

# The Pastoral Epistles At The Seminary And In The Ministry

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“The courses in Pastoral Theology present the Scriptural principles and their practical application according to which a Lutheran pastor will strive to lead his congregation, to minister to the sick and the dying, to counsel the troubled, the distressed, the tempted and the erring, and to reach out into the community with the gospel. A thorough study of St. Paul’s Pastoral Epistles furnishes much of the material in these courses. — 4 hours” (Catalog, 1988-1989, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary).

I do not teach Pastoral Theology and therefore do not teach the Pastoral Epistles, but I have welcomed the opportunity to study them and learn from them. Except for vacancy and supply work, I have not served a congregation for more than 17 years. In these lectures, therefore, I will at every opportunity allow Dr. Martin Luther, some of the fathers of Lutheranism in this country, and past and present teachers of Pastoral Theology in our Seminary speak.

In the May, 1978 *Self-Study of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary* these course objectives are set forth for NT 283, the course on the Pastoral Epistles: “On the basis of the Greek text students are to become thoroughly familiar with the timeless principles which are laid down in God’s Word concerning the character and official conduct of those who are entrusted with the public ministry.”

In the same document and relative to the same course, this is said with regard to classroom procedure and instructional method: “...Students are required to write an essay on the topic: ‘2 Timothy Applied to Me in My Future Ministry...’ ”

His concern with the content of these epistles certainly does not end when a man enters the public ministry. Then that *oratio, meditatio* and *tentatio* which shape the practical theologian are intensified as he discharges the duties of the ministry. Then it is ever more necessary that he review and struggle to apply the timeless principles laid down in these three writings. It is also always necessary for the evangelical Lutheran pastor to distinguish between what is timeless principle and what is *ad hoc* instruction.

In the series of lectures we will pursue a topical study of the Pastoral Epistles under five headings:

1. Preparation and Qualifications
2. Called to Preach the Gospel
3. Teaching and Contending for the Truth
4. Life and Conduct
5. Evangelical Leadership

## PREPARATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst” (1 Tm 1:15). Christ Jesus did what he came to do. That is the story of the Gospels and that is the gospel. God prepares and qualifies a person for service when he convicts that person of sin and convinces that person of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Paul does not say that he was the worst of sinners. He says, "I am." *Protos eimi ego*. *Protos* is in emphatic position. *Ego* emphasizes the verb. Paul does not want us to argue with him or try to outdo him in this confession. On the other hand, none of us who knows himself will be too quick to agree that Paul is foremost.

The great apostle is a penitent sinner, not only acknowledging his past sins but also confessing that he daily sins much. He is *simul justus et peccator*. He is not playing some game of false modesty or self-deprecation. He is not entertaining anyone with dramatic boasts of a wicked past. He is not accepting the status quo. He is only magnifying Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners.

Each of us knows his own mixed, impure and selfish motives better than he understands those of others. Each of us knows his own daily sins and failures and follies. Each knows how he has abused God's grace. Each of us judges himself, as God's law judges us, and appropriates for himself what Paul says of himself: "I am the worst."

"No saint, not even the blessed Virgin, lies when she says: 'Forgive us our debts'" (LW 10.233).

The *pistos ho logos* also points back to the confession which begins in verse 12, a confession of past sins but also a confession of God's grace: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service" (1 Tm 1:12). Paul was faithful, qualified for the Lord's service, because Christ Jesus our Lord considered him faithful. Before Paul exhibited any such faithfulness the Lord called him to faith. The persecutor was justified by faith.

"We become faithful when God reckons it to us" (LW 28.240).

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief" (1 Tm 1:13). Paul had been a *hubristes*, filled with *hubris*, a violent insolence. He had persecuted Jesus himself by persecuting Jesus' followers. He had blasphemed God's Son in his misguided zeal for God's law.

Such a man God considered faithful and appointed to his service. This man was shown mercy. Not to justify or excuse himself but to explain and "justify" God's merciful dealing with him, Paul writes, "because I acted in ignorance and unbelief." His ignorance was not innocence, but he had not sinned against the Holy Spirit by acting against better knowledge, by acting as he did in the face of conviction.

"These are his 'merits' which preceded God's grace.... To whomever grace comes, it comes as it did to Paul, without merit, because that is how we lived.... To be sure, merits have appeared, but we were never worse than when we appeared the best!" (LW 28.241).

"The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (1 Tm 1:14). The initiative was with the Lord. The motive was his grace and that grace was poured out in abundance. It created the faith and kindled the love that have their abode in Christ Jesus.

"...I am the worst (of sinners). But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life" (1 Tm 1:15b,16). For the very reason that Paul was the foremost of sinners he was shown mercy. The Savior's *makrothumia*, which he displayed in bearing with the worst of sinners is an enduring example of how he wants to deal with all sinners. This model provides encouragement to all who come after Paul to trust this long-suffering Redeemer and thus receive eternal life.

“It applies to me, so that I may glory in this passage” (LW 28.248).

This is also an example of unlimited patience for believers to emulate. Just as the Lord did not give up on Paul, so we learn not to give up on those who resist the truth or whose lives are a contradiction of the truth they profess.

The unlimited patience which Christ Jesus demonstrated in showing mercy to the foremost of sinners inspires Paul’s doxology: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Tm 1:17). The minister of Christ is the recipient of God’s mercy. This equips and encourages him to share that mercy with others, to give God honor and glory in faithfully pointing others to what Christ Jesus has done to save sinners.

Paul had two coworkers whom he regarded as his genuine sons in the faith: “...Timothy my true son in the faith” (1 Tm 1:2a) and “...Titus, my true son in our common faith” (Tt 1:4a). They were his “sons” because he was instrumental in their conversion and because they were trained by him for gospel service.

Timothy had begun to learn the Scriptures as an infant (2 Tm 3:15). Although his father was a Greek who did not allow his son to be circumcised, Timothy was blessed with a mother and grandmother who nurtured him in spiritual things (2 Tm 1:5). He was convinced by the gospel before Paul’s second visit to Lystra, his hometown (Ac 16:1). Thereafter he was Paul’s coworker and fellow missionary, constantly learning from the second-best teacher there ever was. God had prepared him thoroughly for the assignment of representing the apostle and faithfully presenting the apostle’s message.

Titus was a gentile, one of Paul’s converts. He too spent a great deal of time with the apostle, accompanying him from Antioch to Jerusalem for that conclave which answered once for all the question of the Christian’s obligation to the law of Moses (Ac 15, Ga 2). There Paul and the other apostles demonstrated that conformity to the Mosaic Code is not necessary for full membership in the true Israel by refusing to agree to Titus’ circumcision. Titus had been Paul’s emissary to the church at Corinth at the time of the relief offering (2 Cor).

Timothy was Paul’s representative to the churches in the province of Asia, with his headquarters in Ephesus. Titus served in essentially the same capacity on the island of Crete. Paul wrote the letter which we know as 1 Timothy and the Epistle to Titus from Macedonia. These two letters were written at about the same time, after Paul’s release from his first imprisonment in Rome and the resumption of his mission activity. The letters provided instructions in writing for the supervisory work which the recipients were carrying on in their respective fields of responsibility. They were serving as pastors of pastors, as overseers of several congregations and a larger number of ministers.

The Second Letter to Timothy was written after Paul had been imprisoned for the second time, when the apostle was expecting to be condemned to death. Because of the changed circumstances and expectations this letter differs in content and tone from the other two epistles. However, it also contains timeless inspiration and instruction which are of great value to the church today, especially to those who aspire to or have been called to the public ministry.

Surprisingly, these three writings were not designated “The Pastoral Epistles” before 1703, at which time D.N. Bernot gave them that collective title. Perhaps the simple reason is that the term “pastor” does not appear in them. Also, the church for about 1400 years thought about hierarchy when it thought about the ministry: bishops, presbyters, deacons. Too early and for too long, the church thought in terms of title and dignity rather than in terms of service and function when it thought about the ministry.

As Timothy counseled and assisted the congregations in and around Ephesus in the calling of supervising pastors, he would need to be aware and make them aware of the qualifications for that office. “Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money” (1 Tm 3:2,3).

“The overseer must be above reproach.” He must be *anepileptos*—one against whom no case can be successfully brought.

“Before God no one is above reproach, but before men the bishop is to be so” (LW 28.284).

In his charge to Titus (1:5,6) to appoint elders in every town in Crete, Paul specified someone who is “blameless.” Here the word is *anegkletos*, not chargeable. In verse 7 he explains why such a man must be blameless: *Dei gar ton episkopon anegkleton einai hos theou oikonomon*. “For it is necessary that the overseer, as God’s steward, be blameless.” NIV (like many translations) could give the impression that the elder and the overseer hold two different offices. However, the same minister is being described in both verses, but from two aspects. He is a leader respected for his maturity (*presbuteros*) and he is a supervising pastor (*episkopos*). Paul is not prescribing or even describing the kind of hierarchical arrangement which developed in the second century.

The overseer must be “the husband of but one wife,” *mia gunaikos andra*. “A one-woman man,” Professor Blume used to say. This does not say that he must be married. Nor does it forbid him to remarry if he should lose his wife. It requires him to be faithful to the wife he has for as long as she lives. We notice, incidentally, that the overseer must be a man, not a woman. Paul uses the same phrase to describe the overseer at Titus 1:6.

He must be “temperate,” not only in the use of wine and the consumption of food, but also in the consumption of ideas and the way in which he expresses them. He must not swallow everything he reads and hears; he must not regurgitate everything he has learned when he teaches the people. One study of *nephalios* as it is used here suggests that the word describes a man whose language is clear rather than ecstatic.

He must be “self-controlled.” The word is *sophrona*, prudent and thoughtful (used also at Titus 1:8). The overseer must be “respectable,” *kosmios*, presenting a good appearance and making a good impression.

“A bishop ought not to go about like a vagabond or a mercenary soldier, but ought to appear with dignity as befits him. He should not be seen with torn shoes and torn sleeves, but he should wear respectable clothes” (LW 28.285).

The “hospitable” man is friendly to strangers, *philoxenos* (1 Tm 3:2; Tt 1: 8). The overseer must do more than entertain his friends and throw parties for his acquaintances. He must be willing to help those in need.

“The word ‘hospitable’ requires that he accept both the saints and the evil ones” (LW 29.29)

It has been said that all but one of the qualifications which Paul lists in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 simply describe the Christian. The exception is *didaktikos*, able to teach.

“By nature we really don’t know anything about heavenly truths. We must first learn from God what kind of God he is, what his thoughts toward us are. Therefore Paul says that a preacher must be able to teach” (Adolph Hoenecke, *Faithfulness in the Preaching Ministry* [three theses], Synod essays in 1893, 1894, 1895).

The ability to teach which is required of the overseer involves more than natural ability. It means that the minister has been taught, that he has been trained to keep on learning, that he keeps on learning for as long as he keeps on teaching.

“It is not an insignificant act to teach others clearly and correctly, and it is not within the power of such folk as have no learning” (LW 40.314).

Needed are “reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tm 2:2).

Professor Adolph Hoenecke commented rather sharply in connection with this passage:

“He does not speak only of faithfulness, as if that alone were sufficient, but also: ‘qualified to teach others.’ Thus it is not only as though faithfulness (which God indeed esteems so highly and which we pastors dare never forget for the sake of our salvation) were the one thing which compensates for everything else about us. Really not! It must not be the case that, ‘It’s true he can’t preach, but still he is faithful.’ Or, ‘It’s true he does not carry on his work with wisdom and insight. Rather he frequently functions like one who utterly lacks wisdom. He neither understands how to lead people in God’s counsel, nor does he know and see what in a given case the truly God-pleasing and Christian-serving goal to aim for would be. Nor does he understand how to reach the goal in a prudent manner which God will bless. But he’s faithful, that’s true’” (op cit).

Faithfulness is fundamental, and that’s what Dr. Hoenecke’s essays were about. But without aptitude for teaching all conscientious diligence will not avail. It has happened from time to time that a seminary student must be asked to discontinue his studies because he is not apt to teach. That is usually (not always) a crushing blow for him, but for the gospel’s sake and the sake of souls it must be done. “The Lord’s servant must...be...able to teach” (2 Tm 2:24).

The overseer must not be *paroinos*, parked next to the wine, “given to drunkenness” (1 Tm 3:3 and Tt 1:7). In our affluent and tolerant society, in which stronger drinks and a greater variety of alcoholic beverages are readily available, the temptations and dangers may be greater for us than for Paul’s first readers with their watered wine.

“It is not that he should dislike wine, but that he should not be a drunkard.... It is not good that a bishop be drunk even once. This can lead to a fall, as in Lot’s case” (LW 28.285).

“Not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome.”

“This means fair, or better yet, accommodating. This is a bishop’s outstanding, most honorable, most universal and greatest virtue. With it he wins the minds of men. With it he accommodates himself to the ways and interests of all people. He can explain all things, endure all things. He does not proceed strictly according to the law.... A bishop should be very fair, very obliging, so that he can easily tolerate people and accommodate himself to their ways, for they are not all of one kind” (LW 28.285).

At Titus 1:7 Paul says that the bishop must not be *authades*, not be *orgelos*. The man who is *authades* is self-willed, stubborn, arrogant. NIV catches all of these in “overbearing.” *Orgelos* means “quick tempered.” Concerning the former *The Shepherd Under Christ* (I.J. Habek and A.W. Schuetze, Northwestern 1974) says:

“He has no other authority in his congregation than that which comes when he speaks for the Lord by speaking his Word—nor should he want to have more authority than that. He is not to be ‘self-willed.’”

On the subject of the short fuse Luther wrote:

“When (the pastor) has wolves in his circuit and is set in the midst of devils, it is impossible for him to avoid being constantly tempted by all sorts of trials and being

presented with many reasons to lose his temper. He should take great care not to be quick tempered toward his brethren; that is, he should be gentle and meek in order that he may be able to bear their weaknesses and all the diseases of their souls. But someone who pleases himself (here Luther seems to have the 'self-willed' bishop in mind) is soon offended when things do not go as he wants them to. If he sees someone who is the least bit reluctant, he wants to excommunicate him" (LW 29.24).

"Not a lover of money" (1 Tm 1:3) is less colorful than "not greedy of filthy lucre," but it's what *aphilarguros* means. An overseer is not required to take a vow of poverty or sell all that he has and give the proceeds to the poor. He must, however, not be guilty of that covetousness which is idolatry. Titus 1:7 says that he must not pursue dishonest gain.

1 Timothy 3:4 reads, "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect."

"In the maze of his professional activity the pastor is tempted to leave the care of the children in the family altogether to his wife. Yet it will be impossible for him to shift the responsibility which God has placed on all fathers and of which He reminds the pastor, too...(1 Tm 3:4). In this expression of the Holy Scripture no pastor will be able to find contentment with the thought that as long as he has the children in a state of fear of himself, he is meeting the Lord's expectations so far as his responsibility toward his children is concerned. Such a thought will do no more than keep the pastor from fulfilling his God-given duty toward his children. It will only keep him in a condition of false satisfaction and totally unaware that while his children might manifest much awe of him in his presence, they may have no fear of wrongdoing when they are not in his presence. To have the children in subjection is to gain their respect as they are taught the will of God and seriously held to follow it" (Alfred O. Rast in *The Pastor at Work*, Concordia 1960).

In Titus 1:6 Paul calls for "a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient."

"We have the example of the sons of Eli, who were notorious for their (dissipation). They devoured any sacrifices they wanted and consorted with women. They really led a wild, profligate and shameless life. But he did not correct them" (LW 29.22).

"An aid in the training of children will be regular family devotions, a matter in which the parsonage ought also to set a good example" (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

"(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)" (1 Tm 3:5). Luther himself knew from personal experience that the conduct of the minister's offspring can undermine congregational discipline:

"We who are placed in prominent positions serve as an example to all, and our degenerate children are a scandal to others. But the rascals want to use our privileged position as a license to sin" (Tabletalk No. 6102, quoted in E.M. Plass, *What Does Luther Say?* No. 428, Concordia 1959).

"He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil" (1 Tm 3:6). Only in Christian literature does the figurative use of *neophytos* appear in the first century. Literally, it means "newly planted." A newly planted believer, one who is a beginner in the faith, is not ready to lead and feed others in their faith-life. He may become puffed up because of the honor and authority of his position, having no clear concept of the responsible service he is called to render.

Not only for the church's sake but also for his own eternal welfare, he should be passed over when overseers are elected. "The devil" seems to be a better rendering than "the slanderer" for *diabolos* here. The devil's sin was pride; he became conceited and was ejected from God's presence. Spare the recent convert from bringing the same judgment on himself.

It is important that even those who are not part of the fellowship of believers recognize that the supervising pastor is an upright and decent member of society. If not, the outsiders will justifiably despise him and will feel justified in rejecting the gospel he preaches. And, he will become the devil's captive, held under Satan's power: "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap" (1 Tm 3:7).

Here in verse 7, as in verse 2, we have *dei*, it is necessary. Paul is not suggesting certain *desirable* qualifications for the ministry. These qualifications *must* be there in the candidate for and the incumbent of the office. It's important, too, to remember (and to remind seminary students), that these qualifications are not to be acquired after one has been called to the public ministry. They are to be there already in those who are called.

The overseer must be "upright, holy and disciplined" (Tt 1:8). Upright is *dikaios*, living in accord with God's law as a justified believer.

The word for "holy" here is *hosios*, not *hagios*. The latter, characterizing all saints, has the sense of being set apart for God's service. *Hosios*, however, has the connotation of piety.

"*Hosios* means someone who is zealous in holy things, so that he teaches, lives and prays in a holy way, and does other works which pertain to holiness" (LW 29.30),

The word which NIV renders as "disciplined" is *egkrates*. The overseer must be a person who does not devote himself to the pleasures of life, good gifts of God though they be. He must use God's gifts of food, drink, sex, recreation and entertainment and not be used by them.

The man chosen to be a steward of God's household must be "one who loves what is good" (Tt 1:8).

"Let him be prepared to advance such causes as piety, sacred letters, peace, harmony and friendship among neighbors. Let him support good causes and turn away from evil ones. Let him be zealous to help good persons and good issues" (LW 29.29).

To the gift of faith God adds others, present to some degree in all believers, but essential for the public ministry. The imprisoned apostle, expecting to be executed for crimes against the state, wrote to his spiritual son: "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline" (2 Tm 1:7).

Besides facing the challenge of his supervisory responsibility in Ephesus and environs, Timothy might also face government opposition. If Rome decided that Paul's gospel activities were criminal, then Christianity would be an illicit religion and the public ministry would be an illegal calling.

Then it would be necessary for Timothy, as it is for all kingdom workers, to remember that any spirit of *deilia* (cowardice, timidity) does not come from God but from another source. What God has given is a spirit of *dunamis* and *agape* and *sophronismos*.

*Dunamis* is the power to continue the work in face of any opposition. *Agape* is that love which imitates God, who saw us prodigal runaways, purposed to rescue us, and did it. *Sophronismos* is the exercise of *sophrosune*, self-discipline in the sense of applying a sober and practical psychology to whatever situation may arise.

"While it is needed at all times, (it) is most needed in dangerous times. For then any foolish, ill-considered, hasty, fanatical action precipitates dire results, especially if the leadership is not 'sensibly-minded'" (Lenski).

The qualities of character listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 are of the kind that might be found in an upright heathen or a decent agnostic. They are not in and of themselves fruits of the Spirit or gifts of the Spirit. Rather, they are natural gifts which have been sanctified, set apart for God's service, when they are found in a man in whom the Holy Spirit has created a sincere, unhypocritical faith (2 Tm 1:5).

"It is interesting to note the great emphasis placed here upon *spiritual qualities of mature leadership*, qualities which have been demonstrated to fellow Christians. So often we are tempted to think of the Christian ministry as we do of other professions. We place great importance upon a man finishing a prescribed course of study, and if he passes this course with high marks we say he is qualified. In many societies, however, people will listen with respect only to those who have demonstrated by their own lives, first of all, that they mean what they say. They will not listen to those who live contrary to their words, no matter how bright and intelligent they may be otherwise.

'Able to teach others,' of course, is included in this list of qualifications. This is important, too.

For both of these reasons we insist on many years of training, especially for overseers, or supervising pastors in the church. We want them to know what is expected of them. We want them to use God's Word correctly. And we also want to be sure—as much as we can—that their lives will be according to their words" (E.H. Wendland's commentary on 1 Timothy).

## **2. CALLED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL**

"Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Tm 3:1). We begin with another trustworthy saying. We all know from experience that the office of a supervising minister is a noble task. However, we have also had hard experience which at the time, for a time, made us lose sight of this truth. How important, therefore, that we know it from the inspired Word. Here is a trustworthy saying which nourishes and encourages us when we are tempted to doubt or to forget that ours is a noble task.

The gospel ministry is a noble task. *Kalon ergon* Paul calls it. It is good and beautiful in its usefulness because it accords with and serves God's saving purpose.

"O blessed ministry, which is carried out with the most certain purpose, for God himself is at work even through feeble and unworthy men.... All zealous theologians ought to dedicate themselves to this profession eagerly and courageously.... No other profession even gets a smell..." (LW 34.132).

*Ei tis episkopes oregetai*, writes the apostle, "If anyone aspires to the office of supervisor." *Episkope* was used in the Septuagint to denote "office." Paul and the primitive church adopted it to express the concept of what we today call the pastoral ministry. The word does not emphasize the dignity of the ministry as *presbuterion*, the office of elder, does. It emphasizes the task. In its roots it has the connotation of "looking after, taking care of, visiting, overseeing." Now, all of that is work, sometimes drudgery, but it is a noble task when it is performed in the service of God and his people.

The literal meaning of *oregemai* is "to reach out one's hand for." Figuratively it came to mean "aspire to, strive for, desire." The NIV's "sets his heart on" is especially apt in view of the fact that *oregemai* takes the genitive (*episkopes*), connoting "this office and this alone."

"With these words the apostle indicates that those who are pastors ought to be in the ministry because they have desired it..."



The apostle furthermore implies that the desire for the office of a bishop will spring out of a living faith in the Savior and a desire to serve him. Financial security, prestige, opportunity for cultural pursuits, and least of all the prospect of leading a comparatively easy life ought never be allowed to tip the scales in favor of entering the ministry” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

Augustine of Hippo said, “Bishop is a name for a task, not a name for an honor.”

“*Negotium, non otium*,” said Bengel, “Business, not leisure.”

“The episcopate is only a work, and a ‘good work,’ but not leisure. The others who climb, namely out of love or desire for leisure, pleasure and honor, those are the ones who ‘take this honor upon themselves’ (He 5:4)” (LW 29.173).

There were in Luther’s time, as there are in ours, people who regarded the ministry as a noble task for someone else’s children:

“The burghers and peasants too say now, ‘Why should I let my son go on with his studies? He will be a beggar if he becomes a parson. I would rather let him learn a trade or become a merchant.’ Well, then, if churches and schools too become barren of God’s Word, then those who have given the cause for such desolation...will have to assume the responsibility here and at the Last Judgment. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit testify that pasturing the sheep was his dearest work for which the Son became man and shed his blood, so that the people should be saved. He who does this work or helps in it (which cannot happen without schools and churches) shall be a great saint in heaven...” (LW 41.355).

Paul, who had seen the risen Christ and been sent by him, was an apostle in the same fullest sense as were the Twelve. He was “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Tm 1: 1). God who saves sinners and God’s Son who is our sure hope of eternal life (2 Tm 1:1) gave him authority and responsibility to instruct Timothy and Titus and the whole church concerning the noble task of those who are *called to preach the gospel*.

All three of the Pastoral Epistles contain rich expressions of the gospel, even in their greetings (1 Tm 1:1,2; 2 Tm 1:1,2; Tt 1:1-4). Five times in the salutations Paul names the name of Christ Jesus; once he calls him Jesus Christ.

The name Jesus reminds us that the One who commissions men to the noble task of overseeing the flock is himself a man. He is not an unearthly being who only seemed to be a man a mythical figure who lived “once upon a time,” an idealized character sprung from the collective imagination of the church’s second generation. He was born when Augustus was Caesar and died in the reign of Tiberius. He was circumcised, grew up, learned as he grew, became a carpenter. He was baptized, tempted, sad. He was hungry, thirsty, angry, exhausted. He slept and wept and prayed. He sweat and bled and died.

He is also Christ, God’s Anointed, Israel’s promised Messiah. He was sent in God’s good time to do God’s saving work. God certified it at his baptism, at the transfiguration, and especially by raising him from the dead.

Paul calls him “our Lord.” Like the title *soter*, so the title *kurios* was often applied to the emperors of Rome, especially by those who lived a greater distance from Rome. It implied that Caesar was the guardian of everyone’s best interests. When Paul calls Jesus *kurios* he is calling him the Sovereign who is above all caesars and kings, the Guardian of our bodies and souls for time and for eternity.

Again, *kurios* was used in the Septuagint to render the special name by which God revealed himself as the faithful I AM, the God of covenant grace. When Paul calls Jesus “Lord” he is identifying him as, equating him with, Yahweh.

I can bid you a “Good afternoon” but I cannot give you a good afternoon. Paul could bid Timothy “grace, mercy and peace” in the confidence that God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ can and do give them. So can we have such confidence in announcing God’s *charis*, *eleos*, *eirene*.

*Charis* is God’s favorable regard for the undeserving, demonstrated and sealed in the substitutionary work of his Son. *Eleos* is his mercy for sinners who can plead no merit and no mitigating circumstances. *Eirene* is his declaration of peace on those who were by nature at war with him. These gifts the gospel announces and it bestows the gift of accepting them by faith. This is the gospel which Paul was sent to preach, which Timothy and Titus and we were called to proclaim.

The good news is that God our Savior *pantas anthropous thelei sothenai kai eis epignosin aletheias elthein. Heis gar theos, heis kai mesites theou kai anthropou, anthropos Christos Iesous, ho dous heauton antilutron huper panton, to marturion kairois idois* (1 Tm 2:4-6).

God is our Savior because he wants all people to be saved and we are included in the “all.” Note the emphatic position of *pantas anthropous*. The *kai* is epexegetical: “to be saved, that is, to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

*Aletheia* is the truth of the gospel as it is set forth, for example, in the sentence which follows (vv 5,6). *Epignosis* is more than mere knowledge of the facts of salvation. It is the realization of what Christ’s work means to me as an individual sinner. It is the personal appropriation of this salvation.

That it is God’s gracious good will (*thelei*) is confirmed by what follows (*gar*). There is one God, for Jews and Gentiles alike, for all nations and races. Likewise, here is only *mesites* who represents God to man and man before God.

By calling Christ Jesus *anthropos*, Paul stresses that Christ Jesus is one of us, representing all of us, the whole human race. He stresses that Christ Jesus entered human history and took our side.

He is the one *ho dous heauton antilutron huper panton*. He paid the price to free all slaves of sin, all those who were subject to death, all the devil’s captives.

That this act was substitutionary, vicarious, is not proved by the *huper* or by the *anti* in *antilutron*. It is proved by the nature of the act: the one Mediator gave himself as a ransom for all. We could not ransom ourselves, but the One to whom we owed the debt paid it himself. We could not ransom one another, but the One whom we had wronged took the wrong upon himself.

“Where ransom is paid to God, it must be adequate and entirely in kind; to save a life, a life must be given.... The righteous God accepted the ransom paid by Christ as of full value; but this could not have been achieved, had not Christ put himself altogether in the place of each individual sinner, to bring the offering of perfect obedience in the sinner’s stead” (John Schaller in *Biblical Christology*, Northwestern 1981).

There are many interpretations of the phrase *to marturion kairois idois*. I understand *marturion* to be in apposition to *antilutron*, or to the clause *dous heauton antilutron*: “He gave himself as a ransom, as the testimony given in its proper time.” The testimony was given by Christ, in God’s good time.

The testimony to what? Remember the confirmatory *gar* at the beginning of verse 5. What does the statement of verses 5 and 6 confirm, what does Christ's giving of himself confirm? It confirms the statement of verses 3b, 4: "God our Savior...wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." Christ's ransoming act confirms this, is the testimony to it.

*Kairois idiois* is the idiomatic plural used for the singular, "in its proper time." This is NIV's rendering of the phrase but not necessarily its understanding of the sentence.

To summarize, it seems to make sense grammatically and contextually to understand to *marturion* as referring to Christ's ransom or all, which is a testimony that God wants all to be saved. It seems to make sense grammatically and contextually to understand *kairois idiois* to mean that God gave this testimony in his good time. On the other hand, those who understand *kairois idiois* as the successive ages in which the gospel is to be preached are expressing a truly Scriptural thought, too.

How do people get to know about God's testimony? Men are sent to proclaim it. Paul continues, "And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles" (1 Tm 2:7). He was appointed a herald, one who publicly announces a message emanating from a higher authority. He was an apostle, sent as one who had seen the risen Christ.

*Etethen ego*. The *ego* gives emphasis to the verb: "appointed was I." He did not appoint himself or usurp the office. "I am telling the truth, I am not lying." Just as the Judaizers in Galatia constantly challenged the authenticity of Paul's apostleship, so did sectarian teachers in Asia. So, again, Paul affirms his legitimacy.

His special assignment was to be "a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles." *En pistei kai aletheia* is, literally, "in connection with faith and truth." NIV properly treats the phrase as a hendiadys, "of the true faith."

God still calls men to preach the gospel. Through the agency of congregations, boards, synods and federations he calls them to herald the testimony of God's love. They are to teach the true faith that the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. We do not do this as peers of Paul and the other apostles, but we are called for the same work. We proclaim the same truth as the Holy Spirit has given it to us through them. By his grace people came to the knowledge of that truth and are saved.

*Kai homologoumenos mega estin to tes eusebeias musterion:*  
*Hos ephanerothe en sarki,*  
*edikaiothe en pneumati,*  
*ophthe aggelois,*  
*ekeruchthe en ethnesin,*  
*episteuthe en kosmo,*  
*anelempthe en doxe.*

The gospel we are called to preach reports events which defy explanation and transcend our understanding. They could not have been imagined or discovered by us. God has revealed them. Thus they constitute a mystery, unknowable to man until they are revealed by God in the gospel.

*Eusebeia*, godliness, does not pertain to the character or attributes of God. Rather, it has to do with man's response to God, his piety of thought and action as one who fears, loves and trusts in God above all things. The mystery of godliness is the revelation which evokes such piety. Bauer/Arndt-Gingrich suggests the translation, "the mystery of our religion."

With great excitement, with no *kai* or *de* to connect any of the clauses, Paul gives expression to this confessedly great mystery. He does this with what is generally regarded as a hymn. He may written the hymn himself, may have quoted a hymn which the church was already singing, may have adapted such a hymn for his purposes. There is never anything wrong with Paul's prose, but here he chooses to use poetry.

All of the verbs have *hos* for their subject, the masculine relative pronoun. Certain manuscripts reflect that their editors were troubled by this, and they read *theos* or *ho theos*. This accounts for the translations in the KJV and Luther.

The trouble lies in trying to determine the antecedent of *hos*. The trouble is only syntactical, for there is no question that the reference is to the Son of God. Syntactically the antecedent is *musterion*; the masculine *hos* is used *ad sensum*. The *musterion* is identified in Colossians 1:27 and 2:2 as Jesus Christ. (There is also conjecture that the words here are the continuation of a hymn in which there is prior reference to the Savior, "who appeared in a body")

*Sarx* here is not used to express sinful nature, flesh, as Paul most often uses it. It simply means that the Eternal who was not corporeal came to this earth as a corporeal being. "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great.

When he had accomplished the work of our salvation he "was vindicated by the Spirit." *Edikaiothe en pneumati*, says the Greek. The contrasting parallelism between *sarx* and *pneuma* reminds us of similar constructions in Romans 1:4 and 1 Peter 3:18, where Christ's resurrection and descent into hell, respectively, are mentioned. At Romans 1:4, NIV reads, "who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead." NIV adds the footnote, "Or *who as to his spirit*," reflecting the *kata pneuma* of the Greek text. At 1 Peter 3:18, NIV reads, "He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit," and adds the footnote, "Or alive in the spirit," reflecting *zoopoiethis de pneumati*. NIV does not have a footnote here at 1 Timothy 3:16, but we seem to have an expression similar to those in Romans 1 and 1 Peter 3. Then Paul is saying, "Vindicated in the spirit," lower case *s*. "Spirit" as used in these three passages does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to Christ's divine nature. Jesus' divine nature (spirit), which was veiled by his flesh was acknowledged (vindicated) by his resurrection.

However, more than his divine spirit was vindicated (justified—*edikaiothe*). His perfect life and substitutionary death were accepted in God's sight and so God declared him righteous by raising him from the dead. God demonstrated before the whole world that he who was executed on the cross as a transgressor is in fact righteous. More than that, in declaring the Representative of the whole race righteous, he was justifying us.

Some think that the angels by whom Christ was seen are the disobedient angels who saw him when he proclaimed his victory in hell (Jude 6 and 1 Peter 3: 19). It seems more natural to think of the angel who heralded his birth, succored him in Gethsemane, watched at his empty tomb and promised his return at the ascension.

"(He) was preached among the nations,  
was believed on in the world,  
was taken up in glory."

"Whatever Timothy does in his work, and whatever he will do in days to come as a pastor of the church of God, finds its whole purpose and meaning in the saving acts of

God in Christ. . . . Without Christ a pastor's work is discouraging and futile. With Christ it has eternal significance: (E. H. Wendland).

God called Timothy to the office of supervising pastor of the churches in Asia. He called him through men. He was appointed by Paul with the concurrence of church representatives. The apostle encourages his protege, "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you" (1 Tm 4:14).

What was Timothy's charisma? It was the ministry. To be more specific, it was the aptitude to do the administrative, preaching, and teaching work called for in 1 Timothy 4:13. It was also the authority to do that work.

This was given to the young superintendent *dia propheteias*. It is not necessary to think here of a miraculous prophecy pointing to Timothy as God's choice for the office, or predicting what his future task and competence would be. Prophecy is not always foretelling; it is also forthtelling. There was preaching at Timothy's installation, telling him what his work was and reminding of the means to use in at work. "Timothy, you are to be a servant of the Word. Use and rely on the Word in your work"

This prophecy was *meta epitheseos ton cheiron tou presbuterion*. The laying on of hands accompanied the preaching; but it was through the preaching that the gift was bestowed, not by the laying on of hands. It had been the custom in the synagogue that the elders laid their hands on the head of a new rabbi or elder as an act of recognizing the service which he would perform and the authority which he would exercise. This custom of the synagogue was taken over by the church because its symbolism was readily understood and it suited the church's need. Its use by the primitive church and its mention in Scripture do not constitute it as a sacrament or as a divine ordinance. Nevertheless, we also regard it as meaningful symbolism and use it as such.

I believe that Paul is referring to the same or a similar, earlier occasion in Timothy's life at 1 Timothy 1:1. "Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the, prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight." Understanding prophecies as preaching and the content of preaching, as the impartation of the Word, it would be better to say "the prophecies once made *to* you." The phrase is *epi se propheteias*. True, Bauer/Arndt-Gingrich suggests "about" when *epi* is used with the accusative. However, "to" is also a linguistically allowable interpretation. This interpretation relieves us of wondering what Old Testament prophecies or what activity of New Testament prophets Paul might be referring to.

"Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message." With reference to this verse a pastoral theology text once used in our Seminary states:

"The practical aptitude of a pastor is not imparted *sine mediis* by the Holy Ghost, but by means of the study of the Word of God. . . . *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum*; this well-known axiom of Luther tells us how the theological *habitus* as such, including the *habitus practicus* of the Christian pastor, is acquired, to wit, through the quickening and directing and restraining influence of the Holy Spirit" (John H. C., Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, Concordia 1945 [1932]).

Paul wrote to Titus (1:5), "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." The specific call of Titus included the responsibility to see that there was a public ministry in every town on the island of Crete. We are not told that Titus was do this in conjunction with the members of the congregations There must have been consultation, however, to identify those who met the qualifications for elders as set forth in 1:6-9. Whatever the details of the procedure, whatever

differences there were between Paul's assignment of Titus and Titus' appointment of elders, it is clear that all of these men had a call to the public ministry.

Luther made practical application of this verse in his lectures on Galatians:

"This is a mediated calling, since it is done by man. Nevertheless, it is divine.

Thus when someone is called by a prince or a magistrate or me, he has his calling through man. Since the time of the apostles this has been the usual method of calling in the world. It should not be changed; it should be exalted, on account of the sectarians, who despise it and lay claim to another calling, by which they say that the Spirit drives them to teach. But they are liars and impostors, for they are driven by a spirit who is not good but evil" (LW 26.17).

KJV translated *katasteses* as "ordain." "Appoint" is more accurate and less subject to misinterpretation. As in the "installation" of Timothy, there is no institution of a sacrament of ordination. An apostolic example or precedent does not constitute an ordinance.

"Ordination thus is an adiaphoron. Nevertheless, because of the purpose it is to serve we can expect the Lord to bless it. Both Schaller and Walther list the following three purposes: public testimony of the pastor's fitness for the office; public recognition of the call for the reassurance of both pastor and congregation; intercession by the entire congregation. Schaller adds a fourth: public confession to pure doctrine and a promise of faithfulness on the part of the pastor" (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

The rites of ordination and installation are adiaphora, but the call is not. As to the limitations of a specific call, Luther wrote:

"It is not lawful for me to forsake my assigned station as a preacher, to go to another city where I have no call, and to preach there. (As a doctor of divinity, of course, I could preach throughout the papacy, provided that they let me).

I have no right to do this even if I hear that false doctrine is being taught and that souls are being seduced and condemned which I could rescue from error and condemnation by my sound doctrine. But I should commit the matter to God, who in his own time will find the opportunity to call ministers lawfully and to give the Word" (LW 26.18).

He also said:

"This rule should be rigidly enforced that no preacher, however pious or upright, shall take it upon himself either to preach to the people of a papistic or heretical pastor, or to teach them privately, without the knowledge and consent of that pastor. For he has no command to do this, and what is not commanded should be left undone. If we want to perform the duties that are commanded, we have enough to do. It does not help their case to say that all Christians are priests. It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors. For to be a pastor one must be not only a Christian and a priest but must have an office and a field of work committed to him. This call and command make pastors and preachers" (LW 13.65).

In the Table of Duties, under the heading "What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors," *The Small Catechism* quotes 1 Timothy 5:17,18: "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'"

"I would not have thought that this teaching was necessary now if experience now did not teach me that where there used to be 200 florins there are now scarcely 20. The

Holy Spirit saw what would happen—that they would forsake their ministers” (LW 28.349f).

Lenski is sure that *time* must mean “honor” only and cannot mean honorarium. However, he himself points out that the contemporary papyri sometimes used the word *time* in the sense of “honor” and sometimes in the sense of “price.”

That price or honorarium is the meaning here seems assured by what verse 18 says about the ox and the worker, especially, “The worker deserves his wages.” Incidentally, Paul seems here to extend the limits of what is called “Scripture” beyond the limits of the Old Testament. Luke had already written his Gospel and “the worker deserves his wages” is an exact quotation of Luke 10:7.

Lenski bases his argument against a wage in part on the fact that the synagogue had many elders and could not have paid all of them. But that the church borrowed the term “elder” from the synagogue does not mean to replicate the number or the duties or the non-recompense of the synagogue’s elders.

On the other hand, we are not justified in insisting that all elders of the church in Asia worked full time and were paid accordingly. There was recompense and there was to be double recompense for those who did their work well, “especially for those whose work (was) preaching and teaching.” There is in this verse the incidental but significant information that there are forms of public ministry which do not directly involve work in preaching and teaching.

Double honor. Twice as much as what? Twice as much as the elders whose performance was only half as good? More likely, double the support given to “those widows who are really in need” (5:16), which the other elders also received.

“This is not a salary or wages in the ordinary sense, for neither the pastor nor the congregation will think of his labor in terms of purchased hourly service resting simply on a financial agreement. The pastor gives himself totally to his ministry; the members of the congregation gratefully acknowledge his labors by sharing with him their material goods” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

“This arrangement may lack some of the warm personal touch which is there when individual members share what they have with their called workers, but it also does have the advantage of being systematic and regular” (I.J. Habek, *The Divine Call*, 1974 essay).

These principles concerning the call to the gospel ministry, and much more, we receive from “Paul, a servant (*doulos*) of God” (Tt 1:1).

“ ‘Servant of God’ is a magnificent and outstanding title. The words ‘servant of God’ should be pondered carefully, for such a person has an office assigned by God.... He is not a servant of the Law; nor is he a servant of men as far as the assurance and certainty of his doctrine are concerned; nor is he a servant intent on imposing the slavery of the Law. Thus whoever is faithful in his own function is a servant of God” (LW 29.41f, inverted).

May God keep us faithful in our function, brothers, for we have been called to preach the gospel.

### 3. TEACHING AND CONTENDING FOR THE TRUTH

“This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive). that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

“Command and teach these things” (1 Tm 4:9-11).

Our hope as Christians and as called servants of the Word is not based on a dead teacher, an empty idea, a vain philosophy. We have based our hope on the living God, who has acted and who acts. He is the Savior of all men and therefore he is our Savior.

He is, especially, the Savior of those who believe. Finally, only believers have benefited by God’s saving work. But this trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance is a gospel statement which has the power to make more believers, to bestow God’s salvation on more who accept it.

We who are called to preach the gospel “labor and strive,” we engage in hard toil and agonizing effort so that more may come to a knowledge of the truth.

In the opinion of some, *pistos ho logos* refers to the previous verse (8), which says that “godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” Then the *hoti* of verse 10, “that,” must be rendered as “because.” “We labor and strive because we have put our hope....” This is grammatically possible and it is true that *pistos ho logos* often points to a preceding statement. However, I prefer the NIV rendering for the simple reason that verse 10b seems a more noteworthy and inspiring saying than verse 8.

“For this we labor and strive.”

“This is not just a game. This is the real thing! It requires every bit of strength and endurance that we have. But it’s worth the effort. Our God is a living God. And he is the Savior of all men. There can be no question about wasting our time or our energy on something which gives no results....

It’s worth every bit of effort, both for now and for the eternal future. You can be sure that these efforts will not be in vain. How sure? Just as sure as you know that God lives, and that his gracious promise of eternal life is for you” (E.H. Wendland).

“Command and teach these things.” “These things” are the things which Paul has written in the earlier verses of this chapter 4. We will take note of these things later, but just now we take note of the fact that the pastor’s work is to teach. He is not only to be able to teach. He is to do it.

“My concern should be that others receive from me [what God has taught me in Scripture] and that I strive to present this in the most attractive form, to teach the ignorant, to admonish and encourage those who have knowledge, to comfort troubled consciences properly, to awaken and strengthen negligent and sleepy hearts, and so on.... This should be my concern: how others get it from me. I should, however, study and beseech God. Studying is my work. This work God wants me to do, and if it pleases him, he will bless it” (Luther in a sermon on Mt 6:24-34, Plass No. 2910).

At the very beginning of the First Letter to Timothy Paul reminds his protege that gospel service involves dealing with error as well as teaching truth. He repeats in writing the instructions he had given Timothy in person: “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tm 1:3-5).

These “certain men” must have been in the church if they were subject to Timothy’s command. We do not need to insist that they were elders or teachers. However, history and current events teach us that such people do appear in the public ministry. It may be that Paul



calls them “certain men” so as not to give them the dignity of calling them *presbuteroi* or *didaskaloi*.

Command them *me heterodidaskalein*, not to teach something other than the apostolic doctrine. Technical discussion of the myths and endless genealogies leave unsettled the question of exactly what they were. They may well have been an early manifestation of hellenistic Jewish Christian gnosticism, which reached its fullest development in the second century. It is enough to understand that they were unscriptural and speculative, that they were like their many modern counterparts in that they “promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith.”

Paul repeated the admonition in his Second Letter to Timothy: “Warn them before God against quarreling about words; *ep’ ouden chresimon, epi katastrophe ton akouonton*. *Logomachein* is useful for nothing; it leads to catastrophe for the hearers.

“The hearers were becoming suspicious of divine truths because of such leaders....

There is not a greater catastrophe than confusion in the church” (E.H. Wendland).

“Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.... Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels” (2 Tm 2:16,23). Sometimes problems persist in spite of clear teaching and correct pastoral practice. Then the pastor must persist in dealing with them.

On Crete, Titus too had to contend with purveyors of myths and quibblers over genealogies. “For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group... Rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the command of those who reject the truth” (Tt 1:10,13b,14). “Avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless” (Tt 3:9). We cannot determine that the rebellious teachers with whom Titus had to deal were the same species as those in Asia, but they belonged to the same genus.

They did not serve the divine work of saving souls. Salvation is by faith in the Christ of Scripture, not by fascination with clever speculations. The gospel engenders, strengthens and preserves faith; nothing else can.

The purpose in shutting up these “certain men” and others like them is love. Not that they are to be treated lovingly (which they should be), or that Timothy is to be motivated by love (which he was), but that they grow in love. Their dabbling in false teaching and their fascination with speculative doctrines cannot produce love. Only God’s truth can purify their hearts, give them a good conscience, remove every element of hypocrisy from their faith.

If we imagine that nurturing young Christians and confirming new converts in the faith was easier in that first century because the faith was fresh and there were not any heretics or sects or tamperers with Scripture, these passages in the Pastoral Epistles will disabuse us of that notion.

“There are two hindrances to the gospel. The first is the teaching of false doctrine, driving the consciences into the law and works. And the second is this trick of the devil. When he finds that he cannot subvert the faith by directly denying the gospel, he sneaks in from the rear, raises useless questions, and gets men to contend about them and meanwhile to forget the chief thing. He gets them to contend about dead saints and departed souls; where they abide, whether they sleep and the like.... So nothing is said about faith and love, for people consider *this* as commonplace as daily bread. All have heard and know enough about this, and it is irksome to hear the same thing forever” (Luther, in a sermon on 1 Tm 1:3-11, *Plass* No. 3565).

“Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly” (1 Tm 1:6-8). “Teachers of the law” suggests that the purveyors of myths and endless genealogies drew some legalistic conclusions from their false teachings and tried to impose them on others. They were not like the Judaizers in Galatia or Colosse, or Paul would speak of them in the same way. They were more unorthodox, peddling views that both Judaizers and orthodox Jews would have regarded as bizarre. They were not using the law in an appropriate manner.

“We also know that law is made not for the righteous” (1 Tm 1:9a). *Dikaio nomos ou keitai*: law (of any kind) is not incumbent upon the righteous person; it does not burden him. The righteous person is that person whom God has declared righteous, who is justified by faith.

“The just man lives as though he had no need of the law to admonish, urge and constrain him; but spontaneously, without any legal constraint, he does more than the law requires. And so the law cannot accuse and condemn the just; nor can it disturb their conscience” (LW 27.96).

“This is not to be understood in the bare meaning, that the justified are to live without law. For the law of God has been written in their heart, and also to the first man immediately after his creation a law was given according to which he was to conduct himself. But the meaning of St. Paul is that the law cannot burden with its curse those who have been reconciled to God through Christ; nor must it vex the regenerate with its coercion, because they have pleasure in God’s law after the inner man” (*Formula of Concord*, Th. Decl. VI.5, Trigl. 963).

On whom *is* the law incumbent? “Lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine” (1 Tm 1:9b-10).

“To all persons of this description, then, the law *only* is to be preached, and they are not to have a drop of the gospel. As long as a person is at ease in his sins, as long as he is unwilling to quit some particular sin, so long only the law, which curses and condemns him is to be preached to him. However, the moment he becomes frightened at his condition, the gospel is to be promptly administered to him; for from that moment on he no longer can be classified with secure sinners. Accordingly, while the devil holds you in a single sin, you are not yet a proper subject for the gospel to operate upon; only the law must be preached to you” (C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, Concordia 1929).

“The sound doctrine” (v.10) translates *hugiainouse didaskalia*, healthy teaching. Paul uses this expression a number of times in the Pastoral Epistles. This healthy teaching “conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to (us)” (v. 11). It could not produce the sinners listed there by Paul.

It is not usually difficult for an evangelical Lutheran pastor to make the proper distinction between law and gospel in justification. The distinction is more difficult to maintain and practice in sanctification. In congregational and synodical life, or in dealing with individual sinners, it is more difficult to keep from vexing the regenerate with the law’s coercion. If we clumsily apply “legal constraint” (Luther) in the area of Christian living we violate the principle enunciated by

Paul “that law is made not for the righteous.” Worse, we can too easily make people doubt that they are justified, and draw them back to seeking justification in their own law works.

“Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tm 1:18-20). All the instructions of verses 3-17 are in accord with what was preached to Timothy at the time when the ministry was entrusted to him. With this preaching, by following these prophecies (*en autais*), Timothy would be equipped to fight the good fight. He would be able to retain his faith and a good conscience in this battle.

In Greek, verse 19 reads *echon ten pistin kai agathen suneidesin, hen tines aposamenoi peri ten pistin enaugesan*. The relative *hen* has *suneidesin* as its antecedent. “Which (conscience) some having rejected, they shipwrecked the(ir) faith.” Note the chiasm: *pistin/suneidesin— hen (suneidesin)/pistin*. Some have gone beyond teaching false teaching, myths and genealogies. Although their consciences told them to submit to the Word of God, they rejected their consciences and refused to submit to the healthy teaching and the apostolic preaching. They ended by losing their very faith.

“One cannot keep his faith while he plays fast and loose with the prophecies (Word). He will have to silence his conscience, make it cease crying out against such practice, and then his faith is wrecked whether he admits it or not” (Lenski).

Hymenaeus may be the same man mentioned with Philetus at 2 Timothy 2:17,18. Those two said that the resurrection has already taken place. At 2 Timothy 4:14 Paul mentions Alexander the metalworker, who did him a great deal of harm. The name was very common but it may be the same person. Paul had excommunicated Hymenaeus and Philetus, but for a salutary purpose. There was still the hoped for possibility that they would stop their conscious and wicked rejection of God’s saving grace.

Teaching and contending for the truth includes the responsibility of exercising church discipline.

“Yes, fighting for the truth of the gospel may result in the unpleasant duty of excommunicating impenitent sinners. So be it! Let us not shrink from doing whatever is necessary to preserve the truth which has been entrusted to us” (E.H. Wendland).

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Tm 4:1). To Paul himself or to one or more other apostles or prophets, the Holy Spirit explicitly revealed that the time between Jesus’ two advents is to be a time of apostasy.

“Scripture calls traditions doctrines of demons when it is taught that religious rites are serviceable to merit the remission of sins and grace. For they are then obscuring the gospel, the benefit of Christ, and the righteousness of faith” (*Apology XV*, “Of Human Traditions in the Church.” Trigl. 315).

The doctrines of demons have multiplied and diversified since the time of Paul’s writing and since the Reformation. The world has gotten older but it has not gotten better. The combination of a cauterized conscience and religious enterprise produces teachers who are hypocritical liars: “They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tm 4:2-5).

Teaching and contending for the truth means to emphasize the positive doctrines concerning the Giver and his gifts, concerning God's purpose in giving them, concerning the way believers should regard and receive them. It also means the explicit rejection of error.

At the very beginning of the letter Paul told Timothy how to deal with certain false teachers who were occupying themselves with myths among the people. Now he tells him how to treat such myths when people bring them to his attention: "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly" (1 Tm 4:7).

"Paul's advice is sound psychology. People who are fanatical in regard to some silly religious matter desire nothing more than to have you argue with them. To do so is to leave the wrong impression, as though the matter is worth discussion and argument. That encourages their folly; they think they will cling to their infatuation more obstinately than ever when one makes the mistake of treating them seriously. The thing to do is: *paraitou*, 'disdain to be bothered'" (Lanski).

For the people's spiritual benefit and your own, "rather train yourself to be godly" (1 Tm 4:7b).

"The highest work of godliness is to meditate on the Word of God in order that we may teach and exhort one another" (LW 29.3).

Teaching God's people includes teaching the works of love when such teaching is needed. "Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need" (1 Tm 5:3). NIV's "really in need" interprets *tas ontas cheras*, "widows indeed." *Cheras tima*, honor widows. In a society where there was no social security system, the church's respect and recognition accorded to widows would include providing for their material welfare.

When a widow has a family, God's command to honor father and mother finds application: "If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God" (1 Tm 4:4). But what if her children and grandchildren do not believe or are not willing to do what pleases God? "The widow who is really in need and left alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help" (1 Tm 5:5). Here is a widow who is utterly bereft. She follows the example of Anna in her devotion and she relies on God for help. How or through whom will God help her? He could do it with ravens or by seeing to it that her small store of flour and shortening was never exhausted. But he does not need to do it that way when a Christian congregation can act as his agent.

There is another kind of widow who is not truly a widow. She is not like Anna in spirit and she is not really in need: "The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives" (1 Tm 5:6). The object of her devotion is pleasure. She is *spatalosa*, living luxuriously and indulging herself. The verb was used in secular literature of sheep in rich pasture being frisky. Lively she is, but spiritually dead.

These instructions and wider applications of the principle involved must be imparted to the church: "Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tm 5:7,8).

"When by his action and course of action a man openly 'denies the faith,' repudiates and disowns the Christian teaching, what has he to cling to inwardly with his heart, with his subjective faith? He may cling to something, but since it is not the Christian teaching, it is a lie of some kind" (Lanski).

Verses 9 and 10 of 1 Timothy 5 give specific instructions as to who should qualify for support. At the same time the passage says significant things about the loving service of Christian women. “No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.”

“Has been faithful to her husband” renders *henos andros gune*. This does not forbid or discourage the remarriage of widows. Rather, it reminds all who read of the norm of faithfulness in marriage. Among the multitudes of Christian women who are described in verse 10 are those to whom each of us owes a great deal. One is also reminded of those widows who help bring up vicars, in addition to devoting themselves to many other good works.

NIV’s rendering of verse 11 is interpretive and it is a helpful interpretation: “As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry.” A literal translation would be, “But reject younger widows, for when they become wanton against Christ they want to marry.” Paul had a hard head to go with his soft heart. Experience, knowledge of human nature and awareness that no one’s sanctification is completed while he or she breathes inform his common sense instructions in the verses that follow. Especially, however, his words are prompted by a concern for the spiritual welfare of younger widows.

Verse 12 is difficult: “Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge.” We are not certain how “they have broken their first pledge” should be understood. The Greek has *ten proten pistin ethetsan*, “they have set aside their first faith.” Many have understood the *pistis* as a pledge to remain in widowhood, to serve the church and be supported by it. The monastic establishment understood it as a vow of celibacy and spoke of the judgment which those who broke such a vow brought on themselves. Luther rejected this view and taught that “the first pledge” is simply baptismal faith. Setting that aside would be apostasy, implying a return to heathenism or Judaism in order to please a new husband (LW 28.344).

“Although we cannot see *pistin* translated ‘pledge, we hesitate to state an absolute opinion as to why these widows ‘set aside their first faith.’ Somehow their desire to marry again was not pure. It showed that they no longer believed firmly in Christ, the Savior. Faith in Christ became a secondary matter. Thereby they placed themselves under the judgment of condemnation” (E. H. Wendland).

“Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan” (1 Tm 5:13-15). The enemy is *ho antikeimenos*, the one who takes up a position against us. The mention of Satan in verse 15 suggests that he is the enemy Paul means. If not he, then some other opponent in his service would welcome the occasion to revile Christianity. That Paul is not trying to anticipate a theoretical problem and is not merely concerned with how the churches spend their funds we see from verse 15: “Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.” He was addressing a real spiritual problem, addressing it with the law in its third use. His counsel reminds us of what he wrote earlier: “But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety” (1 Tm 2:15).

The glory that was Rome had its broad foundation in the institution of slavery, which Roman law permitted and regulated. In concept and detail slavery differed from the modern

employer-employee relationship. One should not try to develop a complete ethical scheme of labor-management relations from what the New Testament says on the subject of slaves and masters. But the principle of respectful service to one's superior for the gospel's sake, also to one who is a fellow believer, is timeless: "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them"(1 Tm 6:1,2).

Subjection, quiet respect and honesty for the gospel's sake are also to be Titus' teaching to slaves. "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Tt 2:9-11). God's grace is intended for slave masters, too. The slaves' good conduct will not in itself convert their owners, but it may make them more willing to give the gospel of salvation a hearing.

From these passages we see, incidentally but clearly, that church's mission is not to overthrow the existing social and political order.

"We see in this section that the church of Jesus Christ does not see as its chief purpose the betterment of outward social conditions in this world, like the abolition of slavery. The true church aims at the heart of man. This must first be changed. If masters and slaves are both Christians, they can do good to each other while they remain as they are.... As the influence of Christianity grew in the hearts of men, the outward conditions were also changed for the better" (E.H. Wendland).

For the Christian affluence has in it the potential for danger and the possibility for blessed sharing. "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Tm 6:17-19). Whatever God provides he provides in his generosity and he wants us to enjoy it. To lord it over those who have less, to base one's hope for happiness on wealth, is not the enjoyment God has in mind.

To use our resources constructively, generously and cheerfully, without condescension, is truly to enjoy them. He who is righteous by faith can hope that the living God will add blessing to blessing. He will hear his Lord say on the last day, "You did it to me."

"A pastor who has rich men in his congregation has a great responsibility; he must not only warn against the danger of riches, but must encourage the rich to use this wealth in the service of God, to relieve the poor, and especially to extend the kingdom of Christ" (U.H.C. Fritz).

Also,

"It is the pastor's duty to teach the lesson of the larger stewardship, to wit, that Christians consecrate themselves wholly, with all that they have, unto their God and their Savior. It is on the basis of that larger stewardship that the stewardship of money and Christian giving should be taught" (U.H.C. Fritz).

Paul concludes his First Letter to Timothy by repeating, in essence, what he said at the beginning (1 Tm 1:3-6). "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from

godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith” (1 Tm 6:20,21).

Teaching and contending for the truth was very much in Paul’s mind as he wrote to Titus, about the same time that he wrote 1 Timothy. Both workers would have to deal with heretical, sectarian and frivolous spirits. We should never imagine that the ministry was easy and that there was no strife in other eras than our own.

“(An overseer) must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Tt 1:9).

“There are not many such; many teach, but few fight. A certain tenacity is signified here, that is, that he not put his Bible aside.... He ought to meditate constantly for himself, that is he ought to immerse himself completely in Scriptures. Such study will enable him to fight back.... If he does not diligently study Holy Scripture, which he knows, the result will be a kind of rust, and a neglect of and contempt for the Word will arise. Even though you know Holy Scripture, nevertheless it must be read over and over again, because this Word has the power to stimulate you at all times” (LW 29.30f).

“He is truly a capable and pious pastor who understands how to make the spirit of the enthusiasts and the sects loathsome to his hearers. He must do this by attacking it with God’s Word and exposing its detestable, soul-destroying venoms” (Ad. Hoenecke).

Titus must teach and contend for the truth. “For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons’” (Tt 1:10-12). How could Titus silence the gainsayers, *antilegontes*? By refuting those who oppose sound doctrine, by holding firmly to the trustworthy message.

Paul relates the unreliability of the false teaching to the personal dishonesty of the false teachers. They were deceivers, their motive was dishonest gain, they lived up to their national stereotype as liars.

In the quotation from the poet Epimenides, from his *de oraculis*, we have an example of truth coming from a pagan. The Greeks regarded him as a prophet.

For his purpose the Holy Spirit is willing to validate statements from such sources when what they express is true and useful: “This testimony is true” (Tt 1:13a). The pastor is willing to teach and contend in the coin of the people’s culture when that is appropriate, when it does not subvert law and gospel. He may cite the poetry, songs, literature, folk-sayings, art, history, drama, movies, television series of his hearers to help a necessary truth strike home.

“Truth comes from the Holy Spirit, regardless of who says it, especially the true sayings of the poets, when they show us our sins” (LW 29.38).

Verse, 15 and 16 suggest that the Jewish myths (v 14) and other false teachings involved demands for ascetic living: “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good” (Tt 1:15,16). It is a mark of sects and cults that they impose dietary and other restrictions on their adherents. They twist the Word of God for this purpose or even frankly go beyond it in accord with their new revelations.

The Lutheran Reformation applied this verse to the cult of monasticism:

“If therefore purity signifies that which is allowed and approved before God, marriages are pure because they have been approved by the Word of God. And Paul says

of lawful things, 'To the pure all things are pure,' i.e., to those who believe in Christ and are righteous by faith. Therefore as virginity is impure in the godless, so in the godly marriage is pure on account of the Word of God and faith" (*Apology XXIII* [XI], "Of the Marriage of Priests" 33, Trigl 373).

Unfit (v.16) is *adokimoi*, tested like a coin and found to be counterfeit. These false teachers are bad pennies, and their actions belie their claim that they know God.

"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Tt 2:1). The sound doctrine of the gospel announces universal salvation, "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Tt 2:11). What accords with that sound doctrine, what the grace of God produces in the lives of those who believe is neither false asceticism nor libertinism. Rather, "It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Tt 2:12-14).

Martin Franzmann called this passage "a caption for the Sermon on the Mount" (*Follow Me, discipleship according to Saint Matthew*, Concordia 1961). God's grace has a twofold teaching objective: that we replace ungodly living with godly living, and that we live in confident expectation of Jesus' second advent. The latter, especially, was Luther's plan for "spiritual renewal" in church life:

"Whatever we teach and establish in the church we do with a view to getting the people to await the coming of the Savior" (LW 16.3).

KJV reads "the great God and our Savior" in verse 14. This could leave the impression that Paul is mentioning two different persons. NIV accurately presents the sense of the Greek, in which a single article controls both nouns. Paul is speaking of a single Person, "our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Our divine Savior has not only rescued us from the guilt and punishment of wickedness. He also rescued us from the power of wickedness. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law and from lawlessness (*anomia*).

We are Jesus Christ's costly possession and precious treasure (*laon periousion* = purchased people), bought with his own blood. To the extent we appreciate that we are eager to do what is good. Not only those called to the public ministry but all his redeemed are called to full time service. Christian living is a vocation, not an avocation. "These, then, are the things you should teach" (Tt 2-15a).

"What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (2 Tm 1:13). As you trust and love Christ Jesus, as one who lives in such faith and love, keep on holding (*eche*, present imperative) to what you heard from Paul. This is the pattern of sound teaching. It is not dead orthodoxy but the life-giving Word. It is not a collection of outworn thoughts but the power of God for salvation.

"The absolute model is the Scripture, and so also Paul's epistles. There one can always find the sum of the Word.... To hold on to Paul's teaching really does not mean, 'Always say what these words say.' Rather, 'Listen constantly to what they say to you.' Who wants the former without the latter?" (Ad. Hoenecke).

The desire for freshness, variety and relevance must not lead us to say less or more than God's Word says, or to say it ambiguously. Not every easily understood Bible paraphrase is a faithful representation of what the Bible really says. Not every facile illustration or analogy is true to the pattern of sound teaching.



“It is safest of all... to hold fast as well to the form of sound words as to the pure doctrine itself, whereby much unnecessary wrangling may be cut off and the church preserved from many scandals” (*Formula of Concord*, Thor. Decl. IV, Trigl 949).

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (2 Tm 1:14). God has entrusted a valuable treasure to our stewardship. Let us trust and call on the Holy Spirit to assist us in safeguarding it.

“As Paul points out to Timothy, we really do not stand alone when we make choices and decisions that affect the gospel’s course” (Armin Panning, Synod essay 1979).

#### 4. LIFE AND CONDUCT

Year after year the president of our Synod or one of his representatives addresses the Call Orientation Seminar on “The Pastor and His Interpersonal Relationships.” At the assignment day dinner or at the farewell banquet he invariably makes the point that circuit pastors and district presidents rarely have to deal with pastors because of doctrinal aberration or lax practice. They more frequently need to calm congregations and try to salvage ministries because of a pastor’s ineptitude in personal relations, his lack of people skills or his failures in life and conduct.

There is a *pistos ho logos* passage for this lecture, but it will have to wait for the appropriate place.

The qualifications of character and ability for the ministry which we heard in our first meeting (1 Tm 3; Tt 1) are to be there before a man is called to the office. Obviously, they must not diminish or disappear once he enjoys the security of a call.

“It is strange what little things will choke a youngster off religion. As an undergraduate I lost for a time what little faith I had because I saw a bishop unable to take a beating at tennis like a gentleman. A poor faith mine, you say. Yes, undoubtedly, but if Christianity does not prevent one of its leading exponents from behaving like a cad when he loses a game, it is a bad lookout for the rest of us” (H.R.L. Sheppard, quoted in *Minister’s Prayer Book, an order of prayers and readings*, John W. Doberstein, ed. Muehlenberg 1959?)

“Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” (2 Tm 2:23-25).

“Law and gospel are proclamations, not crowbars. Nor is any other verbal device—reasoning, apologetics, polemics—more powerful than law and gospel. Since the pastor is trained to speak, he will sometimes be tempted to try to get his way by debate. It is essential for the pastor to learn the distinction between discussion and debate, to learn to guide his people to view every side of a question and the Scriptures that pertain to it, but not argue. Arguing destroys the witness of the Christian faith to the church and to the community” (*The Pastor at Work*).

“He must be kind to everyone.”

“One should not provide an opportunity for his adversaries to charge him deservedly: ‘He teaches love but is himself puffed up. He gives imperious orders to the brethren. Is this the way to teach humility and love?’” (LW 28.291).

“How often in our work do we not find it necessary to put up with things which are very unpleasant indeed...! Before I gain others for Christ, I can expect that people will be suspicious of me. They may even be hostile, at first, accusing me of things which are not true. But I should try to do everything possible to win their confidence” (E.H. Wendland).

“Not resentful.”

“It is tragic to see a minister become sour. After long years of disappointment with visible results and little audible appreciation to cheer him on his way, the minister grows embittered. Then he turns to cruel sarcasm. But such sarcasm is not a weapon which love will ever use. It is often a crooked expression of self-pity and conceit. We are not respected or honored or appreciated as we think we should be, so we take our refuge in sarcasm. It is a sure sign of self-love, for if we loved others...we should never give vent to our bitterness at their expense” (J.W.R. Stott)

“Those who oppose him he must gently instruct.”

“Here...we consider a situation where a minister of Christ deals with the weaknesses and the ignorance of natural man, who has not learned the truth of the gospel, or who is as yet weak in his Christian understanding. This he must do constantly. This he must do in a gentle, winning way, suffering many things in a humble spirit for Christ’s sake. To do this day after day in the spirit of understanding, with patience for the weakness of others, ‘bearing all things,’ as Paul says elsewhere, is not easy!” (E.H. Wendland).

“Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must...not (be) quick-tempered..., not violent” (Tt 1:7). The White House may be a bully pulpit, but the pulpit can also be a throne for bullies. Almost never does anyone interrupt a sermon. Luther had a word to say on the overbearing hothead who uses his pulpit to vent his vindictiveness:

“In the church violence is done to brethren with the word...when...they are rebuked without mercy. And it is a great vice of preachers that when they are in the pulpit, they rail against the faults and the person of their hearers. They strive for the favor of the mob, and they want to appear bold” (LW 29.27).

How to avoid or overcome damaging, gospel-subverting, soul-threatening personal breakdowns in sanctification? “Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things” (1 Tm 4:8a).

Paul says that there is a proper Christian asceticism, training the body in the interest of clear thinking and of stamina for the work. Intemperance of any kind, lack of sleep, lack of exercise cause more than flabby bodies. They also undermine a pastor’s ability to deal in a kind and patient way with others. Not to develop the body beautiful but to be more fit to do the work of the ministry, we should watch our intake, get sufficient rest and take regular healthy exercise.

“Fasting and the like—this bodily training leads to the breaking and controlling of the body. This is good, but two points of moderation are involved: first, that there be no hostility [no rejection of the body as God’s creation?] here; and second, that one place no trust in this kind of life” (LW 28.321f).

It is in the context of instructions on how to exercise church discipline that Paul tells Timothy: “Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of stomach and your frequent illnesses” (1 Tm 5:23). Perhaps Timothy was too abstemious and in staying away from wine was using unfit water. Paul advises him to be less ascetic in order to be more healthy. Chronic ill

health can affect a man's judgment as to a proper course of action. Especially, it can sap his resolve to do what God's Word calls for in a given situation.

"The body exists for the ministry of the Word. The man who deprives his body of health deprives the church of the ministry of the Word" (LW 28.357).

"But godliness has value for all things." Where can we get training in godliness?

"Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of" (2 Tm 3:14).

"It is not only the conscientious preparation for preaching that we have in view as the work which makes a fit pastor. It is not the laboring in Word and doctrine, perhaps on Saturday or some other day, for so and so many hours, as the pastor's wont may be, to prepare for preaching on a Sunday or holiday. Rather, it is the daily laboring in Word and doctrine.

"Again, it is not only working with a view toward preaching to and teaching others with clarity and penetration. Rather, it is laboring in Word and doctrine with a view to your own enrichment in understanding what God's Word teaches.

"It is not laboring in Word and doctrine only to help others live as true Christians. Rather, it is laboring in the Word by which one furthers his own quiet life in God, his own hidden life in Christ. It is the true, inward, day by day contact with God's dear Word—hungrily seeking the Bread, thirstily searching for the Water, desirous of salvation—for one's own edification to eternal life" (Ad. Hoenecke).

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Tm 4: 12). Timothy was older than most candidates are when they complete their seminary training. However, he was not yet forty years old. The Jews of his day regarded a man as a *neanias*, a young man, until he attained that age. Here he was, superintendent over a larger number of elders. Some of them might be tempted not to take him very seriously. The sure way to minimize that danger would be to conduct himself in such a way that no one could dismiss him as too young.

"It is not our job to forbid them to despise us. It is our job not to give others an opportunity to despise.... (The minister) should not have wandering eyes or a slippery tongue.... He should be chaste in word, deed, gestures, eyes and feet.... He should not have a slippery tongue in his conversation with the other sex" (LW 28.327f)

Some seminarians, perhaps some pastors, do not know how important they are as examples of Christian conduct to their fellow believers. *Vita clericorum liber laicorum*: the life of the clergy is the book of the laity.

"The pastor dare not settle for the level of sanctification which has been attained by the average member of his congregation.... He is in the public eye, both as far as his own people and as far as the community in general are concerned. Lapses which might pass unnoticed in the case of his members can easily undermine the effectiveness of his ministry if they occur in his case. On the other hand, evidence of his sincerity and dedication to his Lord will command the respect both of his people and of the community in general" (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

"Smutty talk is unbecoming to any Christian, but the pastor must be doubly careful in this respect and beyond reproach. Also vicious slang and vulgarity should not be found in the pastor's vocabulary" (W.H.C. Fritz).

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who

oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us” (Tt 2:7,8). Not only the content of our teaching with groups or individuals, but also its tone and manner are to be worthy of the gospel. “Integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech” are of ethical import as well as doctrinal.

“‘Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.’ In a large house there are articles of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tm 2:19b-22). A pure life must adorn a clear confession. Anything less endangers the credibility of our confession.

Paul uses an analogy in verses 21-and 22 to illustrate the importance of the company we keep. He speaks of a large house with its appliances and utensils. Some are made of precious materials, others of more ordinary materials. Some are *eis timen* and some are *eis atimian*. Luther, KJV, NASB translate quite literally. NEB interprets: “The former are valued, the latter held cheap.” Four other versions (TEV, AAT, RSV, Phillips) agree in essence with NIV: “some for noble purposes and some for ignoble.”

It is obvious that Paul would not interject an irrelevant commonplace into an earnest spiritual exhortation. The great house is God’s great house, the church. Whether he speaks of how certain articles are used or how they are valued he is speaking of the makeup of the church. The church contains both the noble and the ignoble.

“If a man cleanses himself from the latter,” *apo touton (ha eis atimian)*, “he will be an instrument for noble purposes...” Are “the latter” ignoble *people* (Luther’s translation, NEB fn, Lenski’s interpretation) or ignoble *ways* (AAT, Phillips, RSV, NEB)? The answer seems to lie in the latter clause of verse 22: “...along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” There he speaks of people. Those from whom Timothy is to cleanse himself are those whose lifestyle is not consistent with their Christian confession. He is to “pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

The company we keep impacts on our lives as Christians and even more on our ministry. It would be a mistake for any minister of the gospel to imagine that he is above needing and heeding the admonition of these verses. The history of our Synod, too, is littered with the wrecked ministries of men who neglected the cleansing and the pursuing which Paul enjoins in verses 21 and 22.

“A grave lapse undermines the effectiveness of a man’s ministry both as far as the pastoral care of his own people and his efforts to win the outsider are concerned.

Furthermore, he is exposed to especially severe temptations of the devil, either to cover up by lying, or to relax principles in doctrine and practice in order to curry favor and to maintain his position, or to sink into despair” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

At 1 Timothy 6:5 Paul speaks of false teachers “who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.” He goes on to speak of Christian and unchristian attitudes toward money and he concludes by urging Timothy to flee from avarice. Since Paul applies such instructions to a man of Timothy’s caliber, we do well to apply it to ourselves.

We were told as students and God’s Word tells us not to be deluded that the call brings with it the promise of financial gain. How could we be so foolish as to imagine that it is our sacred duty to maintain a high standard of living ? “But godliness with contentment is great

gain.” There is great gain, real profit, inestimable reward in godly living and a godly discharge of our office (1 Tm 6:6).

“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tm 6:7). Q: How much did he leave? A: All of it.

The several variants suggest that a number of copyists and editors were troubled by the *hoti* in *hoti oude exenegkein ti dunametha*. Among the variant readings are *delon hoti*, it is evident that; *delon de*, and it is evident; *alethes hoti*, it is true that. Each of these seems to be trying to avoid understanding *hoti* as “because.” NIV’s “and” can be understood in the sense of “and so,” which accords with Bauer/Arndt-Gingrich’s judgment that here is a *hoti* consecutive expressing result.

“But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Tm 6:8). Not an argument or even an exhortation, but a simple statement of fact. To be godly and content is to be a winner, to have a great gain. If we have something to eat and something to cover our nakedness we will be satisfied. This is not fatalism or improvidence but simple Christian confidence.

“Are we demanding luxuries? Have we learned that it is no disgrace to say, ‘I can’t afford it...’? Jesus has taught us to pray only for today’s supply of bread and has promised that our Father will provide it. And he’ll be on the job tomorrow, too. So it’s one day at a time.... When we have learned to be content and to put our trust in our heavenly Father’s continuing care, we shall have overcome self-pity and in the process experienced spiritual growth” (I.J. Habek, “Fostering Spiritual Growth for the Pastor and His Family,” WLQ 80:3, Summer 1983).

“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction” (1 Tm 6: 9). All the verb forms are present, suggesting a chronic state of sinful folly with dire consequences.

“As soon as a preacher makes it his aim to get rich, he stops performing his office the way he should. The concern about making a living traps his heart.... He cannot teach or denounce in the right places or in the right manner. He is concerned about losing popularity and friendship among those from whom he can get it. Thus he lets himself be seduced into keeping quiet and into seducing other people as well, not through heresy but through his own belly, which is his idol. Whoever wants to do his duty as a preacher and perform his office faithfully must retain the freedom to tell the truth fearlessly, regardless of other people. He must denounce anyone that needs to be denounced—great or small, rich or poor or powerful, friend or foe. Greed refuses to do this, for it is afraid that if it offends the bigwigs or its good friends, it will be unable to find bread. So greed puts its whistle into its pocket and keeps quiet” (LW 21.201f).

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tm 6:10).

“In the case of a Christian the situation is far worse. He once knew what it was to have peace with God.... These torments begin in this life, such as constant worry over earthly possessions, a fear of losing it all, a loss of real values because of the constant drive for money, etc. But these pains do not end with this life. They carry on throughout eternity” (E.H. Wendland).

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tm 6:11,12). Notice “the faith” in verse 12. It is *he pistis*. Contend for faith’s content, the gospel of

Christ, what was preached at Timothy's installation (1 Tm 1:19). There is some debate as to when Timothy made that good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Some are sure that it was at the time of his installation. Cullman believes that it was on the occasion of a court appearance. But when was Timothy called to eternal life? Was it not at the time of his conversion and baptism? "Take hold" is aorist, *epilabou*, emphasizing the act: do it.

"In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen" (1 Tm 6:13-16).

"In the sight of God...and of Christ Jesus... I charge you" is very solemn language. Christ Jesus' good confession before Pilate was his verbal attestation that he is the king of truth. It was also his patient endurance as the suffering Messiah. In the sight of that Confessor Timothy is to continue as a faithful confessor, keeping the command (*entole*) which Paul had laid on him. The *entole* is the charge to carry on his ministry according to Paul's instructions.

"They climbed the steep ascent to heaven  
Through peril, toil and pain.  
O God, to us may grace be given  
To follow in their train !" (TLH 452.4)

As a Christian, the pastor exercises the privilege of prayer. As a pastor he has more people to pray for than most Christians do. Paul does not say a great deal about prayer in the Pastoral Epistles. When he does mention his personal praying we find him praying for others. He prays with gratitude to God, he prays night and day, he remembers others in his prayers: "I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers" (2 Tm 1:3). We know from his other letters that Timothy was by no means the only person for whom Paul prayed.

*Oratio* is one of the three indispensables that make a theologian. Meditation, the personal study of the Word, we do more readily, perhaps in part because the demands of our calling remind us of the need. Temptation or testing is thrust upon us; it goes with the faithful discharge of our ministry. Prayer is hard work, it takes time, it is easily replaced by merely saying prayers, it is too often forgotten.

We cannot be pastors without being practical theologians and we can't be practical theologians without being prayers. As we schedule and discipline and train ourselves to do all our other work, let us not be lackadaisical or slipshod about this essential work.

"The pastor should be a man of prayer..., having not only a fixed and regular time for his own private devotions.... but also offering up frequent ejaculatory prayers in his study and when making his calls; in church he should offer his own private prayer before the church service, before he ascends the pulpit, after he has preached, and at the close of the service. It goes without saying that in the parsonage the family altar should be found and that the pastor as the priest of the house should conduct family worship" (W.H.C. Fritz).

Paul did not forget what Jesus taught about praying for those who wrong us. It was in the spirit of that teaching that he wrote during his second imprisonment in Rome: "At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them"

(2 Tm 4:16). Paul wanted neither God nor man to reckon the failure of those who could have supported him in court and did not. *Me autois logistheie*, may it not be charged to them.

It is important that we learn to appreciate and remember to acknowledge with thanks the many small and great kindnesses which people extend to us. Perquisites, gifts of food, help, hospitality and much more come to us as expressions of love from God's people. We should not regard them as our due or, worse, deprecate them. "May the Lord show mercy to Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus" (2 Tm 1:16-18). Onesiphorus was not discharging an official duty for which he had been appointed. The refreshment he brought Paul, his urgent search for Paul in Rome, the help he had extended to Paul in Ephesus were all voluntary acts. They were services of love. Paul acknowledges them before the church for all time and asks the Lord to reward his benefactor.

On the other hand,

"You must not give up if for your labor you get the reward of ingratitude. We must not lose hope, as though the Word were about to be destroyed" (LW 17.173).

Before writing his "last will and testament," Second Timothy, Paul had never used the word "suffering" with regard to his many hardships in the gospel work. But when he was no longer free to move about as an ambassador for Christ he did use it. *Sugkakopatheson* means to suffer what is harmful with someone. "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tm 2:3).

A soldier obeys orders, a soldier has enemies, a soldier fights. A soldier suffers and endures along with his comrades, and that is what Paul emphasizes here. He is not supposed to desert his comrades and give up soldiering to return to the comforts of home just when the going gets tough.

As soldiers of the cross we learn that most people are not against morality, but that the natural man does not like to hear about the worthlessness of his morality at the judgment seat of God. People are not usually opposed to the moral philosopher Jesus (as they imagine him to be), but the fleshly mind does not take kindly to the truth that there is salvation in no other. People are generally sympathetic to the tragic figure on the center cross, but not to the idea that their everyday gossip, chiseling, bigotry, avarice, superstition, contempt for authority, lust and general lovelessness brought him there. People can make it rough for a soldier when he teaches these things.

In the face of ridicule, opposition or active persecution, says the Holy Spirit, "endure hardship." "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God" (2 Tm 1:8).

"In the care of souls one often encounters people who are truly disgusting. With such people one not only needs to demonstrate much patience, but also put up with a few things. ... Yes, if one properly conducts the care of souls he endures suffering

"Another thing that makes the care of souls so difficult are the unappreciative insinuations. If the pastor admonishes a covetous person, it is immediately said: 'The pastor can't get enough, and so he is always urging us to give.' If he admonishes those who are earthly-minded, it is immediately said: 'He doesn't want us to get ahead in the world.' If he admonishes a person who is addicted to drinking, he is a temperance man. According to the same people, however, he drinks even more than others in secret. If he

warns against meddling in social affairs it is said: ‘He takes sides with the rich; all the clergy do that’” (Ad. Hoenecke).

“No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer” (2 Tm 2:4).

“The pastor has no time to become entangled with the affairs of this life by holding down a job on the side or by becoming involved in investments the management of which consumes much time, nor dare he let hobbies lead him to neglect his work” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

“Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules” (2 Tm 2:5). The ‘rules’ of our contest, as set forth in the Pastoral Epistles and in all of Scripture, make clear that ministers of Christ are not racing against each other. We are not engaged in an unbrotherly competition in order to triumph over one another. We are competing against the course with its many hazards and hurdles. We encourage and help one another to run the race according to the rules. We rejoice when one of our brothers runs well. We gather to praise God when one of our teammates reaches the finish line and receives the victor’s crown.

“The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops” (2 Tm 2:6). Those who work in God’s Word in order to feed God’s people must be the first to benefit from that study. This is not an injunction to the church to provide adequate salaries for its workers. This is an admonition to the workers to partake themselves of the nourishment which they are offering to others. “Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this” (2 Tm 2:7).

When soldiering gets rough, when the race is long, when your appetite for the Word flags, “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained” (2 Tm 2:8,9).

The imperative is present, keep remembering. Jesus lives and you are not in service to a dead teacher who is helpless to help you. He is the Son of David, the Promised One, who came to do God’s work of salvation and has done it. This is Paul’s gospel, reduced to barest essentials. When everything seems complicated and the flesh grows weary, “Remember Jesus Christ.”

The great apostle was treated like a dangerous criminal because of that gospel. He suffered the shame, discomfort and frustration of chains. “But God’s word is not chained.” If there is a crisis of faith in pastor or people, a desperate need for spiritual renewal, the remedy is ready at hand in the living, powerful, saving Word of God which cannot be chained. “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (2 Tm 2:10).

*Pistos ho logos*. “Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

If we endure, we will also reign with him.

If we disown him, he will also disown us;

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful,

for he cannot disown himself” (2 Tm 2:11-13).

In Holy Baptism we share in the results of Christ’s death and in that sense we have suffered with him. Like him, we died to sin and are no longer under its power (Ro 6). What follows from this is that we will also live with him. That life has begun; we already have it.



It is a life of joyful service, of blessed peace with God, of confident hope. It is also a life of suffering for his name's sake, more suffering for some and for others less. If we endure whatever consequences living with him there may be, we will live and reign with him eternally.

Paul is again quoting or adapting or writing a hymn. Every line posits a condition of reality, *ei* with indicatives in both protasis and apodosis: "If this occurs then that must follow." With the lines of joyful assurance come lines of somber warning: "If we disown him, he will also disown us."

"Often people are tempted to make excuses for those who fall away from the faith in time of trouble and persecution, as though the burden of suffering were too heavy, or the yoke of persecution too grievous. Others seem naively to feel that the warning of Scripture to endure, to be patient, to watch and pray, to confess bravely in the face of hatred, to remain steadfast in the face of opposition are not to be taken too seriously. Perhaps Christ will change his decision at the last moment" (E.H. Wendland).

But the faithful Lord cannot reward the unfaithful servant with the reward of faithfulness: "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2:13). Not some external compulsion but his internal integrity requires him to disown us if we disown him. He is not subject to the laws of logic but he cannot disown what he is: faithful, faithful to what he says.

"If God were to save anyone without faith, he would be acting contrary to his own words and would give himself the lie; yes, he would deny himself.... It is as impossible for God to save without faith as it is impossible for divine truth to lie" (LW 43.53).

Living with the Lord, confessing his name, dispensing his counsel, contending for his truth are a little easier when comrades stand with us. What crushing loneliness Paul must have experienced when he stood before the authorities deserted by all, without even a character witness. "At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me" (2 Tm 4:16).

But he was not alone ! "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth" (2 Tm 4:17). Like Daniel, Paul was delivered from death. More, the Lord actually gave him another opportunity to preach the gospel to the heathen who were present in court !

If it ever happens that we have no brother to speak a word of encouragement to us, to give us the comfort of just being there, to speak on our behalf, then still we have a Lord who stands at our side and gives us strength: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tm 4:18).

The authorities would eventually snuff out Paul's life. They would regard it as duty done, safeguarding the Roman Peace by ridding it of a troublemaker. Paul's view of his situation and of coming events was different: "I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure" (2 Tm 4:6). His entire ministry with its results were a freewill offering to God. His imminent death he regarded as the final libation, poured out as the last act of the sacrifice (cp Nu 15:1-10, Ro 15:16; Php 2:17).

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tm 4:7). God had deposited the faith, the gospel which creates faith and on which our faith is based, with Paul. Paul kept it intact even when while he shared it. God had set a course for Paul which required the apostle to preach to the nations and before their governors and kings. Paul had run the course according to the rules and now the finish line was in sight. God had entered Paul in the

agonizing contest for the faith—to propagate it, defend it, clarify it for the ignorant, apply it in the lives of his hearers and readers. Paul had triumphed in the struggle.

“He does not say that he is justified in all this, but, like Hezekiah, he speaks in the assurance of mercy. It is through its benefit that he awaits the crown of glory, although he is aware of nothing against himself. All believers do this, for hope does not await wrath, but glory... and not through works, but rather through God’s mercy” (LW 32.192).

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Tm 4:8). The story of Socrates’ death is moving in its way. There was a noble serenity about how he made preparations to die, offering consolation to his friends, taking care of last-minute details. But with regard to the future he could say nothing very definite or hopeful: “Only God knows whether my judges or I will be better off after today.”

There is no such uncertainty in Paul’s words to Timothy. He is not passing into oblivion but into glory, not into a shadowy realm but into eternal light, not with a question but with an affirmation. The victor’s crown is in store for him. It is the crown won for him by Christ, promised to him in the gospel, assured by Jesus’ resurrection.

This triumphant hope is not Paul’s special and personal privilege as an apostle. The Lord will award it to all who have longed for his appearing.

## 5. EVANGELICAL LEADERSHIP

“This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone” (Tt 3:8). Titus’ leadership of the churches on Crete was to be based on and to flow from a trustworthy saying. Titus’ leadership was to be a calling on people to live in keeping with that trustworthy saying.

What was it? This time *pistos ho logos* looks back to what has been said rather than ahead to what follows. This is what Paul had said: “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (Tt 3:3-7).

That is the trustworthy saying. It is a statement of law and gospel, particularly the latter. It speaks of God’s love for the race, his *philanthropia*. It says that he saved us, “not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” That is good news and it is a faithful saying.

Paul also speaks of the gospel accompanied by a sign, the gospel in another form. That is, he speaks of Holy Baptism, In Baptism God demonstrates that his grace comes to us from without. It does not reach into us for some inclination, some decision or even some neutral disposition on our part. It is entirely his gift and his doing.

It is a washing of rebirth, absolutely needed because we are by nature sinful offspring of sinners. It is a washing of *anakainosis*, renewal. The *kain*-root tells us that it does not refurbish our old nature. No, it makes it something entirely new. The single *dia* controlling both *paliggenesias* and *anakainoseos* says that rebirth and renewal are not two separate events. Both occur in Baptism. The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews in this washing.

More, in this sacrament the Holy Spirit is poured out. Baptized believers are not to await a “second baptism,” a Holy Spirit experience. Rather, we are to value our Baptism in which the Spirit of God comes to us in generous measure to make us spiritual people.

God poured out this Gift through Jesus Christ our Savior. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are present and active in Holy Baptism. Through it God justifies us by his grace and makes us heirs in keeping with the hope (*kat’ elpida*) of eternal life.

“Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem Baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure, which also indicates sufficiently that it cannot be ordinary mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing, but the Word does it, and (as said above) the fact that the name of God is comprehended therein. But where the name of God is, there must be also life and salvation, that it may indeed be called a divine, blessed, fruitful and gracious water; for by the Word such power is imparted to Baptism that it is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul calls it, Titus 3:5.

“But as our would be wise, new spirits assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things avail nothing, we answer: It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it stands and rests. Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is Baptism, in which there is pure salvation and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it. Now, if I believe this, what else is it than believing in God as in him who has given and planted his Word into this ordinance, and proposes to us this external thing wherein we may apprehend this treasure ?” (*Large Catechism*, “Baptism,” 2629, Trigl. 739).

Paul wants Titus and us to stress this. We need to preach, teach, stress and remind people of the gospel of Holy Baptism. Perhaps then there will be fewer who leave for the sects, saying, “They’re just like us, except that they don’t stress Baptism.”

Without the gospel, before conversion, there is no point in trying to lead people to grow in sanctification, to offer themselves to God for service. Paul acknowledges that even religious zealots and holy Pharisees are “foolish, disobedient, enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures....”

But after the gospel has been preached and believed we can look for good works to follow.

“And thus the preacher must direct the preaching of the gospel first to the strengthening of faith, but likewise to the kindling of love for God and all those who are born of God. He must do this so that he may fulfill God’s purpose and create true sanctification and good works” (Ad. Hoenecke).

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tm 2:15). The verb *orthotomein*, to cut straight, was used in connection with road building. The idea was “to cut a road in a straight direction.” KJV’s “rightly dividing the word of truth” is really quite literal and quite appropriate. In verse 14 Paul enjoins Timothy to warn his people against quarreling about words. In verse 15 he says, “Avoid godless chatter.” Both expressions represent the opposite of correctly handling the word of truth, in content and manner.

Perhaps Martin Luther’s greatest achievement was to consistently interpret and apply this *orthotomein* to the proper distinction between law and gospel. I do not think that any theologian

after the New Testament and before Luther ever pointed and carried it out as clearly. For example, the “Morningstar of the Reformation,” John Wyclif, regularly distinguished between “Goddes Lawe” (the Old Testament) and “Christes Lawe” (the New Testament). In doing it he was really confusing law and gospel.

In his lectures on Genesis (LW 3.222) Luther describes the proper handling of the word of truth without saying “law and gospel.”

“Just as all foods do not agree alike with all bodies, so there is the one kind of doctrine by which the weak, the faint-hearted, the bruised, and the penitent must be buoyed up; and another by which the obdurate, the callous, the smug, and the shamefully wicked must be called back to the right way.”

In his lectures on Deuteronomy (LW 9.136) he uses the terminology:

“So...teach that you apply law and gospel rightly, lift up, make alive, and set the conscience free through the gospel and not suppress or burden it with the law or works and sins. On the other hand, see to it that you do not free the flesh through the gospel, but hold it down and mortify it through law and works, just as it is proper for the old man and the body of sin to be destroyed.”

He speaks in the lectures on Galatians about the danger of confusing the two:

“You must distinguish the promise from the law..., both in your attitude and in your whole life.... When the promise is mixed up with the law, it becomes law pure and simple” (LW 26.302).

To have an intellectual grasp of the distinction is not enough. We need the Spirit’s blessing and guidance to understand its proper application. This is probably more difficult in the area of sanctification, where it must especially be observed if a pastor is to exercise true evangelical leadership.

“A problem always requires individual understanding and application of the necessary healing and guiding truth to the individual.... ‘Rightly dividing the Word of truth...I means more than knowing what is law and what is gospel. It means applying it skillfully at the right time and for the proper purpose’ (*The Pastor at Work*).

That *orthotomein* is not limited to distinguishing between law and gospel was recognized by great teachers of our Seminary:

“It does not, however, suffice that one correctly divides law and gospel. One must properly divide all the individual particulars of doctrine. The word of our fathers applies: *Qui bene distinguit, bene docet*. That is, he who distinguishes well teaches well. Whoever does not properly divide the particulars of doctrine will always confuse rather than teach” (Ad. Hoenecke)

“There should be nothing, absolutely nothing at all, that a pastor of ten or fifteen years does not know in the Scriptures....

“He must know how to purely divide the Word from all error, no matter how subtle or innocent that error may appear to be; he must also understand how to select the expression that finds no room for error within it. He must—which is a great art indeed—not confuse one part of the truth with another so that a new doctrine emerges out of it; he ought not to confuse law and gospel, justification and sanctification with one another; he dare not attach conditions to the gospel and gentleness to the law.... In order to do that, he himself needs a healthy knowledge of the pure doctrine, of the law and the gospel, and that cannot be accomplished except through a thorough study of the Scriptures” (August

Pieper, *Das Schriftstudium als die besondere Aufgabe des Pastors*, Quartalschrift 1906, tr. Daniel Deutschlander 1983).

1 Timothy 3:14,15 sets forth the purpose of Paul's instructions as they pertain to the spiritual welfare and growth of God's people: "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the foundation of the truth."

*Oikos* can mean either house or household. The former meaning seems to accord with the pictures of pillar and foundation. What, then, supports what, as pillar and foundation? We would be inclined to say that the house is built on and supported by the truth of the saving gospel. What Paul seems to be saying, though, is that truth is built on and supported by the house. That is a difficult thought for me to comprehend, let alone elucidate.

What is clear is that the people who are in God's house or household are in God's church. The house of God is the church of God. Paul's instructions on how they are to conduct themselves do not apply only to when they assemble for worship or when they are in the place of assembly. They apply to their entire manner of living, no matter where they are, because they are the house of God.

Can the picture of pillar and foundation, then, simply mean: "Wherever they are and in whatever they do, they uphold and support the truth"?

Chapters 2 and 3 of 1 Timothy comprise the instructions on Christian conduct which Paul gave in writing to help Timothy exercise evangelical leadership in his role as superintendent. We have already examined some of these instructions in other contexts, but let us take a look at this larger section.

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tm 2:1,2). Teach the house of God to pray. Not only for themselves and their families, not only for fellow believers, but for everyone. Billions do not pray to the living God. The church prays for them. Pray for those who govern. Their success in governing has a bearing on how the church goes about its task and how Christians live in the world.

"Peace is essential... that the youth might be trained and educated and that teaching might be carried on in the churches. God instituted political government chiefly for the reason that through its operation, activity and help peace might be preserved. When there is relaxation of discipline, the education of the youth becomes impossible. Rebellion and wars make it impossible to teach the Word aright in the church" (LW 13.140).

"I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing" (1 Tm 2:8). "Men" is not *anthropoi* (people), but *andres* (males). That the men will lead in public worship in every congregation is self-evident. This says more than that. As penitent believers, at peace with God and in agreement with one another, they are to be leaders in their families, role models for their children. Not only in public worship, not only in the place of assembly, but everywhere, let God's men pray. Teach them how to pray, for whom to pray, why to pray. Motivate them in an evangelical way: "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tm 2:3,4).

"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess

to worship God” (1 Tm 2:9,10). In dress and demeanor, in clothing and conduct, in public worship and in everyday life, let Christian women do what is in keeping with their Christian confession.

“I do not want to interpret this too scrupulously—that rich clothing is forbidden to women” (LW 28.274)

“Paul is not insisting on drab dress. Even this may be worn with vanity; the very drabness may be made a display. Each according to her station in life; the queen not being the same as her lady in waiting, the latter not the same as her noble mistress. Each with due propriety as modesty and propriety and modesty will indicate to her, both when attending divine services and when appearing in public elsewhere” (Lenski).

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission” (1 Tm 2:11).

“God has not given us a code of laws to follow as we apply this principle to Christians assembled as the church or to Christians as they live out their lives in a society which often cares little or nothing about God’s will. God gave only a few applications of the principle [of the headship of man], but two of those do treat situations that go beyond the home or the church. The words of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 apply in every phase of a woman’s life” (*Man and Woman in God’s World*, an expanded study, prepared under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents, WELS, Northwestern 1987).

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent” (1 Tm 2:12).

“Paul’s specific application is, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach.’ These words forbid a woman to do that kind of teaching by which she exercises authority over men. Paul qualifies the phrase, ‘to teach,’ with the phrase, ‘to have authority over a man.’ The teaching in question must have been of such a nature that by this act the teacher assumed authority over men. A question arises whether all kinds of teaching involve a similar authority. Let it be said that the root meaning of the vocable for ‘teaching’ is related to the word for ‘master.’

“When a learner or disciple placed himself under a master, he was to do far more than merely accept a set of facts.... A master wished to impress on his disciples every aspect of his life. It is this kind of teaching to which Paul referred” (MWGW).

Patently, confident in the authority of God’s Word, with evangelical concern for souls and not in the interest of legalistic conformity, the pastor will lead his people into an understanding of these principles. He will act and not simply react.

He will not be panicked by those who deride Paul’s instructions as the product of an outmoded view of women. He will not be put on the defensive by the canard “male chauvinist.” Using Paul’s instructions and Paul’s Bible, he will show as Paul did that these instructions are rooted in the history of God’s creation of the human race.

“For Adam was formed first, then Eve” (1 Tm 2:13).

“Paul’s specific application, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach,’ based on the general principle, ‘a woman is not to have authority over a man,’ is grounded on...biblical history. Paul writes, ‘For Adam was formed first, then Eve.’ He is recounting chronology, and chronology is the only meaning to attach to the words ‘first’ and ‘then.’ Yet the chronology is significant. Paul under guidance of the Spirit lists the creation chronology was a reason for maintaining the headship of man principle” (MWGW).

“And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner” (1 Tm 2:14).

“God came walking in the garden to confront his first two human creatures with their sins. He addressed his first question to the man.... God placed the initial burden of responsibility and accountability on the man. God looked for a full confession of guilt from the man” (MWGW).

This verse does not put Adam in a better light than Eve. Instead of exercising a loving leadership, he followed. Nor is Paul trying (as Adam did) to shift the blame to Eve, or to prove that women are more gullible.

“Paul is emphasizing the different ways in which the fall into sin includes a violation of the relationship God intends for men and women. Paul, again under the inspired guidance of the Spirit, sees the fall into sin as in part a violation of God’s design. This sheds greater light on God’s words to Adam in the garden, ‘You listened to your wife and ate...’ “ (MWGW).

“But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety” (1 Tm 2:15). The literal translation of *dia tes teknogonias*, as NIV has it, is “through childbearing.” That women will be saved through childbearing seems a troubling statement, coming from the apostle who wrote *te gar chariti este sesomenoi, dia pisteos* (Eph 2:8). Some have understood *dia* in the sense of accompanying circumstance, “in or while bearing children.” Others see a subtle allusion to the First Promise and the Woman’s Offspring, following on the reference to creation in verse 13 and the fall in verse 14. The change in number from *sothesetai*, she will be saved, to *meinosin*, if they continue, might give some slight support to that idea.

“Women who bear children are holy if they continue in the faith; that is, if they believe in Christ and contend with the serpent.... Otherwise a woman, so far as physical procreation without faith and without the Seed is concerned, will be condemned” (LW 4.242).

In whatever way *dia* is understood, Paul is simply encouraging Christian women to continue as believers whose faith is manifest in the way they live in their most characteristic role, that of childbearing.

“If the adversaries could produce such a passage concerning celibacy, then indeed they would celebrate a wonderful triumph. Paul says that woman is saved by childbearing. What more honorable could be said against the hypocrisy of celibacy than that woman is saved by the conjugal works themselves, by conjugal intercourse, by bearing children and the other duties? But what does Paul mean? Let the reader observe that faith is added, and the domestic duties without faith are not praised. If they continue, he says, in faith. For he speaks of the whole class of mothers. Therefore he requires especially faith, by which woman receives the remission of sins and justification. Then he adds a particular work of the calling, just as in every man a good work of a particular calling ought to follow faith. This work pleases God on account of faith. Thus the duties of the woman please God on account of faith, and the believing woman is saved who in such duties devoutly serves her calling” (*Apology XXIII* (XI), “Of the Marriage of Priests,” 32-34, Trigl 373).

We have twice reviewed and discussed the qualifications for an overseer (1 Tm 3:1-7). There was another group of ministers in the church. Their function seems to have been different from that of those who preached and taught. Although the seven men chosen at Jerusalem to administer relief funds for widows (Ac 6:3) are not called deacons, they are the earliest example of men specially chosen to carry out a *diakonia* of limited scope.

We do not know exactly what they did in the churches of Asia. However, if we think of them as discharging some of the duties which church councils, lay organizations and congregational committees carry out today we will not be far off the mark. We will miss the mark if we imagine that any organizational structure or job description is *the* New Testament form to which we must adhere.

The timeless instruction which Paul does give concerning such servants (*diakonai*) has to do with their character and reputation. “Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tm 3:8,9). The requirement that they be able to teach does not appear, and that is an important reason for judging that the deacons’ work did not include preaching and teaching.

The Greek behind “the deep truths of the faith” is to *musterion tes pisteos*. Other ways in which this phrase has been paraphrased are “the revealed truth of the faith” (TEV), “the hidden truth they believe” (AAT), “das Geheimnis des Glaubens” (Luther), “the deep truths of our faith” (NEB), What man could not discover, what God has revealed in Christ, the apostolic teaching concerning Jesus and his saving work is the mystery of faith. It is that *musterion* on which Paul expatiated at 3:16, “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body....”

To hold these deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience is to live by the forgiveness of sins, to live as a forgiven sinner. It is to be *me dilogos*, sincere or “not double-tongued;” temperate in the use of alcohol, not looking for a way to profit from the handling of the church’s material resources. It is to be and live that way for the Savior’s sake.

“They ought to fix their heart in heaven; they ought to think about heavenly matters; they ought to hold present and temporal things in contempt and set their hope on the future....”

“Where faith is unpretended, there the conscience is clear” (LW 29.297).

“They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons” (1 Tm 3:10).

“The acid test is that a recommendation be required from those who know them” (LW 28.298).

“Church officers should not be elected according to the rule: ‘Let the honors go round.’ The Word of God specifically says that such men should be elected as have the necessary qualifications” (W.H.C. Fritz).

In the midst of his instructions concerning deacons Paul writes (3:11), *gunaikas hosautos semnas, me diabolous, nephalious, pistas en pasin*. Literally, “Women likewise (must be) worthy of respect, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in everything.” Who are the women? NIV translates *gunaikas* as “their wives,” referring to the wives of deacons. More remotely, “their wives” could even refer to the wives of overseers as well (3:2-7). Otherwise nothing is said about the bishop’s wife, except as a member of that household which he is to manage well. Surely, it is essential that the wives of those who discharge any office in the church fit the description which Paul gives here.

There is another way in which *gunaikas* can be understood. Many hold to the view that the reference is to deaconesses, women who rendered charitable service to their fellow believers as official representatives of the church. The vocable for a female deacon, *diakonissa*, does not appear in any extant Greek literature until it occurs in Canon 19 of the Council of Nicea, 325. There it refers to an existing institution, with the assumption that the church had always been



served by women counterparts to male deacons. Whether or not that was the case when Paul wrote these words, we have no difficulty seeing that any woman who serves the church in any phase of its public ministry ought to fit Paul's description. For them, as for men, it is also said: "They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience" (1 Tm 3:9).

Like the overseers, let deacons be faithful in marriage and good house fathers: "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well" (1 Tm 3:12).

"Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Tm 3:13).

"This verse applies both to overseers as well as to deaconesses and deacons.

"They gain an excellent standing. We interpret this to mean that inner assurance which only those acquire who have served faithfully and well. But they gain even more. They achieve a certain boldness and confidence in their faith in Jesus Christ.... The reward is of grace and not of merit. It is spiritual and not earthly. But it is there for every faithful servant of the Lord.

"As we apply these words to the present-day situation, we should remember to use these words especially when our congregations (or other church organizations) choose their officers. All too often our people are careless when they elect officers. A chairman is chosen who fails to attend church services regularly. A treasurer is elected who has not proved himself as a man who can be trusted with money. To have such officers is worse than to have no officers at all" (E.H. Wendland).

"Until I come, devote yourself *te anagnosei, te parakleseis, te didaskalia*" (1 Tm 4:13). Remember, Timothy was not only responsible for evangelical services in one place. He was the superintendent of a larger group of congregations, supervising a larger number of ministers. Not only in his home church but in all churches he must see to it that the public reading of the Scriptures, preaching and teaching were done.

*Anagnosis*, literally "knowledge" or "recognition," was used in the papyri to denote public reading, especially in courts of law and other assemblies. In hellenistic Judaism it was used for the oral reading of Torah in the synagogue. An inscription on a building block in Jerusalem read: *...sunagogen eis anagnosin nomou*. Timothy must be concerned that the Scriptures be read when the congregations-assembled. He must also see to it that only the Scriptures and not some of the many current apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings be read. He must not allow "certain men to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies" (1 Tm 1:3,4). He must see to it that those Scriptures which "urge Christ," as Luther would characterize them, were read.

*Paraklesis* includes more than heralding the gospel (*kerussein*). There is to be encouragement and exhortation for Christians on the basis of the Scripture. There must also be doctrinal preaching, full of instruction (*didaskalia*).

"Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tm 4: 15,16).

"The objective of Pastoral Theology is the salvation of man and the glory of God.... With this in mind, the pastor should apply the law and the gospel. Whether he baptize a child, make a decision in a case of divorce, or officiate at a funeral, the pastor acts as Seelsorger, a curate of souls" (W.H.C. Fritz).

On the other hand:

“A pastor should not make himself so busy saving others that he neglects to think about his own soul’s salvation. Whatever applies to his people, he should apply to himself as well (E.H. Wendland).

Feeding and leading God’s people never means browbeating God’s people. Evangelical leadership does not take the hide off Christians who have slipped or have failed to attain the level of sanctification the pastor expects. “Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers” (1 Tm 5:1). “Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. ... Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled” (Tt 2:2,6).

“You should exhort a pious man if you have seen that he is not doing what he ought. You should direct the exhortation to those who know they should be doing the things of faith, love and Christ. Don’t be sarcastic. Don’t assail them publicly. Rather, admonish them. Yet one ought not grow old in his responsibility. He should go forward, sparing no one” (LW 28.333).

“(Exhort) older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity” (1 Tm 5:2). The women are still the direct object of *parakalei* in verse 1. With regard to the last phrase, “with absolute purity,” W.H.C. Fritz wrote:

“A pastor should be afraid of himself, knowing he himself is yet far from being a perfect saint.”

“Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (Tt 2:3-5). I am glad that Luther refrained from saying something chauvinistic here. At least I think he did. This is what he said:

“One can always find more good than bad to say about women” (LW 29.57).

What we are and how we act often says much more about our real convictions than what we say. Our conduct can sometimes teach more than our teaching. “In everything set them an example by doing what is good” (Tt 2:7a).

Sometimes a servant of the church fails to set an example by doing what is good. Sometimes a servant of the church is accused of failing to set an example of doing what is good. There may be occasions when people accuse him of doing something positively bad. They may be right. They may be mistaken. They may be acting out of spite or out of pettiness. “Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses” (1 Tm 5:19).

It is my opinion that the verses which follow apply to all members of the congregation and not only to an elder against whom two or three witnesses have agreed. One reason for doing so is the shift from singular to plural. In verse 19 we have the singular *kata presbuterou*. Verse 20 begins *tous hamartanontas*. Other reasons will be cited. “Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that others may take warning” (1 Tm 5:20).

“In the case of sins which have been committed in the presence of the congregation or are a matter of public knowledge and an offense to the congregation, admonition may still take place privately and in the presence of witnesses if that seems to be the best way of gaining the offending brother. But that in such cases these steps need not precede is evident from Galatians 2:11f and 1 Timothy 5: 20. In these cases love for

the sinner is decisive. We shall ask ourselves which course in our judgment offers the best prospect of winning the guilty brother” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

Solemnly, Paul warns against any prejudice or preconceived opinion based on one’s predisposition toward the accused or the accuser: “I charge you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism” (1 Tm 5:21). Buddyism can destroy souls.

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure” (1 Tm 5:22). There is division of opinion as to whether Paul is speaking here of church discipline in general (as I have judged in verse 20) or of the installation of elders. Kittel’s *Theological Wordbook for the New Testament* connects the laying on of hands in this verse with absolution. Cyprian, *The Apostolic Constitutions* and Eusebius all speak of it as an ancient custom in connection with absolution. *The Shepherd Under Christ* seems to agree:

“When impenitence has become outwardly evident, the pastor must avoid becoming a partaker of another’s sin by knowingly giving communion to the openly impenitent.”

It is in this context, where the pastor must exercise sanctified judgment unaffected by poor health, that Paul injects his advice on the drinking of wine instead of water (5:23).

He continues with reassurance: “The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them” (1 Tm 5:24). It will not be difficult to identify those who are plainly subject to continued disciplinary action. Their sins are evident beforehand (*prodeloi*), and it is self-evident that they must be dealt with. Others are not immediately evident; they become so at a later time. Don’t aggravate yourself about things you can’t anticipate. Deal on the basis of knowledge you have. Take care of those “trailing” sins and the perpetrators when they become manifest.

There is in this verse still another reason for applying verses 20-25 to all church members and not only the elders of the church. The text does not say, “the sins of some men” (NIV). It says *tinon anthropon hai hamartiai*, “the sins of some people.”

As to the good works of the people, don’t let discipline cases convince you that there are no good deeds. They are there, obvious, if you will recognize them. In fact, even if they aren’t immediately evident they cannot be concealed for long: “Good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden” (1 Tm 5:25). The evangelical leader will have the spiritual discernment to recognize them and be grateful for them. He will thank God for all of them, acknowledge to the people that such works do exist as fruits of their faith, and occasionally cite some of them in order to give God glory and to encourage the saints.

Not all church discipline involves moral lapses or impenitence. All three of the Pastoral Epistles give warnings against false teachers and would-be teachers who subvert the truth, disrupt the church’s work or frivolously argue about questions which God’s Word neither suggests nor answers. Paul tells Titus in 3:10,11: “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned”

Paul is not speaking of an ill-informed person who has difficulty in grasping or verbalizing a doctrinal point. Nor does he refer to a weak brother who has trouble adhering to or even comprehending a scriptural principle. The divisive person is a *hairetikos anthropos*. He holds a mistaken view, clings to it in the face of admonition, insists on its correctness, does so in a disruptive way, is strong in his error, makes propaganda for it.

He is not a “great heretic” like Cerinthus, Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches or Pelagius. He does not espouse a “great heresy,” denying the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the vicarious atonement, the resurrection, salvation by grace alone. He is simply of a factious or sectarian spirit, stubbornly so.

“Separation is called for (Tt 3:10), i.e., the declaration that the persistent errorist is no longer a confessional brother, but not that he is to be regarded as a heathen man and a publican” (*The Shepherd Under Christ*).

“After that have nothing to do with him.”

“When you have done your part, let God do his part. To refuse to quit unless you have corrected things first is to put yourself in the place of God, that is, to be obviously insane” (LW 15.120).

Not only was Timothy to supervise the pastors and other ministers who were already at work in the churches of Asia. He was to train other workers. “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tm 2:2). Paul’s words have a number of applications.

There is always training to be done within the local congregation. Reliable teachers for various part time educational agencies of the church need to be identified. The apostolic teaching must be entrusted to them. Thus they must be qualified to teach others. Informed and capable people must be trained for any work in which they are going to inform or train others, work such as visiting the sick, calling on prospects, presenting the congregational budget, sharing missions information, evangelizing. It is important to recognize that Paul did not really write “reliable men,” here. He wrote “reliable people,” *pistoi anthrōpōis*.

Collectively, as members of a synod, we do essentially what Paul is calling for here. We do it in our worker training system.

“At the seminary there is an ongoing evaluation procedure, to determine students desirable for the ministry. There is a more formal evaluation of each student prior to his vicar placement and following that vicarship. Again during the senior year, before the student’s name is submitted to the assignment committee, there is an in-depth review of the student’s capability for the office to which he aspires. We hope thereby to respond conscientiously to the apostolic directive” (John C. Jeske, “A Student Desirable for the Ministry,” 1980 essay).

Evangelical leadership is exercised in team play and willingness to give someone a second chance: “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Tm 4:11b). There had been a time when Paul could not use Mark, when he and Barnabas had fallen out over the question of Mark’s helpfulness (Ac 15). The time came when Paul called the young man his fellow worker (Phm) and recommended him to the church at Colosse (4:14). Given a second chance, Mark was helpful to Paul in his ministry.

The evangelical leader recognizes and utilizes opportunities in the needs of the larger fellowship of Christians. “Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives” (Tt 3:13,14). The juxtaposition of these two verses implies that “our people” could learn about doing what is good by helping Zenas and Apollos in their mission, seeing that their needs were supplied.

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days” (2 Tm 3:1). The last days are the days in which Paul and his representatives lived. They are also the days in which we live, for

they are the time between our Lord's first coming and his return. Paul's description of the people of these days rings familiar: "People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them" (2 Tm 3:2-5).

"A sense of moral values once held by society is turned upside down. Right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right as everything is twisted and turned in the wrong direction. Even human wisdom becomes a tool of evil, which is defended with a great show of knowledge....

"It hardly seems necessary to apply words of prophecy which are being literally fulfilled in every news announcement of today" (E.H. Wendland).

In fact (*gar*), from those who have a form of godliness but deny its power (*ek touton*) come "the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Tm 3:6,7). Luther described a situation in his day which prevails in ours:

"The sects have two great advantages among the masses. The one is curiosity, the other is satiety. These are two great gateways through which the devil drives with a hay wagon, aye, with all hell" (Plass No 4045).

"Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone" (2 Tm 3:8,9).

"Evil has its season. But only up to a certain point, and then it advances no farther. Even in this world corrupted by sin there comes a time when this extreme folly reaches a limit and is openly exposed for what it is. God is not mocked. He who controls all things does not permit the rule to be taken out of his hand....

"There comes a time when God himself declares: 'Stop. I've had enough!' Eventually error must break down before the power of eternal truth and be exposed for the foolishness that it is. And at the end of it all, we know, the justice of God will surely prevail. Only God's Word endures forever" (E.H. Wendland).

We who experience the subversion of sectarians and the inroads of worldliness in our congregations have not yet endured what Paul endured for the gospel's sake. "You...know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecution, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them" (2 Tm 3:10,11). His good character and his Christian virtues did not prevent persecution. His gospel activity provoked persecution. Expelled from Pisidian Antioch, conspired against at Iconium, stoned and left for dead at Lystra.

But the Lord was still in charge, looking out for the gospel's interest, for the advantage of his elect who should still be called by Paul's preaching, for his apostle. The enemies probably said, "The rascal lucked out and survived." Paul says, "The Lord rescued me from all of them."

God rescued him and God will preserve us, even though things get worse before they get better. As a matter of fact we can expect them to get worse. "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tm 3:12,13).

“We don’t by nature welcome this aspect of our Christian life. In fact, we often shrink from it and try to avoid it. But sooner or later, in some way or other, the Lord puts his finger on us and says, ‘I mean you. What are you going to do about confessing my name in spite of opposition and hardship?’

“Lord, help us to meet the test in keeping with our calling and our profession!”  
(E. H. Wendland).

How can we survive in the faith, let alone continue leading the flock? “Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tm 3:14,15).

How can we lead, so that others may be brought to the faith and survive and grow and serve as Christians ? Use the God-breathed Scripture, which “is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:16,17).

“The man of God” is not the called minister alone. The called minister is only one “God’s person” (*theou anthropos*) among many. But he is the one among many who has been called by God through men to utilize the Scripture which completely fits out (*exartizo*) God’s people for every good work.

“In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tm 4:1,2).

“It is significant, I believe, that Paul says nothing about any special or extraordinary gifts required.... The whole letter proceeds on the assumption that God has given Timothy all that he needs through the Word.... Hence Paul in the closing chapter can sum up the whole of his advice in one short statement” (A. Panning)

“Be prepared.” Prayer, meditation, testing prepare the theologian.

“In season and out of season.”

“To him who will not take to heart what is said against him you may appear to be a preacher out of season, but you ought to know that for that very man you are indeed a preacher in season” (W.H.C. Fritz).

“Correct, rebuke and encourage.”

“What does this mean except that the Word of God must be assiduously expounded and inculcated, engraved and polished ? (LW 32.198).

“With great patience and careful instruction”

“He does not excommunicate, does not shout: ‘To the fire!’ He does not pronounce them heretics offhand, does not lay upon them one burden after the other. No, he displays the fire of his love and the flames of his heart, because he has been eager to kill men’s faults and errors, not men. He does not know the thunderbolts of a broad sentence; he knows only the thunderbolt of God’s Word and the thunder of the gospel, by which alone sinners are killed and made alive” (LW 27.303).

“The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Tm 4:3,4).

With a curiosity for something more “interesting” than healthy teaching, with a yen for something more “practical,” there are people whose itch is satisfied when they hear about possibility thinking, prosperity through piety and the like. The disastrous result is that they turn from the truth which alone can save them to any perverse lie which can catch their fancy.

“The world likes to be wheedled and cajoled; it acts gentle and grunts with pleasure, like a sow when you scratch her ears” (LW 22.36).

“When people do not want the truth and the grace of God, God gives them what they actually desire, namely, strong errors and penalties, also teachers who tickle their ears and preach lies they are prone to believe.... Thus he who is disinclined to listen to the truth and to Christ will be inclined to listen to lies” (LW 22.385).

In the good fight of the faith, pastor, “keep your head in all situations, endure hardship” (2 Tm 4:5a).

“Just at that time when the whole world seems to be going mad, when people in general seem to be under the influence of some evil power, some strange intoxication, then the Christian, and especially the true pastors, should maintain their vigilant self-possession; with clearness of view and judgment use all possible caution. At the same time one must be prepared to suffer wrong at such a period, in such a crisis. For everyone that refuses to join in the general giddiness must expect enmity and tribulation on account of his stand” (P.E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*).

But go on the offensive, too: “Do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”(2 Tm 4:5b). The imperative *euaggelistou* includes the thought that a man’s whole ministry will be carried out in an evangelical way. The gospel will be at the center of his every word and action. He will not try to lead with a legalistic stick or a legalistic carrot.

Discharging all the duties of the ministry will also include the work of evangelism in the stricter sense.

“Of what real good is a pastor to his people in the work of evangelism if he doesn’t lead the way by ‘doing the work of an evangelist’ himself.

“If a pastor has ‘a heart for evangelism,’ this will be apparent not only in his taking the time for evangelism calling. It will show itself also in the attention that he gives to evangelism in the congregational program....

“The pastor is the example. As he leads with certainty and enthusiasm, his flock will follow” (David Valleskey, *The Pastoral Office and Evangelism*, 1978 Essay).

So, *euaggelistou* is Paul’s last command to Timothy regarding the work of the ministry. The other imperatives have to do with personal matters. That it is the last imperative by no means makes it an afterthought or a low priority item. First and last, Paul was an evangelist in every sense. First and last, the work of the ministry is sharing the good news and training others to share the good news. To coworkers, to fellow Christians, to the heathen, tell the good news.

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On these five Mondays we have reviewed timeless principles for evangelical ministry, principles which the Holy Spirit gave Paul to write to Timothy and Titus. All these sayings are trustworthy. God help us in our continuing struggle to apply them in our lives and labors, in our efforts to handle the Word of God correctly.

The last recorded words of Paul are a benediction (2 Tm 4:22). There is a blessing for Timothy: *Ho kurios meta pneumatos sou*. There is a blessing for us: *He charis meth’ humon*.

