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THE THEOLOGICAL PURPOSE OF FIRST TIMOTHY  
AS AN ETHIC FOR THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

Approved: 

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Theological Studies

by

Edward W. Raby, Sr.

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This thesis is done in loving memory of my father Gerald W. Raby --  
faithful deacon of the church and true servant of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction to the Study

#### Introductory Remarks:

The epistle of First Timothy has been commonly regarded as part of a set of books known as the Pastoral Epistles. It has, for the most part, only been looked at in relationship to the other pastorals Second Timothy and Titus. There is a problem with this. Despite their many similarities the Pastorals are in many respects different from each other.

For instance, even though First and Second Timothy are said to be written to the same person, they have very different purposes and historical contexts for both the writer and reader. Most striking is the differences in the two purposes. Second Timothy has no clearly stated purpose, but it can be understood from the contents of the letter that this is Paul's final exhortation and solemn charge to Timothy. First Timothy is very different. First Timothy has a clearly stated purpose: 'I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth' (1 Timothy 3:14-15 NAS). This is very different from a final exhortation and solemn charge in a couple of key ways. First, exhortation has a more dramatic and volitional purpose, but First Timothy's purpose is more focused and more didactic in its approach to the problem with which it is dealing.

Second, First Timothy presents a universal ethic rather than instructions for a single individual as are found in Second Timothy.

Because of these differences, each letter should be considered as a work in its own historical context. By lumping them together for the purpose of study, a disservice has been done to the content of these books. Part of the purpose of this study is to alleviate some of this problem, at least for one of the Pastorals -- First Timothy. The effort of this study is to present First Timothy as a work of theology in its own right and with a unique message all its own. This message is one that concerns the nature of the church, and it is a message that is timeless as its stated purpose indicates. This study is an attempt to uncover First Timothy's message with respect to the purpose of that message.

#### Statement of the Problem:

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: "Within the framework of biblical theology, how does the stated purpose of First Timothy form a foundational theology of the church, how does this foundational theology affect an understanding of First Timothy as a whole and how do these understandings affect the place of First Timothy in Pauline ecclesiology?"

Subproblem #1: How does the purpose passage of First Timothy present a foundational theology of the church?

Subproblem #2: How does this foundational theology of the church affect understandings of various issues found in First Timothy and First Timothy as a whole?



Subproblem #3: How does this understanding of the purpose passage of First Timothy and its affect on the book as a whole show the place of First Timothy in Pauline ecclesiology?

Review of Related Literature:

A review of the literature justifies the necessity of this study. In all there is not a single work devoted solely to the theology of First Timothy. In fact, there is only one work that could be found that dealt with the theology of the pastoral letters. Only Francis Young's The Theology of the Pastoral Letters<sup>1</sup> treats the theology of the pastorals. Its recent date does suggest the idea that theology is starting to be done at a smaller level and is beginning to be discussed, but it is the only case so far. Young's presentation is not without its problems. It is more a mini systematic of the pastoral letters rather than presentation of the theology of individual letters.

Considering the commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles in this review would be a monumental task; considering the commentaries that deal with First Timothy alone is not. French L. Arrington and D. Edmond Hiebert have both attempted to do this. Arrington's commentary Maintaining the Foundation: A Study in First Timothy<sup>2</sup> comes the closest to doing what this study is attempting,

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Young, The Theology of the Pastoral Letters. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> French L. Arrington, Maintaining the Foundation: A Study of 1 Timothy. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982).

but it is more of a study guide for First Timothy and lacks critical depth. Hiebert's commentary is short and old (1957)<sup>3</sup>.

There are many commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles. Two of the most notable are by Gordon Fee and Thomas Oden. They also represent two of the most typical approaches to the Pastoral Epistles. Thomas Oden<sup>4</sup> takes more of a systematic approach in his commentary by organizing various passages according to content. This approach assumes that the Pastorals are all of the same historical context, and this may be due to Oden's acceptance of church tradition concerning the Pastorals. Thus, if the church has bound the three separate epistles into one unit, they should be looked at as one unit. Whatever the reason, Oden seems to fall into the same trap as many who attempt systematic organization of the pastorals before handling each book in its own context. Gordon Fee<sup>5</sup> is very different in his approach to the three books. First, he takes each book in turn considering the differences in each book's historical context. Additionally, he takes each book in the order that it was written in order to show the development of Paul's thought through them. There is still one problem. Fee still assumes that these three books are similar in intent and purpose. These two commentaries represent the two most common approaches to the Pastoral Epistles.

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<sup>3</sup> D. Edmund Hiebert, *First Timothy*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957)

<sup>4</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989)

<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*. New International Biblical Commentary. (Peabody, Mass. : Hendrickson Publishers, 1988)

Other prominent and recent commentaries are Walter F Taylor Jr. 's '1-2 Timothy, Titus' part of the Proclamation Commentaries<sup>6</sup> series, A. T. Hanson's The Pastoral Epistles<sup>7</sup>, J. L. Houldon's The Pastoral Epistles<sup>8</sup>, Dibelius and Conzelmann's The Pastoral Epistles<sup>9</sup> and Donald Guthrie's The Pastoral Epistles<sup>10</sup>. All of these have the same basic methodological problem as discussed above. They all assume that the three books go together in a set without discussion on the fact of their obvious differences.

There are some works which are specifically engaging issues that involve the Pastorals. One of the most common issues engaged by non-commentaries is that of Paul's theology of ministry. E. Earle Ellis' Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society<sup>11</sup> is a good example. Ellis does not deal with First Timothy directly, but does quote it extensively in this book. David Bartlett has one chapter, 'Ministry in the Pastoral Epistles', in his book Ministry in the New Testament.<sup>12</sup> In this chapter, he uses First Timothy to develop his major themes in a theology of ministry. He also uses the Pastorals in his book Paul's Vision for the Teaching

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<sup>6</sup> Walter F Taylor, Jr., '1-2 Timothy, Titus' The Deutero-Pauline Letters: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus. Proclamation Commentaries rev.ed., ed. Gerhard Krodel. (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993) pp. 59-93.

<sup>7</sup> A. T. Hanson, The Pastoral Epistles. The New Century Bible Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982)

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Houlden, The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus. TPI New Testament Commentaries. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1976)

<sup>9</sup> Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Phillip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro, trans. Helmut Koester ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972)

<sup>10</sup> Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans publishing Co., 1957)

<sup>11</sup> E. Earle Ellis, Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989)

<sup>12</sup> David L. Bartlett, Ministry in the New Testament. Overtures to Biblical Theology. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993)

Church.<sup>13</sup> David C. Verner uses part of the purpose passage of First Timothy as part of the title of his book The Household of God: the Social World of the Pastoral Epistles.<sup>14</sup> His focus is on the societies that may or may not have been around the Pastoral Epistles. Finally, L. Cerfaux in his The Church in the Theology of St. Paul<sup>15</sup> uses First Timothy as part of his discussion of Paul's theology of the church.

When considering First Timothy, there has also been some discussion in the periodicals as well. Lewis Donelson has written on the structure of the ethical arguments in the Pastoral Epistles<sup>16</sup> and Peter Bush has commented briefly on First Timothy's structure<sup>17</sup>. Periodical literature on First Timothy is somewhat rare, but the Pastoral Epistles as a whole are still a popular topic. Many of these works use First Timothy as a part of their discussion or as support to already existing debates. They offer dialog about various passages, but often fail to consider those passages in their context and in particular to First Timothy in accordance with its stated purpose.

In contrast to discussion on the purpose of First Timothy and First Timothy as a whole, there is a great deal of discussion on the various issues which First Timothy sets forth, although some of the issues receive much more attention than

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<sup>13</sup> David L. Bartlett, Paul's Vision for the Teaching Church. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1977)

<sup>14</sup> David C. Verner, The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles. ed. William Baird. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation, No. 71. (Chico, California: Scholar's Press, 1983)

<sup>15</sup> L. Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul. trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959)

<sup>16</sup> Lewis R. Donelson, "The Structure of Ethical Argument in the Pastorals," Biblical Theology Bulletin. 18 (No. 3, 1988): 108-113.

<sup>17</sup> Peter G. Bush, "A Note on the Structure of 1 Timothy," New Testament Studies. 36 (No. 1, 1990): 152-156.

others and some of the issues receive no attention at all. Some of these sources have been mentioned already, but there are others.

By far the most discussed passage in First Timothy is 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in the discussion of women in ministry and what it means to be saved through childbirth. Richard and Catherine Kroeger's I Suffer Not a Woman<sup>18</sup>, Sharon Gritz's discussion of the mother goddess at Ephesus<sup>19</sup> and John Bristow's What Paul Really Said About Women<sup>20</sup> are some of the monographs that have been written on the subject that these verses raise. In his book Hard Sayings of Paul, Manfred Brauch cites two of his hard sayings from this very passage.<sup>21</sup> There are many periodical sources on this passage as well. Paul Barnett's 'Wives and Women's Ministry (1 Timothy 2;11-15)', Timothy Harris' 'Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception?'<sup>22</sup>, 'Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2; 8-15 in Social Context' by Alan Padgett<sup>23</sup> and Stanley Porter's 'What Does It Mean to Be Saved by Childbirth'<sup>24</sup> are all good examples of this type of literature on these verses. Without exception, this is the most talked about passage in First Timothy when one considers recent scholarship. There are other verses covered by

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<sup>18</sup> Richard Clark Kroeger and Cathrine Clark Kroeger, I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in light of Ancient Evidence. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992)

<sup>19</sup> Sharon Hodgkin Gritz, Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century. (New York: University Press of America, 1991)

<sup>20</sup> John Temple Bristow, What Paul Really Said about Women. (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988)

<sup>21</sup> Manfred T. Brauch, Hard Sayings of Paul. (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1989)

<sup>22</sup> Timothy J. Harris, "Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception?: A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2," Evangelical Quarterly, 62 (No. 4, 1990): 335-352.

<sup>23</sup> Alan Padgett, "Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2; 8-15 in Social Context," Interpretation, 41 (No. 1, 1987): 19-31.

<sup>24</sup> Stanley E. Porter, "What Does It mean to Be Saved by Childbirth (1 Tim. 2:15)?," Journal for the Study of the New Testament, 49 (1993): 87-102.

independent literature, but this is the only passage that has monograph's written about it. The others are only represented in theological and biblical journals or are mentioned as problem passages in other books.

Sydney Page deals with chapter three's discussion of marital relations and church leaders<sup>25</sup>. Steven Baugh has written an article concerning the phrase "Savior of all people" in First Timothy 4:10<sup>26</sup>. Marvin Reid's 'An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 4:6-16' considers the ideals of godly ministry<sup>27</sup>. Two articles could be found on 1 Timothy 5: 3-16 which concern widows. One was Jouette Bassler's 'The Widow's Tale: A Fresh Look at 1 Tim. 5: 3-16'<sup>28</sup>; the other was B. W. Winter's 'Providentia for Widows of 1 Timothy 5: 3-16.' Another notable article is on 1 Timothy 5:19-25 by William Fuller<sup>29</sup>.

At this point, other sources could be covered as regards to specific content of various passages. Most of these include books on hermeneutical method that use parts of First Timothy as examples of exegesis as well as various books on the historical analysis of earliest Christianity. Black and Dockery's New Testament Criticism & Interpretation<sup>30</sup> cites thirty different passages from First Timothy among its various contributors. Other works that deal with the content of

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<sup>25</sup> Sydney Page, "Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles," Journal for the Study of the New Testament. 50 (1993): 105-120.

<sup>26</sup> Steven M. Baugh, "Savior of All People: 1 Timothy 4:10 in Context," Westminster Theological Journal. 54 (No. 2, 1992): 331-340.

<sup>27</sup> Marvin L. Reid, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 4:6-15," Faith & Mission. 9 (No. 1, 1991): 51-63.

<sup>28</sup> Jouette M. Bassler, "The Widow's Tale: A Fresh Look at 1 Tim. 5: 3-16," Journal of Biblical Literature. 103 (No. 1, 1984): 23-41.

<sup>29</sup> William J. Fuller, "Of Elders and Triads in 1 Timothy 5; 19-25," New Testament Studies. 29 (No.2, 1993): 258-263.

<sup>30</sup> David Allen Black and David S. Dockery eds., New Testament Criticism & Interpretation. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991)

First Timothy in an indirect way are: James Dunn's Unity and Diversity in the New Testament<sup>31</sup>, David Aune's The New Testament and Its Literary Environment<sup>32</sup>, Henry Virkler's Hermeneutics<sup>33</sup>, William Tate's Biblical Interpretation<sup>34</sup> and Helmut Koester's History and Literature of Early Christianity<sup>35</sup>.

All of these, along with others, supply some insight into the content of First Timothy by providing bits and pieces of the text that are commented on in a different format than a commentary or article. Some also supply some understanding of the purpose and place of First Timothy as a whole in the course of Christian history.

This leads into the place that First Timothy has in Pauline ecclesiology. When tackling these issues it becomes necessary to begin the process of formulating Paul's theology in First Timothy and its relationship to his other theological work in other letters. Most useful at first are books on Pauline theology, then books that deal with Paul's View of the church and lastly books that may provide details of that theology.

Some of the literature that deals with Paul's theology is very general, but tries to incorporate all of what he has written to provide a broad overview. Some

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<sup>31</sup> James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity. 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990)

<sup>32</sup> David E. Aune, The New Testament in Its Literary Environment. Volume 8: Library of Early Christianity. Wayne A. Meeks, ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987).

<sup>33</sup> Henry A. Virkler, Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

<sup>34</sup> W. Randolph Tate, Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Helmut Koester, History and Literature of Early Christianity. Introduction to the New Testament – volume 2. (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1982).

books of this type are: Stanley Marrow's Paul: His Letters and His Theology<sup>36</sup>, Herman Ridderbas' Paul: An Outline of His Theology<sup>37</sup>, Fernand Prat's The Theology of St. Paul<sup>38</sup>, Victor Furnish's Theology and Ethics in Paul<sup>39</sup>, Morton Enslin's The Ethics of Paul<sup>40</sup>, William Barclay's The Mind of St. Paul<sup>41</sup> and Dean Gilliland's Pauline Theology and Mission Practice<sup>42</sup>. All of these help with placing Paul's ecclesiology in the context of the rest of his theology. They also help show the place of First Timothy in that ecclesiology, but a better focus on it could be brought about by books whose focus is on Paul's ecclesiology. Some of these are: Daniel Harrington's God's People in Christ<sup>43</sup> and Helen Doohan's Paul's Vision of Church<sup>44</sup>

Both the theologies of Paul and the books on Pauline ecclesiology have problems. First, they both do not focus on First Timothy as a singular work of theology, but rather as part of a greater whole. Second, they are systematic in approach and assume that Paul's theology can be put into categories before they begin their work. None of them expresses a theology of the church through use of First Timothy, nor does any use First Timothy exclusively as a foundation. In

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<sup>36</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, Paul: His Letters and His Theology: An Introduction to Paul's Epistles. (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

<sup>37</sup> Herman Ribberbas, Paul: An Outline of His Theology. John Richard De Witt, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975).

<sup>38</sup> Fernand Prat, The Theology of Paul. John L. Staddard trans. (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Book Shop, 1961).

<sup>39</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethic's in Paul. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968).

<sup>40</sup> Morton Scott Enslin, The Ethics of Paul. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957).

<sup>41</sup> William Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1986).

<sup>42</sup> Dean S. Gilliland, Pauline Theology and Mission Practice. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, God's People in Christ. Overtures to Biblical Theology Series. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> Helen Doohan, Paul's Vision of Church. Good News Studies 32 (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989).



short, there is no theology of First Timothy, as far as this author can tell, in existence.

This review has shown that there is a need for a work that focuses exclusively on First Timothy as a theological work in its own right, as a work in its own separate historical environment, and as a work with its own separate purpose – one that is different from all other books in the Bible. First Timothy must be seen on its own before it is grouped with other books and placed in a theological framework. This study will attempt to do this by showing that First Timothy has a unique and specific purpose of its own. It will also show that the contents of First Timothy are unique because of this purpose and that First Timothy should be regarded as an important building block of Pauline ecclesiology.

#### Theoretical Framework:

##### Overall Theoretical Framework:

There is an overall theoretical framework for all of theology that this author will assume throughout this paper. That being, theology is an organized and logical discipline that involves an ordered step by step process. The beginning of this process is hermeneutics and involves a study of the Scripture's content by directly asking the question -- What does it say? This part of the process is exegetical study and involves all aspects of biblical studies. The second stage is biblical theology which builds on the findings of the previous stage. It is an attempt to take what the text says and understand its meaning and to organize

those meanings into themes. It asks the question -- What does the author mean? Biblical theology takes into account the historical context and purpose of each author and each work. Building on biblical theology, historical theology considers how the church has viewed the text in question throughout the centuries. Church History, particularly doctrinal history, is involved in this stage. Historical theology asks the question -- What has the text meant to the church through the centuries? Once this process is complete, it becomes necessary to place the results that are found in both biblical theology and historical theology into an organized system. Systematic theology is this process. Systematic theology's goal is to organize the findings of biblical and historical analysis into a cohesive set of doctrine and practice. It asks the question -- How does all this fit together?

The last step is contextualization. It is only when the entire process is complete that it becomes possible to ask the question -- What does this mean to us? It is only at this time that it may be possible to say that this question may be answered with some probability of accuracy in finding the correct answer. However, it must be noted contextualization is a constant presence as the process of theology goes on through its stages. In other words, contextualization is not a static discipline. It is a discipline that constantly asks the question -- what does this mean to us today? It asks this through the whole process of theology and it constantly modifies itself as new understandings are reached.

This work is concerned with biblical theology. That is, it is directed to asking the question -- What did First Timothy mean? This work assumes that hermeneutics has been done and is an attempt to take the results of that biblical

study to discern the purpose of First Timothy as intended by the author, and to organize the themes of First Timothy accordingly. The final part of this work is really analysis of these results in light of the author's other works in the Canon of Scripture. This is leading to the second stage of biblical theology, that of organization of theology in accordance to authorship. This is all in accordance with the overall theoretical framework of this author.

#### Hypotheses:

1. The first hypothesis is that the purpose of First Timothy is universal and timeless not particular and time bound.
2. The second hypothesis is that the content of First Timothy is also universal and timeless because its purpose is universal and timeless.
3. The third hypothesis is that First Timothy is the most direct statement of certain aspects of Paul's ecclesiology.

#### Delimitations:

1. This study will not attempt to engage in systematic theology
2. This study will be limited to First Timothy purpose and content
3. This study will not engage in an historical analysis of First Timothy through church history.

#### Definition of Terms:

Biblical Theology -- "The study of God on the basis of the teachings of Scripture rather than on a priori theological or philosophical considerations."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Donald T Kauffman, The Dictionary of Religious Terms. (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1967) p. 74.

Systematic Theology -- "Study of God and His relationships to man and the universe. Standard classical divisions are revelation, God, man, sin, Christ, salvation, the church, and eschatology."<sup>46</sup>

Ecclesiology -- The study of church doctrine (nature and function) and church policy.<sup>47</sup>

Assumptions:

1. The first assumption is that First Timothy is a work of theology in its own right
2. As it is not the purpose of this work to engage in the topics of authorship and date, the second assumption is that first timothy is written by Paul the Apostle to Timothy in the first century.

Methodology:

The first stage of this work will be to interpret the text of First Timothy along established hermeneutical guidelines. Those guidelines will be the ones set forth in Robert Traina's Methodical Bible Study<sup>48</sup>. It is also to be noted that use of the Greek text for the purpose of better understanding will be used along with this method.

The second stage of this project involves a determining of the purpose of First Timothy according to Paul's own words, and analysis of other factors in the text that give that purpose further definition and importance.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p.406.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p.163.

<sup>48</sup> Robert A. Traina, Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics. (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980).

The third stage of this work is to take the purpose of First Timothy and show how it affects understanding of the various issues discussed in the book. This will involve an organization of themes and analysis of those themes in light of First Timothy's purpose.

The fourth stage of this work involves analysis of First Timothy in the light of its significance in relation to Paul's other works. This involves the placing of First Timothy in Paul's overall theology and its particular importance to Pauline ecclesiology.

The final stage of this study is to report the findings of stages two through four in this thesis. It is assumed that stage one will be the foundation of the other stages, but as this is a work of biblical theology those results will remain outside this thesis except where they are noted in this thesis.

### Outline:

- I. The purpose of First Timothy is an ethic for the universal church.
  - A. The purpose is plainly stated -- 1 Timothy 3: 14-15.
  - B. The purpose is related to the universal church.
    1. The church is the household of God.
    2. The church is the assembly of the living God.
    3. The church is the pillar and the support of the truth.
  - C. The universal church's roots are in the mystery of godliness.
    1. The mystery of godliness was revealed in the flesh.
    2. The mystery of godliness was vindicated in the spirit.

3. The mystery of godliness was beheld by angels.
4. The mystery of godliness was proclaimed among the nations.
5. The mystery of godliness was believed on in the world.
6. The mystery of godliness was taken up in glory.

D. The threefold conception of the church and the mystery of godliness are the theological foundation of the purpose of First Timothy.

E. First Timothy is a commandment entrusted to bring strength and to be kept to keep one pure in the universal church.

1. The commandment entrusted to bring strength.
2. The commandment is to be kept to keep one pure in the universal church (1 Tim. 6:11-16).
3. The commandment statements give the purpose of the book authority .
4. First Timothy's final charge is the final emphasis to the commandment. (1 Tim. 6:20-21)

F. 'First of All...' as beginning and end

G. First Timothy's first chapter is a preface to the real work.

H. 'What, then, does First Timothy have to do with Ephesus?'

1. First Timothy's purpose is not particular; it is universal.
2. First Timothy's purpose is not locked in time; it is timeless.

II. The content of First Timothy is in harmony with the purpose passage.

A. 1 Timothy 2: 1-7: The mystery of godliness is the foundation for the assembly's prayer for all men.

B. 1 Timothy 2: 8-15: The actions of men and women in the household are directed by the mystery of godliness.

C. 1 Timothy 3:1-13: Leadership in the assembly is guided by the character of the mystery of godliness.

1. Overseers (Bishops) are to be guided by their character that should be in accordance with the mystery of godliness. (1 Tim. 3:1-7)

2. Deacons are to be guided by their character that should be in accordance with the mystery of godliness. (1 Tim. 3:8-13)

D. Chapter 4-6 Considered

1. Chapter 4: Ministers in the pillar and the support of the truth should practice righteous discipline in accordance to the mystery of godliness.

a. Apostate ministers are revealed in the light of the truth. (1 Tim. 4:1-5)

b. Righteous ministers discipline themselves in accordance to the mystery of godliness. (1 Tim. 4:6-16)

2. Chapter 5: Elders and widows in the household are to be handled according to the mystery of godliness.

a. The family of God is to be properly regarded. (1 Tim. 5:1-2)

b. Honor to widows in the household should be in accordance to the mystery of godliness. (1 Tim. 5:3-16)

c. Honor to elders in the household should be in accordance to the mystery of godliness. (1 Timothy 5:17-25)

### 3. Chapter 6: The Blend of Themes in Chapter Six

a. 1 Timothy 6:1-2: The mystery of godliness affects the slaves in the household.

b Ministers in the assembly must place their discussions under the mystery of godliness' authority. (1 Tim. 6:3-5)

c. Ministers in the assembly must place their understanding of money under the mystery of godliness' authority. (1 Tim. 6:6-12)

d. 1 Timothy 6:17-19: The rich in the household are to use their riches in accordance to the mystery of godliness' final purpose.

III. This new view of the purpose of First Timothy and its relationship to its subjects shows Paul's greatest statement of ecclesiastical ethics.

A. The current trend views First Timothy as a book with little impact on understanding Pauline ecclesiology.

B. First Timothy placed in the light of other Pauline literature

C. First Timothy was important to the Early church in establishing its ecclesiology.

D. First Timothy is the most ecclesiological of all Paul's writings.

E. The ramifications of First Timothy to the current process of contextualization are both immense and powerful.

F. How should First Timothy be applied to the current universal church?

F. Concluding statements to this study.



**Justification for this Study:**

The review of related literature presented above offers much justification for this study. There has been much work on First Timothy, but very little of it has been done considering First Timothy alone as work of theology with its own historical context. Most of the work done has been done in the context of the other Pastoral Epistles. This work would offer a refreshing alternative to this by concentrating on First Timothy alone with no consideration of Second Timothy and Titus until consideration of overall Pauline ecclesiology.

A second justification for the study is that this is a work in a specific theoretical framework. This justifies the study, in that, it is an attempt to see, in the overall theoretical framework of this author, if this theological framework has the capability of being implemented in its beginning stages. If this framework can be used, then it may be beneficial to the rest of the church.

Finally, no work that concerns the church, if it is done with the good of the church in mind, can not be beneficial to that church in reevaluating itself in its current place in history. Application is the foremost goal of this study. If this study provides the church with a motivation to enact this knowledge for its own benefit, it cannot help being beneficial. It is not enough to study, but it is enough to act on what has been learned.

## CHAPTER 2

The Purpose of First Timothy as the Ethic of the Universal ChurchThe Plainly Stated Purpose of First Timothy:

Many works of literature have no clearly stated purpose, and we must speculate what the writer's purpose is in his writing or work. This is not the case with First Timothy. Paul clearly states his purpose in chapter three verse 14-15: "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

Paul has a singular purpose in mind. He fears delay, so he writes so Timothy will know how anyone should conduct themselves in God's household. Paul's fear of being delayed may have loomed large,<sup>1</sup> and Paul, not knowing the future, feels it is necessary to set forth an ordered 'manual' of sorts for behavior in the church. Paul's purpose is specifically designed to bring knowledge of how one (anyone) should order their conduct in the household. "Amid this crisis context, the intent of the letter is stated straightforwardly: to deal summarily with the kind of conduct befits a member of God's household--its worship, preaching, teaching, organization, and moral life."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas C. Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus. Interpretation: a Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989) 43.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 44.

There are two mistakes that one can make concerning any purpose passage. One is to ignore it. The other is to apply it to other works by the same author. In all the commentaries and other works, no one ignores this purpose passage, but they do sometimes fail to give it full importance. Fee in his commentary does this by saying that there is another purpose that Paul is trying to achieve, that of trying to thwart false teachers at Ephesus.<sup>3</sup> At this point, all this author has to say on this is that there is no hint of false teachers in this passage. This purpose is not directed at false teacher's, but to everyone in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the support of the truth. Clearly, there is something larger than Ephesus at stake. Walter Taylor commits the other error. He applies this purpose to all the pastoral epistles.<sup>4</sup> The writing of First Timothy has its own purpose in its own historical context. Its purpose applies to 'these things.' It is a general statement of identification, but one cannot assume, without further evidence, that 'these things' also includes the contents of Second Timothy and Titus. 'These things' refer to the things in First Timothy alone.

The purpose relates to ethics, as it states that the letter's focus is on the conduct of anyone in the church. With this purpose there is an idea of 'ought.' This is how they 'ought' to conduct themselves. This is an ethical 'ought' statement. Because of this, it is not a statement of how things are, but a

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon D. Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus. *New International Biblical Commentary*. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988) 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> Walter F. Taylor, Jr., '1-2 Timothy, Titus.' The Deutero-Pauline Letters: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus. Gerhard Krodel, ed. *Proclamation Commentaries* 2nd. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 77-78.

statement of how things ought to be. Paul is saying that this is how things ought to be done in the church. This is a larger church than just the church at Ephesus. If its focus is to just that individual church, there would be more specific things mentioned that would need correcting. The language of First Timothy is universal. Paul uses phrases like "all men" and "in every place," which indicate that he has larger context in mind. More will be said on how Ephesus fits into the purpose of First Timothy. At this time, one can state with some force that Paul's purpose seems universal in light of the purpose's clear statement describing the church as the household of God, the church of the living God and the pillar and the support of the truth. This leads into a discussion of the three-fold conception of the church that the purpose passage of First Timothy presents.

#### The Purposes' Universal Three-Fold Conception of the Church

The purpose passage of First Timothy ends with a three-fold conception of the church. These three conceptions of the church describe in what one is to behave. As such, they describe the entity that the ethic is to operate in, and they give the purpose passage its particular focus. This focus is somewhat grand, however. The writer describes the entity as the household of God, the church (or assembly) of the living God and as the pillar and the support of the truth. It is these three conceptions that need some understanding in order to grasp the scope of the purpose passage of First Timothy.

The universal church as the household of God.

First, Paul conceives of the church as the household of God. There has been much debate concerning the meaning of this expression. Does it mean temple of God, employing more liturgical language, or family of God indicating a more relational language approach using the language of family relationships. Didelius and Conzelmann state that the later is more likely as it is supported by the context of First Timothy itself, which uses family language in many places, but does not use any building or architectural structure symbolism except in the later part of verse 15 in chapter three.<sup>5</sup> This author agrees, but also submits that the idea of a household has greater boundaries. The word for household in this passage is οἶκος. This is a standard word for 'house' but one can use it to denote family relationship as well. One can use it in a family sense and as a way of denoting descendants. "House of Adam" is a good example of the descendant imagery.<sup>6</sup> The idea portrayed is one of a family that owes its lineage to God.

This is an astounding image of family for the universal church. It portrays the church as the descendants of God related to each other in a family like atmosphere. This image creates a sense of connection. The old expression of "you can pick your friends, but not you relatives" comes to mind. Those in the church have no say in who is a part of it, nor do they have a say in who the chief

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Dibelius and Hanz Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles. Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Helmut Koester, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972) 60.

<sup>6</sup> See BAG 560-561.

relative is, namely God. Yet, they are to conduct themselves appropriately in that household.

Conduct in such a household becomes dictated by the highest ideals of family and the leadership of that family is absolute as that leader is God himself. Ideals, such as loyalty, love, leadership, community, unity and affection, become exemplified in their highest form. God, as the head of the household, could not be in error or lack in compassion. Such a family would be one that is above all others.

The universal church as the assembly of the living God.

Paul's description of the church continues with the expression "which is the church of the living God." The word 'church' is somewhat of a misnomer. A better translation would be "assembly." Despite wanting to make more of the word εκκλησια (the word translated as 'church'), in the time of the writing of First Timothy this word was a common word used to designate a regularly assembled political body.<sup>7</sup> The church gives new meaning to this word to designate itself, but at that time, one understood it in its more political sense. This is important in that it does affect interpretation of this phrase in this context. Often, the phrase household of God and church of the living God are equated with one another. Fee does this in his commentary. He says Paul is only using two images; family and temple and total ignores the political assembly language.<sup>8</sup> More likely, Paul

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<sup>7</sup> See BAG 240-241.

<sup>8</sup> Fee. 92.

is invoking three images of the church and equating them. J. L. Houlden recognizes this, but he does not comment on its significance.<sup>9</sup>

The significance is that there is another word picture being used. That picture is a political one. It evokes images of assemblies in Greek cities for the purpose of a political goal.<sup>10</sup> The question is what is the political goal of the assembly of the living God. First and foremost, the church devotes itself to the political purpose of the living God. An image of the kingship of God is present in this phrase. Paul uses this image later when he states: "... He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords: who alone possess immortality and dwells in unapproachable light:" (1 Timothy 6: 15b-16a). This image of a political body runs throughout the book of First Timothy.

As a political organization dedicated to God's purpose, the universal church has several distinguishing features. First, it has a political makeup in its organization. It is no accident that there is discussion of leadership and money in First Timothy. Secondly, the real assembly of the living God would be in unity of mind and purpose. The goal would be the same for all concerned, to bring about the purpose of the living God. Finally, as the political organization of God, when it deals with the world it should act as his righteous agent in character and power.

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<sup>9</sup> J. L. Houlden, The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus. TPI New Testament Commentaries. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1976) 82-83.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 83.

The universal church as the pillar and support of the truth.

Paul's final image of the universal church is that of the church being the pillar and support of the truth. The imagery is clearly that of a building or, as some put it, a fortress. Guthrie states this has several possible meanings. One is to say this phrase does not relate to the church but to First Timothy itself. Guthrie dismisses this idea, because it hardly seems that First Timothy is such a book. Another possible meaning is that the church is the defender of the truth. This seems more likely.<sup>11</sup> The word picture portrayed is that of a custodian of truth. This is not all truth but the truth.

The concept that the universal church should be the defender of the truth has often caused some to balk at the very idea. This is particularly true in Protestant circles. Protestants do not see the church in this role; the Scriptures take this role instead in the Protestant world. Paul, however, does not see the Scriptures alone as the defender of the truth. He sees the church in that role as well. How does it do this? Paul switches immediately to a discussion of the mystery of godliness upon the completion of his stating the idea of the church as the pillar and the support of the truth. This mystery of godliness, as will be discussed later, is the truth that the church defends. It is by its common confession of the great mystery of godliness that the church defends the truth. The mystery of godliness is what the church defends by its constant confession of that mystery.

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<sup>11</sup> Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957) 88.



The universal church as the pillar and support of the truth has several implications. One is that the church must approach all things with a discerning mind. The discerning mind is open to the truth, but is closed to apostasy and apostate thought. This idea will play itself out in chapter four of First Timothy. A second implication is that this is a serious task of the church. It must be a fortress around the confession of the mystery of godliness. It must constantly strive to strengthen itself and fortify itself to the task at hand. The truth becomes buttressed and grounded so that it does not shake. If this is so, then the church has a mammoth task to keep error out and keep the truth safely in the walls.

This would have the church take on certain characteristics and actions. It would be necessary for the church to take on the character being dedicated to the defense of the truth. This would strike at a nonchalant careless attitude toward the truth. Truth is the primary concern for the church, not a secondary concern. The church would also be dedicated to the maintenance of those systems that defended the truth. It would imply that everything engaged by the church (Scripture, reason, tradition and experience) would defend the truth, not try to destroy it. The goal for such an entity would be to use those faculties to build the walls of defense and it would not try to remove the defenses with those faculties. Finally there would be a reverence for the thing protected as a precious item. The truth, above all other things, is primary.

### The threefold concept in one universal church.

One should not say that there are three different conceptions of the church that Paul uses in describing the church without pointing out there is still one church in mind. Paul is using different language to describe the character of the church from different angles. The church is at the same time all three of these things. This household is also the assembly; this assembly is also the pillar and support of the truth. This will be important in considering the rest of the content of First Timothy as Paul employs all of these language pictures discussing the various issues in First Timothy. These three conceptions of the church form the theological foundations for the rest of the work he does in First Timothy. He uses them to establish an ethic for those in the universal church. These foundational three conceptions would be nothing, however, if they cannot found themselves on some greater concept. That is the mystery of godliness.

### The Mystery of Godliness as the Foundation of the Universal Church

No sooner does Paul end his statement about the church being 'the pillar and support of the truth,' that he states '...and by common confession, great is the mystery of godliness.' There is an equation between the truth and the mystery of godliness. This mystery becomes the object of a confession that is common to the universal church. The secret of godliness is the stated as being: "He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." The

mystery of godliness is not a thing but a person. The person that fits all these things that the purpose states the mystery does is Christ.

The mystery of godliness revealed in the flesh.

The mystery is first revealed in the flesh. To be revealed, or manifested as other translations put it, 'to be made known.' The mystery became known in the flesh. The theme of Christ being made known appears in Paul's' description of him in chapter 2 verse 6: "who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time." The sacrifice of Christ is what is chiefly evident at this point. Christ comes in the flesh and revealed himself in that flesh. The mystery is that he left it in the hands of the pillar and support of the truth to keep this truth throughout the centuries.

The mystery of godliness vindicated in the Spirit.

The one that becomes known in the flesh becomes vindicated in the Spirit. To be vindicated is to be shown to be right and triumphant.<sup>12</sup> This is no ordinary triumph; it is a triumph in the Spirit. The mystery of godliness becomes justified in the Spirit. Christ effects this through his resurrection. The same passage for being revealed in the flesh becomes used to explain this concept. Christ's testimony is twofold. He becomes revealed in the flesh, and he becomes vindicated in the Spirit in order to reveal himself as the mystery of godliness. This is the testimony that comes about at the proper time. Christ showed who he was in his flesh, but it is the spirit that showed he was right by raising him from the dead.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 197-198.

The same Spirit that empowers the assembly of the living God is the one that vindicates the mystery of the church.

The mystery of godliness beheld by angels.

Part of the mystery of godliness is that he becomes beheld by angels. The angelic messengers of God saw him. Along with being revealed in the flesh and vindicated in the spirit, Christ was seen by the angelic host. There is not much more to say here other than to echo Oden: "Together with us the angels saw him. This is indeed a mystery! Hence we are called to 'live in a manner worthy of the mystery.'<sup>13</sup> That is to say, one ought to conduct oneself in the household of God as if oneself was being beheld by the angels of the living God.

The mystery of godliness proclaimed among the nations.

Not only is the mystery beheld by the angels, he becomes proclaimed among the nations of the earth. Christ becomes preached throughout the nations of the earth! From Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, people proclaim Christ. Proclaimed by the household of God, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and the support of the truth, Christ fills the earth as the mystery of godliness .

The mystery of godliness believed on in the world.

Paul continues his description of the mystery of godliness by stating that the mystery becomes believed on in the world. The idea is that Christ has not only been preached to all the nations; some have believed in Him. This belief

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<sup>13</sup> Oden. 45.

changed their lives. The mystery of godliness becomes received and acted upon positively. It is not that the whole world has believed but that someone has believed in the sphere of the world.<sup>14</sup>

The mystery of godliness taken up into glory.

Finally, Paul's poem states that the mystery of godliness was taken up into glory. This is a clear statement of the ascension of Christ into heaven. The mystery of godliness is received back to be with his Father.<sup>15</sup> There he continues to act as mediator for us as the ransom for many. He has returned to glory and his power is absolute.

The mystery of godliness seen in its entirety.

Looking at Paul's poem on the mystery of godliness as a whole, three things become seen. There is a contrast between heaven and earth in the lines of the poem. There is a contrast between the things described in the poem. Finally, there is a mystery of revelatory power in the poem.

There is a contrast between heaven and earth in the poem. The flesh, nations and world stand against the spirit, angels and glory. This indicates the universality of the mystery's effect in both heaven and earth. Another observation is how the lines in the poem contrast in pairs. Being revealed in the flesh contrasts with being vindicated in the spirit. Being beheld by angels contrasts with being proclaimed among the nations. Being believed on in the world

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<sup>14</sup> Guthrie. 90.

<sup>15</sup> Oden. 45.

contrasts with being taken up in glory.<sup>16</sup> The contrast between flesh and spirit shows that Christ triumphed over both and in both. The contrast between the angels and the nations shows that all beings, both earthly and heavenly, have had a chance to see and hear the message. The contrast between the world and glory shows the ultimate triumph of Christ in that belief in him is present and thus has returned to power in heaven. A. T. Hanson shows this relationship this way:

He was manifested in the flesh	Earth
Vindicated in the spirit,	Heaven
Beheld by angels,	Heaven
Proclaimed among the nations,	Earth
Believed on in the world,	Earth
Taken up in Glory.	Heaven <sup>17</sup>

A final observation is the revelatory power of the mystery. The mystery (revealed, vindicated, beheld, proclaimed, believed and taken) is a mystery that shows the way to godliness. All of these actions indicate a response to the revelation of the mystery. The flesh and the spirit become the means and medium through which the mystery reveals itself. The angels and the nations are the ones that have seen, heard and experienced the revelatory power of the mystery. The world and glory have reacted to the revelatory power with acts of belief and acceptance. Christ has come in the flesh and been vindicated by the Spirit in his resurrection as the revelation of himself to man. Angels see that

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<sup>16</sup> Houlden. 86.

<sup>17</sup> A.T. Hanson, The Pastoral Epistles. The New Century Bible Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982) 85.

revelation, and nations hear it preached as truth. Because of this revelation, the world has believed, and glory has taken Christ back as its true Son.

These observations set forth some interesting implications for the purpose of First Timothy. As the text says, this is a great mystery that creates a sense that the whole of the universe, both heaven and earth, become affected by the mystery of godliness. The mystery of godliness stretches from heaven to earth. There is no point in both that it does not touch or affect. The nations, angels, world and glory can all testify to this. Secondly, part of the revelatory power of the mystery is its common confession among the universal church. Finally, this leads one to think that this mystery is the ultimate foundation of the purpose of First Timothy. The mystery of godliness is the foundation of the concepts of the church as household, assembly and bulwark of truth. These three conceptions then support First Timothy's purpose of bringing knowledge so that one will know how to behave in the universal church.

The mystery as the foundation of the church.

The church claims its common confession in this mystery of godliness. This makes it an odd mystery indeed. A mystery in this sense would be a religious rite or a secret teaching that contains the ceremonies and practices of a cult.<sup>18</sup> The mystery of godliness is not such a mystery as it is a common confession of the church as a standard of truth. This mystery is anything but a secret. All that listen to the gospel, preached openly, know this mystery. The

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<sup>18</sup> See BAG. 530.

mystery is not that it is hard to understand as six lines of a hymn can contain it. It is a mystery, however, that is universal in its greatness. This is because the mystery is not a thing, but the open revelation of Christ to both heaven and earth.

The mystery is the foundational concept and confession of the church. It forms the basis of the church's existence and character. The church would not be household of God without Christ, as the mystery of godliness, being the one that is the ransom for many. The church would not be the assembly of the living God without the mystery of godliness being the "King of kings and Lord of lords" over its political structure. The church would have no purpose as the pillar and the support of the truth without the mystery of godliness being the basis for that truth. All of the universal church owes its existence, leadership and purpose to the Christ as the mystery of godliness. The mystery of godliness is the foundation for all that the church is and will be.

### The Foundations of First Timothy's Purpose

There are two main theological foundations for First Timothy's purpose based on the above two main sections. The first is Paul's threefold conception of the church, the other is the mystery of godliness that supports this threefold conception. These two foundations give the purpose its character and strength. The purpose of First Timothy is founded upon the on high concepts of what the church is and what Christ is as the mystery of godliness. As the purpose



connects itself to these concepts, they provide the underlying rationale and basis for behavior in the church.

The threefold conception of the church as the foundation of the purpose.

Paul's threefold conception of the church gives the purpose clear meaning. It describes a church that is a family, an organization, and a foundation for the truth. The church must align itself to its purpose. It is the household of God. It is the assembly of the living God. It is the pillar and support of the truth.

The purpose and the household of God relate to the area of family conduct. In a functional family, there is unity and love. Conduct in the house is governed by a desire to maintain a focus on the good of the family and to love all its members. The church, being the household of God, ought to conduct itself in a manner that reflects these two qualities to all its members. Thus, each member ought to conduct himself in a manner that is encouraging to love and unity.

The purpose and the assembly of the living God relates to political action. In a healthy political action group there is a righteous agenda and activity that purposes itself to bring that agenda to completion. Conduct in the assembly is governed by these two things: to keep the agenda righteous and to bring that agenda to completion. The agenda of the assembly should line itself up completely with the purpose of the leadership of the assembly. The ultimate leader of the assembly of the living God is the living God. God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>19</sup> The conduct of church

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4

orders itself to maintain this agenda and to bring about this desired agenda. Of course, a person in the assembly should order his or her conduct in a manner that keeps the agenda righteous and keeps it moving forward.

The purpose and the pillar and support of the truth relates to the area of structure. The foundation and defense of the truth needs to possess two primary structural qualities: strength and integrity. Without these two, the foundation crumbles and the defense becomes a liability rather than an asset. The conduct of the pillar and support of the truth is governed by a desire to provide a strong defense and underpinning for the truth. No one in that church should act in a way that cracks the foundation or undermines the defense of truth. Truth is the most precious thing for the person in the pillar and support of truth. The conduct of the individual in it would be one of watchfulness for weakness in the defenses and a desire to strengthen the defenses' integrity.

All three of these should instill a sense of awe in the individuals and the church as a whole as to what they are and who they are a part of. That awe provides a motivation to keep conduct pure and righteous.

#### The mystery of godliness as a foundation of the purpose.

The mystery of godliness and the purpose relate in two areas. The mystery provides the justification for the church to be what it ought to be. The mystery also provides a true example of the kind of character that one expects from a member of the household of God. The mystery provides the true foundation for what the church should be, in that, it provides the church with a

basic understanding of its relationship to the mystery. The mystery also provides a clear example of what the church should be by way of a perfect example of behavior in the church.

The mystery gives the church a foundation in that it defines the church's relationship to it as the head of the household of God, as the King of the assembly and as the focal point for the church's activities as the truth. This is how the mystery of godliness becomes great in the common confession of the church.

The mystery of godliness is the head of the household of God. It is through Christ that the household receives its love and acceptance through the ransom offered for many. This ransom is purchased by his being revealed in the flesh and vindicated in the Spirit. The act of Christ's revelation makes him the one who is able to be the true head of the household of God. He is the one that greatly showed the love he possessed for the family of God by his sacrifice for it.

The mystery of godliness is the King of the assembly. The mystery is the King of kings and Lord of lords in the truest political sense. As the King, he alone is worthy and able to lead the assembly of the living God. Christ stands before his host triumphant, and only he is worthy to lead it to battle. He alone has shown by his sacrifice for it that he is able to lead it to victory.

The mystery of godliness is the truth for which the church struggles and works to be a strong foundation and defense. The truth is the mystery of godliness. Christ stands as the mystery for which the church is the pillar and

support. Only Christ could be the truth for which the church struggles so valiantly. He alone shows himself to be right and becomes triumphant because of it. The righteousness of Christ shows that he is the mystery of godliness in truth; the truth for which the church strives.

The mystery of godliness also provides an example of how one ought to behave in the church. Christ becomes the supreme example of sacrifice, humility in leadership, godly character in the assembly and concern for the truth. The members of the assembly become unified and loving because Christ was unified and loving in all he did in the church that he created. The church should be a church with a righteous agenda because it was Christ who also had this agenda and did all in his power to bring it into being. By these actions he showed what it means to be a leader in the assembly of the living God. It was Christ's concern for the truth that led him to his great sacrifice. He would not surrender a single aspect of the truth for any reason. Because of this, he provides a supreme example of what it means to be the pillar and the support of the truth.

Taking both the threefold conception of the church and the mystery of godliness as foundations for the purpose of First Timothy, there is thus a rationale for maintaining that First Timothy is much more than helpful advice to a pastor in Ephesus. It is a book that founds itself on eternal principles and thus presents an ethic of the universal church. It is a book of timeless and universal principles.

First Timothy as the Commandment Entrusted to Bring Strength and Purity.

The purpose of First Timothy defined in this manner leads to a discussion of the other passages that support and give further definition to this purpose. Most notably, there are the command statements of First Timothy. These are found in 1:18-20 and 6:11-16. These present a solemn charge to Timothy to keep the commandment in order that he may remain strong and keep himself pure in the universal church. Considering the plain purpose of First Timothy, anyone who keeps this command can expect the same strength and purity. These statements also show that First Timothy is a commandment as a whole. It begins with the phrase "First of all,..." and ends with a final charge to keep the commandment (6:20-21). In light of this, First Timothy can be understood as a commandment with a universal purpose.

The first command statement is found in 1 Timothy 1:18-20: "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

The commentators differ as to interpretation of this passage and most of the consideration of this passage focuses on what Paul meant by 'delivered over to Satan.' Fee thinks that this is a renewal of the 'command' given in verse three

of chapter one and focuses his discussion on the 'excommunication' aspects of the passage.<sup>20</sup> Oden focuses more on the call of Timothy aspects of the passage, but does not make any connection between this passage and verse three of the same chapter.<sup>21</sup> Guthrie balances his consideration between the solemn charge to keep the commandment and consideration of the meaning of Paul's delivery of the two individuals to Satan.<sup>22</sup> Generally, the commentators consider the passage linguistically, but they do not consider it at all in the light of Paul's purpose for writing the book itself.

Fee's attempt to connect verse three of chapter one and this command statement seems stretched since there is no direct connection between the two passages. Additionally, the command that is given in verse three of chapter one is a command that was previously given, but in verse 18 it is referred to as 'This command.' This denotes a command that has a present sense to it. It indicates a command that is currently being given, not one given previously.

The beginning of chapter two follows with the phrase 'First of all...' indicating the beginning of the main body of the letter and the commandment that Paul is entrusting at that moment to Timothy. This is the best and most direct connection concerning the commandment that Paul is entrusting to Timothy at that very moment. From then on, the main body of First Timothy is a series of commandments under its purpose of providing an ethic for the universal church.

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<sup>20</sup> Fee. 57-60.

<sup>21</sup> Oden. 123-124.

<sup>22</sup> Guthrie. 67-69.

This command statement gives the overall purpose of first Timothy its force and strength. It gets this strength from the fact that it is a command that one entrusts to another. To entrust something to someone comes with the expectation that the thing entrusted be kept in good order. This commandment has with it a remembrance of prophecies made concerning Timothy before the command was given. This gives the command further weight by pointing out that if he keeps the command, he will keep his faith with a good conscience. Additionally, Timothy will be able to fight the good fight of faith. If he does not, he will become like the many that have seen their faith become shipwrecked, Hymenaeus and Alexander are mentioned as examples of this condition. Paul is pointing out that there is more at stake than just Timothy's problems at Ephesus. A much larger battle that involves a fight of faith presents itself with those who have been given over to Satan.

The second command statement is found in chapter six verse 11-14: "But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Several things are observable about this passage. This is a command given with a charge in the presence of God. Timothy cannot escape it, for God is everywhere. It is made before Christ. Paul mentions this because, like Christ, Timothy has also made the good confession before a witness. Because of his identification with Christ, Timothy must strive to be like him in character. He must pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness to make his confession sure.

This command statement has a similarity to 1:18-20 in that they both mention a good fight of faith. Paul is thus returning to the central idea of the first statement in summing up his commandment. There is much at stake in this fight of faith -- too much to not be seriously concerned about the fight against Satan. Hence, the commandment Paul is giving has its importance in preserving the faith by being kept faithfully.

The fact that one statement about keeping the commandment begins the main body of the letter and the other comes near the end of the letter leads one to believe that some form of inclusio structure may be present. This would lend more support to the idea that the whole of the main body of First Timothy is the commandment to which Paul is referring.

These two command statements strengthen the main purpose First Timothy and further define its function. First Timothy is a command entrusted by Paul to Timothy in order to keep one pure in order that he may fight the good fight of faith with success. The solemn nature of the command gives the purpose of



First Timothy importance. It now involves a great struggle between those that will keep the commandment in accordance to its purpose and those that fail and fall to Satan. By Keeping true to the commandment one will cultivate the characteristics that allow one to fight the good fight of faith and continue to the end. This further defines the purpose of First Timothy.

The purpose of First Timothy now has a rationale. The reason one should behave as he or she should in the household of God founded on the mystery of Christ is because such action will lead to purity and righteousness. This purity and righteousness leads to an overcoming power until the return of Christ. This makes First Timothy of utmost importance to the church. It contains the commandment that will bring about purity and strength so that the church will last till the end.

If this is not enough, Paul's final charge in the last two verses of First Timothy serves as a final exclamation point. "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge'--which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith." This reveals Paul's final concern for Timothy. Timothy must keep the command that is entrusted to him despite opposition from those that think they know but in reality have fallen from the faith. Thus, the importance of First Timothy as the command of the universal church to show all how they should behave in the household of God founded on the mystery of Christ cannot be underestimated.

'First of all...'

The phrase 'First of all...' starts the second chapter, and it has a dual significance. First, it shows the beginning of the main body of the letter. It is not the beginning of a group of items in a list, however, as there are no follow up phrases like 'second of all, thirdly, etc.' Second, it indicates the end of what has gone before and a desire to get to the main business of the letter. It also indicates a break in the thought of Paul. Up to this point in the letter he has been dealing with various issues, but his main business, the main reason for his writing, has not yet been revealed. 'First of all...' indicates that this has now changed, and Paul is about to get to the main thoughts on his mind. He gets to the main reason for writing Timothy in the first place.

There are some ramifications of this in considering the theology of First Timothy. The main ramification is that there is ideological separation at this point. Up to this point there has been no unifying theme guiding what Paul is writing. Now there is a unified theme found in the purpose passage. Everything that follows the phrase 'First of all...' falls under its power. Finally, there is the ramification that the material before and the material after this phrase are separate in ideological function and nature. If this is so, then one group cannot be used to interpret the other in a direct way. They are comparable, but one is not subordinate to another. They must be considered separately as to their purpose. It constitutes the beginning of the commandment and the end of the prefatory material.

### The First Chapter of First Timothy as a Preface to the Commandment

Considering the observations that the commandment statements form an inclusio of the main commandment and its purpose and that 'First of all' denotes the beginning of this commandment, some determination needs to be made as to what part the first chapter plays in shaping First Timothy and its purpose. It is the contention of this author that the majority of the first chapter is prefatory material designed to give the purpose a setting and historical context. Also, this context does not diminish the universal nature of the book of First Timothy in any way.

Verses one and two of chapter one offer a typical salutation in the ancient world. They also offer us insight into the character of Paul and Paul's relationship to Timothy. Paul and Timothy are very close and Paul regards himself as an apostle according to the commandment of Christ Jesus. This provides two points for discussion. First, this is a letter to a single person not a group, although its content may affect all the church based on Paul's apostleship. Secondly, the idea of the commandment of Christ being the basis for Paul's apostleship paves the way for his entrusting the command to Timothy to preserve it.

Verses three through eleven focus on Paul's purpose in leaving Timothy at Ephesus. That purpose was to instruct certain men not to teach certain doctrines that apparently had something to do with the Law. Paul then goes on to discuss the position of the Law in the life of the believer. Paul points out that all Christian instruction should bring about sincere faith not fruitless discussion. The Law's focus is toward the unrighteousness of man. The righteous man has no need of

the Law since he already keeps it. There is a difference between what Paul says is the purpose for leaving Timothy at Ephesus and the purpose for his writing Timothy. Paul specifically says that he has left Timothy at Ephesus to instruct certain men not to teach certain doctrines. This purpose is particular and time bound and differs totally from the universal purpose that is stated in the purpose passage of First Timothy. This is not to say that this passage does not help in our understanding of the purpose of the Law in the Christian life. It also does not mean that this passage has no bearing on the main body of the letter and its purpose. It provides a backdrop and shows Timothy his place in the church and in the grand scheme of things. It also indicates the main goal of the church is instruction.

Verses 12 through 17 offer a glimpse into the heart of Paul in relation to the church. Paul mentions how he earlier had persecuted the church, but later found mercy and it is reasonable to assume that his description of himself is connected with the main purpose of the letter. At the same time, it is hard to draw a direct connection between this paragraph and the plainly stated purpose of the letter. Paul is voicing his main regret concerning the church, that he persecuted it. He rejoices, on the other hand, that he has found mercy through the church despite that persecution.

In consideration of all this material, one can say that Paul's mind is on the church, but nothing seems to foreshadow his main purpose stated in 3:14-15. Paul mentions his apostleship, Timothy's particular work in Ephesus, the purpose

of the law and his chief regret concerning the church, but there are no universals mentioned other than the purpose of the law. Concerning the church, Paul mentions his and Timothy's current happenings, but not those of the church as a whole. Thus, the first seventeen verses of chapter one provide a historical backdrop to the book, but do not dictate the purpose for the book or influence that purpose. They provide a preface to the work, but that is all.

“What, then, does First Timothy have to do with Ephesus?”

This view of the first chapter leads to a question about Ephesus and its relationship to the book of First Timothy. Was the book of First Timothy written to address specific problems at a historical point, or is the purpose of First Timothy larger and more universal?

Whether this material is particular or universal is important and it in fact it becomes crucial for the continuing debate concerning women in the church in chapter two. Both Sharon Gritz<sup>23</sup> and the Kroeger's<sup>24</sup> hinge their argument on Ephesus. It is their central point in their consideration of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15. They both contend that the particular situation in Ephesus is the main reason for what Paul says in the passage.

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<sup>23</sup> Sharon Gritz, Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century. (New York: University Press of America), 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Clark-Kroeger and Catherine Clark-Kroeger, I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 1992.

Yet as we have seen, the purpose passage is universal in its intent, and the only mention of Ephesus in the whole book is found in 1:3. ("As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct men not to teach strange doctrines...") Thus there is an instruction to remain and a rationale for that command, but there is no connection between this command to Timothy and the universal purpose of First Timothy. Ephesus, of course, provides a historical backdrop for the book, but there is no direct connection between Ephesus and why Paul is writing First Timothy.

There is a further problem with a view that Paul is addressing specific problems at Ephesus. That is the problem of reconciling two purposes that contradict in focus. The argument goes like this. Purpose #1: Paul is writing to help Paul correct problems in the Ephesian church. Purpose #2: Paul is writing to show how one ought to conduct oneself in the household of God. While it is possible to correct problems by adjusting behavior, the scene for the purposes is totally different. In order to maintain the first purpose in the Ephesian church you would have to say that the household of God is the Ephesian church. The first purpose has a specific historical focus; the second has a broad universal focus. The problem for those that maintain the first is that Paul says that the second is his purpose in writing to Timothy, but not the first. They can only say they have inferred the first without any direct statement. Considering this, the author of this thesis would say that while the problems at Ephesus provide a backdrop for Paul's work in writing First Timothy, they are not his focus. Ephesus and First

Timothy only meet when the letter reaches Timothy and Timothy reads it in Ephesus, but its content focuses on the church universal.

This means that the purpose of Timothy is both universal and timeless. It is universal in that it deals with a single entity -- the universal church. It is timeless in that it intends to be a guide for that church and the people in it until the church no longer exists. There will always be a household of God. There will always be an assembly of the living God. There will always be a pillar and support of the truth.

### Summary of Chapter Two

The purpose of First Timothy is plainly stated, and it is related to the universal church. It is an ethic for the universal church based on three conceptions of that church. That threefold conception is the church as the household of God, the church as the assembly of the living God, and the church as the pillar and support of the truth. These three conceptions are founded on the principle of the mystery of godliness. Both the threefold conception of the church and the mystery of godliness begin to form the theological foundation of the main body of the book of First Timothy. This main body shows itself to be a commandment entrusted to Timothy to keep one strong and pure in the church. The command statements also give the book its authority and importance to the church. The phrase 'First of all...' and the idea of the first chapter being only a preface to the real work both show that First Timothy is primarily a universal and

timeless work and only secondarily has to do with the situation at Ephesus. It is first and foremost a timeless ethic for all those in the universal church.



## CHAPTER 3

### The Content of First Timothy in Harmony with the Purpose Passage

#### Introduction

This chapter will seek to answer the following question: How does the theological foundation of First Timothy, presented in the purpose passage, affect understanding of the various issues found in the main body of First Timothy? In effect, how are the various issues discussed in First Timothy affected by the understanding of First Timothy's purpose shown in chapter two of this thesis? The purpose passage of Timothy shows the reader what Paul is trying to achieve in the book. This chapter will show how this is accomplished in the book's main content. This main content, as discussed in the previous chapter, is found after the phrase 'First of all' and continues to the end of the book. It is the commandment that is entrusted to Timothy and passed down to the present day. The content of this commandment must show how one ought to behave in the church, if it is to line up with the purpose passage's main intent. The content should also reflect the nature of the church as found in the purposes threefold conception of the church and the church's foundation in the mystery of godliness. This chapter will attempt to show how the purpose of First Timothy affects the theological understanding of chapters two and three. This is done save space and time as it is not the intent of this chapter of the thesis to be a commentary on the book of First Timothy. Chapters four through six will be dealt with in a general and broad way. This is done in order to see more fully the impacts of the purpose passage on the content of the book of First Timothy.

### 1 Timothy 2:1-7: The Assembly's Prayer For All Men

In looking at this section, and all the following sections in consideration of chapters two and three, this writer will be using three main sources: Oden's First and Second Timothy and Titus<sup>1</sup>; Fee's 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus<sup>2</sup>; and Young's The Theology of the Pastoral Letters<sup>3</sup>. Additional sources will be used where they are most useful and periodical resources will be used when they apply to the passage under consideration. Each section will follow the same format. First, a summary observation will be made about the section. Next, the main sources will be engaged as to their validity. Finally, a theology of the section as it relates to the purpose passage of First Timothy will be offered.

This section provides instructions to the assembly in the area of prayer for others. It is a section with political language throughout its contents. It would seem best to connect it to the idea of the church as the assembly of the living God. It shows the relationship that should be present between the secular authorities and the church. That relationship is rooted in prayer. The church should be praying for all the secular authorities with the goal of a peaceful life with each other. Paul stresses that prayer should be offered for all because Christ died for all. Finally, Paul appeals to his apostleship as a result of this kind of prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas C. Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Gordon D. Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, Mass. : Hendrickson Publishers, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Francis Young, The Theology of the Pastoral Letters, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Oden divides this section in two segments. The first includes verses one and two. Oden points out that the first two verses deal with worship and order in the church<sup>4</sup>. In the church, prayers are offered for all because Christ died for all<sup>5</sup>. Leadership is prayed for, especially magistrates, because of the effect their decisions can have on others<sup>6</sup>. Oden then moves on to the second segment in verses 3-7. In this segment Oden points out two things. First, Oden points out that this segment is about "One God, One Mediator, One Redeemed Humanity."<sup>7</sup> Paul is trying to stress this oneness as a basis for prayer for all men. "That one man brings God and humanity together is fundamental to all Christian proclamation."<sup>8</sup> Oden goes on to point out that the entire section offers four fruits of a well-regulated secular government. These are tranquillity, peace, godliness and public decency.<sup>9</sup> Prayer should be directed toward authorities so that their actions strive to achieve the above qualities.

Fee has a completely different approach to the passage. He maintains the idea that false teachers have infiltrated the church and this is a correction of their teachings concerning civil authority.<sup>10</sup> Fee still manages to point out the mediator principle in the passage much in the same way that Oden does<sup>11</sup>. Fee at this point stretches to maintain his false teacher conspiracy theory, but it is just that -- stretched.

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<sup>4</sup> Oden. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 46

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 91

<sup>10</sup> Fee. 63.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 64-65.

Young speaks of the passage in more theological terms. In considering this passage, he talks of the first principle duty of the church as prayer<sup>12</sup>. In this passage are several key concepts of theology. It speaks of God as savior. Young sees this passage as key in understanding Christ as the mediator between God and humanity.<sup>13</sup> This seems to be Young's major focus concerning this passage.

In response to all of these viewpoints, this author feels that Oden is closest to the mark. By pointing out the political nature of the passage and Oden has a better viewpoint concerning Christ as the great mediator by relying on this political language. Fee is disappointing as he seems more interested in false teachers than the clearer political tones of the passage. Young is better than Oden concerning the Christological aspects of this passage as it concerns salvation, but he is weak in noticing the political aspects of the passage.

In this author's consideration of the passage, the political language of the entire passage is to be noted in its relation to the church being described as the 'assembly of the living God.' First is the descriptive use of words like 'petitions' and 'entreaties.' These words have political connotations. There is talk of kings and magistrates. There is a desire for peace, tranquillity, godliness and dignity. Oden rightly calls these the four fruits of a well-managed civil government. There is talk of salvation for all men. The very concept of Christ as mediator is loaded with a the political idea of the lawyer/go-between of governments, especially monarchies. There is also the ransom concept. This is societally oriented toward

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<sup>12</sup> Young, 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 48-68

slavery. It is the idea of the Great Mediator paying a price to free his client and acquitting the one he is defending. There is also talk of Christ being a testimony given at the proper time. This is a public testimony. This language indicates a political tone to the section.

Oden is right in his analysis but fails to note that this could very well apply to the church authorities as well. While it is the salvation aspects of the passage that seem to be the main focus of the prayer for the state by the church, the ideas of tranquillity, peace, godliness and public decency would also apply concerning the church's authorities.

The political idea of the church being the assembly of the living God is what is at issue in this passage. The prayers of the assembly have a political motivation. They also have a goal -- the salvation of humanity. This is the agenda of God's assembly to have all saved with a knowledge of the truth.

The mystery of godliness affects this as well. Prayer is expected from the church because the mystery puts forth a petition for all men to be saved. There is thus a desired behavior for one in the church. This is to pray. The one in the assembly prays because of the mystery's desire for all to be saved. The prayer is for all because Christ died for all. The person in the assembly ought to pray for all men because the mystery of godliness died for all humanity and continues to act as mediator for all humanity. The mystery becomes the testimony given at the right time to help acquit his client -- all humanity. Verse seven confirms this with Paul's description of himself as apostle that is appointed to bear this testimony to the Gentiles in faith and truth.

In summary, this section of First Timothy points to the idea of the church being the assembly of the living God and its relationship to all other political entities. It is a relationship based on prayer from the assembly of the living God toward all authorities. This includes secular and sacred authorities. The goal of this prayer is twofold. First, that society, both in the world and the church, be ordered by the principles of tranquillity, peace, godliness and dignity. Second, that all humanity becomes saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Both of these goals find their foundation in the mystery of godliness as an example of this desired behavior. Christ acts as mediator and redeemer, so the church should also act to bring mediation and redemption to the world. The assembly must continue to proclaim the testimony given at the proper time to the world. Paul sights himself as an example of a proclaimer of this testimony.

#### 1 Timothy 2:8-15: The Actions of Men and Women in the Household

Of all the sections in the book of First Timothy, chapter two verses 8-15 are the most discussed in most recent times. It is a passage of great controversy and has caused many a debate on the subject of women in the ministry. More particularly, women in leadership positions in ministry. It is the intention of this author to engage this question in light of the purpose passage's effect on interpretation of this passage. At the same time to point out the other great truth's found in this passage.

To summarize this passage, it must be understood that this passage is a conclusion based on the previous passage. It starts with the word 'therefore'

which denotes a conclusion or a resultant state of affairs. Considering the previous passage, Paul points out that this has consequences for both men and women in the household of God in how they act toward others and each other. For men, it is to pray in purity without anger and division. For women, modesty becomes a watchword, and they are not to teach or usurp authority over men but to learn in silence with submissiveness. Paul backs up his point with an argument that is not based on culture, but on the account of the creation of man and woman in Genesis and their subsequent fall. Interestingly enough, Paul includes a promise for women in the bearing of children if they continue in the household with an attitude of faith, love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Oden views verse eight as an encouragement for the male leadership to pray and take an active part in public prayer in worship. This prayer is to be done in sincerity without anger toward each other and without dissension in the church.<sup>14</sup> Oden then deals with verse nine and ten. Oden takes a strong view on this passage but prefers a middle way. He views the commands of modesty as absolutely necessary to public prayer. However he does fall into a more culturally relative viewpoint seeing this as a command that relates to the wealth toward the poor in Ephesus. To Oden this does provide a universal principle for dealing with this issue in that modest dress reflects the inner attitude of the heart.<sup>15</sup> Oden then deals with the rest of the section. Oden points out that verse eleven is a command of permission, as it allows women to learn. This permission was a step up from the traditional view of Judaism that did not allow women to be taught.

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<sup>14</sup> Oden. 91-92.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 92-96.

The problem most women today have with the text is the two requirements to the learning -- silence and submissiveness. Oden states that in reality these are the two great strengths of women in all ages. Quietness leads to attentiveness and submission means the person is there to learn. Oden says there seems to have been a problem in all the churches where the women were disrupting the services. To Oden what Paul means is that women are to learn quietly with submissiveness, without an attitude of domination over men.<sup>16</sup> Oden then points out that Paul backs his view of women in this matter by two observations concerning Adam and Eve. Paul points to the creative order and the fall not the culture of Ephesus. Oden points out that in no place does Paul say that there is some inequality between men and women, but there is a difference between the sexes because of the created order and the nature of the fall.<sup>17</sup> Oden's final comment is on verse 15. He comments that this is the childbearing, the birth of Jesus not just bearing of children in general. It is through Christ that Eve's sin has been atoned.<sup>18</sup>

Fee's approach is still one of cultural relativity with reference to the false teachers in Ephesus. Thus, the entirety of this passage was to correct specific difficulties in one church. The instructions toward men are to promote purity and heal anger and dissension in the church of Ephesus. The 'every place' refers to the church meeting places around Ephesus.<sup>19</sup> Thus, for Fee, all the commands in this passage are relative to the time and the culture in which they were made.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 96-98.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 99-100.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 100-102.

<sup>19</sup> Fee. 71.



The commands to women were directed toward a certain group of women in the Ephesian church.<sup>20</sup> Paul concludes his discussion of the passage in much the same way as Oden. He too believes that to be saved through child birth involves salvation through Christ's birth.<sup>21</sup>

Young's approach to the passage is almost one of indifference. When he does deal with this passage, he focuses on how the Christian is to act in a hostile world. He takes much the same view of verse 15 that many take. He hardly looks at it or the rest of this passage.

Two monographs deserve some note at this point. These are books written by Sharon Gritz<sup>22</sup> and by Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger<sup>23</sup>. Both of these books are written under the same premise. That premise is that there was something religious, cultural or historical about Ephesus that caused Paul to write what he did concerning women in the church. It is toward these women, not all women that Paul directs his instructions.

There have been several noteworthy articles written on this passage over the last fifteen years. '1 Timothy 2:8-15: Unique or Normative?' by Bruce K. Waltke<sup>24</sup> offers a serious critique of Fee's basic premise that 1 Timothy is an *ad hoc* document. He does this by showing that if this is so, the church has misread the Bible for over 1900 years before Fee showed that the church was wrong. He

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 71-73.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 74-76.

<sup>22</sup> Shanon Hodgin Gritz. Paul, Women Teachers and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century. New York: University Press of America, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger. I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce K Waltke. '1 Timothy 2:8-15: Unique of Normative?' Crux. Vol. 28. No. 1. 1992. 22-23.

also points out that there were many godly women at Ephesus, should they be silenced because of a few bad apples. Finally, and in Waltke's mind the most damaging, is the fact that Paul bases his argument on the universal concepts of the order of creation and the Fall.

Another article is Timothy Harris' 'Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.'<sup>25</sup> In this article, Harris takes P. W. Barnett to task for his ideas that this passage is directed against the woman being a senior teacher and at married women. He does this by showing that the idea of a senior teacher appears nowhere in the New Testament and that this would exclude single women. He additionally points out that the universality of the origin and fall of humankind would nullify these ideas.

Finally, "What Does it Mean to be 'Saved by Childbirth' (1 Timothy 2:15)?" by Stanley Porter<sup>26</sup> offers an example of how this part of the passage is dealt with in its context. He points out that if these women continue in the behavior described by Paul, they will be saved. The article offers good exegesis on the passage as well.

The above books and articles are given as examples of the large debate that surrounds this passage. The argument can be broken down into a debate between two viewpoints that are used when looking at this passage. The first is to look at this passage as unique and historically specific. The second is to view

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<sup>25</sup> Timothy J. Harris. 'Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.' The Evangelical Quarterly. No. 62. No. 4. 1990. 335-352.

<sup>26</sup> Stanley Porter. "What Does it Mean to be 'Saved by Childbirth' (1 Timothy 2:15)?" Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Vol. 49. 1993. 87-102.

the passage as normative and universal to the whole church. Oden tries to plot a middle way between the two, but he is the only one. This creates a unique problem, for Oden seems to pick and choose which parts of the passage are normative and which parts are particular on the basis of what is palatable to modern thinking. The only redeeming thing about Fee is that he is consistent. He continues to use a unclearly stated purpose over a clearly stated one in his interpretation of the book. Young avoids the passage and its controversy as if there is nothing theological about it at all. Gritz and the Kroeger's books are intriguing and fall in with Fee as to their approach from a historical viewpoint to the exclusion of any clearly stated purpose. Another thing that is disturbing about this approach is that it never seems to be applied to the rest of the book of First Timothy. Waltke presents the basic conservative approach to the passage, but he is really attacking Fee at Fee's foundational approach to the passage. Harris is showing the impossibility of taking this passage at anything but face value. One cannot read into the passage terms like 'senior teacher' or 'in Ephesus' without seeming to be practicing eisegesis. Porter offers a good analysis of the last verse of this passage, but he does not seem to give any good answers to its meaning. Both Fee and Oden seem to be better on this verse.

The problem all these sources have is that they do not reference the plainly stated purpose of First Timothy to buttress their arguments. Those that want make Ephesus the main issue cannot use anything that would seem to push any idea of universality. Those that see the passage as universal seem to only want to engage in a defensive tactic of handling their adversaries. This author

sees this passage as universal because the purpose for the book of First Timothy is universal. The language of the passage itself is universal which lines up with the purpose passage's universality.

To begin, the language of the passage continues to be along the lines of a political organization. This is a continuation of the same type of language that is found in the previous passage, and should not be surprising as this passage starts with 'therefore.' This indicates a conclusion or a desired result from the previous passage. In this case, the desired results are two-fold depending on the sex of the individual person in the assembly.

To the men there is a short commandment that deals with their prayers. This is a continuation of the discussion of prayer found in the previous section. It is the logical state that should follow the fact that God desires all to be saved and that prayers should be made for all men. Therefore, men should pray. Not just some men, but men in every place that are a part of the assembly of the living God. Such prayer has three conditions. First, such prayer is made by 'lifting up holy hands.' Pentecostals and Charismatics both emphasize this passage in the area of worship. The key element is in ones attitude. This attitude is one of surrender and submission to Christ, and is accomplished by having hands that are holy, hands that have done no wrong toward God or man. Second, prayer should be made without wrath. If one of the desired areas in any government is peace, anger must not be present in the prayers for that peace. Anger leads to hate and hate leads to war. Thirdly, prayer should be made without dissension. Division marks the downfall of any government. It is also the chief hinderer of

prayer. Is it possible to pray with a divided heart? Can the community of faith pray effectively in their collective heart is divided? The answer to both these questions is no. There is only one assembly of the living God. If the assembly has division in it, it will not be able to reach any conclusion or course of action. If the prayers of the assembly are divided, it cannot be assumed that peace and tranquillity will be achieved in the world.

The instructions to women are more lengthy, but they are still in the same theological context involving prayer. Women should pray, but they have an additional requirement so that their prayers are not hindered. That requirement is one of modesty. Discreteness is also mentioned. The idea is one of humility and not being proud of appearance or status. Worship in the assembly is not a public spectacle, but a prayerful event. Proper clothing should be worn that does not promote an attitude of pride or a show of position as all are equal before God. Modesty and discreteness are the best clothing of a woman for they lead to good works that are godly and holy. The women in the assembly become living examples of the public decency and godliness they are trying to promote in their prayers.

An additional requirement is submissiveness in instruction. Women are to receive instruction with entire submissiveness. This is simply a requirement of all good students. Arrogance makes a poor student. It implies that a person knows more than an instructor. A good student submits what he thinks he knows to the knowledge and insight of his teacher. When this happens, true learning takes place. The true positive of verse eleven is that women are now allowed to

receive religious instruction. This was not the case for all women in the time of Paul in Judaism, and this is still the case in Orthodox Judaism. Paul opens the door for women to be instructed as long as they are submissive to that instruction. This is still in the context of prayer. Prayer is better served by women that receive instruction with submissive hearts and can then submit to the Lord's will and instruction for their lives.

Verse twelve is presently one of the most controversial verses in present date. It is a prohibition by Paul for women to both teach and usurp authority over men and an exhortation for women to remain quiet. This is a contrast from the previous verse which is a permissive statement. This is prohibitive. The instructions concern women's relationship to men in the assembly of the living God. They are not to teach these men nor are they to exercise authority over men in the assembly. There are several things to note. One is that in no way does this preclude women from ministry. In this very passage there is an exhortation for women to adorn themselves with good works. This command also does not preclude women teaching other women or teaching children. The command is very specific. Women are not to teach men, and they are not to exercise authority over men. This is with a reminder that this is in the context of the assembly of God. In this assembly, women cannot teach or exercise authority over men. Given the universality of the purpose passage, Paul should not need to buttress his argument, but he does. He does it by returning to the dawn of humanity and humanity's fall.

In verses 13 and 14, Paul strengthens his commandments to women by reminding Timothy of the origins of humanity and the origins of human sin. Paul is not just strengthening his arguments; however, he is making an interpretive statement about these passages in Genesis as well. First, he brings up the fact that it was Adam that was first created and then Eve. This relates to both teaching and authority. It relates to teaching in that in the Genesis account Adam is taught directly by God not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>27</sup> This was not so for Eve. She is created after the command is given, and there is no record in the Genesis account of her being a witness to this command being given again by God. It is only given directly by God to Adam alone. The only way Eve could have learned the commandment is if her husband taught it to her. This is how she knew it when the serpent tempts her. It would also explain her addition to the command of 'or touch it.'<sup>28</sup> Adam might have added this to the command to provide an extra measure of safety to Eve or to give it greater emphasis. Adam simply reasons, if she does not touch it, she cannot eat it. Paul in First Timothy simple equates this to the teaching relationship between men and women. The creative order also shows us a reason that women should not exercise authority over men as well. There is no reason given for Adam's creation other than God wants to create him. With Eve, there is a reason. God sees that it is not good for man to be alone. Therefore, he creates Eve to be a companion to him and to be his helper. Eve is created with the role of being Adam's helper. Being a helper implies two things. Her role is important; she is

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<sup>27</sup> Gen. 2:16-17.

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 3:3.

filling a need for the man. However, man is still the leader; she is not in authority over him. She is there to help, not to command. Paul is pointing out the danger of forgetting the creative role that God gave to women. If Eve had been submissive to Adam's teaching, if she had respected his authority over her and not tried to show Adam a thing or two about this fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the temptation of her by the serpent would have failed and the fall would not have taken place. Paul is making a command that protects women in the assembly in a similar way by showing women to respect the creative order as it regards males and females.

Paul does not stop with the creative order, but moves on in verse 14 to the consequences of the fall on women. Woman's role in the fall of humanity also affects her by prohibiting both teaching and exercising of authority over men. It does this through the nature of that involvement in the temptation and deception of Eve and through the curse on humanity that follows. Paul mentions Eve's deception as a rationale for women not teaching or usurping authority over men. In Genesis, Eve's role in the fall is much more active because of this deception. Eve's role is to listen to the serpent's lie and believe the lie. Based on her belief in the lie, she begins to see the tree and its fruit through a deceived perception that sees both as desirable and good. This deceived perception causes her to desire the fruit for the wisdom it will bring to her. The desire for the fruit and its wisdom causes her to act in taking the fruit and eating it. This action leads to a further action of involving her husband by giving him the fruit. Up to this point this has been all Eve's doing. Adam has done nothing up to this point in the story, nor is



he deceived in what he is doing. Despite this, he eats the fruit and the fall of humanity is complete. The prohibition against women teaching men has its origins in this activity of Eve in the fall of humanity. Eve's deception is the first domino being tipped over that causes the fall of all humankind.<sup>29</sup> Because of this and the desire to avoid similar catastrophes for the assembly of God, Paul prohibits women to teach. This stems from Woman's initial deception and perhaps a tendency of the female to be easily deceived if she does not act submissively to the teaching of her husband. The fall also adds to the force of Paul's instruction for women not to exercise authority over men. The fall does this through the curse that follows it. In that curse is a statement to Eve: "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."<sup>30</sup> The general authority of leader to helper is intensified to a stronger headship of the man over the woman. Paul simply points out that this remains true in the assembly of the living God. At the same time, He points out that women are redeemed through one element of the curse in verse 15.

Verse 15 is a puzzle, but it only seems proper to connect it to the previous verse. One of the consequences of the curse is that women would bear children in sorrow.<sup>31</sup> However, Paul points out that it is through the childbirth that they will be preserved in their salvation. The promise of Genesis 3:15 comes to pass in Christ's birth which is the beginning of the redemption all humanity. This redemption is theirs, if they continue in faith, love and sanctity with self restraint.

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<sup>29</sup> See Gen. 3:1-7

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 3:16.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

They become the assembly's living witnesses of peace, tranquillity, godliness and dignity if they keep these commands that Paul lays before Timothy. In doing this they cause the prayers for kings and all in authority to be pure and holy before the Lord.

Paul has the highest good for the assembly and the men and women in it in mind. His commands to both of them are designed to enhance the prayers of the universal church in that assembly's agenda of seeing God's desire of all men to come to repentance happen. It is this desire and a healthy view of the roles men and women which both play in the assembly's actions in prayer. These roles are not defined by some historical-cultural milieu, but rather on the theological conceptions of the relationship between men and women based on the creative order and the nature of the fall and its resultant curse. Men and women should pray with a full knowledge of these roles as it affects their teaching and conceptions of authority. If they do this, their prayers will not be hindered and the agenda of the assembly will move forward.

### 1 Timothy 3:1-13: The Mystery and the Character of the Assembly's Leadership

This chapter begins with phrase: 'It is a trustworthy statement.' There is some debate as to what verse this belongs. It either is a final statement about the promise to women or an opening to the discussion of overseers. Regardless, it does form a break between the two subjects. It acts as a transition between the two issues. Paul begins to talk about two offices in the church -- the overseer and the deacon. The primary issue with both is not they should do, but what they

should be. So Paul offers a list of qualifications for both. For the overseer or bishop there is list of qualifications for bishop that involve a bishop's spirituality, character, social position and abilities. For the deacon it is much the same except there is an additional instruction concerning the deacons' wives. The fundamental issue for both is character particularly as it affects action in home and the community.

Oden deals with this section by dividing the two offices. In dealing with the office of the bishop or overseer, he first deals with the word for this office -- episkopos. Oden defines it as presbyter or guardian.<sup>32</sup> These are the shepherds of the flock of God. Oden divides the qualifications of these overseers into five areas: domestic accountability, oversight abilities, ability to teach, free from addiction and good reputation.<sup>33</sup> Oden treats the deacons in a similar way. To Oden, deacons are servants to the household of God. They are servants to the overseers.<sup>34</sup> Qualifications for this office are thus by nature ones that would enhance this office in its service to the overseers. He deals with women in serving ministries as equals in respect to deacons.<sup>35</sup>

Fee divides the two offices as well. In his treatment of overseers, he takes every qualification into consideration. He is good in presenting all options for the purposes in interpretation, but there is no hint that this was just for Ephesus. He at least believes this passage is universal in some way.<sup>36</sup> The same is true for

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<sup>32</sup> Oden. 140-141.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 141-145.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 147

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 149-150.

<sup>36</sup> Fee. 78-85.

deacons.<sup>37</sup> In dealing with the deacons' wives, he says that this is not only referring to the wives of deacons, but any woman that served the church in some capacity.<sup>38</sup> Fee's focus is presenting each qualification as completely as possible.

Young's focus is on church order when dealing with both these offices. Young focuses on the necessity of character for bishops.<sup>39</sup> For deacons the emphasis is on their servanthood. Young discusses at length the issue of women as deacons. He shows the various options, but does not focus on one in particular.<sup>40</sup>

There are some journal articles of note. The first is about the 'true saying' statement and to which passage it belongs.<sup>41</sup> In his article, Ellingworth believes that the 'true saying' belongs to the discussion of the episcopacy. Sydney Page's article 'Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles'<sup>42</sup> deals expressly with what is meant by the phrase 'husband of one wife' in relation to church leaders. He sets forth the following four groups who would thus be excluded from the ministry: (1) the unmarried, (2) polygamous individuals, (3) divorced or (4) remarried after the death of the first spouse. He dismisses the first as unlikely given the rest of Scripture. The second, he says, is unlikely as well because monogamy was the norm throughout the Roman world. The third

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 86-90.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>39</sup> Young. 99-100.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 112-113.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Ellingworth. "The 'true saying' in 1 Timothy 3:1." The Bible Translator. Vol. 31. No. 4. October 1980. 443-445.

<sup>42</sup> Sydney Page. 'Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles.' Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Vol. 50. (1993) 105-120.

has a weakness that makes it unlikely for if an exclusion of divorced persons was meant, Paul could have just said so. The fourth is dismissed because of the encouraging tone Paul gives to marriage in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Page then presents his own view of marital fidelity. He believes the issue is faithfulness to one's spouse.

All of the sources above present intriguing and interesting viewpoints. Oden's, Fee's and Young's treatment of the passage point to the character of the two offices. Page presents the main contemporary issue addressed by this passage. There is still another issue that Fee, Young and Oden present that touches contemporary society, the issue of women in these roles.

#### Two offices; one type of man.

Before examining these two offices separately, it would be good to compare the qualifications between the two offices to see the similarities between them. Both offices are to be filled by men that are above reproach. They are both to be men that are the husbands of one wife, not addicted to wine, manage their household well, not new converts or untested individuals, and free from the love of money. These overlapping qualities show leadership in the assembly to be marked by men, be they bishops or deacons, who cannot be slandered and are faithful to one spouse. They are not addicted to wine; thus, they are clear headed to make decisions. They manage their own household well showing that they can handle the flock of God. They are not new converts and they have been tested to show they can handle the office and not fall into conceit or trouble. They are free from the love of money and thus can be trusted to handle money and to not be in

these positions to do anything that would abuse that trust. These are men of integrity.

In the assembly of the living God, such men would be invaluable. In political organizations, scandal is the one thing that can destroy everything for which that organization has worked. Individuals that are above reproach do not have a high risk of scandal. They cannot be attacked by scandal as they have nothing to hide, nor do they do anything in the slightest way that even hints at evil or even the appearance of evil.

The phrase 'husband of one wife' has triggered two contemporary debates. The first is the question of women in these roles. The second is what the marital status of these leaders should be. The phrase can be broken down to address these issues. Husband implies the male half of a married couple. No wives are referred to as husbands. 'Of one wife' implies monogamy. The whole phrase is written in present voice. This is a husband who is currently married to only one woman. Page in his article misses the plain sense meaning of this phrase. Even if one takes the marital fidelity view, would this not prohibit polygamy? By this phrase, Paul endorses four things: maleness, married, monogamy and possessing one wife. This would prohibit women, unmarried people, polygamists and homosexuals. To those offering a historical defense of women in the ministry, the universal nature of the plainly stated purpose of the book prohibits Ephesus being used as a defense.<sup>43</sup> Secondly, such a view would rip this phrase, for all practical purposes, out of the Bible as it would have no effect at all.

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<sup>43</sup> See chapter two 47-49.

If 'husband of one wife' is historically and culturally relative to the first century, then perhaps all the rest of these qualifications are relative as well. Perhaps then a bishop would not have to be not addicted to wine or free from the love of money. This is not the case. The culture of the western world has no right to usurp the commands of Scripture, nor does it have the right to ignore them by trying to justify its practices by appealing to Scripture. This qualification protected and continues to protect the mystery of godliness that provides a foundation for the assembly. It does this by providing a defense against the sexually motivated practices of paganism. Women in the culture of the first century would be thought of as priestesses and possibly temple prostitutes if they were in leadership of a religious order or group. It protects the reputation of both the assembly and the women in the assembly. It could be argued that such paganism still exists in different forms.

The idea of these men not being addicted to wine cuts to the idea of being sober and clearheaded. Such qualities are necessary for all good leaders of any political organization. They are clearly a necessity for the leadership of the assembly of the living God. Addiction to wine also implies a weakness of character. In particular, it points to a deficiency in self-control. Such a virtue would be essential to good leadership.

Both offices are required to manage their households and children well. Paul gives his own rationale for this. "But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God."<sup>44</sup> This is a

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<sup>44</sup> 1 Timothy 3:5.

commonsense requirement dealing with management. There is a good probability that if a person can manage his household; he can manage the assembly. This qualification also point to one of the main purposes of leadership in the assembly -- management. Both bishops and deacons are to be involved with this is some capacity. Leaders in the assembly must be able to manage the assembly as well as manage their own homes.

This author couples the ideas on not being a new convert and being tested. These individuals must be experienced in some way. They are not to be individuals that are unfamiliar in the way the assembly operates and they should be ones that have faced testing in their position before they are officially installed. Novices and untested individuals were not to be placed in these offices. Without a familiarity of how the assembly operates, mismanagement is bound to happen. Experience in leadership is a necessity.

Finally, leadership in the assembly must be free from the love of money. The assembly is to be lead by men that are not greedy. In any political institution, money is present and presents a temptation for dishonesty and gain. To prevent this, those that would become bishops and deacons must show themselves to be free from the love of money and greedy appetite before they take office. Scandal involving money must be avoided by placing men of trust into positions that handle money and receive money for their services. The motivation for taking office must not be the money involved but a desire to serve.



These represent the similarities involved in the two offices. It is now time to consider the two offices separately to show the specialized requirements for each office.

#### Bishops as leaders of the assembly

Bishops, in addition to the above qualities, have many additional qualities that are required of them. They are: temperance, prudence, respectability, hospitableness, ability to teach, lack of pugnaciousness, gentleness, uncontentiousness and a good reputation with those outside the assembly. Each of these qualities has force in improving that role and in defining the work of the bishop as Paul sees it.

Temperance implies that the person has a measure of self-control above what it is necessary not to be addicted to something. It is a self-control that implies a moderation in all things. Thus, bishops will face many temptations, but must choose the path of righteous moderation.

Prudence is the ability to careful, discreet and exercise forethought. It is the ability to see ahead to the troubles and indiscretions a course of action might lead to. This is often associated with money, but in this case, it points at a thoughtfulness in leading the assembly of the living God on the right path with some thought given to safety and the future. This is an essential ingredient in leadership. It will avoid shortsightedness, indiscretion and danger. It will then preserve the assembly to continue in the future.

Respectability is a quality necessary for leadership. It allows a leader to speak and be heard. If a leader is not respected, no one will follow his direction.

Paul is simply acknowledging this fact. The assembly must follow its leadership without hesitation. If its leadership follows the example of respectability presented by the mystery of godliness, this should not be a problem.

Hospitable implies a measure of people skills. It is the ability to be friendly to strangers or guests and implies the diplomatic ability to be a friend to all those one meets. In the Assembly this would include those in and outside the church. This leads to both growth and an ability to make peace.

The bishop must be able to teach for he has teaching responsibilities in the assembly. He must, thus, have some skills in this area, so that he does honor to the assembly as the pillar and the support of the truth and to the mystery of godliness, who also is the truth. Teaching in any organization also serves as preventive maintenance for future problems and maintenance for existing ones. It results in a wholeness in the organization. In addition, by teaching others certain skills, other ministries and positions in the assembly will run more smoothly. As a side note, the requirement for bishops to teach also undercuts any idea of women in this position. Women are required by 1 Timothy 2:12 not to teach men. Bishops would most certainly need to do this.

'Not pugnacious' is the next quality necessary for a bishop. If a person is pugnacious, that person likes to fight and argue. To have such a person in a leadership position in the assembly of the living God would be disastrous. The assembly's mission is peace and tranquillity. Such a man in a leadership role would undercut that mission. So a bishop must be a person that, while he is not afraid of confrontation, does not like fights and disputes.

The bishop must be gentle. Gentleness is power under complete control. Bishops must temper his actions with mercy. This mercy causes his power to be in control and to be used in a way that is conducive to growth in the assembly of God. Gentle power is used only to bring growth and promote strength in the assembly.

The bishop must be uncontentious. Contentiousness is to strive, to fight and dispute. It is found in those who enjoy power struggles. The bishop must be free from the desire to advance by means of fighting and political power moves. The assembly is not about power: it is about freedom and redemption for all. The bishop is a servant not a power player.

Finally, the bishop is one who has a good reputation with those outside the assembly. This speaks of the diplomatic role of the bishop as he acts between the church and the world. If a bishop is not respected by the outside community, no relationships can be maintained by the bishop and that community. No peace can be attained. Antagonism, not tranquillity, is the result.

Bishops, based on these additional qualifications, are thus to be involved in administrative, teaching and diplomatic roles. The administrative role of the bishop involves the maintenance of the assembly as a cohesive unit. It is this unity of purpose and mind that must be present for the assembly to be about its mission. The bishop has a responsibility to administrate to the best of his ability. The teaching aspect keeps the church pure and secure in the knowledge of the truth. The diplomatic aspect of the bishop involves being hospitable and having a good reputation. These diplomatic skills allow the bishop to be kind to strangers

and outsiders and resolve differences within the church. All these things are desirable as they help the church move forward with its mission and maintain the integrity of its prayers for the world.

Deacons as leaders in the assembly.

Deacons have three additional qualities in addition to those required for bishops and deacons together. These are men of dignity, not double-tongued and holding the mystery of godliness with a good conscience. Additionally, there are qualifications for their wives. Deacons by their very title are servants. They are concerned with the physical aspects of the church and the community around it.

Deacons must be men of dignity. This corresponds to the idea that the prayers of the saints should bring about dignity or public decency. They are to be living witnesses of that decency. By being that example, they will show others in the assembly how to be persons of dignity. They become teachers by example.

Deacons must also not be double tongued. This reflects basic honesty; one does what one says. Lying has no place in a godly political organization. In the assembly of the living God, the leadership must be honest. Honesty is the first key to understanding the truth. Truth is the primary thing in the assembly of the living God, and it requires that there be men that reflect this concern.

Finally, deacons must hold the mystery of the faith with a good conscience. This involves a desire to approach the mystery of godliness with clarity of conscience. To have a clear conscience implies holiness and godliness. It implies that deacons must be men who model the holiness for which the church

stands and that source of holiness who allows them to stand -- the mystery Himself.

There are additional qualifications for deacon's wives. The word used for deacons' wives clearly refers to women and indicates that they are to be regarded in many ways as being like a deacon. It cannot be saying that women should actually be deacons as the phrase 'husband of one wife' would exclude this possibility. Yet, a general reference to women seems unlikely as well as it interrupts the discussion of deacons. The qualifications listed reflect the deacons in a similar way. These qualifications are dignity, not malicious gossips, temperate and faithful in all things. The idea of dignity is the same as for those of the deacons themselves. The prohibition against gossiping is repeated in like form in 5:13 later in the book. Temperance and faithfulness indicate holiness, and the like aspects, in the deacons. The focus of all these aspects is towards the godliness and dignity that the assembly is trying to promote. The deacons must have wives that reflect these characteristics.

This brings up an observation that concerns both bishops and deacons and their relationship to the goals of the assembly. The goal of the assembly is to pray to maintain tranquillity, peace, godliness and dignity in the public life of the community and within the assembly itself. The bishops, with their abilities in diplomacy and maintenance, focus on the peacefulness and tranquillity of the community of faith and the community of the world. The deacons with their attributes focused on godliness and public decency are the promoters of these things in the community. The leadership of the assembly both live by an ethic

that requires them to maintain the assembly. All of these characteristics lead to a certain type of action that does honor to both the assembly and the mystery of godliness that undergirds it.

### Chapters 4-6 Considered

Up to this point this point, this chapter has offered a detailed analysis of the theological impact of the purpose passage of First Timothy on chapters two and three. This has provided an example of how such a viewpoint could be applied to the content of First Timothy. In consideration of chapter 4 through 6, this author will not be so detailed, but will provide a broad stroke view of the rest of the chapters to show how the purpose passage is applied in general to the rest of the book of First Timothy.

#### Chapter 4: The pillar and support of truth in relationship to false ministers and godly ministers

Chapter four of First Timothy consists of two sections. The first section includes verses one through five. In this section false ministers are dealt with in relationship to the church as the pillar and the support of the truth. The second section begins with verse six and concludes at the end of the chapter. It is similar to the first section, except it concerns godly ministers and how they ought to behave if they are true ministers. The language of the two sections is a contrast between truthfulness and deceit.

The apostate minister has no concern for truth. His motivation is for power over individuals. They are men "who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining

from food, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:3, emphasis mine). Their concern is not the truth. If it was they would not be advocating what they advocate.

In contrast, the godly minister's ultimate concern is the truth. He is constantly nourished in sound doctrine and has nothing to do with these worldly fables. He disciplines himself toward godliness and labors with the life to come in mind. He gives his full attention to reading, exhortation and teaching the truth. He does not neglect the gift given by the Spirit in him. He takes great pains to do the things he should watching both himself and the doctrine of truth. He does this because he knows if he is faithful, he will save not only himself but those that see and hear him.

The fourth chapter is a chapter that contrasts ministers. The language of the chapter is the language of truth. The dividing line between apostate ministers and the godly ones is their concern for truth. The apostate minister has no knowledge or concern for the truth. The godly minister makes the truth his passion. The godly minister presented in chapter four is the one who behaves as he ought in regard to the truth in the church.

#### Chapter 5: Widows and elders in the household of God

Chapter five starts out with family language. Verses one and two form their own little section and inform one how deal with others in the household of God. The person in the household of God treats every person in the household as family. That person treats the older men as fathers and the older women as mothers. The younger men are treated as brothers and the younger women are

treated as sisters. All of the above relationships in the household are to be kept in purity with the highest ideals of family relationships being emphasized. Then the chapter deals with specifics in the family of God, such as how the household should treat the widows and elders. The family language extends into chapter six, but more will be said about this when chapter six is covered.

The section on widows in the household of God starts in verse three and ends at verse sixteen. Paul deals with the widows in an extraordinary way. He sets up criteria for those who are true widows and those who are not true widows. The church is to provide for widows, but only widows of a certain type. These are the widows indeed. The widow who is a widow indeed has her focus on God and is concerned for the mystery that forms the foundation for the household of God. She is also over sixty.

Those who do not qualify are under sixty years of age, but even those that would qualify with the sixty years of age restriction may be denied help from the household. They would be denied if their concern is pleasure or if they have not shown themselves to be merciful to others in the household and to those outside the household. The criteria includes both age and character. The household of God should also not be burdened with the care of a widow if she can receive help from her family, especially if that family is part of the household of God. Thus the household of God respects its widows, but if another avenue of aid can be found for the widow, let that be done so the money and support can be used for those who really need it.



Chapter Five ends with the section on elders. Oden views these men as separate yet connected to the office of overseer. He believes all overseers were elders, but not all elders were overseers.<sup>45</sup> The overseer is clearly the bishop of a church, but an elder is part of the presbytery. Elders are dealt with in family language, but at the same time they cannot escape their duties to the assembly.

Elders are held in a great deal of respect in the church. They are to be given double honor and well paid. Because of this position in the household and the assembly, they are not to be accused of wrong doing unless accused by two or three witnesses. At the same time, partiality is not to be tolerated in the household/assembly, but at the same time caution is to be exercised in dealing with the elders of the church.

Both the widows and elders represented two groups in the household of God that require special attention from that household. They are to be honored and taken care of financially. They are to be respected and honored for their wisdom and work in that household. The household language does not stop with the end of chapter five. It continues into chapter six.

Chapter 6: Slaves in the household, peace in the pillar and support of the truth and money and the assembly

Chapter six continues in the same vein as chapter five as a third situation in the household that requires special attention is discussed, that of slaves and the relationship to their masters. Slavery was a common practice in the time of Paul, but the principles are still universal in understanding the management/labor

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<sup>45</sup> Oden. 140.

dynamic. Those slaves who had accepted Christ, according to Paul, should not despise their master. They should in fact count them worthy of all honor. If their masters were in the household of God this did not change the master/ slave relationship or allow the slave to be disrespectful to their master because they were brothers in Christ. Rather, the idea of respect to one's master was intensified because the master was to partake of the benefits of the believers. What is presented, then, is a relationship between labor and management in Christ. Peaceful relationship is the result of respect toward each other. Those who labor, regardless of position, are to respect those that have authority over them. They are not to despise even fellow believers who are over them, but give them more honor because they are brothers. In our postmodern world with labor unions and contracts, this may be hard to swallow, but the universal command of First Timothy evokes us to do it.

At verse three of chapter six, the language of First Timothy changes again. It once again returns to a discussion of ministry. Doctrine and truth are the key words in this passage. Paul states that if anyone advocates a different doctrine than what is given by Jesus Christ, that person understands nothing. He then seems to return to chapter four and starts to talk about the strife that results from such people. These people are only in ministry for the money. The righteous man is content with food and clothing; these men are greedy. Money has lead them down and evil path. The righteous man flees from greed and dispute. His concentration is on righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and

gentleness. By doing these things he can fight the good fight of faith in the assembly and be true to his calling.

The second command statement found in chapter six verse thirteen through sixteen has been dealt with previously in chapter two.<sup>46</sup> There is still one more paragraph that follows which deals with money and those that are rich in the assembly. Paul states that the rich should be instructed not to be conceited or trust their riches. Rather, those in the assembly should trust God and concentrate their efforts on good works that will store up for them a treasure in the life to come. The assembly and those in it by doing good works achieve the goal of the assembly and provide for a truly glorious future.

The content of First Timothy ends with a command for Timothy to guard this command that was entrusted to him so that he may avoid the false and avoid falling into the trap of the apostate minister.

### Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter has endeavored to show how the content First Timothy is guided by its purpose. By describing the content of chapters two and three of First Timothy, this thesis has shown that these two chapters are geared toward the assembly aspects of Paul's threefold conception on the nature of the church. In a more general way this method was followed to show how chapters four through six follow the same idea considering the church as the household of God and the pillar and support of the truth. Thus, there is a definite connection

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<sup>46</sup> See. 39-44.

between this threefold conception and the content with the mystery of godliness as a central theme through the entire book. This does bring up the question concerning first Timothy and Pauline theology. Given these new understandings, how does First Timothy now fit into Pauline theology. In particular, what kind of theology does it present and how important is it to understanding that type of theology in Paul's thought. This is the question the next chapter will address.

## CHAPTER 4

### First Timothy and Its Place in the Theology of Paul

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, this chapter will attempt to discover the place of First Timothy in the theology of St. Paul. Second, This chapter will also consider the ramifications of that place for the current understanding of Pauline theology. The first objective will start with an analysis of current understanding of the place of First Timothy in the theology of Paul. Next will follow a brief analysis of the other writings of Paul and how they compare to First Timothy in purpose and content. Then we will examine how the early church viewed and used the epistle of First Timothy in its theology, with particular reference to several major church fathers of the first and second centuries. Finally, we will conclude with our own determination as to the place of First Timothy in Pauline theology. This will be based on the content of this thesis and the above information. The second objective will be dealt with briefly by the author based on his own opinion concerning the ramifications of First Timothy in the current process of contextualization and to the practice of the church in modern times.

#### Current Thought On the Theological Place of First Timothy

The fact that First Timothy is usually lumped together with the pastoral epistles indicates how it is generally viewed by scholars. This might not be detrimental if it was simply for the purpose of study, but it often is taken even

further so that the three books are viewed as a single unit with the same purpose. Despite this tendency to view the three books as one unit theologically, there are some interesting views on First Timothy. Some of the more noteworthy of these follow.

Young<sup>1</sup> speaks of the Pastorals with this one theology in three books understanding. He states that the ultimate theological position of the Pastorals is sound teaching leads to ultimate salvation in the life to come.<sup>2</sup> When E. Earle Ellis<sup>3</sup> deals with the text of First Timothy, he does so by placing it according to already decided themes. First Timothy often is used in his works to aid his discussion of women in the church order, ministry and church order.<sup>4</sup> He also never speaks of First Timothy as having a theology of its own, but uses its contents along with the contents of the other pastorals, to strengthen his position on ministry and church order.

This idea of the unity of theological theme in the Pastorals continues in other writers. A.T. Hanson<sup>5</sup> maintains that the Pastorals reflect the first formation of theology by the church. He uses this to substantiate his argument that the pastorals are not Pauline. P.H. Towner<sup>6</sup> examine the eschatology of the present age in the pastoral epistles. He speaks at length about the 'last days' theme

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Young, The Theology of the Pastoral Letters, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 160-161.

<sup>3</sup> E. Earle Ellis, Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pp. 53-121.

<sup>5</sup> A. T. Hanson. 'The Development of Early Christian Theology.' Bulletin of John Reynolds University Library -- Manchester. Vol. 63. No. 2. (1981) 402-418.

<sup>6</sup> P.H. Towner. 'The Present Age in the Eschatology of the Pastoral Epistles.' New Testament Studies. Vol. 32. No. 3. (1986) 427-448.

found in the pastorals. Jerome D. Quinn<sup>7</sup> focuses on the impact that the pastorals had on shaping the early church's social structure and their influence on the formation of various liturgies. Michael A. G. Haykin<sup>8</sup> challenges the notion that the pastorals are rigid letters designed only to form church structures. He does this by pointing out the many references to the Holy Spirit and the freedom that seems to accompany such references.

All of these individuals serve as good examples of how the theology of the pastorals is generally understood. They all treat the pastorals as one unit for the purpose of theological work. None of them consider the possibility that each of the pastorals might be written for a different purpose and hence the theological emphases might be different in each of them.

### The Theology of First Timothy in Relation to Paul's Other Writings

The purpose of this section is to compare, in a very general way, the theology of Paul's other writings to the theology of First Timothy. This will be done to show the importance of First Timothy in Pauline theology and to show its impact on current thinking. For the purposes of this section, we will assume the traditional understanding of the books which Paul authored. Besides First Timothy, this would include Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, Second

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<sup>7</sup> Jerome D. Quinn. 'Paraensis and the Pastoral Epistles: Lexical Observations Bearing on the Nature of the Sub-Genre and Soundings on Its Role in Socialization and Liturgies.' Semina. Vol. 50. (1990) 189-210.

<sup>8</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin. 'The Fading Vision? The Spirit and Freedom in the Pastoral Epistles.' Evangelical Quarterly. Vol. 57 No. 4. (1985) 291-305.

Thessalonians, Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Hebrews is excluded because of its unknown authorship. Each one of these will be briefly dealt with to show its basic theological purpose and how that purpose differs from the purpose of First Timothy.

Romans is the most highly regarded of all of Paul's works. Paul writes to tell the Romans that he was planning to come and see them but had been delayed. Instead he writes them to share on salvation and the consequences of that salvation on human and church behavior. This is an epistle about salvation and its effects. This differs in theme from First Timothy; in that, First Timothy does not deal with salvation but how one should operate in the church.

First Corinthians is an *ad hoc* ecclesiastical epistle written to correct various problems in the Corinthian church. Its purpose is correction. Paul does this by bringing up various issues and dealing with them. Theological themes in its content are various and include wisdom and God, Christians and marriage, Christian liberty, The Lord's supper, spiritual gifts and the resurrection. Unlike Timothy, it is written to a church and not an individual. It is written to address problems in that church but has no clearly stated overall purpose. Timothy does have a clearly stated purpose that involves the universal church.

Second Corinthians is an epistle to reaffirm the Corinthians in their efforts. It is written to encourage them in their efforts. Like First Corinthians, Paul has one church body in mind and not the entire church as in First Timothy. It is not so much an *ad hoc* epistle, but it is more of an epistle of encouragement to a



specific church in the church universal. By contrast, First Timothy's concern is the universal church.

Galatians is another epistle that deals with salvation. In particular, its main focus seems to be to address the relationship of Christians to the Jewish law. Its theme is freedom from the letter of the law, while walking in the spirit of the law. While First Timothy in one place does deal with the law, it is not considered to be in the main body of the letter but rather as part of the opening chapter. In contrast, Galatians entire contents revolve around the law and its relationship to the believer.

Ephesians is a book that deals with Pauline christology. It has an instructive tone and is doctrinal in content. Its focus is Christ, his work and how Christians should walk in relation to that work.. This is different from First Timothy in that First Timothy has its focus on the universal church and how one should behave in that church. Behavior is mentioned in both, but the theological foundations are different. Ephesians is christological; First Timothy's is ecclesiastical. Their respective contents then follow their foundations.

Philippians focus is the Christian's life in Christ. It is more theological oriented to the inner working of Christ in the life of the believer. Its foundations are christological. First Timothy is completely different as its foundations are ecclesiastical. The mystery of the church is Christ, but the word mystery indicates an ecclesiastical tone to the christological ideas in First Timothy.

Colossians' center is also Christ, but it has a more corrective purpose. It is designed around correcting heresy in the church at Colosse by pointing out that

Christ is all and in all. Colossians has a negative tone as it is written for corrective purposes. First Timothy also deals with apostasy, but it has a more positive tone. It does this by promoting behavior and encouraging preventive measures to heresy and false teaching. Once again, the foundations are different as well.

First Thessalonians is written in response to a report that Paul had received about that church. It was a report that the Thessalonians were weakening in their faith, that there was sin in their midst and that the young members of the church were trying to remove the older members from leadership. Paul also answers charges that the Thessalonians leveled against him. Its purpose is corrective and reconciliatory. Its foundation seems to be the relationship that Paul has to the church at Thessalonica. First Timothy is none of these things. It is written to an individual, its foundation is theological and its purpose is universal.

Second Thessalonians is written to address a specific problem concerning the 'day of the Lord.' Its main theological foundation is eschatology with a focus on the return of Christ and events leading up to that return. It is corrective in tone. First Timothy is concerned with ecclesiology not eschatology. Its focus is behavior with a positive tone.

Second Timothy focus is concerned with those in the ministry. In particular it concerns itself with Timothy himself. Its main concern is that Timothy finish his ministry with endurance and separate himself to the work of the ministry. It is concerned with ministerial ethics. Its foundation is ministerial. It is concerned

with the passing of the baton from one generation of ministry to the next. First Timothy deals with the church as a whole; Second Timothy is concerned with behavior in the ministry. Both focus on ethics, but First Timothy is universal covering all in the church. Second Timothy covers only those that are leaders and ministers in that church. Second Timothy is a true pastoral epistle; First Timothy is an ecclesiastical epistle.

Titus is concerned mainly with church order. It is like First Timothy in that it is ecclesiastical as it focuses on church offices and godly behavior in the church. However, it has no clearly stated purpose. Titus is concerned not with the church as a whole, but a particular part of that church in Crete. This is the main difference between the two epistles: One is universal and the other is particular although the resulting contents, particularly when dealing with church officers, is very similar.

Philemon is a short Pauline epistle that has a particular focus. It deals with the reconciliation between a slave and his master. Its major theme is forgiveness between two members of the body of Christ. It has a very particular focus on one relationship. First Timothy deals with a broader context.

In considering First Timothy in relationship to the other writings of Paul, First Timothy is Paul's only universal ecclesiastical epistle. It is the only one that presents a universal ethic for the church. Other epistles, such as Titus and Second Timothy have a focus in the church, but are addressed to a particular part of the church or a particular aspect of the church. First Timothy provides a universal ethic for the church as a whole. Putting it another way, First Timothy is

to Pauline ecclesiology what Romans is to Pauline soteriology or Ephesians is to Pauline christology. They all provide a particular aspect of the greater picture. The other epistles are particular application to the universal themes. There may be a relationship between First Timothy and the other pastoral. First Timothy provides the universal foundation on which the more specific instructions in Second Timothy and to Titus are based. However, First Timothy should be allowed to stand on its own much in the same way that Romans and Ephesians are allowed to stand as statements of universal theology.

### First Timothy and the Early Church

How did the early church view First Timothy in its theological purpose? The New Testament/First Century church looked at First Timothy through the eyes of submission. In the pastoral epistles, First Timothy among them, the church is not a special sect, but as a unit that can reach beyond itself to society. A formula was needed to organize such an outreach,<sup>9</sup> and Paul presents one. Having chosen Timothy as his replacement, he confides in him concerning the nature and power of the church. The early church recognized this and used it as a basis for its organization and conduct. Examples can be seen in the church fathers as the church began to expand and continue into the second century.

First Timothy does not appear much in the church fathers, but when it does it is often used as if it applies to the whole church and not just a specific congregation. In Polycarp's letter to the Philipppians, he practically quotes 1

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<sup>9</sup> Helmut Koester. History and Literature and Early Christianity. Introduction to the New Testament. Vol. 2. New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1982. 302.

Timothy 3:8-13 in his instructions in showing what constitutes a good deacon.<sup>10</sup>

He also lists the same qualities found in 1 Timothy 5:19ff that Paul uses in describing elders.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, Ignatius of Antioch seems to model his image of church government around Paul's descriptions in First Timothy. Thus, the church fathers used First Timothy to order their affairs in matters that concerned the church universal. All of the pastorals provided a ready church manual for church government, structure and activity in society.

### Evaluation of the Place of First Timothy in Theology

Modern thought on First Timothy, while helpful does two things that are distressing. First, it fails to take the purpose of First Timothy seriously enough to examine the book in light of that purpose. Second, there is a disturbing trend to lump First Timothy in with the rest of the pastorals in consideration of its theology and impact. Both of these problems lead to looking at First Timothy as a historically locked book with no unique theology of its own. Modern scholarship simply treats it, for the most part, as an *ad hoc* document that is part of other *ad hoc* documents. This is difficult to maintain in light of the purpose passage of the book and the underlying foundations of that purpose.

Of all Paul's writings, First Timothy is the only universal ecclesiastical epistle. Its focus is how a person ought to behave in the universal church. No other epistle of Paul has this focus. It is the Romans of ecclesiology. The

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<sup>10</sup> Polycarp. 'Letter to the Philippians.' Early Christian Fathers. Cyril C. Richardson ed. New York: Collier Books, 1970. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 134.

subjects of this epistle line up with this purpose. Those who read it should place themselves in the places they fit in the church, then act accordingly. It clearly presents to the reader Paul's conception of the nature and foundation of the universal church. It presents the church as a family, political group and defender of truth. All of these conceptions are undergirded by the mystery of godliness which is Christ revealed in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world and taken up into glory. This is far more than a simple defense against false teachers or nice advice to a young pastor. It is the ethic of the universal church as to its foundations, purpose, structure, leadership, benevolence and ministry as Paul sees it.

#### First Timothy in the Modern Context

To place such a theological document in the modern church and apply it becomes much more simple when looked at through the eyes of the purpose passage. Application of the book of First Timothy should be done in the same manner as one would apply the contents of Romans to salvation or Ephesians to christology. First Timothy's power lies in its influence over ecclesiology. It gives us standards of behavior in the church. This does not mean that Paul's complete ecclesiology is contained in this one book. Many others contain bits and pieces of Pauline ecclesiology. First Timothy is the only one of Paul's works that is totally devoted to ecclesiology for the church universal.

The problem does not lay in understanding the epistle; the problem lies with the modern world's ability to submit to its contents. Submission is the

problem. People of the modern world are not good students of the Word in that they are not submissive to the authority of the Word over their lives. First Timothy, to those in the church, is authoritative to what the church does in practice. In the modern mind of the church, First Timothy does not seem to be that important. It is at least not as important as some of the 'greater' work of Scriptures. First Timothy, because of its purpose, should carry significant authority in the church over the church's practice in the area it covers.

If this is so, practice of church order and ethic would have to change in light of this book of Scripture. The actions of the church should line up with the purpose of First Timothy and its theological foundations. The church should first consider its mission concerning its being the household of God. It should treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ the mystery that binds the church. It would mean a change in attitude toward widows and elders in that household and their purpose in the household of God. It would also change our understanding of the labor/management dynamic, particularly when members of the household are involved on both sides of the dispute.

Next, there would have to be a change in the church in light of its being the assembly of the living God. There would have to be a new understanding of the churches being the political group of God. The church's purpose should align itself with the purpose of God for the world. The gospel becomes the primary thing in such an organization. Prayer would be the main political tool of the assembly of God to bring tranquillity and peace to the world, not some sort of political activism. Men would raise their holy hands to go with the character of

unity and peace. Women would be modest before their God and learn with all submission. Leadership of the assembly would be based on character qualities not on political power struggles. Democracy is not the primary thing in leadership and choosing leadership; character is what is most important.

Finally, the truth is the most important thing to the church as the pillar and the support of the truth. In church history, the church has made the greatest gains when it has had a no compromise attitude toward the truth. There is no room for watering down the gospel of Christ in the pillar and support of the truth. The desire of the church based on this aspect of itself is to remove those that are false and approve the godly ministers. There is no self serving attitude in such a church, but there is an attitude of self sacrifice for the truth. Often the church in this aspect takes a modern view and tries to cover up wrong doing or be apathetic to the truth of a situation. The pillar and support of the truth cannot do this.

All in all, the universal nature of the purpose of First Timothy requires the individual in the church and the community of the church itself to behave as they ought to behave. They are required to view the contents of First Timothy authoritative in all the things that Paul covers in its six brief chapters. The question remains as to whether or not the church of the modern world is ready to take such a step. That is perhaps why this book remains in controversy. As long as it remains in a controversial state, the church can question its authority over itself.



There is a great danger with this half way approach to the book of First Timothy. The church then remains in peril of being removed as God's political arm of grace, his family and his champion of truth. In Romans, Paul warned believers to fear lest they be removed and another put in their place because of their arrogant position.<sup>12</sup> Paul has left First Timothy as a guide to those who want to know how to behave in the household of God. To ignore it is to ignore the purpose of First Timothy in its desire to promote behavior proper to that household in keeping it strong so that it does not become removed from God's plan. Such a move would be shocking as it would mean God's rejecting of the church as his family, his political party and his defender of the faith. This could very well happen. God discarded the people of Israel; he can just as easily discard the Gentiles that make up his church. Let the church beware how it treats those parts of the Scriptures that are designed to keep it strong in its purpose and nature.

#### Concluding Thoughts on This Study

This study began with a desire to uncover the message of First Timothy with a respect to the purpose passage. It is a message that concerns the church universal from a book that has the right to stand in its own right. The purpose of this thesis was to show how the stated purpose of First Timothy presented a foundational theology of the church. It has also attempted to show how that foundational theology affects the understanding of the contents of First Timothy.

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<sup>12</sup> Romans 11:15-24.

It has also show how these new understandings affect the place of First Timothy in Pauline theology, particularly Pauline ecclesiology. All of this has attempted to stay within the framework of biblical theology.

For the most part it has been successful. It has shown that the purpose of First Timothy involves ethics. It involves prescribing behavior to individuals in the universal church. That universal church is described as the household of God, the assembly of the living God and the pillar and support of the truth. All three of these conceptions of the church are founded on the mystery of godliness which is Christ. All of these concepts form a basis for why one ought to behave in the church as they ought.

These theological conceptions were then used to show their relationship to the content of First Timothy. Each section that had political language was to present the church as the assembly of the living God. Family language indicated the concept of the household of God. Language that involved a concern for the truth and integrity indicated the concept of the church as the pillar and support of the truth. All references to the work or position of Christ in these concepts refer to the mystery of faith that formed the foundation for these concepts.

This view of the theology of First Timothy changes its place in the works of Paul. It is no longer just one of the pastoral epistles; it is the truest statement of Paul's ecclesiology of all his works. Its authority should be regarded as universal for all the church at all times. This is not supported by the modern view by the majority of scholars, but it is the most likely using chapter three verses 14-16 as the main purpose of the book. The church fathers used it as if it was completely

authoritative to all churches. This is another indication of universal application.

The trouble is not interpretation of what the text means; it is in the application of those texts to the current church.

The idea for this study came from a moment of devotional reflection on the purpose passage of First Timothy. In this moment it was as if the whole book of First Timothy lay open before this author and a new understanding filled my mind and heart. Since that time, there has been a burning in this authors soul to consider First Timothy in a more detailed way. This study has helped begin a lifelong reflection on this new understanding of First Timothy. It is hoped that this study will enlighten and inspire others to continue the study of First Timothy along these lines. Much more work needs to be done in the area of biblical theology, especially concerning the pastoral epistles. In the meantime, let this study serve as an example for those to follow.

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