence for authenticity, she avers that "canonical support for the Pastorals is exceeded only by that of Romans and 1 Corinthians" (14), although it is unclear how this is

known as *The Bible and Its Traditions* (see www.bibest.org), scheduled for publication in 2016 or 2017; and *The Second Epistle to Timothy: A Commentary* (Paulist Biblical Commentary; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2017).

¹³ P. Towner, review of M. Gourgues, *Les deux lettres à Timothée. La lettre à Tite*, CBQ 75 (2013): 360.

¹⁴ J. Murphy-O'Connor, review of M. Gourgues, *Les deux lettres à Timothée. La lettre à Tite*, RB 117 (2010): 619.

the case. Her introduction highlights several “major theological themes” in the letters: “God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, righteousness, piety and wholesome teaching, and heresy” (16). Belleville conflates the evidence from all three letters to develop a portrait of the false teachers, which may well contribute to her description of them as “syncretistic” (20); this conflation is especially surprising given her support of authenticity, which affirms two different recipients in two different locales. In her commentary, Belleville gives perhaps the greatest attention to passages addressing women and thus brings a consistent emphasis of her previous research to a systematic exegetical treatment of the letters, finding in her reading of the LTT an egalitarian Paul.

Aída Besançon Spencer

In the New Covenant Commentary series, Aída Besançon Spencer has produced volumes on 1 Timothy and on 2 Timothy and Titus. Like Belleville, she brings her previous research on women’s roles to bear on her work, providing a strongly egalitarian reading of the letters. In her introduction to the letters as a whole, she provides a standard defense of Pauline authorship, although the scholarship with which she interacts is often surprisingly dated. Spencer finds that the Artemis cult provides significant background to 1 Timothy in particular, and she regularly interacts with Greco-Roman literature in the footnotes; she also seeks to highlight Paul’s rhetorical strategies. The parameters of the commentary series include brief sections of contemporary application, and Spencer has also included several excurses: the intersection of women and teaching roles, lifting up hands in prayer, and heresy in 1 Timothy. The heresy is christological: the errorists believed that as a human, Jesus could not be the mediator between God and humankind, sufficient for all people; this resulted in both legalism with asceticism, and the promotion of wealth (147).

Non-Western contributions

The LTT are represented in several newer commentary series which aim to provide commentary from a particular non-Western cultural standpoint, and thus take part in a welcome trend. The most significant of these is that of Samuel Ngewa, who produced the inaugural volume of the Africa Bible Commentary on the LTT. At over 450 pages it provides extended and straightforward discussion of the letters from an indigenous African perspective. Conservative in stance, the volume is more pastoral than academic, with plenty of illustrations, “case studies” (e.g., “Practical Care for Widows”), and end-of-chapter discussion questions, drawn from and aimed toward the African context. Ngewa engages the Greek text, typically in the endnotes, but falls prey to the etymological fallacy at times (e.g., 26, 81). The introduction consists of a brief defense of Pauline authorship (1–3).

Paul Trebilco and Simon Rae (1 Timothy) and the two of them along with Chris Caradus (2 Timothy, Titus) have produced volumes for the Asia Bible

Commentary, which were unavailable to me. Graham Simpson has discussed the LTT in the evangelical India Commentary on the New Testament. Simpson thinks the letters are best understood as written by Paul, or by Luke at Paul's behest. His commentary alternates between workmanlike exegesis, and focused application to the Indian context. The bibliography is careful to include anything with an Indian connection written on the LTT.

Other Works

Introductions

This essay's timeframe found no lack of treatments of the LTT in NT introductions and similar works. David Aune contributes an article on the LTT in the new *Blackwell Companion to the New Testament*, helpfully identifying current topics of interest in the scholarly study of the letters; summarizing the academic discussion on the LTT vis-à-vis authorship, reception in the second century, historical setting and purpose, church organization, intertextuality, constituent literary forms, genre, epistolary analysis, and rhetorical analysis; and providing a briefly annotated bibliography. Similarly, I. Howard Marshall wrote the article on the LTT in the *Blackwell Companion to Paul*—to my knowledge, his last published essay on the LTT, and thus the final formal statement of his take on the letters after many years of writing on them—and though he does not see Paul as author, he is always careful to demonstrate the many ways in which the letters are consistent with Paul; one would be hard pressed to find a more thoughtful content summary of the letters “as they would appear to somebody who accepts them as authentic writings of Paul” (112).

The treatment of M. Eugene Boring in his *Introduction to the New Testament* is notable for his thorough sixteen-point defense of pseudonymity (one could hardly ask for a better summary) and his treatment of the letters' theology as post-Pauline. Don Hagner's *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* finds him having shifted from an earlier position of defending Pauline authorship to being convinced by the cumulative case for pseudonymity; his treatment of the issue is very helpfully structured, as he presents pro and con arguments for areas often discussed in the authorship debate (language/style, church organization, theology/ethics, nature of opposition, picture of Paul, personal history of Paul). In a sort of *Pauline* introduction, *All Things to All Cultures: Paul Among Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, Mark Harding (whose command of the literature is outstanding) contributes a sophisticated chapter on the LTT, discussing attestation, the character of the letters, genre, authorship, the LTT as pseudepigrapha (Harding's position), and the theology of the LTT. Mark Powell takes great pains in his *Introducing the New Testament* to set forth options while coming to no conclusions regarding the LTT, as he seeks to mediate discussion on the letters to a college-level audience. In the final volume of his Christianity in the Making project, *Neither Jew nor Greek*, James D. G. Dunn concurs with the standard critical judgment of

pseudonymous authorship, the LTT being written “to consolidate the riches of the first generation, as perceived by the writers, and to ensure that the most enduring structure of the Pauline churches was passed on to the next and future generations” (90); the letters most notably embody “increasing institutionalization” and the “crystallization of faith into set forms” (678), along with fresh christological expression. In contrast, and easily the most conservative among recently-published scholarly NT introductions, is Andreas Köstenberger’s contribution on the LTT to *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, notable for its defense of authenticity and its discussion of the letters’ theological themes; an expanded second edition is now available.

Authorship

The discussion of authorship continues unabated. Ever increasingly, proponents of pseudonymity do not seem to be resting their case on some key aspect of the LTT (such as vocabulary or theology) which provides proof positive that the letters are inauthentic, but instead rely upon the cumulative weight of a number of arguments.

Bart Ehrman has published the scholarly *Forgery and Counterforgery* in which he finds each of the LTT to be a polemical forgery: 1 Timothy and Titus were forged to establish church order, and 2 Timothy in order to authorize a particular eschatological position. Believing all three LTT to have been produced by the same author, Ehrman rehearses standard arguments for pseudonymity at some length and seeks to debunk the arguments of those who contend for authenticity (in particular, he argues against the secretary hypothesis in a lengthy excursus).

Stan Porter and Greg Fewster have recently edited *Paul and Pseudepigraphy*.¹⁵ In it, Armin Baum provides an outstanding collection of freshly-translated source material related to pseudepigraphy, as well as a specialized annotated bibliography. Porter examines Pauline chronology vis-à-vis the question of pseudonymity, defending a date after Paul’s Acts 28 imprisonment. Andrew Pitts questions typical linguistic and stylistic methodologies used to determine pseudonymity and sets forth a new methodology to judge the likelihood that a given work associated with a corpus is pseudonymous or not. Jermo van Nes reexamines P. N. Harrison’s proposal that the LTT are pseudonymous documents built around authentic Pauline fragments, and demonstrates that this theory has been thoroughly discredited in spite of the use some scholars still make of it. Linda Belleville finds that some of the atypical

¹⁵ Note also the recent edited volume *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen* (ed. Frey et al.) which includes Jens Herzer’s essay “Fiktion oder Täuschung? Zur Diskussion über die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe.” Other recent German-language contributions include Joram Luttenberger, *Prophetenmantel oder Bücherfuttermal*, which presents a thorough examination of the personal details found in the LTT, particularly in connection with the authorship question; and M. Tsuji, “Persönliche Korrespondenz des Paulus,” which argues that the need to pass the letters off as authentic drove their author to shape them as personal correspondence.

christological language used in the LTT, as well as some of the other distinguishing characteristics of the letters, does not necessitate pseudonymous authorship; “comparison with imperial epiphany language and Greco-Roman redemptive religious piety and soteriology readily points to a first generation *Sitz im Leben* and concerns consistent with the challenges that a church in the imperial temple-warden city of Ephesus would face” (243).

In briefer treatments, a typically thorough defense of authenticity is found in Eckhard Schnabel, “Paul, Timothy, and Titus”; as well, Terry Wilder has helpfully brought his broader work on pseudonymity to bear on the LTT in his “Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and the Pastoral Epistles.” A number of the works which take the LTT as pseudonymous find the letters to be appropriating material from the undisputed Pauline letters, including Elvis Elengabeka, *L'exploitation des Ecritures*, which suggests numerous intertextual connections.¹⁶

Reception¹⁷

In the Blackwell Bible Commentary series, Jay Twomey's *The Pastoral Epistles through the Centuries* provides a fascinating look at the LTT, sampling the letters' use by writers ranging from the apostolic fathers to moderns as diverse as Luther, Locke, Lewis, and LaHaye. Working passage-by-passage through the letters, Twomey's goal is not so much to argue a particular point of view as it is to highlight how the letters have been interpreted and appropriated over time.¹⁸

Several treatments of the LTT by particular theologians of yesteryear are now available, including Mark Frisius, *Tertullian's Use of the Pastoral Epistles, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*, which explores Tertullian's knowledge of the LTT, his exegetical approach to the letters (44–55), and the ways in which they shaped his theology and disciplinary practices (87–101); possible citations of the LTT in Tertullian are catalogued in a helpful appendix (129–35). Forthcoming is Michael Sirilla's volume on Thomas Aquinas's appropriation of the LTT.

A number of focused explorations of the reception of specific exegetical cruxes in the LTT have recently been offered. Particular scrutiny has been

¹⁶ See also in the bibliography Lincicum, Marguerat, Mitchell, Redalié, and Schröter.

¹⁷ In addition to the items below, note in the bibliography Davis, Hübenthal, McKee, Tinkle, White (“How to Read a Book”; *Remembering Paul*), and Yarbrough. Note also that the Italian journal *Annali di Storia dell'Essegesi* devoted most of its October 2015 issue (32.2) to history of reception of the LTT, including articles by Dragutinović, Hunter, Meiser, Nicklas, Sommer, and Zamfir. See English-language abstracts at <https://asejournal.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/ase-32-2-abstracts.pdf>.

¹⁸ Note that in InterVarsity's Reformation Commentary on Scripture series, a volume on the LTT edited by Brad Green and Lee Gattis is in the works.

given to 1 Tim 1:15 and especially 2:4 in the context of the Pelagian controversy and its aftermath.¹⁹ The reception of 1 Tim 2:9–15 continues to be treated as well.²⁰

Language and Structure

Rick Brannan has just released two technical volumes: (1) *First Timothy: Lexical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, consisting largely of discussion of the vocabulary of the letters (particularly vis-à-vis contemporary literature), set in the framework of a running commentary on the letters; and (2) *Second Timothy: Notes on Grammar, Syntax, and Structure*, a workmanlike treatment which frequently engages Runge's discourse grammar. Speaking of discourse grammar, Stephen Levinson has made available online his very helpful "Some Notes on the Information Structure and Discourse Features of 1 Timothy."²¹ A number of articles in the newly revised *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (ed. Silva) highlight the use of particular terms in the LTT.²²

As to exegetical handbooks, Richard Blight's volume on 1 Timothy in the SIL Exegetical Summaries series is excellent and takes account of all major commentaries through Towner (NICNT). However, although the SIL volumes on 2 Timothy (Minor) and Titus (Greenlee) were both reissued as "second editions" in 2008, they appear to be reprints and not true second editions, as no new literature seems to have been engaged. Still to be anticipated are the volumes on the LTT in both the B&H Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series (Ray Van Neste) and the Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament series (Larry Perkins).

Mark Yarbrough, taking his cue from E. E. Ellis's work, has produced *Paul's Utilization of Preformed Traditions in 1 Timothy*; after establishing a taxonomy of preformed traditions along with criteria for identifying them, he locates twelve of them in 1 Timothy,²³ proposing that they fulfill four functions in the epistle: strengthening its literary cohesion, providing rhetorical leverage, serving as theological directives, and combating false teaching.

¹⁹ See in the bibliography Dupont, Eelen, Gumerlock, and Teske. The controversy over 1 Tim 2:4 did not end in the first millennium, as demonstrated in Foord.

²⁰ E.g., Brown, *An Historian Looks at 1 Timothy 2:11–14*, who argues that over against present-day complementarians who typically allow women roles of authority in society but limit such roles in the church, the earlier "traditional" understanding strictly limited roles of authority in society for women, but granted more leeway in the church. Note also Calvert-Koyzis and Weir, eds., *Strangely Familiar*; Zamfir, "Men and Women in the House(hold) of God."

²¹ <http://www-01.sil.org/~levinson/1TimComments.pdf>.

²² See, e.g., διδάσκω (1:715); the σέβομαι group (4:276); σφίζω (4:432–33); the σωφρον- group (4:444–45); υγιαίνω (4:517–18); and the φαίνω group (4:590–91).

²³ 1:8–10; 1:15a–b; 1:17; 2:5–6a; 3:1; 3:16; 4:8; 4:9, 10b; 5:24–25; 6:7; 6:10a; 6:11–16.

Two recent monographs treat the epistle to Titus, too often the “exegetical stepchild” of the LTT: (1) Alfred Genade’s *Persuading the Cretans* sets forth a “text-generated persuasion analysis” of the letter, seeking through rhetorical criticism to further Van Neste’s work on coherence in the LTT; (2) Paul Jeon’s *To Exhort and Reprove* sets forth the epistle in a four-part chiasmic structure meant to strategically reveal Paul’s guidance for the recipients. Timo Glaser’s *Paulus als Briefroman erzählt* argues that the composition of the (pseudepigraphical) LTT was informed by that of ancient epistolary novels.

Students of the LTT have increasingly eschewed the corpus reading of the LTT, and this important trend has found formal expression in Michaela Engelmann, *Unzertrennliche Drillinge?*, who traces several themes (christology/soteriology, ecclesiology, heresy, Paul) through each of the letters and compares the results; she concludes that three different authors (none of them Paul) produced the letters.

Background

Gary Hoag’s *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy* mines an ancient novel by Xenophon of Ephesus (recently redated to the mid-first century AD) via Vernon Robbin’s socio-rhetorical methodology to inform the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9–15; 3:1–13; 6:1–2a; 6:2b–10; 6:17–19, particularly vis-à-vis the relationship between 1 Timothy’s teaching on wealth and that in the rest of the NT.²⁴ Sandra Glahn has recently produced a pair of articles highlighting the Artemisian background of the letters to Timothy, emphasizing the distinctiveness of the *Ephesian* Artemis over against the deity as worshipped elsewhere, and bringing this background to bear on the letters’ interpretation. Harry Maier, *Picturing Paul in Empire*, considers the (pseudonymous) LTT vis-à-vis the vocabulary and imagery from the imperial cult of the 2nd century AD. Wieland’s essay “Roman Crete and the Letter to Titus” is excellent, notable for the connections it draws between Crete in the NT era and particular textual features of the epistle to Titus.

Opponents

Pride of place here must go to Dillon Thornton’s just-published monograph, *Hostility in the House of God: An Investigation of the Opponents in 1 and 2 Timothy*. Methodologically rigorous and full of exegetical insight, the work finds that the opponents arose with the Ephesian congregation, that their teaching centered on an erroneous eschatological position grounded in Paul’s complex teaching, and that they engaged in a ministry of sorts at Ephesus, for which they were paid. Notably, Thornton takes exception to many who understand the polemic of the LTT to be stock and not actually descriptive of the false teachers.²⁵ In addition to Thornton, note the treatment of the

²⁴ Note the extended discussion on this work between Hoag and Ben Witherington at www.patheos.com (search “Wealth in Ancient Ephesus” [with quotes]).

²⁵ The polemic of the letters continues to receive scholarly attention, for which see Gerd Häfner, “Polemik in den Pastoralbriefen” and further literature therein.

LTT in B. J. Oropeza's larger project, although he conflates the opponents in Ephesus and the opponents in Crete.

Theology

An increasing amount of work is being done on the theology of the LTT. In addition to Köstenberger's forthcoming BTCP commentary, with its biblical-theological emphasis, Köstenberger and Terry Wilder have edited *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, an excellent collection of essays on the LTT, many of them about some aspect of the letters' theology.

Writing from a Reformed perspective, William Barclay has treated the LTT in the just-released *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (ed. Kruger), discussing such themes as proper conduct in the household of God, the priority of prayer, proper leadership in the church, care for the needy, proper attitude toward and use of money, and the importance and centrality of the church. James Aageson has followed up his important *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* with a chapter on the LTT in his just-published *Windows on Early Christianity*, where under the heading "The Theology of the Pastoral Epistles" he discusses the deposit of the true faith, the church, the nature of Scripture, women, asceticism, and Jewish practices. Bernhard Mutschler, *Glaube in den Pastoralbriefen* has meticulously examined and categorized every instance of the *πίστις* word group in the LTT. Other recent essays address the LTT on christology (Akin; Belleville; Edwards; Harris), eschatology (Mathison; Mutschler), mystery (Beale and Gladd), salvation (Schreiner; Talbert; Wall, "Salvation's Bath"; Wieland, "Function"), and theology proper (Couser, "Sovereign Savior").

Scripture

Contending that Paul explicitly views apostolic writings as Scripture, Timothy Swinson's *What Is Scripture? Paul's Use of Graphe in the Letters to Timothy* sets forth a well-argued dual thesis: (1) in 1 Tim 5:18, Paul cites a written version of the Gospel of Luke; and (2) in 2 Tim 3:16, Paul uses the adjective "all" (*πᾶς*) to bring together two collections of writings—the OT and apostolic writings extant in Paul's day—under the broader rubric of "Scripture" in the phrase "all Scripture" (*πᾶσα γραφή*). These lines of argument together support the larger concept that Paul "ascribes to his own teaching and to that of his apostolic coworkers an authoritative standing equal to that attributed to the sacred writings (*τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*) found in the OT" (1).

Phil Towner's invaluable treatment still holds pride of place as the best overall discussion of the use of the OT in the LTT.²⁶ More briefly, Paul Wolfe's "The Sagacious Use of Scripture" is very helpful. The use of Genesis

²⁶ Towner, Philip H. "1–2 Timothy and Titus," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 891–918.

in 1 Tim 2:13–15 continues to be strongly debated, and the literature on this matter is, of course, extensive.²⁷

The Church and Ministry

Full of intriguing observations, Jack Barentsen's *Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission* examines local leadership development in Ephesus (and Corinth) from a social identity perspective: how did church leadership emerge, how was it maintained, and how did succession occur? A number of essays address church leadership as well (Goodrich; Merkle, "Qualifications"; Robertson; Schreiner, "Overseeing"; Serworwora; Sewakpo). Benjamin Merkle and Christopher Hutson have both produced summary treatments of the LTT's ecclesiology, and David Downs has incorporated the LTT (as Pauline) into his "Pauline Ecclesiology."

Two recent monographs address education in the LTT: (1) Claire Smith, *Pauline Communities as "Scholastic Communities,"* examines the semantic domain of "teaching" in the (authentic) LTT (and 1 Corinthians); (2) Friedemann Krumbiegel, *Erziehung in den Pastoralbriefen*, examines education in the LTT as a response to a loss of identity in a post-Pauline setting.

Gender Issues

An entire "state-of-research" essay could be written solely on gender issues in the LTT, or even on that most contentious of passages, 1 Tim 2:9–15. Here, I can only mention several recent book-length works.

Writing from a complementarian perspective, Andreas Köstenberger and Tom Schreiner's *Women in the Church* has been released in a completely revised third edition, addressing 1 Tim 2:9–15's Ephesian background (Baugh), use of *αὐθεντέω* (Wolters), syntax and discourse analysis (Köstenberger), overall interpretation and scholarship (Schreiner), hermeneutics (Yarbrough), and translation (Burk).

From an egalitarian angle, Philip Payne has compiled many years of research into his *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, which spends nine chapters discussing pertinent passages in the LTT (1 Tim 2:8–15; 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). As well, Jamin Hübner presents *A Case for Female Deacons*, which is how he understands the "women" of 1 Tim 3:11.

In a thorough and wide-ranging work, Korinna Zamfir (*Men and Women in the Household of God*) finds the (pseudonymous) LTT to respond to significant challenges in the post-Pauline church and to set forth "a hierarchical ecclesiology, anchored in the social and cultural values shared with contemporary society," and by so doing, "(re)define . . . social roles, including gender roles, and the ministries performed in the church by men and women" (xii,

²⁷ Presently, the best entrée to this body of literature is via the footnotes in the most recent edition of Tom Schreiner's essay on the passage ("An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship," in *Women in the Church*, ed. Köstenberger and Schreiner, 199–216), and my specialized research bibliography in the same volume (363–94).

italics removed); societal values which inform this redefinition include the male-female division of spaces (public/private) and roles (authority/submission), the honor-shame dynamic, and expectations concerning women.

Annette Bourland Huizenga has produced *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean Letters*, comparing and contrasting the moral education of women as set forth in the (pseudonymous) LTT and in an ancient collection of philosophical letters attributed to female Pythagorean authors (composed somewhere around the same time as the LTT). She argues that the LTT provide a “program of moral training for women” that is similar in several ways to that set forth in the Pythagorean letters (365) with both corpora emphasizing female *σωφροσύνη* along with other aspects of the “good woman” *topos*.

Marianne Bjelland Kartzow’s work, *Gossip and Gender*, focuses on the LTT’s “employment of the notion that gossip is gendered speech” (1), examining various Jewish and Greco-Roman texts about gossip and gossipers in order to illuminate instances of female gossip in the LTT (e.g., 1 Tim 3:11; 5:13; Titus 2:3–5). She maintains that the author of the LTT connected false teaching and teachers with gossip, feminizing—and thus marginalizing—his opponents.

Fitting under the rubric of “gender issues,” several works on masculinity vis-à-vis the LTT have appeared since the turn of the millennium, including Manuel Villalobos Mendoza’s recent monograph on the topic, *When Men Were Not Men*. Villalobos Mendoza “employs a number of hermeneutical tools (i.e., queer hermeneutics, liberation hermeneutics, autobiographical biblical criticism, etc.) and focuses on select texts where issues of masculinity, gender, power, race, money, abuse of religion, and otherness are present.”²⁸

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The following bibliography compiles scholarly literature on the LTT produced from 2009–2015. The contentious 1 Timothy 2:9–15 continues to generate a literature all out of proportion to its size, and space constraints here force me to omit most works addressing the passage and instead to refer the reader to my recent comprehensive bibliography on the passage.²⁹ Space considerations also require the omission of most foreign-language works (monographs excepted). In what follows, I first list commentaries, then other published works. A section that lists unpublished dissertations on the LTT from 2000–2015 closes the bibliography.

Happily, several collections related to the LTT were published in our

²⁸ Dillon Thornton, review of Manuel Villalobos Mendoza, *When Men Were Not Men: Masculinity and Otherness in the Pastoral Epistles*, BBR (forthcoming).

²⁹ *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner; 3rd ed.; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 363–94.

timeframe: *1 Timothy Reconsidered* (ed. Donfried);³⁰ *Ein Meisterschüler: Titus und sein Brief. Michael Theobald zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. Weidemann and Eisele); and *Entrusted with the Gospel* (ed. Köstenberger and Wilder).

As well, essays on the LTT make up a significant part of two other collections: *Paul and Pseudepigraphy* (ed. Porter and Fewster), and *Lukas—Paulus—Pastoralbriefe* (ed. Hoppe and Reichardt). Finally, two scholarly journals produced issues which focused largely on the LTT: *Early Christianity* 5.1 (2014) and *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 32.2 (2015). All of the pertinent English-language essays from these collections are listed separately below.

In addition to newly published works, Philip Towner's important *The Goal of Our Instruction*, A. T. Hanson's provocative *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles*, and Lewis Donelson's *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Arguments in the Pastorals* are all newly available in reprint editions.³¹ As well, Abraham Malherbe's many essays on the LTT are now part of a collection,³² as are Luke Timothy Johnson's.³³

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³⁰ Note that *2 Timothy Revisited* (ed. Bieringer) is forthcoming.

³¹ Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Arguments in the Pastorals* (HUT 22; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015); A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: S.P.C.K., 1968; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015); Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTSS 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989; repr., Bloomsbury Academic Collections; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

³² Abraham J. Malherbe, *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity. Collected Essays, 1959–2012* (ed. Carl R. Holladay, John T. Fitzgerald, Gregory E. Sterling, and James W. Thompson; 2 vols.; NovTSup 150; Leiden: Brill, 2014).

³³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays* (NovTSup 146; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

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Interview with Ray Van Neste of Union University

How did you become interested in studying the Pastoral Epistles?

I realize that the Pastoral Epistles have played a significant part in my life from early days even when I did not think of them in any specific way distinct from the rest of the Bible. Bible drill was a big part of life for me growing up and the theme verse was always 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (KJV). My Sunday School teachers and Bible drill instructors, particularly my grandmother, stressed the truth of this verse on a regular basis in addition to having me memorize it.

My decision to focus on the Pastorals in academic work came from sermon preparation as I pastored a church during seminary at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. I was struggling with the decision of what to focus on for an MA thesis. I just knew I wanted to study the Bible, and I had a wide range of interests. I investigated a few ideas and discovered those questions had been well addressed. I happened to be preaching through Titus at the time. I don’t remember at all why I had chosen to preach through Titus, but as I studied I began to see connections between paragraphs in the letter which were not addressed in any of the commentaries I had. Tracing the flow of thought throughout a letter was something that really caught my attention in seminary, so I was captivated. I loved seeing how the text fit together and how the whole can help you interpret the parts. This shaped my sermon that week, and the idea began to form of pursuing this further for my thesis.

That connection suggested to me that the structure of the letter to Titus made clear the occasion of the letter—to address false teachers who were afflicting the church. This became the topic of my MA thesis which was a great learning exercise under the supervision of Grant Osborne. I was already interested in doing doctoral work, and I began to be intrigued by connections within Titus and expanding this to include 1–2 Timothy. Grant Osborne encouraged me to consider pursuing a PhD at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland with Professor Howard Marshall. The prospect of studying with such a prominent professor with a strong commitment to Christ, the Scriptures, and the church was thrilling. However, his work had focused on Luke and Acts primarily, so I wondered if it would even be possible to pursue my interest in the Pastorals with him. Then I discovered that he was in the midst of writing a commentary on the Pastorals for T&T Clark’s International Critical Commentary series.

This all made the idea of pursuing doctoral work in the Pastorals compelling, but I still struggled with whether we should make such a move or stay

in the US. I wondered if perhaps in the US I should pursue a different topic. Much prayer and counsel as well as financial provision went into the decision. Another helpful aspect in the decision process was the opportunity to meet Professor Marshall at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Grant Osborne arranged for us to go to dinner together. I am not sure what I expected, but I was surprised to meet this smaller, quiet, unassuming man and realize he was *the* Howard Marshall. It was sometimes hard to hear him over the din of the noisy restaurant where we stopped, but I was won by his humble and gracious spirit. The prospect of studying the Pastoral Epistles with him was an opportunity not to be missed.

Could you give us a brief overview of your dissertation?

My dissertation is a detailed argument that each of the Pastoral Epistles cohere linguistically. It was published as *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 280 (T&T Clark, 2004). There has been a stream of scholarship which considers 1–2 Timothy and Titus to be second rate compositions, devoid of any coherent message and thus safe to ignore. I seek to counter that idea at least at the literary level. My dissertation is one step in an argument to rehabilitate the Pastoral Epistles in academic circles.

I surveyed the scholarship which takes such a negative view of the Pastorals. These scholars range from those who continue to see these letters as valuable and comprehensible to other critical scholars who have a clear disdain for the letters, even suggesting they be ignored. A. T. Hanson's 1982 commentary is one example. Hanson said the author of the Pastorals (who is not Paul in his estimation) "is no profound theologian," "does not have any doctrine of his own" and "could not do much at the intellectual level." The author of the PE, Hanson says, would not be very competent in defending the Christian tradition from Scripture.¹ This line of thinking has continued with various defenders.

To accomplish my task I drew from both modern linguistic studies on coherence and ancient discussions about writing in general and letter writing in particular. I felt like this would allow me to utilize the best of modern research while remaining sensitive to the original setting of these texts, including the expectations of its original readers or hearers.

It was fascinating to find various places where modern critics simply failed to consider these texts in terms of ancient literature, judging them instead by how modern critics expect them to be written. For example some scholars criticized the list of requirements for pastors in Titus 1:5–9 saying that the list was awkward and unbalanced since it was a list of single words or short phrases until the last item which is quite long and grammatically complex. However, scholars have demonstrated that a common way in ancient writings to emphasize one item out of a list was to place it first or last and then make

¹ A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). The page numbers for the above statements are, in order of appearance, 50, 38, 50, 51.

it much longer than the rest. So instead of being clumsy or odd, Titus 1:5–9 is intentionally written to accentuate the importance of a pastor having a strong grasp of Scripture and doctrine so he can teach people and refute false teachers. Highlighting this point serves to introduce the rest of the letter, which is taken up with teaching believers how to live as well as refuting false teachers.

I enjoyed the close attention to the text which the project required and was fascinated by what I discovered. While some critical scholars thought of these letters as clumsy, I found them to be almost artistic in design. The closing of one paragraph would introduce the topic of the next, or sections would begin and end with the same phrase. These features, when carefully examined, were doorways to understanding the letter as whole.

When examined carefully these letters demonstrate a high level of cohesion. There are no grounds for dismissing them as second rate compositions or avoiding their message by suggesting they are not coherent enough to have a theological message.

I have summarized key aspects of the argument with some examples in “Structure and Cohesion in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul’s Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Köstenberger and Wilder (B&H, 2010). I have sought to demonstrate how such work aids interpretation and application in “The Message of Titus: An Overview,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7.3 (Fall 2003): 18–30.

Are you currently doing research related to the Pastoral Epistles?

Yes. I am in the early stages of working on the Pastoral Epistles volume for the *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* series published by B&H Academic. I am excited to contribute to this excellent series which focusses on the grammar of the Greek text. I particularly hope I can live up to the standard of the most recent volume of the series on Ephesians by Ben Merkle!

I recently published a new edition of John Calvin’s sermons on 1 Timothy, which was an enriching work in the realms of history of interpretation, theology and application of this letter. Many people are familiar with Calvin’s commentaries but his sermons are not as well known. In the sermons you really see Calvin the pastor; you see him in his pulpit which was the center of his reforming work. The sermons have been obscured because they are not as readily available in accessible English versions. The 1 Timothy sermons were translated into English in 1579, but there has been no new translation since. What has been available is a facsimile of the 1579 translation which is filled with odd spellings (and variations of spellings on the same page), letters that look different from today, and words which are no longer in use. Yet, they are rich in exegetical, theological, and pastoral reflection. Calvin’s treatment of pastoral ministry, his extolling of motherhood, his strong call to holiness, his consistent pointing to Christ and grace, and his evangelistic challenges all make these compelling messages.

I have also just completed the portion on 1–2 Timothy and Titus for the forthcoming *Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary* which is being edited by Danny Hays and Scott Duvall. This was a profitable exercise for me, pushing me in some areas I had not delved before and requiring me to summarize helpful information in short space. It is intended for pastors and Bible study leaders.

I also help to lead the Pastoral Epistles study group of the Evangelical Theological Society which Greg Couser and I started several years ago. We started this group in hopes of gathering some of the good work being done on these letters and fostering further work. I have been very pleased that we have been able to bring together very established scholars and emerging scholars to share their work and to probe key issues within these letters. A key focus for this study group is examining the value of the Pastoral Epistles for Pauline and New Testament theology. We have asked this question in several ways: How is our view of Paul impacted by the effective bracketing off of the PE even in much evangelical scholarship? How would our understanding of Paul be enhanced if we saw a robust integration of the PE? I would be happy to hear from any ETS members who would like to present a paper addressing these issues.

From the work of this study group and discussions arising from it I hope to edit several volumes of essays in the coming years on aspects of the PE.

You manage the website PastoralEpistles.com don't you? How did that get started? How can it be helpful to our readers?

Yes. The website was created several years ago by Rick Brannan who works at Logos Bible Software. Rick has an ongoing interest in the Pastoral Epistles, and he is well versed in all things digital including website development. Along the way he asked me to contribute to the site and then eventually turned it over to me. Also, through his advocacy Logos Bible Software agreed to host the site which is a great help. Rick continues to work on the Pastorals and recently published two very helpful volumes, *Second Timothy: Notes on Grammar, Syntax & Structure* and *Lexical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy*.

My aim is for the site to be a clearing house for information about the Pastoral Epistles including book reviews and notices, interaction with recent articles, helpful links, as well as exegetical and theological posts and updates on the work of the ETS study group. For the last few years, with the help of Chuck Bumgardner, we have posted fairly comprehensive bibliographies of publications relevant to the Pastorals which have come out each year. We also often have synopses and evaluations of papers given on the Pastorals at the annual meetings of ETS and the Society of Biblical Literature.

For a student wanting to enter the field of studying the Pastorals, this can be a great resource. It could help such a person see some of what is being talked about and possible leads to chase. For someone already working in this area, it is a good, easy way to keep up with work being done in various

places. It can also be a useful way to let others know about your work. I welcome emails about new work on the Pastorals. We sometimes do guest posts about new scholarship. One of my aims in the ETS study group and this website is to help foster the work of younger scholars.

In your opinion, what areas of study related to the Pastoral Epistles still need to be pursued?

There is plenty of work still to be done, especially in terms of constructive theology and integrating that into the rest of the Bible. There has been a shadow over the PE for quite a while now so that they are overlooked or treated like the embarrassing uncle at a family gathering. The family is embarrassed that he's there and would get rid of him quickly if they could. In the meantime they interact with him as little as possible hoping he'll go away. That's how the PE are treated in contemporary academia. Elsa Tamez has argued that we need a completely different way of reading the PE lest they end up saying things that would be uncomfortable in modern, egalitarian society. Others have lamented their negative effect on the church, suggesting these letters taint our understanding of Paul and the rest of the Bible. Luke Timothy Johnson has even drawn attention to the fact that critical scholars typically ignore the PE while giving full place to the gnostic writings. As a result, biblical scholarship is informed more by heretical writings than by these canonical letters! If you have only walked in evangelical circles you may not realize the level of condescension and even vitriol there is toward these letters. However, this affects even evangelical circles, as scholars too easily concede points for the sake of conversation. Sometimes the contributions of the PE to Pauline and NT theology have been overlooked since they are essentially bracketed from the rest of the canon. Even a more critical Catholic scholar, Karl Donfried has noticed that the PE have become "disenfranchised." In such a context, there is much to be done. We need people working on various aspects of the theology of the PE and then connecting that with what we find in the rest of Paul. We need to see how this complements and critiques what scholars have been saying about Paul more recently. (For more on this point with documentation see my recent article, "Coherence and Authorship in 1 Timothy," *Global Journal of Classic Theology* 12.3 [December 2015]).

Here is just one example of how the PE might challenge lines of thought in Pauline studies. Several years ago a well-established NT scholar who has worked on the issue of the New Perspective on Paul told me that if the PE were considered Pauline, the New Perspective never would have gotten off the ground. This is largely due to Titus 3:5: "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (ESV). Later after hearing a prominent New Perspective advocate give a lecture to some of my students, I asked what he would make of Titus 3:5. He stammered and said that he had not yet worked out all the issues. I find this striking, and it makes

me wonder where else a robust re-engagement with the Pastorals might help our understanding of Paul.

Relatedly, there is fresh work to be done once again on the authorship issue. Not long ago people lamented that other issues related to the content of the letters were neglected because all the work concerned the authorship issue. The complaint is fair, and we must not lose sight of working on the content. However, it is time to pull together the implications of so much work done in the last few decades. While I was doing my doctoral work I kept coming across published dissertations which, in their conclusions, would say something like, "If the argument of this book stands, then one pillar of the argument against Pauline authorship falls." It is time to gather some of this research.

We need work that focuses on each of the letters individually so that they are not mashed together as an undifferentiated corpus. I do believe these three letters form a recognizable grouping, sharing many similarities. However, each one has its own uniqueness as well, deserving exploration.

It is increasingly common for scholars to say that there are various ecclesiologies in the NT and that, therefore, the NT does not prescribe a certain church structure. I am dubious about this. Good work could be done examining ecclesiological components in each of these letters and comparing them with what is found in the rest of Paul. Does this assertion of multiple ecclesiologies really correspond to the textual data or does it arise from a desire to affirm the disparate practices of varying denominations?

In a different direction, people too often still think of these letters as speaking only to pastors or church structure. They fail to see how rich they are in regard to practical Christian living. Once in a conversation with an established ethicist I suggested that the PE were a valuable resource for ethical instruction. He immediately responded, "Well, for pastoral ethics, I guess." This misses these letters completely. Titus 2, for example, is all about how ethics for each group within the church is rooted in the gospel.

There are a lot of similarities in vocabulary and ideas between the PE and later NT letters, like 1–2 Peter. More work could be done examining what implications there might be in these connections.

Lastly, how are the Pastoral Epistles particularly valuable to the church at this time?

It seems to me that the PE are often a touchstone, a test, that will tell us how individuals or groups are going to respond to Scripture in general. The PE contain hard edges which cut against the grain of our culture. It is interesting to see how many people now openly disparage these letters and seek to minimize their theological impact. Some more radical voices (which are still recognized in the guild) suggest that portions of 1 Timothy contradict the gospel itself and go against the will of God. It is common to find all sorts of apologies (not apologetics!) for these letters for what they say about gender or authority or other issues. Our response to the Pastoral Epistles serves as an indication of whether we will accept Scripture's authority or look for a way

to avoid it.

The Pastorals are also rich in the demonstration of gospel-rooted ethics. I alluded to this previously, but this is of immense value to the daily life of the church especially in a time when there is much confusion about grace and works. Titus, for example, makes clear that salvation is by grace alone (2:11–14; 3:4–6). At the same time it demonstrates that this grace shapes how we live. That is the point of chapter two following 1:16. The false teachers show they don't know God, despite their claims, because their lives don't match the gospel (1:16). In contrast, Titus is to teach Cretan believers the manner of life which affirms and confirms a claim to know God (2:1–10). Other texts could be pointed to but this is a helpful text for demonstrating how a salvation by grace alone always brings with it a change in lifestyle. 2:11 says the grace which saves also trains us to live a certain way. If we are not pupils of training grace we are not recipients of saving grace. This is a needed message today. We need to mine the ways in which Paul uses glorying in the gospel not to make people complacent about holiness but to stir them to grateful obedience. Of course, this can be seen elsewhere in the NT as well, but we ought not miss such rich texts in the PE.

Titus 2 is of further interest also since it describes a lifestyle which affirms a profession of faith (rather than denying it as the false teachers did). Paul describes this life in terms of different age and gender groups. Parts of the description of gospel-living are consistent across the groups as we would expect. However, there are unique things about godliness for each group. Feminine godliness has some differences from masculine godliness, for example. The church could benefit from reflection on these texts.

Similarly, the PE make a strong connection between orthopraxy and orthodoxy. People often discuss the problem of a division between these and the PE can help us here. In the PE, one way we can discern false teachers is by their behavior. A key mark of faithful teachers, (i.e., those qualified to be elders/pastors) is mature, godly living. No allowance is given for a professed faith which fails to shape daily living. In a day when churches are too often willing to turn a blind eye to arrogance or lack of concern for individual people as long as they get a good speaker or “leader” who can draw a crowd, we need the emphasis of the PE.

The PE are a good place for us to encounter afresh the real earthiness of biblical spirituality. The Pastorals are not unique in the Bible on this theme, but they provide unique resources for this topic. The affirmation of marriage and food in 1 Timothy 4 is a strong reminder that God intends us to enjoy creation. Too often in our churches people think only of austerity in their ideas of spirituality or godliness. Self-denial is important, but the Bible blends that with joyful, thankful embracing of God's good gifts. Then, the description of the godly widow in 1 Timothy 5 is wonderfully earthy, focusing on what would often been seen as mundane—certainly not glamorous—like long term marital faithfulness, caring for children, washing of feet, caring for the afflicted. This is what Paul highlights when he wants to describe a godly

older woman. In a church culture obsessed with celebrity and fame, this is a needed message.

I could go on, but these are adequate examples of ways in which the church needs to hear these letters today. These letters were originally written to help churches avoid error (doctrinal and ethical) and to live godly lives rooted in the gospel. This continues to be their primary function as believers read the letters and pastors and teachers faithfully proclaim them.

Book Reviews

Craig G. Bartholomew. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 640pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801039775. \$44.99.

The making of many books on the interpretation of the Bible has no end. In recent decades such book making has only proliferated in a Western culture that bends (or fractures) under the weight of postmodernism and nihilism. It is within and because of this context, one of “much darkness in our world,” that Craig Bartholomew offers his approach for “healthy biblical interpretation.” For Bartholomew, healthy biblical interpretation enables readers of Scripture to excavate from it the hidden pearl of great price, namely Jesus Christ (p. 5).

To excavate and enjoy this pearl he presents an interdisciplinary framework for hearing God’s address in Scripture. Bartholomew believes such hearing is the starting point and goal of biblical interpretation. He assumes a Trinitarian hermeneutic and a communication model of Scripture to achieve this goal (pp. 5–16, 410–15).

Bartholomew organizes *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* into five parts: approaching biblical interpretation (part one); biblical interpretation and biblical theology (part two); the story of biblical interpretation (part three); biblical interpretation and the academic disciplines (part four); and the goal of biblical interpretation (part five). In part one, he describes his Trinitarian hermeneutic (chapter 1) and the important role of listening to God through Scripture (chapter 2). He responsibly employs *lectio divina* (“divine reading”) as a method for such listening. Part two on biblical theology contains the story of the Bible (chapter 3) and the related story of biblical theology (chapter 4).

In part three, then, he proceeds with a history of biblical interpretation, covering the traditions in which we read (chapter 5), early and medieval Jewish interpretation (chapter 6), the Renaissance, Reformation and Modernity (chapter 7), and the history and theology of the canon (chapter 8). Part four includes his discussion of biblical interpretation and related academic disciplines: philosophy (chapter 9), history (chapter 10), literature (chapter 11), theology (chapter 12), and the role of Scripture within the university (chapter 13). Bartholomew concludes in part five with discussions of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chapter 14) and preaching the Bible (chapter 15).

A close reading of *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* confirms what one perceives at a quick glance: Bartholomew offers a complex but compelling framework for biblical interpretation. The convictions described in chapters 1–2 rightly ground his framework in the reality of God’s revelation in Scripture. From this foundation, he interacts ably with diverse fields that impact

the process and goal of biblical interpretation. What is more, he often provides exegetical discussions that illustrate the implications of one component of his framework (e.g., philosophy and language in exegesis, pp. 329–34). Throughout, Bartholomew interacts with an astonishing amount of secondary literature. As a result, readers learn about lesser-known but important figures such as J. G. Hamann in addition to Augustine, Calvin, and Kant (pp. 293–97).

Part four contains the bulk of Bartholomew's work (204 pages), and this is where he shines. He presents a well-informed and balanced discussion of the roles of philosophy, history, literature and theology in biblical interpretation. Specifically, his awareness of the history of hermeneutics (part three) informs his suggestive theory of history drawn from biblical history. He traces well the rejection of Scripture as revelation through the line of Spinoza, Lessing, and Kant. Bartholomew then argues persuasively that such rationalist, antiseptic readings of Scripture leave little to proclaim and bankrupt the Church's faith. His approach instead serves to feed the Church (see especially pp. 344–50).

Other positives could be mentioned in a longer review, but two drawbacks deserve mention here. At times Bartholomew's strength—his great command of diverse secondary literature—becomes a weakness. He often cites important academic arguments as examples for his already theoretical discussion. Occasionally, it seems readers are expected to know the broad arguments of the secondary literature to which he refers (e.g., p. 529). Thus, one must read the footnotes very carefully. (And those who do so will undoubtedly learn a great deal!) Also, in the final chapter on preaching, Bartholomew addresses the issue of application theoretically. Unfortunately, he does not refer to any sermons that put the theory on concrete display. Perhaps interaction with a few exemplary sermons, outside the opening quotations, would have aided the synthesizing role of this final chapter.

These minor weaknesses aside, Bartholomew presents a viable and helpful framework for hearing God's address in Scripture. The breadth of *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* will especially help advanced students and teachers of hermeneutics. Serious pastors who consider the varied implications for proclamation will be stirred to listen anew to God's words in Scripture. Bartholomew's work, then, deserves attention from anyone serious about excavating Scripture for the hidden pearl of great price, Jesus Christ.

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Christopher J. H. Wright. *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 288 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310524649. \$18.99.

Christopher Wright is well known among Christians as an evangelical

scholar, preacher, and writer who specializes in the study of the Old Testament. He has authored works such as *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, *The God I Don't Understand*, and commentaries on books like Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel. Wright is the International Ministries Director of the Langham Partnership, a ministry that provides training and literature to Christians and pastors worldwide.

Wright begins this book with the assertion that many preachers do not preach regularly from the Old Testament. That assertion is surely true and demonstrable. The church's lack of teaching from the Old Testament is problematic for several reasons, one of which is that the Old Testament constitutes over 70% of the church's Bible. Publishers have recognized this problem and have produced several books in recent years that seem to offer help. However, most such books have been written by Old Testament specialists who do not preach on a weekly basis. The result is more help in theory than in practice. Readers are confronted with general information about how the Old Testament is put together, or authors' unique hermeneutical perspectives that may shed light on how one might approach preaching Old Testament texts. Such information is interesting, but it falls short of helping local church pastors develop sermons from the Old Testament week-by-week. In that context, Wright's book is a breath of fresh air.

Wright has taught a seminar in preaching the Old Testament to pastors and lay leaders in various international settings, and *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament* grew out of that seminar. Persons who want to teach or preach from the Old Testament will find help in Wright's book for at least four reasons. First, the book is accessible. Wright uses simple, even conversational language. The reader gets the feeling of sitting down with Wright over tea and chatting with him about how to preach from the Old Testament. He avoids footnotes almost completely and writes statement like, "I reckon" and "I really don't know." The lack of academic jargon helps all readers to access Wright's content readily and to think about how to put it to use.

Second, the ideas of the book are transferable. Local church pastors and Bible teachers not only look for Bible content to teach their people; they also look for ways to teach that content that will make sense to their people. The language Wright uses is immediately transferable to people who are not Bible scholars or even Bible students. For example, in his review of the typical pattern of the lament psalms, he does not call the elements of the pattern "a cry to God for help" and next "a prayer for help and deliverance" (as I do in OT Intro courses!). Instead, he calls them "God, I'm suffering pretty badly here," and "God, you aren't doing anything to help me right now, and I desperately need you to." Wright also includes copious illustrations that help learners to grasp more difficult concepts. Such word pictures are typical of a great teacher and a helpful book.

Third, Wright's approach is Christological. Showing how Old Testament texts teach or lead to Christ is expected from the person who wrote *Knowing*

Jesus through the Old Testament, and Wright delivers. He is careful to point out, however, that Christian preachers should first consider every Old Testament text in its own historical and canonical context. Only then can we find the ways texts lead to Christ. Wright also emphasizes an important distinction—not every Old Testament text is *about* Christ, but every text *leads somehow* to Christ. Wright then proceeds to show readers *how* various Old Testament texts lead to Christ.

Fourth, Wright has produced a practical book. For each Old Testament literary genre, he supplies a chapter to help readers understand that genre, then a chapter to help readers preach or teach from that genre. Since so many Christians and pastors need help in understanding and applying Old Testament law, Wright's brief but helpful treatment of that genre is worth the price of the book.

Of the books that claim to offer readers help in preaching the Old Testament, Wright's work is the most helpful recent effort this reviewer has seen. Still, if one asks whether this book will help in the week-by-week preparation of sermons from Old Testament texts, the answer is not that simple. Much of the book serves as an introduction to the genres of the Old Testament. While such basic hermeneutical information is enormously helpful to many preachers and will prevent interpretation errors, it is also the kind of education one receives in a seminary or Bible college. Hence, some parts of the book will be a review for readers who have had access to advanced theological training. It is even unlikely that the book will provide much help at all for seminary graduates *unless* such readers give thoughtful attention to the numerous "Checklist" sections throughout the book. The checklists are lists of questions preachers and teachers should ask about their expositions of Old Testament texts. The checklists are specific, practical, and so carefully written that they can be used to check one's exposition of a text in any Old Testament genre on a weekly basis before one preaches. Thus, this book can be a helpful tool for all who serve the church by preaching and teaching the Bible.

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Rodney A. Whitacre. *Using and Enjoying Biblical Greek: Reading the New Testament with Fluency and Devotion*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 258 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801049941. \$24.99.

The hardest part about learning Greek is not vocabulary, nor is it the commitment to memory of paradigms, though that definitely makes most students gnash their teeth. The hardest part is not understanding verbal aspect or figuring out the whole idea of first and second aorists. The hardest part is not even the Greek courses themselves, which students take in seminary or at local churches. The hardest part is actually *using Greek* when those courses are finished! So, *Using and Enjoying Biblical Greek* by Rodney A. Whitacre (Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity School for Ministry) is designed to

help students of the New Testament “get back into Greek” and “discover for themselves its joys and benefits” (p. vii).

The book is divided into seven chapters (164 pages) and five appendices (75 pages). The first chapter is the introduction, which contains a discussion on fluency. Chapter two discusses ways Greek students can increase their knowledge of vocabulary, such as paying attention to suffix morphemes, prefixed prepositions, cognate words and semantic domains, and etymology. Here Whitacre challenges students to move beyond studying vocabulary based on frequency in Greek corpora, though that is still a helpful approach. He provides readers with various routes to reach the goal of knowing the words found in the New Testament. He discusses suffix morphemes but does not specifically point out how these features are important for exegesis (e.g., distinguishing between *δόσις* and *δώρημα* in Jas 1:17), other than simply committing words to memory. In any event, this chapter points readers to valuable resources like Bruce Metzger’s *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (especially part two) and concludes with some strategies for studying vocabulary. In chapter three, Whitacre provides a survey of traditional paradigms associated with beginning Greek grammars (from the definite article all the way to participles and principal parts). Most paradigms are followed by some annotation that assists readers in best practices for understanding and memorization.

Chapter four focuses on sentences in Greek—their components and formation. The author provides examples of word order patterns and different parts of speech (e.g., prepositions and participles). Marking the parts of speech in Greek and English within the examples would definitely make them more useful for people that have lost their Greek and are just diving back into the language. Other matters, such as word order, the definite article, and discourse markers, are treated ever so slightly. The largest section of this chapter though deals with marking texts in ways that “sort out the flow of difficult sentences or passages” (p. 88). Three techniques are explained: (1) chunking, (2) sentence scanning, and (3) sentence mapping. Examples in English and Greek are provided for Acts 2:22–24 and Acts 9:1–2. Nevertheless, using one example to contrast a diagram in English and Greek, in order to show the importance of diagramming in Greek, would have been extremely beneficial (e.g., Matt 28:19–20a, where English translations have two finite verbs [“go and make disciples”], but Greek has only one [*μαθητεύσατε*]).

In chapter five, Whitacre offers some insights as to how individuals can increase their familiarity with and fluency in the Greek language. He recommends skimming over passages and paying attention to the individual words (e.g., case, person, gender, stem), then scanning—paying attention to the number of clauses, how elements of the sentence are expanded (e.g., participial clauses)—and then rereading the passage several times. Chapter six, perhaps the most unique part of this book, is entitled “Utilizing Greek in Meditation.” Basically *meditation* is reading a passage over and over again until

it is memorized (p. 120). Why do this? Whitacre says, “This slow, thoughtful rereading and then recitation from memory allows the text to seep into your mind and imagination in very powerful ways that touch the heart, the will, and the emotions” (p. 120). He wants students of Greek to (1) spend time with the text and the God of the text and (2) labor over the text as skilled workmen. At the same time, his “hybrid approach” (pp. 126–27) is quite strange. He says a historical-grammatical hermeneutic is foundational, yet he encourages readers basically to allegorize passages they are studying.

Finally, chapter seven contains a number of examples that incorporate the principles and techniques outlined in the previous chapters. To conclude, this book is one step towards using Greek. Learning Greek happens when people use it. Knowing everything about a language is not a prerequisite to using it. And a Greek course will only get students so far. Whitacre encourages Greek students to get into the Greek text and pursue fluency “one sentence at a time and one passage at a time” (p. 4). And every book that encourages students to pick up their Greek New Testament and start using it should be commended.

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Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado, eds. *Peter in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xxii + 358 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802871718. \$40.00.

This collection of essays had its origins in a July 2013 conference sponsored by Edinburgh University’s Centre for the Study of Christian Origins. The introductory essay by Larry W. Hurtado surveys the scholarly contributions to Petrine studies of Oscar Cullman, Martin Hengel, and Markus Bockmuehl. The work is then divided into five essays on the “historical Peter,” five on Peter in the New Testament, seven studies on Peter in post-New Testament writings and traditions, and closes with concluding observations by Bockmuehl.

Sean Frye begins the historical Peter section by exploring the historical/cultural background of Bethsaida and 1st century commercial fishing. Margaret H. Williams examines the variations in Peter’s name in the New Testament in light of contemporary naming practices, concluding that Jesus gave him the Aramaic nickname *Kephas*, which was translated into the Greek *Petros* with the expansion of the gospel among predominantly Greek-speaking peoples. Helen K. Bond cautions against too quickly dismissing Papias’s testimony of the link between Peter and Mark’s Gospel, and at the same time against giving that connection too much interpretive significance. Jonathan W. Lo responds to the question of the historicity of Peter’s speeches in Acts, deeming the evidence inconclusive, but asserting that Luke was more concerned with historicity than is usually recognized. Timothy D. Barnes reconstructs the circumstances surrounding Peter’s death, focusing on John 21:18–

19 and extra-biblical evidence. He concludes Peter was burned alive in Rome in AD 64.

Beginning the essays assessing Peter in the New Testament documents, John R. Markley proposes that the portrayal of Peter as imperceptive in the Synoptics is not an unfavorable or negative portrayal of the person of Peter, but the appropriation of an apocalyptic motif that emphasizes the incapacity of humans to fully perceive divine revelation and actually serves to authenticate him as a recipient of God's revelation. Jason S. Sturdevant argues that most understandings of the narrative development of Peter's characterization are too focused on his portrayal vis-à-vis the disciple Jesus loved and fail to recognize that it was Jesus guiding Peter through his own discipleship process that forms him into the apostle he becomes. Finn Damgaard asserts that Luke's narration of Peter's denial, repentance, and return to Jesus becomes, together with Paul's conversion experience, the paradigm for repentance and conversion that enables him to become one who proclaims that repentance. Sean A. Adams turns to the tradition of Peter's literacy, concluding that his portrayal as an authoritative interpreter of Scripture legitimizes him as a guarantor and proclaimer of the Christian faith. However, Matthew V. Novenson asks the question, Why are there any Petrine letters instead of none? Denying their authenticity, he characterizes the existence of 1 and 2 Peter as "an anomaly . . . a happy accident" (p. 157)!

Initiating the section on Peter in post-biblical traditions, Todd D. Still looks at Peter in the Apostolic Fathers. He argues they preserve a multidimensional portrait of Peter, while surprisingly lacking many significant memories of Peter from the Gospels, including the rock, holder of the keys to the kingdom, and denier, to name but a few. Paul A. Hartog asserts that even in letters addressed to churches which Paul planted (specifically *1 Clement* and Polycarp to the *Philippians*), Peter is tangibly present (explicitly in *1 Clement*, implicitly in *Philippians*) as a fellow participant with Paul within the apostolic sphere. The elusive *Preaching of Peter*, known only through fragments in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* and Origen's *Commentary on John*, is the basis of William Rutherford's attempt at a historical reconstruction of the nature and theological emphases of the community that produced it. Tobias Nicklas surveys the Petrine tradition preserved in select gnostic texts, noting that some are written against him, some downplay his significance in comparison to other figures, while other texts claim his authority as the basis of their teaching. Paul Foster investigates the apocryphal gospels, acts and epistles, finding in them varied representations of Peter, ranging from refutation to support for their own theological assertions. Paul Parvis's question "When Did Peter Become Bishop of Antioch?" is not a historiographical question concerning Peter, but an exploration of the development of a legend whose origin he traces to Jerome. Peter Lampe explores Roman archeology for traces of Peter's presence and preservation. He concludes that veneration of Peter served as the precedent for future generations of martyrs, and his martyrdom be-

came a symbol of God's salvation. In his concluding essay, Marcus Bockmuehl assesses Peter in the writings of the Catholic theologian Hans Ur von Balthasar in light of the New Testament portrayal of Peter.

Bond and Hurtado provide a helpful collection of essays on an important, yet often neglected subject of New Testament scholarship, the apostle Peter. While evangelicals have much greater confidence in the historicity and authenticity of the New Testaments texts, these essays for the most part are a corrective to much of the extreme skepticism of previous generations of scholars and are a useful resource for any historical investigation into Peter and the traditions surrounding him.

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Gary G. Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus*. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 11. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015. 266 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1575068299. \$49.50.

This monograph serves as the published version of Gary G. Hoag's doctoral thesis completed under the supervision of Philip Towner and Stephen Finamore at Trinity College, Bristol University. In order to offer new insights into the debate regarding how Christians viewed wealth in the ancient world, Hoag brings fresh evidence forward from *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus. This work was largely overlooked by scholars because it has only recently been dated to the mid-first century. Hoag employs a socio-rhetorical methodology (as developed by Vernon K. Robbins) to examine *Ephesiaca* alongside five passages in 1 Timothy.

Ephesiaca is a story about a rich young Ephesian couple (Anthia and Habrocomes) who fall in love and endure a series of hardships that test both their character and love for each other as well as their commitment to Artemis. Because this work was recently dated to the mid-first century by classical and biblical scholars, it comes into view as a contemporary document to the ministry of Paul in Ephesus as recorded in Luke's Acts of the Apostles. Because it contains many of the same terms or themes related to wealth that appear in 1 Timothy, it also provides rich insight into the social and cultural world to which 1 Timothy was written.

After introducing *Ephesiaca* and discussing his research method (chapter 1) and sketching a Sitz im Leben of the rich in first-century Ephesus based on ancient evidence and *Ephesiaca* (chapter 2), Hoag devotes the remaining five chapters (3–7) to discussing five texts in 1 Timothy with wealth in view: 2:9–15, 3:1–13, 6:1–2a, 6:2b–10, and 6:17–19. Just as Luke presents Artemis as central to life for the people of Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:28), much of the insight gained from Hoag's exploration of primary sources revolves around the prominence of Artemis and her temple, the Artemisium. Generally speaking, the Artemisium served as a cultural and religious center where Ephesians

and visitors from around the world made offerings and honored the goddess who was viewed in antiquity as the author of all life. Specifically, the wealthy played key roles in her priesthood and supported her temple, which served as a bank for the well-to-do in the ancient world.

In this social and religious context, why does the author of 1 Timothy restrict women from wearing plaited hair with gold and pearls (1 Tim 2:9)? Based on its use in *Ephesiaca*, Hoag suggests that the rare term translated “braided” or “plaited” (πλέγμασιν) “appears to point to a hairstyle that was closely associated with the goddess, Artemis” (p. 79). Furthermore, “the call to avoid adornment with costly clothing also seems to point to the cultural norm of dressing to imitate and serve Artemis” (p. 79). Thus, Timothy should instruct the Christian women of Ephesus to renounce their devotion to Artemis and instead offer their allegiance and service to the one true God. This includes ceasing to promote her myth that included a false view of the origin of man and sin. Because Artemis was also known as the goddess of childbearing, Timothy must also remind Christian women in Ephesus that they need not fear the threat of the vengeance of the goddess during childbearing but remain faithful to God.

After investigating 1 Tim 3:1–13 with the aid of ancient sources and *Ephesiaca*, Hoag determines that the qualifications for leadership would have sounded radically countercultural to an Ephesian audience. While some of the qualifications in 1 Timothy may have been familiar, leaders were to be chosen based on their character rather than their noble birth. In addition, Paul seems to require leaders to abandon the benefactor model, which was rooted in greed and selfishness, for a service model following the humble example of Jesus.

The last three chapters deal with slaves, masters, false teachers, and the wealthy. In these chapters Hoag uses ancient evidence and *Ephesiaca* to help modern readers see many ways the Artemis cult and her wealthy supporters served to keep people’s loyalty. False teachers, for instance, promulgated myths associated with the Artemis cult. Furthermore, “the people who propagate this myth are prominent citizens who can trace their genealogy back to the founding of the city” (p. 187, cf. 1 Tim 1:3–4). Hoag argues that the rich should not feel confident because they have placed their riches in the Artemisium, but rather their confidence should be in God. He concludes by suggesting that the teachings on wealth in 1 Timothy are countercultural and therefore consistent with the trajectory of other NT teachings.

The main strength of this book is that it is well-conceived and executed. From beginning to end, the author presents a clear thesis that is backed by rigorous research and solid documentation. Especially noticeable is his careful attention to primary Greco-Roman and Jewish sources. For any reader wondering what a model dissertation looks like, this is it.

There are, however, possible concerns that surface regarding the thesis of this work. First, although the mid-first century (c. 50 CE) dating of *Ephesiaca* proposed by James O’Sullivan in 1996 has been tested widely and upheld by

classical and biblical scholars, if additional evidence came forth that suggested a later date for *Ephesiaca*, Hoag's work would lose much of its strength. Another concern relates to how much of *Ephesiaca* is true to life and how much of it is embellished. Can we assume Xenophon of Ephesus has knowledge of life and society in Ephesus? Hoag notes that ancient sources identify him as a historiographer, though he admits that little else is known about that author. Also, while Hoag compares what he finds in *Ephesiaca* alongside other ancient sources, one wonders if certain terminological parallels are enough to establish a firm connection between ancient clues and 1 Timothy.

These questions notwithstanding, Hoag's work is compelling and serves as an excellent model for those seeking to make a solid contribution to the world of scholarship.

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L. Timothy Swinson. *What is Scripture? Paul's Use of Graphē in the Letters to Timothy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015. x + 205 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1625641007. \$26.00.

In *What is Scripture?*, L. Timothy Swinson tackles the New Testament (NT) canon's awareness of its own scriptural status by closely examining Paul's use of *γραφή* in his two letters to Timothy. He contends that *γραφή* in 1 Tim 5:18 refers to Luke 10:7 and *πάσα γραφή* in 2 Tim 3:16 refers to extant apostolic writings, which include Luke's gospel and Paul's writings (p. 1). Swinson provides a balanced approach that considers both diachronic and synchronic considerations while favoring synchronic literary and semantic evaluations. He effectively argues that Paul gives the NT equal scriptural status and authority as the OT (p. 1). Swinson builds a persuasive cumulative argument in which he draws out intertwined implications: (1) Paul employs *γραφή* to refer to a written, authoritative body, not merely traditions, (2) Paul advances an apostolic proclamation for teaching in written form alongside the OT, (3) key lexical links in these letters set Luke's gospel as a core piece of Paul's authoritative writing, 4) claims of a late authoring of these epistles or of their disunity lack evidence, and 5) Paul's usage of *γραφή* proves consistent across these two letters (p. 185).

In chapter 1, as he lays out his thesis and his primary question, Swinson acknowledges the breadth of scholarship that runs against his work. Then, in chapter 2, he mutes the relative importance of critical diachronic questions of authorship and unity by focusing on historical and linguistic evidence. In so doing, Swinson effectively sets his thesis as a plausible solution to its question.

In chapter 3, Swinson moves to the meat of his project by examining 1 Timothy and the role of *γραφή* as a central discourse feature (p. 45) so that the terms and concepts from the letter's other sections may set parameters

for its use in 1 Tim 5:18. He frames, therefore, his ultimate interpretive options by relating similar terms and concepts into a “semantic stream or discourse flow” (p. 45). In particular, his methodology shows that Paul’s desire to preserve sound gospel teaching and to correct false teachers shapes 1 Tim 5:18 (pp. 46, 82). These priorities set “apostolic proclamation” (p. 83) as the letter’s most important element and lead Swinson to assert that Paul defines more than only the OT as Scripture. He positions this apostolic proclamation as a message beyond the OT’s domain that must be present in the letter because of its priorities. However, Swinson never clearly defines the interpretive relationship between the OT and NT, which might limit the need to divide such proclamation from the OT (p. 83). Because his argument builds cumulatively though, this limitation does not overturn his argument.

In chapter 4, he zeroes in on 1 Tim 5:18’s literary context. Specifically, Swinson legitimizes this verse’s citation of Deut 25:4 (pp. 87–93) before drawing out his critical truth: 1 Tim 5:18’s lexical connections to Luke 10:7 surpass those of Deut 25:4. That is, if the lexical connections to Deut 25:4 prove valid, then the reference to Luke 10:7 demands similar if not superior credibility (pp. 93–110). This chapter underscores one of the great values of this book’s argument: solid and accessible logic that is cleanly organized.

In chapter 5, Swinson pivots to 2 Timothy. The semantic streams of this epistle compare the apostolic proclamation to many parallel terms (p. 141). Ultimately, Swinson shows that “Paul deems both *πάσα γραφή* and *τα ιερὰ γράμματα* as compatible with the apostolic gospel tradition” (p. 137). In chapter 6, detailed grammatical analysis of 2 Tim 3:16 joins with literary comparisons of the surrounding sections to demonstrate that the specific declaration and emphasis on “all” makes the most sense if “all” has more than one referent: the OT *and* the apostolic gospel (p. 150). Again, he drives for a disconnect between the OT and NT to define implications of “all,” but he does not sufficiently clarify the relationship between the testaments (pp. 140–41, 153–54). At times, he admits OT continuity or its compatibility as gospel proclamation (pp. 136–37) but neglects to draw out the logical implications. If the apostolic proclamation were indeed exegesis of the OT, for example, then the *necessity* of an additional written body would be minimized, limiting his conclusion but not overturning it.

Finally, Swinson examines Philo and others in chapter 7 to show that every usage of the term is “written or drawn” (p. 161). Ultimately, a written gospel proclamation is reasonable. Chapter 8, in conclusion, effectively restates his thesis and argumentation that “helps to guard, and perhaps even to advance, a high view of both OT and NT” (p. 186). So, *What is Scripture?* provides a refreshingly well-organized analysis that will allow multiple audiences to test its ideas for many years.

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Rodrick K. Durst. *Reordering the Trinity: Six Movements of God in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015. 372 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0825443787. \$22.99.

Rodrick Durst exhibits a pastor's heart and an inquiring mind in his recent volume on triadic formulations in the New Testament. Durst's purpose is to demonstrate that, including the traditional and liturgically predominant order of "Father-Son-Spirit," there are six ways in which the New Testament arranges the references to the tripersonal God.

Durst begins by introducing the issue that he seeks to address: While the traditional order of "Father-Son-Spirit" is found eighteen times (by his method) in the NT, this only accounts for twenty-four percent of the seventy-five (by his method) triadic occurrences in the NT. While it is the order with the most occurrences, it is not by much; the "Son-Spirit-Father" order is found fifteen times (20%) and the "Son-Father-Spirit" order is found fourteen times (19%). Together, these three make up sixty-three percent of occurrences. The other three, less attested orders—F-Sp-S, Sp-F-S, and Sp-S-F—occur eleven, nine, and eight times, respectively, and only account for thirty-seven percent of all occurrences. In any event, after an overview of implicit Trinitarian language and of the history of Trinitarian thought after the New Testament, Durst spends most of the book working through the seventy-five triadic occurrences.

In some ways, *Reordering the Trinity* will change how you read your Bible. Simply by noting the large number of implicit (in the OT) and explicit (in the NT) triadic formulations, the reader's eyes may be opened or at least refreshed to the Bible's Trinitarian character. But Durst does not just demonstrate the Bible's attestation to God as the one God who exists as Father, Son, and Spirit; he also repeatedly shows how that Trinitarian confession results in practical application in the life of the believer and the church. Because he spent thirteen years as a pastor before entering full-time academic service, Durst understands the seemingly perennial problem in the pews with Trinitarianism—it is unfathomable and impractical. Durst overturns both of these notions in his book.

Durst should also be commended for taking the time to carefully work through the triadic occurrences. This is no small feat, and one that should be helpful to laypeople and scholars alike. Still, as I read through the chapters on the different orders, I continued to balk at one of Durst's main questions, whether sticking to the traditional order of F-S-Sp is a "constriction" (p. 78) of Trinitarian language for the church that "has . . . inhibited church capacity to participate fully in the divine Great Commission" (p. 160).

My aversion to such talk about the Trinity and the Great Commission aside, two issues merit attention. First, the statistical method is questionable, at least in my mind. Should, for instance, many of the verses he examines even be considered triadic *formulae*? Yes, they mention all three persons of God, but there is a difference between the mention of the three persons over

the course of a few verses and explicit, formulaic mentions (e.g., Matt 28:19–20; 2 Cor 13:14). The second, and perhaps more important issue, concerns the relationship between these differing orders. In other words, are they mutually exclusive, or, better, equal in terms of the absence of any kind of hierarchical relationship? This seems to be what Durst is saying.

In contrast, the F-S-Sp order makes sense of all of the other orders because it is the order, the *taxis*, of both the *ad extra* (upon which Durst focuses) and the *ad intra* Trinitarian relations. For the former, the Father sends the Son, and they both send the Spirit. To paraphrase Cyril of Alexandria, all Trinitarian operations are from the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit. But this is true not only economically but also immanently; the Father generates the Son and both Father and Son spirate the Spirit. Durst actually acknowledges this *taxis* a few times (e.g., in discussion of John 14:25–26, p. 204; see also pp. 194, 200, 206, 248, *passim*), but does so without allowing that acknowledgment to critique his assertion that each of these six Trinitarian orders reflects something different about the Trinitarian economic relations. When we look at the contextual significance of each of these six orders, as helpfully articulated by Durst, what becomes clear, albeit unacknowledged, is that each of the other five orders relate back to and are reflective of the traditional, primary order of F-S-Sp. While a verse or set of verses may use an alternative order, what remains the same is that the work of God is ordered in such a way as to be from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit—F-S-Sp.

These questions about method are important but actually end up being tangential to my assessment of the book. While Durst is at pains to show the relevance of each of the six orders, what comes across is not so much a focused, sustained argument for the (in my mind erroneous) conclusion that there is no real primary order, but rather that Christians should be concerned to understand what God has revealed about himself and has sent us to do in the light of these triadic orders. Durst ably and repeatedly accomplishes this. For that reason, I recommend this book for its pastoral focus, its thorough exegetical attention to the Trinitarian formulae and triadic orders in the New Testament, its incredibly helpful chapter on implicit Trinitarianism in the Old Testament, and its extensive knowledge of the Trinitarian tradition in Christianity. It will be of great assistance to pastors, laypersons, and academics in knowing the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

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Jerry L. Walls. *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things that Matter Most*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015. 235 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1587433566. \$19.99.

Should evangelicals accept and adopt a belief in purgatory? Jerry L. Walls, in his new book *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things that Matter*

Most, argues for an evangelical conception of purgatory as an intermediate state between death, final judgment, heaven, and hell. To be sure, this book is not exclusively about purgatory in that the author explores a wide range of other philosophical and theological issues surrounding the question of the afterlife. And Walls, a philosophy professor at Houston Baptist University, is uniquely qualified to write this book because he has published three academic monographs on the main topics: *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

While he writes this current work for a popular audience, in a conversational manner, it is academic enough to have the feel of a classroom lecture. So, the topics of heaven (chapters 1 and 2), hell (chapter 3), and purgatory (chapter 4) are addressed in the order of the book's title and serve as a foundation for the remaining chapters, focusing on issues like the soul and personal identity (chapter 5), the problem of evil (chapter 6), the grounds for morality (chapter 7), and the possibility for postmortem repentance (chapter 8).

Walls argues that the meaning of life driving human motivation is rooted in the deep-seated desires for happiness and to be loved, which can only find full satisfaction in heaven (pp. 19–39). Heaven, properly understood, is not about leaving the body and this world, rather it is God's presence on earth in a renewed creation with our resurrected bodies (pp. 29–32). He maintains that both heaven and hell are real eternal destinations for all people. Walls argues that God gives people free will because he is loving and they, then, willfully choose hell over love and obedience to God—to quote C. S. Lewis, “the doors of hell are locked on the inside” (pp. 70–90). When it comes to purgatory, he helpfully describes the difference between purgatory as *satisfaction* (punishment to satisfy God's wrath) and purgatory as *sanctification* (a completion of the process of conforming us to holiness). While affirming purgatory as sanctification, he maintains that our problem is what we *are*, not just what we *do*, so we need a deep transformation because forgiveness from sins is not enough (pp. 105–12). At death our souls still need further sanctification to accomplish the process of this “deep transformation” to align our will to his holiness. He also suggests a possibility for unsaved people to have a post-mortem repentance in response to the love and grace of God. He argues for an “optimal grace” to describe how a loving God gives everyone all possible chances to repent even after death (pp. 187–211).

There are a number of aspects of this book that deserve commendation. First, Walls is a Christian philosopher who is well within the bounds of orthodoxy and evangelicalism. The tent of evangelicalism is large enough to allow for some diversity when it comes to the exact nature of eschatology and the afterlife. He makes some incredibly good arguments for the immortality of the soul (especially in opposition to physicalism or monism), the Trinity, the need for repentance and faith, and the implications of heaven as

it relates to theodicy and moral philosophy.

Second, he has a thorough grasp of secondary literature and knows how to argue his case well. His style of argumentation engages a range of views proposed by leading scholars and philosophers. He makes clear, robust, and cohesive cases for his views. What is more, he manages to make very complex philosophical concepts accessible to the uninitiated and does so without sacrificing any depth. He frequently uses illustrations and examples to ensure that the reader fully grasps what he is saying. He also peppers each chapter with discussions of thinkers like Pascal, Plantinga, Lewis, Sayers, Polkinghorne, and Nietzsche, as well as drawing from the literary masterpieces of Dante Alighieri, Charles Dickens, and Victor Hugo.

Finally, Walls has given extensive and serious consideration to the nature of the intermediate state between death and the final states in eternity (i.e., heaven for believers and hell for those who reject God). Evangelicals typically affirm that believers go to heaven and unbelievers go to hell immediately upon death. Revelation 20–22, however, depicts the final states of heaven and hell as occurring after the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. While this does not automatically imply that the traditional evangelical view is wrong, it does suggest that whatever happens to believers and unbelievers at death is only a temporary state until the eschaton is fully accomplished. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Walls, he has done an admirable job of dealing with this challenging and important issue.

Nevertheless, his argument for purgatory is not very convincing for at least three reasons. First, his argument fails to convince due to the general lack of scriptural support for the doctrine of purgatory. Although not totally devoid of scripture references, his arguments for purgatory depend more on inference and the writings of C. S. Lewis than explicit biblical teachings. The main scriptural basis he provides for the doctrine of purgatory is Rev 21:27 and Heb 12:14, which teach that only those who are holy can enter into God's presence. Since, according to Walls, God does not "zap" people into complete holiness at the time of their death, a postmortem process of continued sanctification is necessary to prepare people for heaven (pp. 112–15). He makes a strong logical argument that impressively invokes the voice of C. S. Lewis, but Christian theology must derive primarily from the text of scripture. The absence of a robust biblical case for purgatory as necessary for completing the sanctification process is a weakness. Interestingly, he is aware of this exact criticism, but he could provide a more adequate response (p. 114). He notes that passages like Luke 23:39–43, 2 Cor 5:8, and Phil 1:21–23 seem to contradict his view of purgatory, but refers to Phil. 1:6 concluding, "Christ will carry on this good work in the intermediate state between death and the final judgment" because one's death is not the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6, however, is not a load bearing verse that alone can sustain the weight of his notion of purgatory.

Second, although he is thoroughly Trinitarian in his theology, he makes

almost no reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of sanctification. The work of the Spirit, however, would accomplish the type of sanctification and transformation he says necessitates purgatory (Rom 8:1–17; Gal 5:16–17). It is the Spirit who grants us adoption into children of God, giving us new birth and eternal life by making us become new creations of God. The Holy Spirit indwells believers at the point of justification, and he is a deposit guaranteeing their inheritance until the final redemption at the resurrection (Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 5:5; Gal 3:2–5; Eph 1:13–14; 2:18–22). The hope and good news of our salvation is that our bodies will be resurrected and glorified. This resurrection is accomplished through the Holy Spirit who also raised Christ from the dead (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:47–57). In contrast, Walls seems to present a view of sanctification that is largely dependent on us and our choices. He is careful to avoid making sanctification a work of the flesh or human effort, but he could give so much more place to the powerful, purifying and transforming work of the Holy Spirit to complete the sanctification process as indicated in the New Testament.

Lastly, he overemphasizes a libertarian view of human freedom, making it the preeminent reality giving shape to his theology of hell and purgatory. This emphasis on free will shapes, directs, colors, and shades his entire theology from his soteriology to his understanding of purgatory. Even his emphasis on the love of God and optimal grace is rooted in the bedrock of free will. By elevating free will to this overarching status, it is really no different from what hyper-Calvinists do with their deterministic view of the sovereignty of God. These are nothing more than two extremes on opposite ends of a swinging theological pendulum. God's sovereignty and human responsibility are not mutually exclusive.

To conclude, *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory* is a great read that is sure to make one think deeply. It is impossible to read this book and not give serious consideration to its content. It provides an engaging apologetic for the traditional orthodox belief in heaven and hell. While I am not convinced of his arguments for purgatory, I am thankful he has started this conversation for a popular audience of evangelicals. Perhaps, it will spark interest in developing a more nuanced theology when it comes to the afterlife.

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S. Donald Fortson III and Rollin G. Grams. *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. xiii + 402 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433687921. \$34.99.

In 1980, John Boswell (1947–1994) of Yale University published his influential *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*. Building on earlier work by Sherwin Bailey, Boswell asserted that neither Christian doctrine nor practice was explicitly anti-homosexual until the late Middle-Ages. Though

Boswell's work is flawed at many levels, he continues to be cited by revisionists who insist we must abandon the Bible's clear teaching that homosexual behavior is inconsistent with being a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. In *Unchanging Witness*, Donald Fortson of Reformed Theological Seminary and Rollin Grams of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary respond to the oft-repeated but historically inaccurate arguments of sexual revisionists.

Unchanging Witness is divided into two major sections. In the first, the authors rigorously summarize the broad agreement across the spectrum of Church history that homosexual acts are sin. In the second half, the authors review the major Scriptural texts regarding homosexuality. The logical flow of the book would have been easier to follow by beginning with Scripture and then moving to church history, but the authors want to emphasize that the Church's witness on this issue had been unified until the latter half of the twentieth century.

Considering the first half, their citations are mostly comprehensive from the representative eras, with two notable omissions. Eusebius uses the words *μοιχεία* and *ἀρσενοκοΐται* in the same sentence in *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1.6.67) when paraphrasing and commenting on Matt 5:28 (on a man looking at a woman), but this reference is not in *Unchanging Witness*. Also, when discussing the Southern Baptist Convention's stance, the authors cite several resolutions, but do not cite the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* Article XV, which specifically opposes homosexuality. While resolutions are helpful, in Baptist polity they are non-binding and reflect the opinion of the assembled body at that time. As a statement of faith though, the *Baptist Faith and Message's* stance has a long-lasting influence since it has been adopted as the doctrinal standard for all SBC agencies and thousands of SBC churches. In addition, though the authors are to be commended for a desire to cite ancient authors in context, the book contains a great many extended block quotes, some of which could have been shortened and summarized.

The second half of *Unchanging Witness* does an admirable job of addressing the major biblical texts relating to homosexuality. Fortson and Grams's discussion of the Sodom episode is accurate and rightly emphasizes the degree to which homosexuality in general, and not just homosexual rape in particular, was a core component of God's judgment. At the same time, the authors stress that Sodom was not just guilty of sexual immorality but had committed "a multitude of reprehensible practices" (p. 209).

Unchanging Witness firmly supports an orthodox stance regarding the New Testament's references to homosexuality. Among the authors' many comments though, two may be the most provocative. First, they contend the word "vessel" in 1 Thess 4:4 refers to the "male sexual organ." Based on this premise, they go on to say, "Thus, while one might understand 'wrong his brother' in verse 6 as a reference to adultery, the text might equally be a reference to homosexuality" (p. 255). This is a thought-provoking inference but one which appears to be more speculative than certain. The debate about the

precise understanding of 1 Thess 4:4 is broad enough that the prudent interpreter will consider Fortson and Grams's suggestion here with caution.

The other interesting stance in *Unchanging Witness* regards the words *μαλακοί* and *ἀρσενικοῦται* in 1 Cor 6:9, terms which are considered by many to refer respectively to the passive and active partners in male homosexual intercourse. In contrast, Fortson and Grams contend *μαλακοί* refers to an "open, effeminate orientation" while *ἀρσενικοῦται* refers to those who "merely commit homosexual acts, whether open or secretive" (p. 294). While the authors cite multiple references to bolster their case, they do not emphasize the degree to which the Roman context supports the majority understanding of 1 Cor 6:9 as the passive and active partners. Among many in the Roman Empire, the "inserting" male in homosexual intercourse was not considered to have surrendered his masculinity, but the "receiving" male was viewed negatively. With this background in mind, Paul's comments in 1 Cor 6:9 become clear: regardless of the part played, homosexual behavior is inconsistent with Christian ethics.

Unchanging Witness provides excellent background material for those researching the interpretative history regarding homosexuality. After a robust review of ancient references to what we would call a "homosexual orientation," Fortson and Grams conclude, "There is . . . nothing distinct about contemporary conversations concerning homosexual orientation" (p. 312). In short, "born this way" arguments are nothing new. In spite of such claims, church tradition clearly viewed homosexual behavior as sinful. *Unchanging Witness* demonstrates the degree to which revisionist interpreters play fast and loose with both church history and hermeneutics.

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Kirk R. MacGregor. *Luis de Molina: His Life and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 288 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310516972. \$27.99.

Kirk R. MacGregor is assistant professor of philosophy and religion at McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas. In *Luis de Molina: His Life and Theology*, MacGregor provides a comprehensible explanation of Molina's theory of God's middle knowledge (i.e., God's knowledge of counterfactuals) and demonstrates the theological fruitfulness of the doctrine. The impact of middle knowledge on the doctrine of divine providence is well-known in theological and philosophical circles, but MacGregor shows how Molinists are also applying the implications of middle knowledge to areas as diverse as the inspiration of Scripture, the fate of the unevangelized, and even the Incarnation. However, the book's most original and provocative claim is that Molina's soteriology, for all intents and purposes, was Protestant.

MacGregor provides a survey of Molina's theological battles during his lifetime (1535–1600). The Dominican priests were willing to defend Thomism (literally) to the death—preferably Molina's. Molina faced the Spanish

Inquisition and at times appeared certain to be condemned by Papal bull. He died thinking that his views would be found heretical. The fact that he died peacefully is surprising—that his views would eventually receive Papal sanction is even more remarkable.

Molina's practical theology and his commitment to social justice are not as well-known as his theological struggles, and here also MacGregor makes a real contribution. Molina retreated from the controversies by serving as a parish priest where he became known as an effective pastor and a popular preacher. He addressed the issues of the day, defending the developing market system while at the same time opposing the practice of slavery.

But Molina will always be known primarily for his development of the doctrine of middle knowledge, and *Luis de Molina: His Life and Theology* focuses primarily on this subject. MacGregor makes three theological claims: (1) Molina was opposed to Thomism; (2) Molinism is not Arminianism; and (3) Molina's soteriology had more in common with the Reformers than with the Council of Trent. MacGregor's first claim is uncontroversial, his second claim is a matter of present discussion among scholars, and his third claim—that Molina was an evangelical—will raise a few eyebrows.

As to Molina's opposition to Thomism, it should be noted that most Thomists affirm a libertarian definition of human freedom. However, following Aquinas, they contend that God's knowledge of counterfactuals of libertarian freedom is logically the product of his decree to create this world. Therefore, God's counterfactual knowledge could not have been the basis of his creative decree. Molina disagreed with Aquinas that God's counterfactual knowledge was *a posteriori* to his creative decree. He believed that Aquinas' position entailed divine determinism and was incompatible with libertarianism. Molina argued that God knew all counterfactuals of creaturely freedom logically prior to his decision to create this particular world and, in fact, used that knowledge to select this world. He called the entire set of God's knowledge of counterfactuals "middle-knowledge" (because it resides, logically, between God's natural knowledge and God's free knowledge). God's middle knowledge was grounded within himself by means of his "supercomprehension" of the individual essences of all possible creatures.

The notion that God knows all counterfactuals by means of supercomprehension is important for MacGregor's second claim: that Molina was not an Arminian. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Arminius was not a Molinist.) MacGregor argues that Arminius misunderstood Molina's view of supercomprehension. As noted in the previous point, Molina argued that God conceived middle knowledge from within himself. In contrast, Arminius states "that God obtains his middle knowledge from creatures," an understanding that Molina explicitly rejects. In other words, Molinism holds that God *conceives* his knowledge of future free actions, while Arminians believe that God *perceives* all such actions. Reformed theologians read Molina through the lens of Arminius. They subsequently rejected Molinism on the basis that it seemed to them that God's use of middle knowledge produced a

reduced “election according to simple foreknowledge.” Calvinist opponents of Molinism seem to continue to confuse or conflate the two approaches and fail to understand that Molina’s doctrine of election was much closer to Calvin’s than to Arminius’s.

MacGregor makes his most original contribution with his third claim, namely that Molina was much more evangelical than is commonly recognized by scholars. According to MacGregor, in addition to opposing Aquinas’ view of counterfactual knowledge, Molina also opposed Aquinas’ understanding of the nature of grace. Aquinas saw grace as a substance infused in the believer. Molina, however, embraced the more Reformed view that grace was favor from God. He was glad to see that the Council of Trent affirmed libertarian freedom, but he regretted its affirmation of Aquinas’ view of infused grace and its insistence that justification was a process. *Luis de Molina: His Life and Theology* makes a significant contribution to Molinist studies and should receive considerable attention from scholars.

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Kyle C. Strobel, ed. *The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. 270 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1409461104. \$109.95.

Oliver D. Crisp. *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 218 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802871725. \$25.00.

The scholarly recovery of Jonathan Edwards that commenced after World War II originally included mostly social and intellectual historians within its ranks. Historians continue to make significant contributions to Edwards Studies, but with the completion of the “Yale Edition” of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, along with its accessibility online through Yale’s Jonathan Edwards Center, a door has opened for theologians to engage more intentionally with Edwards’s corpus, including large amounts of previously unpublished material. Theologians are studying Edwards more than ever before, and he is being put into conversation with a more diverse group of thinkers than at any time in the past. Two recent books illustrate these welcome trends.

Kyle Strobel, a theologian who teaches at Talbot School of Theology, has emerged as a leading younger scholar of Edwards. If Edwards is truly one of the great theologians of Christian history, then Strobel suggests he should attract engagement from theologians across ecclesial traditions. To help facilitate this sort of ecumenical theological dialog, Strobel has assembled an impressive array of theological interlocutors in *The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians*.

Part I of the volume includes seven chapters that put Edwards’s thought

into contact with other theologians and traditions. Chapters comparing Edwards with Orthodox theologians, Nicholas Cabasilas on soteriology and Sergei Bulgakov on wisdom, respectively, show some points of affinity, though the commonality typically breaks down at exactly those points where Reformed thought diverges from Eastern Orthodoxy. Thomas Weinandy critiques Edwards's philosophical arguments for the Trinity as being too influenced by Lockean categories, while Robert Jenson suggests Edwards's view of the bondage of the will is less Trinitarian than Luther's understanding; surprisingly, both suggest Edwards was not always Trinitarian enough. Though Edwards and Anselm were both Augustinians in their theology, Oliver Crisp suggests Edwards's theology proper was speculative in ways that Anselm would have seen as departing from Augustinian orthodoxy. Peter Leithart provocatively suggests that Edwards's view of sacrifice was friendly to more sacramental understandings and demonstrates that Hugo Grotius affirmed substitutionary atonement and equated sacrifice with the cross. Strobel compares the theological aesthetics of Edwards with that of Hans Urs von Balthasar, suggesting that Balthasar's Christocentric view of beauty would have been strengthened had he read Edwards's more explicitly Trinitarian aesthetics.

In Part II, theologians offer constructive engagement with Edwards on contemporary theological issues. Matthew Levering offers a post-literalist account of Genesis 2–3 that draws upon Edwards's view of death as the consequence of original sin and Aquinas's view of the solidarity of Adam and his descendants in those consequences. Gerald McDermott suggests the natural typologies advanced by Edwards and John Henry Newman offer a more enchanted (and hopeful) view of nature and history than Barth's rejection of natural theology. In an essay comparing Edwards and Alasdair MacIntyre on virtue, Elizabeth Agnew Cochran suggests modern virtue ethicists, most of whom are Aristotelian-Thomist like MacIntyre, should more intentionally dialog with the Augustinian-Reformed views of Edwards. Brandon Withrow demonstrates that Edwards employed spiritual exegesis to find *theosis* in Song of Songs, similar to Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, while Myk Habets makes an interesting case for the priority of pneumatology in Edwards's theology, also in part because of Edwards's affirmation of *theosis*, as well as his Spirit-Christology. In the final chapter, Kent Eilers argues for the importance of a Trinitarian approach to prayer, drawing upon insights from both Edwards and Wolfhart Pannenberg, especially their respective emphases on the mutual love within the Trinity and the divine sharing of that love with humanity.

Some contributors summarize or expand upon earlier work related to Edwards (McDermott, Withrow), while others put Edwards into conversation with theologians that seem like obvious dialog partners (Crisp, Strobel, Jenson, Cochran). Still other chapters, particularly those that focus on Eastern Orthodox or Catholic thinkers and themes, or modern theologians such as Barth and Pannenberg, bring Edwardsean ideas into contact with ideas and traditions that Edwards may have rejected or preceded, but could lead to

fruitful theological insights in our ecumenical context. The chapters are uneven and not all of the contributors engage Edwards as deeply or thoughtfully as others; this is to be expected in a volume that invites non-specialists to engage with Edwards's thought (and the massive secondary literature related to it!). Nevertheless, *The Ecumenical Edwards* should inspire a raft of essays, dissertations, and monographs that challenge, refine, or expand upon themes treated herein. In particular, comparative studies of Edwards's and others' views of *theosis*, Spirit-Christology, the Trinity, theological aesthetics, ethics, and the atonement should attract the attention of scholars.

One contributor who does understand Edwards is Oliver Crisp, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. Over the past fifteen years or so, Crisp has emerged as one of the leading Edwards scholars, and arguably the most important theologian who is drawing upon Edwards for the sake of constructive theology. In *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians*, Crisp complements chapters in *The Ecumenical Edwards* by showing how one theologian can put Edwards into dialog with a number of different thinkers, themes, and traditions for the sake of contemporary theological insight. Most of Crisp's chapters have been previously published, including the aforementioned chapter on Edwards, Anselm, and the doctrine of God included in Strobel's book.

In chapter one, Crisp argues Edwards was a Reformed theologian who, in an effort to creatively restate Reformed thought in the context of the Enlightenment, eschewed confessionalism, embraced a more Augustinian model of the Trinity, (arguably) defended a stricter determinism than earlier Calvinists, and (even more controversially) affirmed a form of panentheism. This chapter highlights a persistent theme in *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians*, also found in Crisp's earlier work, that Edwards was not (to use a contemporary term) a theologian of retrieval, but rather was a revisionist theologian. Though he remained committed to his Reformed heritage, Edwards pushed the boundaries of that tradition in ways that would perhaps surprise contemporary Calvinists who consider Edwards an exemplar of Reformed theology. Crisp's second chapter addresses Edwards and Anselm, followed by a chapter that critiques elements of Edwards's Trinitarianism, especially his allegedly deficient understandings of divine simplicity, divine essence, and perichoresis. The next chapter compares Arminius and Edwards on creation, suggesting the former was more orthodox than the latter due to Edwards's controversial affirmation of God's essential creativity and his idiosyncratic doctrine of continual creation.

The fifth chapter compares Edwards and nineteenth-century Presbyterian theologian John Girardeau on the freedom of the will. Contra popular assumptions, but consistent with recent scholarship, Crisp suggests Edwards's determinism was more strident than many earlier Reformed thinkers and argues Girardeau's version of "libertarian Calvinism" should be a viable alternative for contemporary Calvinists. In chapter six, Crisp builds upon some of his earlier work on Edwards's view of original sin by examining Edwards's

adaptation of an Augustinian model of sin's transmission and drawing upon analytic philosophy to suggest Edwards held to a "four-dimensional" understanding of the continuity of human nature from Adam to his descendants. The next chapter argues Edwards's view of the atonement, though primarily substitutionary, contained hints of the moral government view advocated by Joseph Bellamy and other later Edwardseans. Rather than a departure from historic Calvinism, Crisp suggests governmentalism is one viable option in a tradition that has been marked by greater diversity in its atonement theology than is often assumed by modern Calvinists. Chapter eight looks at the doctrinal nature of Edwards's sermons, which were often more theologically technical than those of his ministerial peers, while the final chapter provocatively contends Edwards was heterodox because of his pantheism. Crisp is arguably the most vocal contemporary proponent of the idea that Edwards was a type of pantheist.

What are we to make of Crisp's arguments that Edwards was a revisionist theologian? First, these chapters are helpful correctives to the simplistic views of Edwards popularized by authors such as John Piper, R. C. Sproul, and Iain Murray. These authors tend to read their own very conservative Calvinism back into Edwards. Second, Crisp is right to point out that Edwards was in some respects a theological outlier in the Reformed tradition, even if some of his arguments (Edwards's pantheism) are less certain than others (Edwards's overly deterministic view of free will). Third, while Crisp seems to be open, like Edwards, to revisionist accounts of Reformed theology—see Crisp's *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014)—he is also critical of some of Edwards's more controversial moves, especially some elements of his Trinitarian thought, his belief that God is essentially creative, and his pantheistic tendencies.

Scholars to the left and right of Crisp will disagree with some of his interpretations, but all can appreciate fresh readings that both take seriously Edwards's robust Reformed convictions as well as appreciate the ways his philosophical commitments led him to go places where other Calvinists fear to tread. Agree or disagree, no serious scholar can consider Edwardsean theology without engaging with Crisp's extensive, stimulating, and sometimes vexing interpretations of "America's theologian."

Nathan A. Finn
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Carolyn Curtis and Mary Pomroy Key, eds. *Women and C. S. Lewis: What His Life and Literature Reveal for Today's Culture*. Oxford: Lion Books, 2015. 287 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0745956947. \$17.95.

Was C. S. Lewis sexist? Editors Carolyn Curtis and Mary Pomroy Key seek to answer this question in *Women and C. S. Lewis*, a compilation of opinions and short essays concerning Lewis's attitude toward women. The contributors, ranging from academics to poets to pastors, defend Lewis against

sexist allegations, arguing that he had a high view of women, particularly for a man of his standing in early to mid-twentieth-century England. The volume is divided into five sections: Lewis's interactions with women, his portrayal of women in novels, his portrayal of women in poetry, his influence on the twenty-first century, and his impact on several contemporary writers. The chapters are short and easy to read, making this book well-suited for a general audience. For scholars, the twenty-nine perspectives on Lewis and women in one book can serve as a starting point for further research.

The editors deliver on their main goal of bringing together a variety of voices addressing the hot topic of Lewis and sexism. From leading Lewis scholars like Colin Duriez to a little girl named Kathy with whom Lewis corresponded in the 1950s (and who grew up to be Kathy Keller, writer and co-founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City), the various contributors depict a man who "cared for all people" (p. 159). The defense of Lewis presented in this collection can be grouped into two broad categories: how he treated women in his life and how he treated women in his writings.

All of the writers who discuss Lewis's biographical information emphasize his high regard for women. David C. Downing acknowledges that Lewis had sexist attitudes early in his career when he voted to limit the number of women admitted to Oxford. However, Downing argues that after Lewis's conversion to Christianity, such attitudes disappeared. Lewis's respect for women writers such as Dorothy Sayers, Ruth Pitter, and Joy Davidman is discussed by several contributors as strong evidence against the sexist label. In fact, Duriez disproves sexist misconceptions through a catalogue of Lewis's female friends and important acquaintances. Lewis's admiration and respect for his wife's writing talent is discussed by Andrew Lazo who highlights Davidson's role in her husband's work, specifically her contributions to *Till We Have Faces*. One of the strongest pieces of evidence showing Lewis's high regard for women is presented by Carolyn Curtis who explains that Lewis amended a chapter in his 1960 revision of *Miracles* because of issues noted by philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe.

Other important defenses against sexist accusations come directly from Lewis's writings. His treatment of Susan in *The Last Battle* is an often cited as evidence of sexism. However, Devin Brown's close reading of this text reveals that Susan is not condemned because of her interest in "nylons and lipstick." Instead, she is condemned because these are her only interests; she is no longer interested in Narnia. Brown goes on to discuss other female characters in Narnia and points out that Lewis's heroines are "confident, capable, and independent" (p. 106). Such heroines are also found in the Space Trilogy and *The Great Divorce* (see chapters by Steven Elmore and Joy Jordan-Lake, respectively). According to Jordan-Lake, Sarah Smith in *The Great Divorce* is the ultimate example against sexist arguments. Sarah, unlike Susan in Narnia, has kept her focus on things of Christ and is the spiritual model for all around her. Other contributors refute sexist claims through discussions of

strong female characters in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, *Till We Have Faces*, *The Four Loves*, and in Lewis's poetry.

While the conversation presented is interesting and insightful, there are a few distractions to be aware of. One of the editors' goals is to allow "authorities to debate the sexism charges within the pages of one volume" (p. 14). However, authorities who believe that Lewis was sexist are not given a voice here. Instead a multi-perspective defense of Lewis is presented. This defense introduces readers to the conversation about Lewis and sexism, provides evidence that Lewis was not sexist, and demonstrates that his twentieth-century writings are both relevant and useful in the twenty-first century. However, researchers interested in the larger debate will need to look beyond this volume. A minor point to note too, but one that could cause frustration, is that the page references in the table of contents and the list of images are slightly off.

Despite the technical flaw and the one-sidedness of the conversation presented, fans of C. S. Lewis and those new to his writings will appreciate the insight *Women and C. S. Lewis* offers on the current conversation about sexism. Many will want to reread beloved works and others will want to discover them for the first time as they are reminded how Lewis continues to inspire readers to stay focused on the eternal realities and to realize that "there are no ordinary people," whether they are women or men.

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Philip Turner. *Christian Ethics and the Church: Ecclesial Foundations for Moral Thought and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. xxiii + 289 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801097072. \$26.99.

What is the proper focus of Christian ethics? On that question, Philip Turner, a long-serving Episcopalian churchman and retired seminary professor of Christian ethics, beckons Christians to ponder deeply in *Christian Ethics and the Church: Ecclesial Foundations for Moral Thought and Practice*. As Turner relates, the impetus for the book is a great concern over denominational dysfunction in North America that he attributes to the church's loss of "social charter" and a reactionary embrace of an inwardly-focused spirituality that he concludes is unhelpful in treating "the primary disease of an overly individualistic culture" (p. xviii). Responding to the times, Turner proposes instead that we consider the "originating locus" of Christian ethics. It is his thesis that such is to be found in the "common life [read: unity] of the church." Ecclesiology, then, is paramount, or as Turner states, "How Christians are to live with one another is the first concern of Christian ethics" (p. xiv).

In making his case, Turner is a very articulate writer. The book is well-organized, well-edited, and accessible—in language and concepts—to students on the cusp of graduate theological studies. While geared for the seminarian, the work nonetheless presents seasoned Christian scholars much to

consider in its four parts that begin with a presentation of the options. Reflecting upon the history of Christian ethics, Turner identifies three separate emphases guiding moral reflection and practice at various times and places—specifically, “the life of the soul, the life of society, [and] the life of the church” (p. xvii). Probing these foci through the writings of John Cassian, Walter Rauschenbusch, and John Howard Yoder, respectively, Turner concludes that the latter comes closest, but not close enough, to them. In the book’s remaining parts, Turner defends Yoder’s general approach (i.e., Christian ethics as, firstly, an “ecclesial” ethics) *sans* the perceived shortcomings—theological and practical—of the Mennonite scholar’s account.

Some readers may be surprised to find an Episcopalian scholar taking positive cues from an Anabaptist in a theological inquiry touching on the relationship between faith and culture. By book’s end, however, one is hard-pressed to find Yoder in the mix as Turner opts for an ethics that rejects pacifism, includes politics within the orbit of Christian vocation, and draws practical guidance from Rome. (“Had [Protestants] thought things out with the same care as the Roman Catholic Church,” Turner comments, “they might be able, as churches, to take a constructive and credible part in the social and political struggles that now so divide the populations of North America and Europe” [p. 256].)

Pitting concern for unity within the church against monasticism (Cassian) and social gospel (Rauschenbusch), the book presents a seemingly obvious choice. Wary of an easy lure, however, some readers might probe the alternatives. Against Turner’s selected examples, which certainly draw from significant streams in Christian moral thought, one might press for more challenging accounts—say, for example, in the Puritan quest for personal holiness (“living unto God”) that, by Richard Baxter’s account (*The Christian Directory*), leads the faithful not to monastic retreat but to arduous labor for “the unity, concord, and peace of [C]hristians,” “the public good,” and “the spreading of the gospel through the world.”

Clearly inclined to an ecclesial focus, Turner turns to Scripture in Parts II and III for warrant. Particularly significant, he contends, is the Book of Ephesians as it presents a “prismatic case” of ecclesial focus by linking strong moral instruction (“agapic practice”) to the aim of preserving unity within the church (p. 59). Recognizing that linkage, Turner companies with many a biblical commentator. However, in pressing the connection to the point of denying in Scripture’s moral teachings a primary stress on personal holiness (by his own admission), he departs from the beaten path, though not without good effect, he claims. With a righteous hope, he anticipates churches more gracious, forgiving, and capable of providing the watching world a credible gospel witness, as he works out his thesis in the book’s final section.

To be sure, Scripture has much to say about how Christians are to relate to one another. As Turner ably demonstrates, unity is a clear demand; but so also are personal holiness and working for the good of one’s enemies. Perhaps, then, we err in presuming for Christian ethics a singular or predominant

focus. Indeed, one way to read the extremes in Christian moral thought and practice over the millennia is that of overemphasis rather than a misidentification of emphasis—or, stated another way, of moral vision narrowly trained on but one aspect of a truly multi-faceted ethics. Such was the conclusion of Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr in their classic survey of Christian ethics, and that may also help situate and temper Turner's push for an ecclesial ethics.

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Stephen Finlan. *Bullying in the Churches*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015. ix + 98 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625647221. \$14.00.

Stephen Finlan is a United Church of Christ pastor and holds a PhD in Pauline Theology from the University of Durham in the United Kingdom. His publications include: *Problems with Atonement* (2005) and *The Family Metaphor in Jesus' Teaching* (2013). He is also the coeditor of *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, vol. 1 (2006). In his present work, Finlan points out that while many of us first entered a church committed to preach the gospel, we quickly learned that our church did not have a healthy foundation. We expected healing and inspiration but found power grabbing and *bullying*.

In his seven chapters, the author takes the reader from problem description to problem solution. He is clear and straight-forward throughout, which makes it a good practical text for pastors and Christian workers who need insights for entering a discussion on bullying. And because he deals at length with the unhealthy foundations of many local churches, it also serves as a helpful source for the problematic topic of church discipline.

Finlan begins in chapter one with a descriptive list of individuals in the Bible who experienced bullying at the hands of others: Joseph at the hands of his brothers, Israel under Pharaoh and their own kings, Jesus, and the early Church under Roman rule. In doing this he places the reader within a biblical framework, but unfortunately broadens the definition of *bullying* to such an extent that the precise meaning of the word is temporarily lost to the reader. Fortunately, the author comes back to a definition that he uses throughout the book: *abusive behavior and disrespect*. Finlan centers the reader on the writings of Paul and the teachings of Jesus on love, offering practical solutions and applications to local churches. In so doing, he positions Jesus as the defender of the vulnerable in the Scriptures, and narcissism as the most salient characteristic of the bully.

"The Jesus Response" in chapter two, and his development of it, is the most important argument in the book: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." The author demonstrates how to endure suffering while loving as Jesus taught, living with a Jesus motivation—which he defines at length—rather than a worldly one.

Finlan then moves from a predominantly biblical description of the problem and solution to a psychological one, describing the main cause for bullying as rooted in a struggle for power and status. While making this transition, he takes the reader into the mind of the bully or bullying group. He offers examples within the local church, such as the powerful member who bullies both individual members and the pastor, or the *old gang* that is unwilling to transition to different modes of worship, etc. The types of bullying behaviors seen in the church are described at length, as they affect church members and pastors alike. He also describes a number of social psychological theories, such as *herd mentality*, *the psychopathology of the dictator*, *scapegoating*, and *the patronage system*.

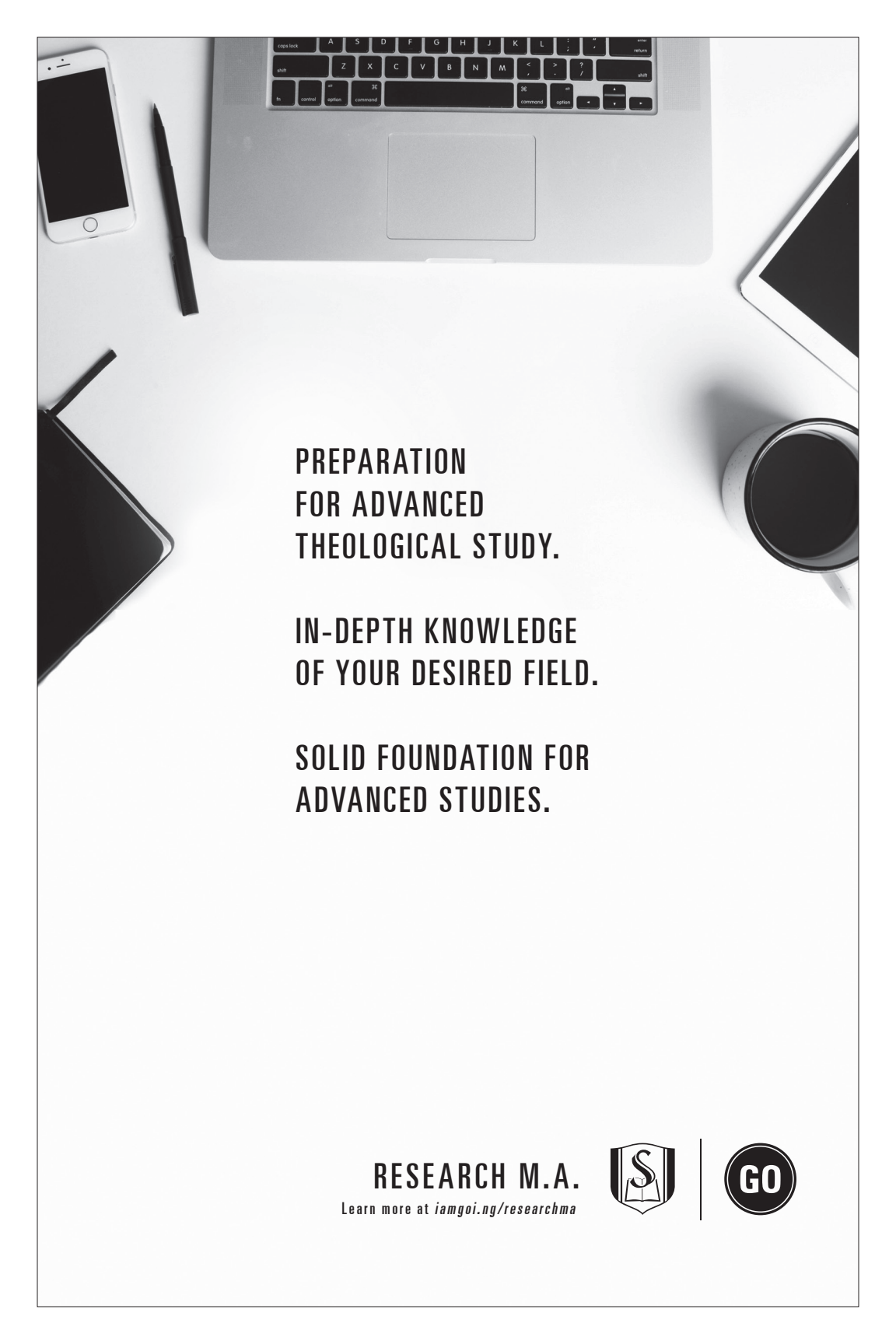
Unfortunately, it is within his discussion of the *patronage system* that Finlan reveals a higher critical approach to the Scriptures. Later writers of Scripture are interpreted as making corrections, not only to the behavior of Israel in the time period in which they wrote, but to the previous biblical writings as well. At one point he writes, "Sacrificial systems were largely a feature of patronage, with clients expressing their gratitude to their divine patrons. It makes sense that the critics of patronage should also criticize the sacrificial offerings" (p. 49). In so doing, he challenges the fact that God superintended the writing of the entirety of Scripture.

This being said, I do think the positives outweigh the negatives. A strength of Finlan's work comes in chapters five and six as he focuses the reader's attention on preventive practices in the churches and protecting vulnerable people. In describing such things as an ethic of respect, valuing differences, training ourselves, grievance procedures, and dis-fellowshipping, Finlan handles the topic of church discipline in a clear and practical way.

Also in his final chapter, "A way forward for the Churches," while denying that a magic formula exists, the author encourages us to practice the principles of wisdom, respect, and truth. We must follow Jesus in love and forgiveness, but not to the point of foolishness—which is particularly important in responding to child, elder, and spousal abuse. Churches will build people up through respect and support, while maintaining accountability, and a grievance-related procedure assures that ethical guidelines will be observed within local churches.

The book contains some interpretive limitations with respect to the biblical text. However, it remains a help to pastors and Christian workers searching for a clear and practical text with insights for entering a discussion on bullying. For these individuals, Finlan provides an example of introducing Scripture into the conversation.

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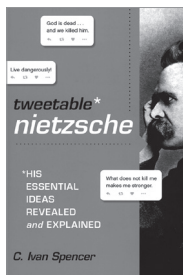
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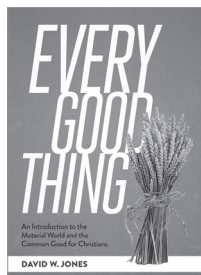
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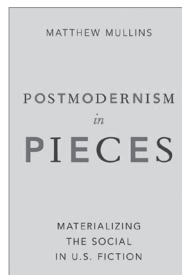
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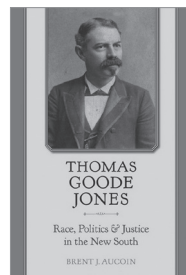
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