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Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church

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PAUL, THE PASTORAL EPISTLES,
AND THE PAULINE LEGACY

INTRODUCTION

Paul's influence on the history of Christian life and theology is as profound as it is pervasive. A brief survey of almost twenty centuries of Christian thought and practice will confirm the enduring importance of Paul for the life of the church in the Roman and Protestant traditions of the West, as well as the Orthodox traditions of the East. Even as Christianity, at the dawn of its third millennium, has become increasingly global and traditions have come to develop and intersect in new and complex ways, Paul's place in the story of Christianity remains deeply rooted in the church's theology, worship, and pastoral life. In both past and present, Paul's influence on the Christian church can hardly be overestimated.

Among the many intriguing issues generated by the historical Paul, his New Testament letters, and early church history is the question, "What happened to Paul after Paul?" Whether we think in terms of the reception of Paul's theology, or the ongoing legacy of Paul, or early Christian reinterpretation of his letters, a number of important questions persist. What did the early church do with Paul's memory? How did it reshape his theology? What role did his letters come to play in the life of the church? This book focuses on how these issues played out in the early decades and centuries of Christianity, a time when the memory and legacy of Paul came to serve varied and often competing interests. It was a time when Paul's reputation and his importance to the church were reinforced and when his epistles gained the authority that would ensure their place among the sacred texts of Christianity. It was also the time when the burgeoning Jesus movement forged itself into Christianity. In this process Paul played a pivotal role and eventually also became an object of revision and transformation himself. What is virtually indisputable is that Paul and his letters, during his lifetime and after, played a critical role in making Christianity what it was to become.

If the image of Paul and the theology of his letters were thoroughly interwoven in the early church, as they undoubtedly were, the adaptation of Paul and his words by the early Christians was more than an issue of simple
textual reinterpretation. It was also a matter of an evolving Pauline image merging with the developing concerns of the day, where the words and ideas of the apostle came to bear on the circumstances and conflicts of the church. Paul's personal authority continued to inform this process and his legacy endured through the ongoing reinterpretation of his letters. All the while, the Christian church continued to grow in size, develop as an institution, and mature theologically.

THE PASTORALS AND PAUL'S LEGACY

The Pastoral Epistles and the images of Paul represented in them have an important place in the symbolic and ecclesiological matrix of early Pauline tradition. They also contributed in significant ways to the development of this tradition. Contrary to the position taken by some scholars, the developing mainstream of Christianity did not reject Paul. Rather, the reimagining of the apostle Paul and the echoes of his theology over the early decades and centuries of Christianity illustrate the church’s complex, and most often conflicted, development as a diverse social and religious movement. From the early attempts to define Christian orthodoxy, to Marcionites and gnostics, and on to the countercultural movements of early Christian women and martyrs reflected in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the apostle was valorized as an authority figure and wonder-worker. His letters were cited and alluded to, and his legacy often burst forth in new and unanticipated ways. The reception of Paul and his letters in the church was exceedingly complex, diverse, and uneven. There is rarely a straight-line to be drawn in this history. The Pastorals represent only one part of this complex Pauline tale, and it is this aspect of the story, to the middle of the third century when the church began to confront a new set of troubling issues, that is the focus of the discussion that follows.

In the case of the Pastoral Epistles, we are able to see how one part of the early church responded to the problem of incorrect belief and practice (heterodoxy and heteropraxy), to the church’s relationship with Jews and the Jewish law, and to what some saw as a problematic form of Christian asceticism. Already in 1 Timothy and Titus we see an emerging sense of church order expressed in the writer’s concern for the qualities appropriate for overseers, deacons, and elders, identified as leaders in the church. In 2 Timothy we can hear the call for Timothy to suffer as Paul has suffered, a

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1 Martinus C. DeBoer underscores the point that some scholars (e.g., Adolf Harnack and Walter Bauer) have found a striking Pauline silence, even a rejection of Paul, in early mainstream forms of Christianity, whereas others (e.g., Andreas Lindemann) think this is not the case, “Comment: Which Paul,” in Paul and the Legacies of Paul (ed. William S. Babcock; Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 45-46.
message sure to resonate among those in the early church who would be called upon to suffer for their faith in Christ. Confronted with disunity that threatened to tear the church apart, the Pastorals reflect an effort to unite the church in the face of both internal and external threats.

Despite the absence of the Pastorals from \textgreek{\textalpha\textomicron\textnu\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textomicron\textnu} and Codex Vaticanus in the manuscript tradition, we are able to detect in these three letters a sense of the Pauline writings as Scripture, perhaps even the early functioning of a Pauline canon.\footnote{Raymond F. Collins, \textit{1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary} (New Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002), 1; Luke Timothy Johnson, \textit{The First and Second Letters to Timothy} (Anchor Bible 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 16–18; and Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, \textit{The First and Second Letters to Timothy} (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 3–4.} Even more to the point, the plea to Timothy to guard the “good deposit” foreshadows the church’s debates about the relationship between Scripture and tradition and also the role of the church, represented by its bishops and theologians, as the bearer and protector of the truth. In retrospect, we can see that the Pastorals reflect many of the issues that would confront the church in the early centuries: the character of the truth and true faith, the relationship of Christians to Jews and things Jewish, Christian asceticism, the threat of disunity, the formation and functioning of a canon, the balance between Scripture and tradition, the place of women, and the role of the church represented by episcopal hierarchy in preserving the faith and practice of the true church. As we look at the Pastoral letters in relation to this development of the church more broadly, we are able to see quite clearly how the figure of Paul served to confront crucial issues of the emerging church with the apostolic authority that had accrued to him and his teaching.

\section*{SCHOLARSHIP: PAUL AND THE PASTORALS}

It will be helpful to identify a number of the important areas of scholarship related to the Pastorals and the development of early Pauline tradition. The intent here is not to provide an exhaustive treatment of scholarship on the Pastorals but rather to provide a sketch of the scholarship important for the arguments developed later in the book.

\subsection*{The Pastorals and Pauline Authorship}

In addition to the large body of commentary literature on the Pastoral Epistles, there are numerous monographs that focus primarily on exegetical aspects of these three letters, their place in the scope of Pauline theology and
tradition, and their role as pseudepigraphic documents. For example, Lewis Donelson has focused explicitly on the character of pseudepigraphy and ethical argument in the Pastoral Epistles. Margaret Y. MacDonald has looked at the institutionalization of the Pauline writings from a socio-historical point of view, whereas Frances Young has focused exclusively on the theology of the Pastoral Epistles. James D. Miller has recently revived a version of the composite document theory of the Pastors, while Luke Timothy Johnson has challenged many of the traditional assumptions used to argue against Pauline authorship. Still others have focused on letter writing and the rhetoric of the Pastors. More specifically, Gerhard Lohfink, Peter Trummer, and J. Christian Beker have examined Pauline theology and tradition in the Pastors.

The critical issue that runs, either directly or indirectly, through a number of these works as well as through the body of commentary literature, is the question of Pauline authorship. For most modern critical scholars, that question has been largely settled for some time. The linguistic and

5 Margaret Y. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in Pauline and Deuter-Pauline Writings (SNTSMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

The critical issue that runs, either directly or indirectly, through a number of these works as well as through the body of commentary literature, is the question of Pauline authorship. For most modern critical scholars, that question has been largely settled for some time. The linguistic and

theological dissimilarity, as well as the difficulty of understanding ministry, raised further questions about the pseudepigraphic character. The Pastoral structure, authority, and purpose has led to confirm their date and authorship. In the second century the divergence between Romans, appeared in both the critical view and the majority view, but for modern scholars the question has largely been settled for some time. The linguistic and

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William Schories has explored the influence of

11 See the discussion in pp. 86-89.
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Theological dissimilarities with the seven undisputed Pauline letters, as well as the difficulty of situating these three letters in the chronology of Paul's ministry, raised for many scholars the prospect of the Pastoral's pseudepigraphic character. The new and seemingly more developed sense of church structure, authority, and leadership reflected in the Pastoral also appeared to confirm their dating after the death of Paul, perhaps as late as sometime in the second century. Likewise, the issues of Gentile inclusion and righteousness by faith, so important in Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Romans, appeared to be much more subdued and to have lost much of their urgency in the Pastoral. Taken together, these considerations prompted most modern scholars to conclude that, despite the fact that Paul is the named author of these three epistles, it is most likely that they were written by someone other than Paul.

To be sure, not all subscribed to the majority view, but for many scholars the non-Pauline authorship of the Pastoral became virtually axiomatic. For some who continued to maintain Pauline authorship, the question of authorship had theological implications, since the idea that someone other than Paul could have written these letters seemed to contradict what the letters themselves actually say. From a conservative theological perspective, this could be thought problematic. More recently, Luke Timothy Johnson and others, unpersuaded by the traditional arguments for non-Pauline authorship, have sought to challenge the seeming consensus and reopen the question. As a result, a group was formed in the Society of Biblical Literature in the 1990's to address this and other related issues. Even if this has not in the end altered the majority view, it is still healthy to have assumptions reconsidered and scholarly canons challenged.

It is also a reminder not to presume too quickly that the critical issues related to the study of Paul are necessarily settled.

In the present investigation, the question of authorship will be neither the centerpiece of the discussion nor argued directly, but it will be considered more generally in terms of a comparison of literary and theological patterns. One of the interesting possibilities to come from this is the prospect that the author of 1 Timothy and Titus might not have been the person who wrote 2 Timothy. Furthermore, as we will argue, the epistle to the Philippians appears to be the linchpin in considering the relationship between 2 Timothy and the other two Pastoral letters. When all of this is considered it still seems that the evidence leans in the direction of the non-Pauline authorship of the Pastoral whether all three of them were written by the same author or not.

Paul and the Early Church

William Schaedel, in his commentary on the letters of Ignatius, has explored the influence of the Pauline letters and their theology on the
Bishop, and in this commentary, he pays particular attention to the influence of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Regarding Polycarp and the Pastoral Epistles, Hans von Campenhausen argued that Polycarp is the author of the Pastoral Epistles. But while there can be no doubting the links between Polycarp's letter to the Philippians and the Pastoral Epistles, the claim of common authorship is not finally persuasive. Donald Hagner and James Carleton Paget have also examined the use of Pauline material in Clement of Rome and the Epistle of Barnabas. More broadly, Andreas Lindemann has investigated the legacy of Paul, his letters, and theology in the early church to the time of Marcion, including the Pastoral Epistles. Rolf Noormann in turn has written a major work focusing on the reception of the Pauline letters in Irenaeus. Similarly, Richard Norris has addressed Irenaeus' use of Paul specifically in his debate with the gnostics. Robert Sider has written on the figure of Paul in Tertullian, and David Rankin has focused more narrowly on Tertullian's use of the Pastoral Epistles in his doctrine of ministry.

With the exception of Rankin and Campenhausen, these authors all consider the full corpus of Pauline letters, and the influence of the Pastoral Epistles is only part of the reception of Paul's epistles more generally. Whereas the question of Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles focuses attention back to the historical Paul, the issues addressed here center attention on the legacy of Paul and the reception of his letters in the post-Pauline period of the early church. This makes clear that the Pastoral Epistles are close to the balance point between the historical Paul and his later reception.

The arguments by categories for this scholar's major work focusing on the reception of the Pastoral Epistles reminds us that the church that reacted against gnostics, traditions and attitudes of Marcion, had for the first time a unified tradition that claimed to be the true and final version of the apostle's teaching. Tertullian's depiction of the relevant texts to the Pastoral Epistles was influenced by the gnostics, their papers and their concern for a celibate way of life.

After acknowledging the major work focusing on the reception of the Pastoral Epistles, it is clear that the evidence is best understood as a sequel to the Jesuit/Tertullian model, that the author is pay particular attention to the influence of Paul's letters in Tertullian. The arguments by categories for this scholar's major work focusing on the reception of the Pastoral Epistles was influenced by the gnostics, their papers and their concern for a celibate way of life.

In either case, the reception of Acts of Paul as a sequel to the Jesuit/Tertullian model, that the author of the Pastoral Epistles is the author of the Acts of Paul. Perhaps most important is that the Gnostic gnostics, their papers and their concern for a celibate way of life.

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18Robert D. Sider, "Literary Artifice and the Figure of Paul in the Writings of Tertullian," in Paul and the Legacies of Paul (ed. William S. Babcock; Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 99–120.
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Point between the historical Paul on the one hand and the Pauline legacy on the other, and the decision about authorship simply moves the Pastoral Epistles from one side of that balance point to the other. In either case, we must attend to their links to the historical Paul, to the undisputed letters, and to the Pauline legacy.

The Pastoral and the Acts of Paul Debate

The arguments by Dennis MacDonald and Richard Bauckham set the categories for this scholarly debate. According to MacDonald, the author of the Pastoral Epistles represented a socially conservative movement in the church that reacted against the more radical Paul reflected in certain folk traditions and attitudes toward women. We might characterize MacDonald’s depiction of the relationship between the Pastoral Epistles and the Acts of Paul as a conflict model, where conservative forces contend against more popular and radical elements in the church, elements marked by openness to women and their central place in the church, as well as an ascetic and celibate way of life.

After acknowledging the close relationship between the Acts of Paul and the Pastoral Epistles, especially with 2 Timothy, Bauckham contends that the evidence is best explained by claiming that the Acts of Paul was intended as a sequel to the Acts of the Apostles. The author of the Acts of Paul sought to continue the story of Paul from the point where the Lukan account left off to the time of the apostle’s eventual martyrdom in Rome. Because the author of the Acts of Paul assumed the events reflected in 2 Timothy and 1 and 2 Corinthians came from a time after the events reported in Acts he drew his characters from these letters (perhaps also from Titus) rather than Acts. Unlike MacDonald, who argues that both the Acts of Paul and the Pastoral Epistles were dependent on a common oral tradition, Bauckham claims that the author of the Acts of Paul worked with those Pauline letters thought to come from the end of Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome to his martyrdom in the imperial capital. Thus, the Acts of Paul was an extension of the Pauline story whereby the author searched the texts thought to come from the time in Paul’s life following the Acts of the Apostles.

In either case, the Pastoral Epistles are linked in some fashion to the Acts of Paul tradition, and the respective arguments affirm once again the importance of the Pastoral Epistles in shaping the Pauline tradition and the legacy of Paul. Perhaps most importantly, the two arguments also suggest different models for how to understand the important question of authority in the

early church: conflict (MacDonald) and extension (Bauckham). Moreover, in the particular episode in the Acts of Paul dealing with Paul and Thecla, we see Paul’s legacy developing in terms of a countercultural movement in the church, a movement centering on issues associated with authority, women and sexual purity. To the extent that the Pastorals and their views of women are connected to the apocryphal tradition of Paul and Thecla, we can see that the lines between more and less normative notions of Pauline authority intersect in complex ways in the early church.

Paul the Person, Paul the Personage

In terms of the construction of Paul’s image in the early church, Anthony Blasi’s argument about charisma is important. He argues that charisma is bigger than an individual and the person who has charisma is not only a “person” but a “personage.”21 The term “person,” according to Blasi, refers to a historical individual, whereas the term “personage” refers to an individual’s public and charismatic persona constructed in the minds of other people. For a person to maintain charisma and continue to be a personage, his or her charisma must be constructed anew for each generation. This, Blasi argues, is exactly what happened in the case of Paul.22 As this process of construction moves from generation to generation, there is a renewed sense of why the person is important and is endowed with special power and authority. Hence, Paul’s charisma was a matter of how the public perception of him was formed and invested with significance by those who honored his place in the social and theological world of the early church. The construction of this perception was a creative and imaginative effort by those who turned to Paul as man of authority and charisma.23

In short, Paul’s various images in the early church were social constructions, and the Pastorals, especially if they were pseudepigraphic, represent but one of those constructions. In these epistles, Paul’s persona is that of the protector of sound teaching and the guardian of the “good deposit,” the exhorter to proper behavior, the imprisoned and suffering apostle who invites others to follow his example (2 Timothy), the founder of churches (Titus), the one who legitimates qualities of leadership as well as persons fit to be leaders in the church, the identifier of individuals with whom Christians should and should not associate, the bearer of apostolic memory, and the defender of the church’s unity.24 Hence, it is not just Paul’s letters or his theology that are significant for the early church but also his personal legacy and the authority this brings to bear.

Even though the character of letters, more precise, according to the heading tradition of exhortation recalling teaching, taught in this case the most conspicuous personal example, in terms of what is taught,25 we stand in a long line of personal paraenetic letter correspondence from Luke Timothy on.26

Regardless of the literary features of these epistolary presentations, which seem to be assumed to enter the text of Paul (the stated author), and its theology, which would be assumed to enter the text, whether it is the text or more broadly, the genre and its theology. Therefore, without drama right along with, beyond our grasp at the moment, Timothy or Titus and exercise identification of the text of the hearths read.

The Pastorals and the Questions of Genre and Audience

Even though the Pastoral Epistles are ostensibly letters and have the character of letters, the identification of their genre needs to be done with more precision. According to Benjamin Fiore, the Pastorals belong under the heading *traditional instruction*, a form marked by hortatory material and exhortation recalling the authoritative foundation upon which the true teaching, taught in this case by the divinely appointed teacher, is based. Among the most conspicuous features of this hortatory structure are contrast and personal example, in which the speakers or teachers are their own example of what is taught.26 With great care, Fiore shows the way the Pastoral letters stand in a long line of hortatory literature.

Luke Timothy Johnson argues that 2 Timothy is an example of a personal paraenetic letter, whereas 1 Timothy and Titus are similar to the royal correspondence known as *mandata principis*, or commandments of the ruler.27 He also notes that scholars often identify 2 Timothy as a farewell discourse, but to do so tends to prejudge the question of authorship because in this genre someone else normally recorded the words of the dying person.28 Regardless of who wrote these letters, it is constructive for the discussion here to note that contrast and personal example are important formal literary features of the Pastorals that clearly shape the pattern of their theological presentations. In addition to the literary axis in these letters between Paul (the stated author) and Timothy/Titus (the stated recipients), a larger audience, which would probably have heard these texts read aloud, can also be assumed to enter into the thought world of the letters.29 This larger audience, whether it is thought of as the community's leaders or the community more broadly, becomes yet another dimension of the text's referential world and its theology. This larger implied audience also enters into the hortatory drama right alongside the stated recipients of the letters. What may be beyond our grasp at this point is the precise connection between the historical Timothy or Titus and the stated recipients of the letters, as well as the precise identification of the larger audience who may have read the epistles or heard them read.


26 Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example*, 21, 36.

27 Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 96-97.

28 Ibid., 97.

Chapter 1

History, Epistolary Text, and Context

In his work on Philemon, now over two decades ago, Norman Petersen refocused the critical distinction between text and history—between the world of the text (literary construction) and contextual history (time of writing)—and applied it to the referential world of Paul and his epistles, especially Philemon.30 In the course of his attempt to clarify the differences between narratives and epistles with regard to these historical and textual distinctions, Petersen wrote: “In letters, as well as in narratives, we have to move from the text to its referential, narrative world, and from its narrative world to history.”31 Petersen’s argument is germane to the following discussion of the Pastorals in at least two ways: (1) epistles have referential worlds and (2) history must be constructed from the referential world of the document. What is not entirely clear in the case of the Pastorals, however, is the extent to which their referential worlds overlap their contextual worlds. If Paul actually wrote the Pastorals, presumably—though not certainly—the referential and contextual worlds overlap to a greater extent than if someone else wrote in the name of Paul at a later date. If, however, the letters were written pseudonymously at some date after Paul’s death, the time in and for which they were written is clearly removed from the events and circumstances projected back onto the time of Paul, Timothy, and Titus. In any case, it would be a methodological fallacy to assume congruence between the two when there may in fact be little or none.

THE ARGUMENT AND APPROACH

In this section, we will lay out the approach we will take in assessing the epistolary texts and their theologies, comparing their theological patterns, and discerning their place in the canon and the early church. We will also conclude with a brief statement about the contribution this book makes to the larger scholarly conversation about Paul and his legacy. In each case, the issues will be framed here only in general terms in order that they can be developed more fully later in terms of specific texts and arguments. We begin first with the question of the Pastorals and their theologies.

31 Ibid., 8-9. In that same discussion Petersen also writes: “The only history referred to in a letter is its contextual history, which is the total history envisioned by the writer as relevant for the letter. However, as real as this difference between letter and narrative is, because letters refer to a world they have referential worlds, and these are the narrative worlds, from which any real-world history must be reconstructed.”

Text and Theology

The approach of this book is to assess the authenticity nor present a survey of commentary on the textual character and the theological content of the three epistles will determine the character of the argument. In the following discussion, we will compare the three epistles in at least two ways: (1) epistles have referential worlds and (2) history must be constructed from the referential world of the document. What is not entirely clear in the case of the Pastorals, however, is the extent to which their referential worlds overlap their contextual worlds. If Paul actually wrote the Pastorals, presumably—though not certainly—the referential and contextual worlds overlap to a greater extent than if someone else wrote in the name of Paul at a later date. If, however, the letters were written pseudonymously at some date after Paul’s death, the time in and for which they were written is clearly removed from the events and circumstances projected back onto the time of Paul, Timothy, and Titus. In any case, it would be a methodological fallacy to assume congruence between the two when there may in fact be little or none.

32 A survey of commentaries on the Pastorals shows that the argument about authenticity, style, vocabulary, and Pauline authorship has not been addressed. From a conclusion that the epistles then proceeds.
Text and Theology

The approach of this book is to begin in chapter 2 by assuming neither the authenticity nor pseudonymity of the Pastoral Epistles. In contrast to much scholarship on the Pastorals, the starting point for this discussion is the textual character and theological world of the respective letters.32 Each of the three epistles will be examined carefully on their own terms to determine the character of their particular theology and thought world. Only then will we compare the respective letters and their theologies. Although the issue that drives this discussion is not the question of Pauline authorship, it will be necessary to think about the literary features of authorship. It will also be necessary to frame the issue of authorship in such a way that historical questions do not surreptitiously preempt our starting point or our focus on the theology represented in the literary worlds of the texts.

The theology of the Pastorals is understood broadly here as the pattern of convictions and behaviors related to God and to the activity of God represented in these texts. This is an intentionally broad definition in order not to screen out any of the elements of the thought world of these letters. If the theology of the Pastorals reflects a patterned, as distinct from a thoroughly systematic, view of reality with a single organizing center, it stands to reason that the initial goal of this project is to understand the relationship of the elements in that pattern. It is not necessarily an attempt to find the key that unlocks the theology of each letter or the scarlet thread that runs through it and ties it together. Instead, it is a matter of understanding the pattern of convictions and behaviors presented in each. A more appropriate metaphor may be an orchestrated collage, as opposed to a random and disconnected set of elements, where a pattern of images is constructed that shapes and defines the individual elements within the whole. In chapter 2, this is the pattern that we are looking for in each of the Pastorals.

The theology and thought of the Pastorals appears on many different levels. For the sake of this discussion, two of these levels need to be distinguished. On the first level, the form and shape of the epistles’ theology is explicit. In other words, it is on the surface level of the texts that its pattern can be discerned most directly. On the second level, the epistles only hint at theological conceptions and patterns that are at most implicit in the literary worlds of the texts. They are part of the theological subtext. At various points in the following discussion, this distinction between explicit and implicit theology will become clearer. The presence of these two levels means that any attempt to identify the pattern of the Pastoral Epistles’ respective theologies will necessarily have gaps and places where the patterns are less than clear.

32 A survey of commentaries and books on the Pastoral Epistles illustrates that the argument about authorship, based on the standard criteria of theology, linguistic style, vocabulary, and Pauline chronology, is often one of the first issues to be addressed. From a conclusion about the issue of authorship, the interpretation of the epistles then proceeds.
Interpreters customarily deal with a text's implicit theology in two ways. First, they seek to draw a fuller picture of the thought world and theology of the Pastorals by appealing to the clues inherent in the texts themselves. In this way, interpreters seek to make explicit that which is only implicit. The second approach is more interesting for our purposes. It involves placing the letters in a broader literary and theological framework as a way of drawing the latent theology of the texts to the surface. Grouping 2 Timothy with 1 Timothy and Titus, as modern scholarship has done for the last two hundred years, or grouping 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus with the larger Pauline corpus on the basis of authorship is, from a textual point of view, really a matter of claiming how that larger referential world ought to be construed. Once the larger theological background is identified, it becomes a way of elaborating this second level of theology and of drawing it to the fore.

In modern historical critical scholarship, the method of choice for determining this broader framework is to argue comparatively for or against Pauline authorship on the basis of internal theological, stylistic, and linguistic evidence and to situate the Pastoral Epistles historically in the chronology of Paul's ministry. This approach is undoubtedly predicated on assumptions about the importance of historical context for determining theological meaning. It also assumes a high degree of correspondence between the context of the author, the thought of the author, and the text the author produces. Since we, in contrast, are concerned about the shaping of Paul's image and his thought as represented in the respective Pastoral texts, the next step will be to bring these patterns into comparison in chapter 3. We will compare them both with each other and with material from the undisputed Pauline Epistles through an analysis of the respective patterns of thought and theology. From this we can in turn make judgments about the relationships between and among the Pastoral Epistles and the undisputed Pauline material.

Comparison of Patterns

Although we are thinking in this discussion not about the comparison of religious systems broadly conceived but of texts and the conceptual and theological matrices represented by those texts, it is still necessary to be mindful of the triadic character of comparison. Jonathan Z. Smith observes that "the statement of comparison is never dyadic, but always triadic; there is always an implicit 'more than', and there is always a 'with respect to.' In the case of an academic comparison, the 'with respect to' is most frequently the scholar's interest, be this expressed in a question, a theory, or a model..."33 In chapter 3, the "with respect to" is the question, how do 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus represent God, the activity of God, and the character and behavior appropriate for those in the church? More specifically, how do these epistles represent truth, knowledge, faith, the redemptive action, the identify truth or answer questions, each development seen together allows us to see similarities and differences between the developing Pauline corpus.

Further on in chapter 3, the points also become more specific. Naturally 2 Timothy is addressed with respect to the exhortation, 1 Timothy with respect to the definition of the leader. In the comparison accrued in these patterns and images, the historical contexts. We can see authorship and historicity. Uncertainty on these is inherent in comparative comparisons will pertain to the Pastoral Epistles, as well as to them, their effects on Paul and his theology.

In these comparisons, they also suggest changing contextual as texts, traditions, and culture and meaningful. Freshness and contrast are also suggested differences among them, can begin to see the image action, appeal to concipients of the epistles. The importance of the between correct and author's intention, the appropriately the author is not leading astray. Likewise, the leadership necessary for a leader in the context of the church is unfitness for leadership. Their importance in this process

these epistles represent God, God's redemptive activity in Christ, godliness, truth, knowledge, faith, exhortation, and instruction? For example, how do the epistles address the issue of God or Christ? How do the epistles express the redemptive activity of God? How do they represent godliness? How do they identify truth or knowledge and so on? This element, stated in the form of a question, identifies the substantive point of the comparison. These comparisons, each developed relative to a different element or question, when seen together allow us to understand more clearly the structural similarities and differences between and among the respective patterns and images in the developing Pauline tradition.

Further on in the process, the issue of "more than" will at certain points also become apparent. For example, we will be able to say that structurally 2 Timothy is more like Philippians than 1 Timothy or Titus with respect to the exhortation to suffer, or that Titus is more like Galatians than 1 Timothy with respect to the issue of works and grace. As the points of comparison accrue, we will be in a better position to see how the Pauline patterns and images correspond to one another in their canonical and historical contexts. We will also be in a better position to assess the issues of authorship and historical context. This approach, of course, will not result in certainty on these issues but rather relative probabilities. Furthermore, these comparisons will provide different lenses through which to view the Pastoral Epistles, as well as different frames of reference within which to see them, their effects on each other, and the ongoing process of representing Paul and his theology.

In these comparisons, points of dissimilarity will be of special importance. They are markers not merely of conceptual divergence; they may also suggest changes in context as well. Identifiable differences between texts, traditions, and images make points of similarity all the more striking and meaningful. From a semantic and conceptual point of view, difference and contrast are also ways that meaning is generated. By attending to the differences among the texts, traditions, and images under comparison, we can begin to see the ways the authors sought to generate meaning, encourage action, appeal to sources of authority, and shape the behavior of the recipients of the epistles. For example, the more sharply the contrast is drawn between correct and incorrect belief in 1 Timothy and Titus, the more poignantly the author can appeal to the faithful to resist those who have gone astray. Likewise, the more sharply the author identifies the qualities necessary for a leader in the household of God, the clearer the qualities of those unfit for leadership become. Hence, dissimilarity will be of special importance in this process of comparison.

Throughout the comparisons in chapter 3 and subsequent chapters, identification of isolated and random similarities will be strictly limited. Such parallels in thought and theology may or may not be inherently meaningful or indicate a genetic relationship between the various texts and traditions. Even when the parallels are more than mere coincidence, the real significance of these parallels is often not apparent. More to the point for our purposes is to compare the patterns and structures of thought, theology, literary character, and social organization that help us situate the Pastorals in their proper symbolic matrix and to find, their contributions, if any, to this matrix. Our purpose is not necessarily to try to determine strict literary and theological dependence. Furthermore, the relationships between texts and traditions cannot be limited to quotations or simple parallels in wording. Significant features of religious texts and traditions are frequently exposed by highlighting the structural characteristics of the tradition, such as the deep-seated impulses that prompt the writing of a text, assumptions about the audience’s problems and how to respond to them, images of authoritative figures in the text, and the theological worldview that supports the concepts and claims of the text.

Canon and Early Church

In chapter 4, we shall investigate the development of Pauline apostolic authority and the emergence of the Pauline writings as Scripture, perhaps even in a rudimentary sense as canon, in the Pastoral Epistles. Working from the conclusion based on the comparison of literary and theological patterns in chapter 3 that two different authors may be responsible for the three Pastorals, we will begin to see that the Pastorals display a perceptible sense of the Pauline writings as authoritative for the “good deposit” and the correct faith. In other words, there is a movement in these letters towards an established form of Christianity and an impulse to consolidate a notion of Christian truth ecclesiologically. This need not mean that the Pastoral Epistles are second-century documents. To draw such a conclusion depends more on one’s theory of Christian development than it does on any one particular piece of concrete evidence. In chapter 4, we shall also extend the patterns of comparison to include other New Testament documents in addition to the undisputed Pauline letters: Acts and the deuteropaulines. The goal of this comparison is to differentiate the Pastorals from other New Testament images of Paul and other early strands of Pauline development. By seeing beneath the differences in genre, we shall be able to explore the structural similarities and differences in order to understand more clearly the Pauline framework for the Pastoral Epistles and their place in that framework.

35 Samuel Sandmel many years ago warned of the dangers of “parallelomania” (“Parallelomania,” JBL 81 [1962]: 1–13).
Continuing these comparisons into the period of the early church Fathers, and probably Mothers, in chapters 5 and 6 we will illustrate the contours of Paul's legacy as it passes through the developing Christian church. Once again, we will differentiate the traditions represented by the Pastoral and those displayed in other parts of the developing church through a process of comparing structural patterns. There will be no attempt to provide a comprehensive discussion of Paul's legacy in all of the various strands of the early church, but rather to use these other lines of development to bring into bold relief the movement toward forms of so-called orthodox Christianity and the formation of a church drawn together in belief and practice. Since the thrust of this argument is comparative and diachronic, reference to the context of the Pastoral letters means primarily the way these letters are situated in the struggles of the early church to define the faith, to determine who is responsible for preserving the faith, to preserve the unity of the church, and to establish the authority of both Scripture and the apostolic witness to the gospel. Only secondarily does it refer to the historical situation of the Pastoral and the circumstances of their writing.

**Argument and Contribution**

Because we are focusing on the Pastoral Epistles, the legacy of Paul represented by them, and their place in the formation of Christian traditions, it will be necessary to use these three letters as a two-way lens to look back to Paul and his undisputed letters and ahead to the development of the postapostolic church. The former is important in understanding the place of the Pastoral in the development of the Pauline tradition and the latter in seeing the role of these letters in the ongoing legacy of Paul in the church. In both directions, the three issues of chronological development, geographical area, and literary function are important for understanding the Pauline matrix of the early church and the place of the Pastoral in it. Our concern, however, is not primarily with the historical Paul or with the character of his own personal theology but is with the image of Paul and his thought in the Pastoral and the shaping and transmission of the Pauline legacy through the line represented by these three letters. The argument is that the roots of early church tradition concerning ecclesiology, orthodoxy, Christology, and the transmission of tradition run deep into the New Testament period and grow out of concerns and issues that emerge in the church well before the end of the first century. The imaging of Paul in the Pastoral reflects this development and contributes to it in substantive ways.

With this in mind, we can state the argument as follows: A comparative analysis of theological patterns illustrates that even as the Pastoral...
Epistles represent Paul and his theology in new contexts, they also reflect and foreshadow the significant issues confronting the church in the first two centuries. Among these issues are the nature of the true faith, the relationship of the church to Judaism, Christian asceticism, the prospect of church unity and the threat of disunity, the formation of the canon, the balance between Scripture and tradition, the place of women, and the role of authorized leaders in preserving the true faith and practice of the church. These are pressure points of early Christian debate, and the Pastoral Epistles mark all of them in varying degrees. In this sense, the Pastoral Epistles serve as a kind of sourcebook for identifying, and in some cases detailing, the points of contention that characterize the church in the first three centuries. Perhaps no other set of documents in the New Testament point to such a broad range of conflicted issues in the early church as do the epistles of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.

What then is the place of this book in the larger scholarly landscape? Its contribution is threefold. First, this discussion takes seriously the literary and conceptual world of each of the individual letters as discrete documents that have integrity in their own right. This is not the case in much scholarship on the Pastoral Epistles. They are often treated as a Pastoral corpus, which disguises the substantive differences between them, especially between 1 Timothy and Titus, on the one hand, and 2 Timothy, on the other. Viewing the Pastoral Epistles as a block also makes it difficult to situate these letters properly in the developing Pauline tradition. Moreover, there is rarely an effort to approach the thought and the Pauline images of these letters from the point of view of the literary thought world of the respective letters. The primary objective of this discussion is to establish the literary contours of the thought world of the Pastoral Epistles, their theology, and their representations of Paul and Pauline authority. In light of this, the approach in this discussion is fundamentally comparative—that is, comparative in terms of the structural patterns represented by the respective texts and traditions. Specifically, that means the conceptual and theological patterns, the patterns of ecclesiastical order, and the various images of the apostle Paul.

Second, this investigation focuses primarily on one part of the developing Pauline tradition, the lines of development represented by the Pastoral Epistles in the growth of the early church. Others have focused on the use of Paul in more marginal groups within early Christianity, for example Marcion and the gnostics. Or, in the case of Andreas Lindemann, who casts his sights more broadly, the focus of the investigation is on the earlier period of the post-New Testament church. The primary concern here is with the representations of Paul, his authoritative presence, and his thought in what came to be for the most part mainstream church traditions. The goal in this discussion is not to write the history of the making of the early church, but to situate the Pastoral tradition. The lens of Paul's transformation of the church, as well as the developing way into authoritative texts in the early church. In that regard, Paul's "charisma," which led to the canonizing of his letters, the church, his charismata, and his thought was considered one of the important foundations of Church life and would continue through his persona...
situate the Pastoral Epistles in, and to trace their contribution to, that larger tradition. The lens through which to view this process is, as we have said above, that of the Pastoral Epistles, looking both back to the historical Paul and his letters and forward to the post-New Testament church. In this part of the discussion the thought world of the Pastorals is the interpretive lens, not a social theory or model of early church development. What this lens lacks in abstract explanatory power it makes up for in conformity with and proximity to the world being investigated.

Third, this approach takes seriously the developmental character of Paul's transformation from a Jew and an apostle of Christ into a saint of the church, as well as the transformation of his epistles from occasional letters into authoritative texts that continued to inform the life and theology of the early church. In that sense, we are concerned with what Anthony Blasi calls Paul's "charisma," which is closely related to the sacralizing and ultimately canonizing of his letters. For Paul to continue to be a figure of authority in the church, his charisma had to be reconstructed and renewed through the generations, and that is what happened. Paul, along with Peter, came to be considered one of the apostolic pillars of the church. It is virtually impossible to think about the rise of early Christianity without thinking about the transformation of Paul from a persecutor of the early church into a revered figure who continued to inform and shape the church through his letters and through his personal authority.
THE PASTORAL EPISTLES AND THEIR THEOLOGICAL PATTERNS

EACH OF the Pastoral Epistles displays its own discrete set of literary and theological patterns. The immediate goal of this chapter is to identify those structural patterns and to see the individual theological elements in their respective literary contexts. The further goal is to begin to position these letters conceptually in the developing Pauline tradition by providing the baseline for later comparisons of Pastoral and Pauline material and for identifying the earliest signs of the Pauline writings as Scripture. This will also help us assess how the tradition of the Pastoral Epistles contributes to theological formation and consolidation in the early church. The method for identifying these structural patterns will be to examine the literary and textual characteristics of each of the Pastoral texts in turn.

1 TIMOTHY

The world of 1 Timothy turns on the literary axis that runs from Paul to Timothy, the named author and reader respectively of the epistle. In the world of this text, it is along this axis that the various instructions and exhortations, as well as the pattern of the epistle's theology, begin to come into view for the reader. On the face of it, quite apart from the literary question of genre, this epistle is a private correspondence between two people, Paul and Timothy. To that extent, 1 Timothy is much like 2 Timothy. What distinguishes 1 Timothy from 2 Timothy most dramatically is that in 1 Timothy the shape of the discussion is cast broadly in terms of οἰκουμένη (divine training/order; 1:4) and εὐσεβεία (godliness) for those within the household of God (3:15). Along this Paul-Timothy axis, the ecclesial dimension of 1 Timothy shapes the context for the instructions, exhortations, and theology that emerge from the literary world of the epistle. In 2 Timothy, as we shall see, the Paul-Timothy axis turns more directly on the intimate relationship between the two, most especially on the appeal for Timothy to suffer as Paul has suffered. With this in mind, it is clear that the household of God, the church in Ephesus according to the text, also functions as an implied audience in 1 Timothy. On the Paul-household of God axis.

The function of the Paul-Timothy letter is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. The world of 1 Timothy turns on the spiritual axis that runs from Paul to Jesus according to the common bond of God that becomes the authoritative bond between Paul and Timothy. In speaking of Jesus according to the common bond of God, the common bond between Paul and Timothy by which the common bond between Paul and Timothy is established. This bond is identified in the text as a household of God. The function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. The function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. The function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy.

Unlike the conclusion of the letter of 1 Timothy, which is characterized by pithy notes, and greetings, 2 Timothy begins with a greeting in the form of "Grace and peace to you." Although the establishment of the common bond between Paul and Timothy in 1 Timothy is a private correspondence between two people, Paul and Timothy, the function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. The function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. The function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy.

From the Greco-Roman world, the function of the Paul-household of God is to provide a private correspondence between Paul and Timothy. In his study of the Pauline correspondence, Norman Petersen writes that the textual tradition of literal reference can be placed in the class of reference. It is now apparent that the wider community of the church are two such believers' identities. The use of the phrase "Paul-household of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15, that the wider community of the church are two such believers' identities.

1 For a discussion of the relationship of the Paul-household of God, see J. Christiaan Beker, *Hermeneutics of the New Testament*. 2 The use of the phrase "Paul-household of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15, that the wider community of the church are two such believers' identities.
The Pastoral Epistles and Their Theological Patterns

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The function of the greeting in 1:1–2 is to establish this axis between Paul and Timothy. The author identifies himself as “an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the command of God our savior and Jesus Christ our hope.” Paul portrays himself as being under a divine command, and as such becomes the authoritative voice in the text that addresses Timothy and the household of God. But even more than that, God is identified as “our” savior and Christ as “our” hope. Already in this opening statement of the greeting, the common bond between the author and the reader in the household of God is established. They are united in God and in Christ. In turn, the text identifies Timothy as a true child in the faith as well as the recipient of the letter on whom grace, mercy, and peace are bestowed by God and Christ through the words of greeting from Paul. Timothy, the child, is addressed by Paul, the apostle.

Unlike the conclusion of 2 Timothy with its final testament, personal notes, and greetings, 1 Timothy ends abruptly with the words: “Grace be with you.” Although the entire sequence of 1 Timothy is structured around the relationship between Paul and Timothy established at the beginning of the letter, the end of the text presents no corresponding discussion portraying the personal connection between the two. That relationship is presumed in the world of the text and the abrupt ending, rather than reiterating that bond between the author and the reader, simply intrudes to bring the discussion to a close.

From the Greco-Roman Household to the Household of God

In his study of Philemon and the sociology of Paul’s narrative world, Norman Petersen wrote, over twenty years ago, concerning the transformation of literal references into metaphorical references:

It is now apparent that Paul has borrowed the role names of master, slave, father, child, sons, brothers, and sisters from the kinship and master-slave institutions in the world outside the church. But because he transforms the literal reference of the role names taken from these worldly institutions into metaphorical reference to roles in the church, we can see that the world and the church are two separate domains within Paul’s narrative world. . . . The believer’s identity as a believer is represented by borrowed language, but the


2 The use of the plural pronoun ὑμῖν (you) in 6:21 b reinforces the perception that the wider community was also thought of as part of the audience of 1 Timothy. The textual tradition indicates that this pronoun was changed to the singular in some manuscripts, presumably to convey the sense of the epistle being a private correspondence between two people.
believer is not governed by the institutions from which it was borrowed. The role names are the same in both domains, but in the domain of the world they refer to the literal relationship between actors, . . . all of whom are governed by institutional rules of behavior to be followed by the role players. In contrast, within the domain of the church the same role names are also used to refer to two different sets of actors, one set of which is superior to the other set, but with strikingly different significance.3

Similar to the shift identified by Petersen in Philemon, the rules and patterns governing relationships in the church, understood literally in 1 Timothy as the household of God, are not, strictly speaking, identical to those in the institution of the Greco-Roman household. Personal qualities and behaviors were obviously important to those concerned with the management of the Greco-Roman household, as they were to those concerned with the well-being of the church. However, the assembly of the living God represented in the text as the household of God in fact operates on a conceptual level with a somewhat different pattern of expectations, and this affects the sociological implications of the exhortations and instructions of the epistle. This discussion addresses how the transformation of images from the Greco-Roman household to the church takes place in the world of 1 Timothy. To put it another way, what happens when the social patterns and expectations governing the one shift, if not also transform, the patterns that pertain to the other, even though they are connected in the symbolic reference of the text by the image of the household of God?

In light of the extensive work already done on the background and circumstance of schisms and “household codes” in the letter of Polycarp, through all of these is the guise of managing (not threatening the order) the assembly of the household becomes, both members of the household, in the case, as well as for the household of the church, which members of the household, and convey both the sense of personal duty incumbent on the household, and the context of the understanding the social responsibility of every member of the household, and the literature and domestic code in 1 Peter, 1-62; Clayton N. Jefford, “Household Codes and Conflict in the Early Church,” StPaR 31 (1997): 121-27; Angela Standhartinger, “The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians,” JSNT 79 (2000): 117-22. See also David C. Verner, The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles (SBLDS 71, Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983), 83-125.

3 Norman R. Petersen, Rediscovering Paul, 25.


The Pastoral Epistles and Their Theological Patterns

The world, they governed: in all other sets, the qualities he concerned regarding God, concepts, affects of the churches from the world of patterns transform, even by the undulating and fluctuating lines that originate, function, and then transform in the community according to order in the formal codes.6 Further, Clayton Jefford identifies the consistent circumstance of schism or theological conflict from the first appearance of “household codes” in the letter to the Colossians to their final appearance in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians.7 The common thread running through all of these is the maintenance of or quest for order, whether under the guise of managing a household (ordering a household), silencing critics (not threatening the order of society), structuring the life of the church (ordering the assembly of the living God), or dealing with conflict and division (reordering the community). In line with this common thread, the household becomes both metaphorically and socially, a microcosm of the city, or the empire. In the case of 1 Timothy the household serves as a microcosm for the household of God, the church. Hence, as we shall argue below, οἰκονομίαν θέω τὴν ἐν πίστει in 1:4 is best translated “divine order to which members of the household ought to conform in faith,” because it conveys both the sense of order that is underscored by divine purpose and the duty incumbent on Timothy to conform to that divine order. This is played out in the context of what Ramsay MacMullen has described as the key to understanding the social scale of the Roman empire, “verticality,” and the responsibility of everyone through their behavior to maintain the prescribed order of Roman society.8

In light of all this, we must, however, be more precise about the use of the terms “household,” “household of God,” and “church.” The terms “household” and “church” point to social phenomena, the one represented in discussions of the household in Greco-Roman literature and pertaining to the character and management of household life and the other projected in the text of 1 Timothy as the ecclesial community. What connects them is the term “household of God,” a metaphor and linguistic link between the two social realities. As a linguistic link, it may not say much directly about the actual social realities of either the Greco-Roman household or the church, though the linkage presumes that the established social reality of the household is in some sense a model for the real life of the church. To make the metaphor work as a model, the author—in addition to what is said about the life of the church in the text—must also presume on the readers’ own experience of household life. What the term “household of God” does relate to directly, however, are the instructions related to other household terms in the literary world of 1 Timothy: overseers, deacons, women, elders, older men, widows, and slaves. Once again, the extent to which these instructions are manifested or will be manifested in the actual communal life of the epistle’s readers we are not able to know with precision.

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7 Ibid., 122. See also Verner, The Household of God, 76–77.
As literary realities, the image of the household of God in 1 Timothy and the instructions and exhortations pertaining to the management of the church are on one level largely consistent with what we think we know about the order and management of household life in the Greco-Roman world.\(^9\) In 1 Timothy’s frame of reference, various classes of people are identified and instructed concerning the appropriate qualities and behaviors for each. While the rough outlines of an ecclesial structure come into view, there is in 1 Timothy no concern to sketch the job descriptions for those positions identified as overseer, deacon, and elder. On the contrary, the concern in this text is with the characteristics and behaviors that ought to be exhibited by those people who have designated public roles in the household of God.\(^10\) Relationships within the household are crucial, and the qualities and behaviors necessary to maintain those relationships are of paramount concern in the world of this text. If the church is to function as the household of God, it must function according to patterns that contribute to the proper network and ordering of relationships among people in the community. In short, this is the way to maintain the good order of the church.\(^11\)

However, if we do not also consider the theology of 1 Timothy, we miss the full implication of the shift involved in borrowing the language of the household and applying it by means of a metaphorical link to the church. Here, we could argue, the prepositional phrase ἐν πίστει (in faith) in 1:4 and the genitive τοῦ (God) in 3:15 function as qualifiers that require the household of God metaphor to be understood in relation to the full range of conceptual, theological patterns in the textual world of 1 Timothy and not simply in relation to the various individuals and groups explicitly identified in the epistle. To put it another way, both the instructions that pertain to the individuals and groups as well as the theological patterns represented in the epistle affect the way the household of God imagery applies to the church. It is on this level that the movement from the one domain to the other exhibits the most profound shift, a shift that would have had important social implications for the church as well. Hence, it is not adequate to divorce the theology of 1 Timothy from the issue of the household of God, as either an image or a model for the church. The social character of the church and the qualities expected of those who exercise leadership roles in the church are circuitous. These put the household of God into context for Paul’s correspondence to Timothy, which is directed to Timothy, not as a neutral text, attention is directed to the theological, social, and the household of God.\(^12\) We might conclude, depending precisely on what we determine the originating context for the household of God image to be, that the transition from the domain of household life to the household of God as a metaphor and model for the church exhibits a high degree of consistency and a low degree of social transformation. However, Verner writes: “The station code schema has influenced the shape of the material in 1 Tim 2:1ff. and Titus 2:1–10, 15ff., 3:1ff., although this influence is considerably greater at certain points than at others. At the same time the schema has been freely adapted, modified, and even ignored as concrete problems of the church have been addressed” (The Household of God, 106).

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\(^9\) Johnson, Letters to Paul’s Delegates, 144–45.
\(^10\) Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, 63–72; and Young, Theology, 17–20.
\(^11\) We might conclude, depending precisely on what we determine the originating context for the household of God image to be, that the transition from the domain of household life to the household of God as a metaphor and model for the church exhibits a high degree of consistency and a low degree of social transformation. However, Verner writes: “The station code schema has influenced the shape of the material in 1 Tim 2:1ff. and Titus 2:1–10, 15ff., 3:1ff., although this influence is considerably greater at certain points than at others. At the same time the schema has been freely adapted, modified, and even ignored as concrete problems of the church have been addressed” (The Household of God, 106).
the church are circumscribed by 1 Timothy's theology and sense of piety. These put the household of God in a distinctive frame of reference when compared to the Greco-Roman household.

The Household of God

In 3:14b–15, the author writes: “so that, if I am delayed you may know how it is necessary to behave in the household of God (οἶκος Θεοῦ), which is the assembly (ἐκκλησία) of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” This image, presented midway in the discussion, sets the referential context for Paul’s instructions and exhortations. The author’s words are directed to Timothy and to the household of God; and in the sociology of this text, attention is directed inward to the assembly of the living God. Insiders are implicitly distinguished from outsiders, and the injunctions about proper behavior, personal characteristics, and patterns of life are intended for those who are inside this household. Modeled on the pattern of household life in the Greco-Roman world, this text projects, in a literary way, the ideal pattern of life in the household of God. In short, the patterns seen in the real world are picked up in the literary world and shaped into a context for the instructions, injunctions, and theological claims of the epistle. The patterns of the household in the real world shape the ideal patterns of the household of God in the literary world, which in turn are intended to order the real life of the church. This is the social and literary interplay that circumscribes this text, and it is the household of God concept in 3:15 that emerges as the crucial image for understanding the literary context of 1 Timothy’s theology, as well as for understanding the instructions and exhortations that are directed to Timothy.

The household of God image may or may not be the center of 1 Timothy’s theology, but it is clearly framed by the theological statements in 3:16: “Without a doubt the mystery of godliness (ἐνθρόνος) is great. Who was manifested in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, preached to Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.” As the pillar and foundation of the truth, the assembly of the living God rests upon the great mystery of godliness, which is cast in christological terms. The unmistakable implication is that the work of the living God and the mystery of godliness are

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12 See Jouette M. Bassler, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 73–74; Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, 102–6; and Frances Young, Theology, 17, 22.

13 A fuller discussion of the relationship between the Greco-Roman household and the household of God in 1 Timothy will be presented in the conclusion to this section.


to be understood in terms of Christ, and all of these are tied directly to life in the household of God. If the household of God image projects a context for theology in 3:15–16, the work of the living God expressed in Christ sustains that household in truth. In that sense, the church is the assembly of God.

The inward focus of attention in the literary world of 1 Timothy comes to the fore immediately following the opening greeting in 1:3. Timothy is urged once again to stay in Ephesus and to instruct certain people not to teach a different, presumably incorrect, doctrine. Those who occupy themselves with myths, endless genealogies, and speculations are to be corrected. Without any doubt, these are people within the household of God who are straying from the truth into false doctrine. The concern is not with outsiders at this point, and to the extent there is a concern with outsiders in 1 Timothy, it is primarily with the image the household of God projects to the outsiders.15 The perceived threat is from false teachers within rather than the threat of persecutions from without. More specifically the threat comes from those who wish to be teachers of the law but have no understanding about the things of which they teach and end up in idle chatter (1:6–7).

The false doctrines of the false teachers—their myths, genealogies, and debates—are contrasted with the ἀληθέντα θεοῦ τῆν ἐν πίστει. The meaning of this phrase is critical for understanding life in the household of God and for the injunctions that shape much of 1 Timothy’s textual world. A brief survey of English translations of 1 Tim 1:4 and of recent debates about the meaning of the term ἀληθέντα indicates the diversity of renderings.16 Lexicons themselves confirm this diversity of options.17 There are two general schools of thought regarding the term ἀληθέντα: the term has either the sense of divine order or it conveys the sense of cultivating the proper form of godliness.18 In deciding between these two schools of thought, the first point to be observed is the adverative nature of the sentence structure. The false teachers occupy themselves with myths and genealogies which give rise to debates, instead of (μᾶλλον ἢ) the ἀληθέντα θεοῦ that is known or received in faith. Syntactically it appears that two forms of behavior on the part of people in the household have two different results, speculative debates or knowing in faith. If such parallelism is in the text, then it would seem to tilt the argument slightly in favor of the term. Although this might be a primary order of things, it is not the only language. On the face of it, the phrase would appear to be the verb ἀληθένομαι, and the object would be the noun ἡθονία. What seems to be perhaps under consideration in this verse is how one might describe the proper form of religion within the household of God that is also tied to life in the Greco-Roman world, to the extent that one might ask if the household of God projects a context for theology in 3:15–16.

If this term is understood as seekers of the household of God that is also tied to life in the Greco-Roman world, on the other hand, the emphasis is on seeking truth. The emphasis is faced with this alternate meaning in 1 Timothy 1:4–5 and then to understand the thought that is being represented by this lens. A better translation might be: "the things of which they teach and end up in idle chatter," as in the Latin and as in the Greek. In 1 Timothy 1:4–5 then to understand the thought that is being represented by the lens. A better translation might be: "the things of which they teach and end up in idle chatter," as in the Latin and as in the Greek.

What is clear in 1 Timothy 1:3 and the organizing structure of the passage is that the false doctrines and controversies of the false teachers give rise to parallel forms of behavior on the part of Timothy and his charges to instruct certain people not to teach a different, presumably incorrect, doctrine. Those who occupy themselves with myths, endless genealogies, and speculations are to be corrected. Without any doubt, these are people within the household of God who are straying from the truth into false doctrine. The concern is not with outsiders at this point, and to the extent there is a concern with outsiders in 1 Timothy, it is primarily with the image the household of God projects to the outsiders.15 The perceived threat is from false teachers within rather than the threat of persecutions from without. More specifically the threat comes from those who wish to be teachers of the law but have no understanding about the things of which they teach and end up in idle chatter (1:6–7).

The false doctrines of the false teachers—their myths, genealogies, and debates—are contrasted with the ἀληθέντα θεοῦ τῆν ἐν πίστει. The meaning of this phrase is critical for understanding life in the household of God and for the injunctions that shape much of 1 Timothy’s textual world. A brief survey of English translations of 1 Tim 1:4 and of recent debates about the meaning of the term ἀληθέντα indicates the diversity of renderings.16 Lexicons themselves confirm this diversity of options.17 There are two general schools of thought regarding the term ἀληθέντα: the term has either the sense of divine order or it conveys the sense of cultivating the proper form of godliness.18 In deciding between these two schools of thought, the first point to be observed is the adversative nature of the sentence structure. The false teachers occupy themselves with myths and genealogies which give rise to debates, instead of (μᾶλλον ἢ) the ἀληθέντα θεοῦ that is known or received in faith. Syntactically it appears that two forms of behavior on the part of people in the household have two different results, speculative debates or knowing in faith. If such parallelism is in the text, then it would seem to tilt the argument

16 Cf. 6:1. See also Beker, Paul’s Heirs, 45. MacDonald says we find no desire in the Pastoral Epistles for rejection of the world, The Pauline Churches, 164–70.

17 See the article by Luke Timothy Johnson, “Oikonomia Theou: The Theological Voice of 1 Timothy from the Perspective of Pauline Authorship” and the response to it by Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘Speaking of God as He Was Able’: Three Accounts of the Theology of 1 Timothy Compared,” HBT 212 (1999): see especially pages 95–103 and 130–34 in the article and the response. Also Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, 27; and Johnson, First and Second Letters to Timothy, 164.


19 See the discussion by Young, Theology, 54–55.
slightly in favor of the practice of godliness as the proper translation of the term. Although this does not rule out the sense of knowing in faith the divine order of things, it is stated directly in 1:5 that the goal of this instruction is "love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith." On the face of it, this sounds very much like the language of piety and devotion. At least this much is clear in light of the parallelism identified: different forms of human activity have different results, debates or knowing in faith. What seems to be ruled out is the idea that divine order is merely a static concept apart from any human concern or activity.

If this term is understood to convey the idea of divine order, then the instructions and exhortations that alternate throughout the epistle ought to be understood as seeking to replicate the divine order of things in the household of God that is also found more generally in the Greco-Roman household. If on the other hand, the term encourages the practice of godliness, then the emphasis is on shaping piety and devotion in the household of God. When faced with this alternative, two things are important to observe. First, the translation decision ought not be made solely on the basis of 1:4–5 but must be made in light of the entire textual world of 1 Timothy. Second, these alternatives cannot be set in rigid contrast to each other, for there is evidence in 1 Timothy for both proper conduct leading to good order in the church and conduct that leads to godliness. It would also be a mistake to try to understand the thought world of 1 Timothy by making a definitive decision about the translation of this term and then reading the entire text through that lens. A better approach is to identify the alternate emphases in light of 1:4–5 and then to examine the text's theological and rhetorical patterns to see how the text might nuance and shade the meaning of the term. Hence, this issue will be revisited after the pattern of 1 Timothy's thought world has been sketched and discussed.

What is clear to this point is that the household of God image provides the organizing structure within which the instructions, exhortations, and theological claims of the letter are made. This image, drawn from everyday life in the Greco-Roman world, establishes the underlying symbolic network that gives the discussion in 1 Timothy intelligibility and poignancy. Moreover, within this concept of the household, the ἀποκομιστήρ, whatever its particular nuance in 1:4, is critical for understanding behavior, life, and thought in the assembly of the living God.

God, Godliness, and Salvation

In 1 Timothy, God is identified as one (2:5), and Christ Jesus is the mediator between the one God and humanity. In this statement, the divide...