Paul and Timothy: developing a leader

by

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Statement of Originality

The material contain in this thesis is my own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or institution.

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.
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Abbreviations used throughout this paper are consistent with *The SBL Handbook of Style*, Hendrickson Publishers Inc.: Peabody, Massachusetts, 1999.

All Scripture Quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the *New Revised Standard Version*, Zondervan: Grands Rapids, 1989.
The story of the church reveals that the apostles and Paul provided the first generation of leadership. Where did the second generation come from?

The relationship between Paul and Timothy exemplifies the passing on of the baton to the second generation. Selected by Paul, Timothy shared in ministry over many years, and had the opportunity to learn the teachings of the faith and share in the responsibilities of ministry and leadership. Their relationship offers an example of the development of a leader in the early church as seen from the differing perspectives of Paul, Acts and the Pastoral letters.

By exploring these perspectives on their shared ministry: the way the relationship was expressed by Paul, the activities that Timothy engaged in, and how the early church understood the relationship; the nature and growth of Timothy’s leadership is evaluated and described in terms of some current models of leadership.
Chapter 1: Timothy, Paul, and Leadership

“If the world is to hear the church’s voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual and sacrificial.”¹

Where do authoritative, spiritual and sacrificial leaders come from? The church continues to grapple with the challenge of finding leaders in each generation. In the business sphere much has been written about leadership. The church can learn from successful and ethical practice in other fields, but the experience of God’s people through the ages must not be ignored. The Scriptures provide insight into successive generations of leaders amongst God’s people through the ages. Jesus selected leaders (Mk 3:13–19; Mt 10:2–4; Lk 6:12–16), Matthias was selected by lot to take Judas’ place (Acts 1:15–26), and seven “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3) were chosen by the fledgling community to take local and specific ministry roles. Luke’s story of the early church makes clear that God ‘recruited’ Paul (Acts 9:1-19). Where did the next generation of leaders come from? This thesis will explore the relationship between Paul and Timothy as an example of the developing of leadership in the church, particularly in the transition between the first and second generation of followers of Jesus.

Thesis Approach

The material for this exploration is all found in the New Testament. The letters of Paul are the primary source of information, and offer insight into the relationship between Paul and Timothy, while the Acts of the Apostles provides a later record of their activities. Within the Pauline corpus are two Pastoral Epistles addressed to Timothy. While the authorship of these epistles is disputed, they add to our understanding of the relationship, or at least how it was perceived in the early church.²

By examining these documents from an historical and narrative perspective we will explore the activities that Paul and Timothy shared, how Paul viewed Timothy, and seek to discover how Timothy may have been encouraged and developed in leadership. We will then endeavour to analyse the impact of Paul as a leader, and trainer of future leaders. A brief contemporary analysis of leadership will be used to consider Paul’s leadership and that of his acolyte. This will help to outline critical issues and evaluate the impact of both Paul and Timothy as leaders in the early church, and particularly in the Pauline communities.

Leadership described

Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter highlight four broad approaches in defining leadership — those that begin with the person (where personality and/or style are significant), those that focus on position or status (and ignore informal leadership), those that involve influence on others, and finally those that revolve around the

² See Appendix 3 for a discussion of the authorship of the Pastorals.
“observable results leadership achieves”. The latter approaches may offer a helpful line of enquiry in our context, because our limited statistical evidence is best explored by a functional approach.

A functional description of leadership can go too far, however. John Maxwell offers the definition: “Leadership is influence” but this is extremely broad. The substantive ‘lead’ is defined as “the action of . . . leading, direction, guidance”, “direction given by going in front”. ‘Leading’ includes “[t]o cause to go along with oneself”, and “[t]o accompany and show the way to; to conduct, guide, esp. to direct or guide by going on in advance; to cause to follow in one’s path.” Here we have the important additional aspect of direction in leadership. It is more than just a matter of influence, since others are caused to go along with the leader and move in the intended direction.

Alastair Mant also notes the corporate and universal nature of leadership, and concludes that “[l]eadership, as a phenomenon, is thus defined by followership.” This pushes us towards an evaluation of both Paul and Timothy on the basis of their followers, a task that can only be undertaken in terms of their textual legacy, otherwise it would require more historical and statistical information than is available.

A functional definition of leadership thus requires the additional qualifications of

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4 John C. Maxwell, Developing the leader within you, (Milton Keynes: Word Publishing, 1993), 15. See also Banks and Ledbetter, Reviewing Leadership, 16.


direction and communal significance. Howard Gardner’s definition helps in this regard:

A leader is an individual (or, rarely, a set of individuals) who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals.\(^8\)

Adopting Gardner’s definition enables the exploration of the success of a leader by evaluating their impact on others. All of us have some effect on others but Gardner views leaders as having a significant impact on a significant number of people. No absolute numbers are offered to allow us to differentiate easily between leaders or non-leaders. ‘Significant’ is a relative term. In a group of ten, three may be significant! Leaders operate within particular groups or environments, and their effectiveness can only be assessed in terms of their sphere of operation.

Banks and Ledbetter also add the element of direction and change, noting that “leadership involves a person, group or organization who shows the way in an area of life . . . and in doing so both influences and empowers enough people to bring about change in that area.”\(^9\) They also distinguish between leadership and godly leadership, the latter being exercised when “direction and method are in line with God’s purposes, character, and ways of operating.”\(^10\) The assumption of this paper is that both Paul and Timothy exercised godly leadership, in the sense that their example has been affirmed by the inclusion of their textual legacy in our New Testament canon.

Thus Gardner’s definition will be adapted by the addition of the concept of godly leadership:

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\(^9\) Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 16,17.

\(^10\) Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 17.
A leader is an individual who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviours of a significant number of individuals so that they might accomplish the will and purposes of God.

This definition will be used when we come to examine the leadership of Timothy.

**Leadership in the New Testament**

In the New Testament the concept of leadership is present, but there are no directly equivalent terms in Greek. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (13: 7,17,24) readers are enjoined to remember, obey and greet their leaders (ἡγομένων, ἡγομένων, ἡγομένος — those who lead or guide). 11 Another term often translated in terms of leadership is ἐπίσκοπος but this may be more accurately translated as ‘overseer’, one who takes care of another or a group, with an emphasis on the position or office. Paul identifies various gifts in Romans 12, one of which is translated “leadership” (Rom 12:8 NIV). Alternative translations include “he that ruleth” (KJV), “he who leads” (NASB), and “the leader” (NRSV). The term used is προϊστάμενος, a perfect participle of προϊστάμην. The same word is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, but is translated “those who are over you” (NIV) or “have charge of you” (NRSV). The range of meanings that the word conveys includes those who are at the head of, who rule over, who manage or conduct, as well as those who are concerned about, care for or give aid. Frederick Danker includes its use in Romans 12:8 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12 under both ranges of meaning. 13

A number of other terms are used in the New Testament to denote leaders or rulers.

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11 *BDAG*, 434a.

12 *BDAG*, 379a. “May another take his place of leadership (ἐπίσκοπος)” Acts 1:20b (NIV).

13 *BDAG*, 870b.
Some refer to status or some form of priority, such as πρῶτον (first) and ἀρχων (ruler), and others to the exercise of power, e.g. δυνατός. On the negative there is also τῶν δοκούντων — “those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders” (Gal. 2:6).

**Terms used for leadership in the New Testament**

Many terms could be used for those who carry the responsibility of leading a group of persons, and the table below outlines the occurrence of particular titles in selected New Testament writings. While the word may appear in a different form, particularly identifying the task rather than the position, the use of titles (or lack thereof) highlight the challenge of exploring the issue of leadership in the early Church. For example, while teacher (διδάσκαλος) occurs 12 times, teach (διδάσκω) is used 28 times — so the act of teaching is noted more often than the designation for the person who performs that task.
### Terms used of leadership

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The above details need to be examined further to explore usage in the undisputed Pauline letters.¹⁵

διακόνος is used 3 times as a matter of self-identification (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4), and twice in relation to other ‘leaders’ or followers of Christ (Rom 16:1; Phil 1:1). Only in the Pastorals (1 Tim 3:8,12) is the term used as a title denoting a position of authority or responsibility rather than a role or function.

Most notable is the omission of πρεσβύτερος in the Pauline epistles. While frequently used for those with status and influence within the Jewish community, it was also

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¹⁴ 1 Cor. 4:8 has two references to followers of Jesus as ‘kings’ in an ironic sense.

¹⁵ Refer to Appendix 1 for further details.
used within the early church. Its use in Acts (especially with regard to leaders in the Jerusalem church)\textsuperscript{16} and other epistles suggests that it was well known, and used within the Church.

In a similar vein ἐπισκόπος only occurs once (Phil 1:1), where it occurs in the letter’s address in a unique formulation. The saints, together with ἐπισκόποι καὶ διάκονοι are included in this address. It is interesting to note the translation differences — with this phrase rendered as “overseers and deacons” (NIV) or “bishops and deacons” (NRSV).

The most prominent leadership term used by Paul is ἀποστόλος. It is used to identify or defend Paul’s apostleship (12 times), or to identify the other ‘apostles’ (7 times) in the group of prominent leaders with whom Paul was claiming equal recognition, authority or status. The term is used of a few others, notably Andronicus and Junia who were “prominent among the apostles” (Rom 16:7), Epaphroditus who was the apostle to Paul from the church at Philippi (Phil 2:25), and Titus (2 Cor 8:23) as Paul’s representative (apostle) to Corinth.

What becomes clear is that it is not possible to explore leadership on the basis of nomenclature alone. Titles within the early church are used sparingly and positional leadership beyond the ‘apostles’ is not clearly identified. Where particular roles are mentioned it is on the basis of gifting rather than status, and διάκονος (minister/servant) appears to be the most prominent designation. R. Eduard

\textsuperscript{16} Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23.
Schweizer notes:

the NT writers consistently refused to make any distinction between an official ministry of a selected person or group and that of any believer. Despite the fact that the Greek-speaking world offered to the early Church a rather rich vocabulary for the notion of “ministry”, most NT writers instead utilised a comparatively rare Greek word that hardly ever appears in the LXX: *diakonia*, “service” (especially of a place at table).  

These aspects of leadership (as I have defined it) in the New Testament demand more than just an analysis of what came later to be leadership titles. A functional and descriptive approach needs to be undertaken also – and especially with regard to the earlier Pauline material and its treatment of Timothy. Analysing the development of Timothy as a leader in the early church requires an exploration of the actions and activities of Paul and Timothy, their relationship, and a consideration of the various terms used to identify Timothy.

The Apostle Paul is arguably the most significant figure in Christian history after Jesus. His impact is evident as we read the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Corpus. His influence is undoubted, but who followed in his wake and how were they prepared for leadership?

**Timothy – learner and future leader**

Paul gathered around him a group of co-workers who assisted in the work of the ministry, and among them were Titus and Timothy. We learn of the involvement of these two through the early letters of Paul, the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral Epistles. Timothy and Titus are depicted in the Pastoral Epistles as exercising authority in particular churches as Paul’s life and ministry was drawing to a close

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In the letters of Paul we get glimpses of the relationship at a personal and the practical level. Not only are they a primary source for the activities in which Paul and Timothy were involved, they also provide insight into Paul’s relationship with Timothy.

The Acts of the Apostles is a secondary source that gives invaluable pointers to the activities in which both Paul and Timothy engaged. Acts is ‘an ancient history’. Recognizing the purposes behind this book, and allowing for the flexibility and creativity of that genre, will allow careful use of the document to assist in exploring the relationship.

The Pastoral Epistles are advice from an elder leader to his younger protégé, and are the only documents of this form in the New Testament. The Pastoral Epistles come with the significant challenge of authorship. Given the intensity of the argument over authorship of these letters, their use offers particular challenges. Authorship views range from asserting Paul wrote them, to the stance that they were written many years after his death. This paper will take the view that they are writings of the Pauline school, and represent a later view of Timothy and his role as leader.\(^{18}\)

Our exploration will provide insight into the relationship between Paul and Timothy, and the way in which Timothy may have been developed in leadership by his mentor. The challenge will then be to outline the methods and assess the effectiveness of Paul’s efforts in developing a successor. I will then return to some current models of leadership to shed light on the nature of Paul’s leadership, of Timothy’s development as a leader, and briefly, on our present situation.

\(^{18}\) Refer to Appendix 3.
Chapter 2: Timothy as travel companion

Timothy joined Paul at Lystra (Acts 16:1–3) during his so-called second missionary journey. During this time it is difficult to chart with any certainty the movements of Paul, let alone Timothy, from the available sources. While we cannot date with any precision the actual movements of Timothy, it is possible to identify the length of time he was associated with Paul and gain an indication of his activities.\(^\text{19}\)

Robert Jewett dates Timothy’s time with Paul as commencing from around 46 CE (prior to the Jerusalem conference).\(^\text{20}\) If Romans was written around 56/57 CE from Corinth, then the association between Paul and Timothy extends to at least ten years. If their relationship continued until Paul’s imprisonment in Rome a further two years can be added. According to Ben Witherington the second missionary journey took place later, around 50–52 CE, but he agrees with Jewett’s dating of Romans. At the very least this allows for an association between Paul and Timothy of five to seven years from recruitment at Lystra until Paul left for Jerusalem, or ten years inclusive of the time at Rome. What we know of Paul’s journeys beyond Acts is “largely inferential and conjectural”\(^\text{21}\) but we can be confident that the relationship between Paul and Timothy spanned at least ten years. During this time Timothy travelled

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19 See Appendix 2 for possible chronological details.


throughout Asia, Macedonia and Greece sharing as a ‘co-worker’ of Paul, and at
times was sent as an emissary of Paul to different congregations.22

A collective enterprise

Paul’s missionary activity focussed on the eastern and northern Mediterranean. At
times he moved on quickly and on other occasions he remained in a city for lengthy
periods, potentially up to three years. In all this activity Paul was not alone.
Numerous people are identified in Acts as travelling with Paul at various times and
many of them were referred to as fellow-workers in the Pauline correspondence.
Wayne A. Meeks notes that “[f]rom the beginning the Pauline mission was a
collective enterprise, with something that can loosely be called a staff.”23 Paul’s
ministry involved a wide range of relationships with others who shared something of
his mission:

At the one end there is the independence, but with some
communication maintained, of a Barnabas . . . and an Apollos . . . At
the other there is Timothy’s very close dependence upon Paul’s
direction and authority — although that does not mean that he or Titus
could not be given considerable discretion in carrying out delicate
assignments.24

Paul travelled and ministered with a group of associates, but it is not clear how many
may have been with him at any one time. We cannot be sure of the specific activities
of most of the individuals, but a pattern of operation can be identified.

22 Thessalonica, Corinth and probably Philippi. See further chapter 5 below.
Yale University Press, 1983), 133.
24 Meeks, First Urban Christians, 134.
In the cities and towns

Acts depicts Paul’s engagement in mission as having an initial focus around the synagogue\(^{25}\) before mounting opposition caused his exclusion from the synagogue, or the city.\(^{26}\) Although the standardized nature of the Acts narrative has caused scholars to question its accuracy,\(^{27}\) it is clear that the synagogue or places where diaspora Jews gathered were not the only venues where Paul preached or taught. Paul and his companions needed a place to stay. If ministry did take place in synagogues, some had rooms nearby to accommodate travellers.\(^{28}\) Here Paul and his companions might find shelter at a venue that gave opportunity to discuss, debate, and present the good news to Jews and those attracted by the Jewish faith. If accommodation at the synagogue was not available there were other options. Ronald F. Hock suggests that inns could be used for stopovers on a journey, while for a short stay the hospitality of a Christian household might be offered.\(^{29}\) Longer stays would require a more permanent arrangement, and this could be in the accommodation provided by gymnasia or synagogues or at an inn.

For practical and strategic reasons, Hock argues that “it seems that Paul preferred to find long-term lodging in the houses of members of his churches.”\(^{30}\)

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Gehring notes that these “offered Paul, his co-workers, and other itinerant missionaries overnight quarters as well as room and board for longer stays.”

While the synagogue opened up contacts with Jews and proselytes, Abraham J. Malherbe stresses the benefits of accepting the hospitality of new converts or fellow believers as,

> [s]uch households were part of an intricate social network, being linked to other households by ties of kinships, friendship, professional advantage, and so on. Paul’s strategy of initiating his work in such households was a sound one, because the household provided him with a relatively secluded setting and a ready-made audience as well as a network in which his influence would spread.

Private arrangements were to be preferred, but opening one’s home to others came at a cost. Unless the host was wealthy this could become quite a burden. Four individuals are mentioned in Acts as providing accommodation for Paul — Lydia in Philippi (16:14–15), Jason in Thessalonica (17:5–7), and Aquila and Prisca in Corinth (18:1–4). In addition Gaius (in Corinth) was identified as a “host to me and to the whole church” in Romans 16:23. There are also indications that Titius Justus (18:7) could also have offered accommodation for Paul. Banks suggests that in total there were “as many as forty persons who were actual or potential sponsors of his activities.” While it is difficult to determine all who actually provided hospitality for Paul, there is little doubt some acted as patrons, an arrangement that could prove beneficial to the mission. Hock likens it to “attaching oneself to a

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35 It is noted that Paul only ever names Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2) as his patron.
householder as his resident teacher or intellectual, with the room and board and other gifts amounting to a salary.” Thus Paul would be freed to engage in teaching and preaching on a full time basis. What is not so clear is the position of the rest of the entourage in this setting. We can only assume that they shared in that accommodation, or found accommodation with other believers.

Stanley K. Stowers considers private homes the “major platforms” of Paul’s preaching activity. Given the nature of the accommodation available, with only the homes of wealthy able to accommodate large groups, even teaching in private homes had a public dimension. Hosts would invite guests to join their household for the occasion, and often others would listen to discussion and debate held in a public space. In these settings Alexander paints a picture of two groups giving attention to the teacher — an inner ring of ‘disciples’ and an outer ring of be interested onlookers, people from rival groups, or uncommitted people drawn by the gathering. Again we can readily picture Timothy as part of the inner ring of disciples while Paul preaches or teaches.

After Paul was expelled from the synagogue in Thessalonica the attention of his opponents focused on Jason’s house (Acts 17:1–9). Malherbe suggests “we should understand Jason’s house as having been the base for Paul’s work among the Gentiles after his separation from the synagogue as Titius Justus’s house would be in

36 Hock, Social Context, 30.


Corinth (cf. Acts 18:6–7). In Corinth Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3) but it is likely that Titius Justus’s house was the centre of his preaching and teaching activities. The activities of Paul in these two places, Thessalonica and Corinth, offer insights into the practices of Paul and his companions. His trade as a tentmaker/leather worker allowed him to be self-sufficient, but the generosity of others who were able to provide hospitality freely would have allowed more time for him to preach the good news.

In Thessalonica Paul stayed at the house of Jason. Despite Acts presenting this stay as very brief, we know that Paul worked (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–9), and his strong attachment to the church (1 Thess 2:17; 3:2) points to more than just a brief stopover. C. U. Manus refers to Jason as “Paul’s host who was thought to have undertaken to sponsor Paul’s ministry.” It is possible that he was also host to Silas and Timothy and,

it has been concluded that Jason was rather well off since he could extend hospitality to missionaries as well as post bond, and that as Paul’s host, and because of the presence of “the brethren” (17,6) in his house, that he was host and therefore leader of the Thessalonian Christians.

What sort of accommodation was Jason able to provide? Malherbe believes that Jason’s house was “an insula, a type of multi-storied apartment house that served the vast majority of people in the large cities of the Roman Empire.” The typical insula would have rows of shops on the ground floor with living accommodation for owners and families above or at the rear. Living quarters for visitors, employees, servants or

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43 Morgan-Gillman, "Jason,” 41.
slaves would be part of the accommodation, perhaps provided on a mezzanine floor or in a backroom. On the two or three floors above were likely to be one or two bedroom apartments. Those in the household probably represented a small cross section of the population — notably manual labourers and tradespeople — who made up a large percentage of the populace. If Malherbe is correct, space would have been available for Paul and Timothy as well. We should not romanticize about such conditions, however, as most insulae lacked kitchen and toileting facilities, were too small for socializing with friends and “inhabitants must have done their eating, drinking and socializing in public places.”

This public aspect of living also allowed opportunities to share the good news.

Lodging with Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth would also provide a setting where Paul could work and share his philosophy and his life with clients and colleagues. It should not be surprising that Paul took the offer of Titius Justus’s house near the synagogue (Acts 18:7) to preach. It seems probable that Aquila and Pricilla “were not workers residing in their employer’s property, but were owners, or, more probably tenants of a workshop.”

Jerome Murphy-O’Connor states that tentmakers needed little storage space, and only a narrow bench on which to work. Excavations in Corinth and Ostia give some insight into the insulae where ground floor shops measured between 2 to 4 metres (8–14 feet) wide and 3 to 5 metres (12–14 feet) deep and about 4 metres (12 feet) high. A space such as this could also host a house church (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5) of “between 10 and 20 believers.” In such an

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47 Murphy-O'Connor, "Prisca and Aquila," 49.

environment Paul could work at his trade as well as meet with believers while taking the opportunity afforded by Titius Justus to use his house as a “preaching centre”.  

Paul’s extraordinary work ethic is reflected in 1 Thessalonians 2:9 where he writes of working “night and day”. This does not mean all night and all day, but rather “in the day and in the night”. Working patterns of the time allowed for a rest period in the middle of the day. In Ephesus Paul “argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9). Here a textual variant adds ὀπωρας ἐ ἐκκατης, i.e. from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the siesta hours when the lecture room was not normally in use. His pattern of working day and night meant taking advantage of every opportunity.

Both working and teaching provided opportunity for engagement with the social network of his hosts, and the public. Hock comments that “most workshops would be located in or near the agora or market place” and had a number of workers — both craftsmen and slaves. While working at a trade may have been a step down Paul’s social status, this trade would have allowed him to set up shop anywhere. Hard work would be needed if Paul had to fully finance his activities, but it also allowed contact with others who shared his trade and customers who called on his skills.

The need or desire to be self supporting meant that “Paul, and presumably his colleagues, had little choice but to use the workshop as a place for communicating

49 Barrett, Acts, 867.


51 Barrett, Acts, 905.

52 Hock, Social Context, 32.

the gospel since so much of their time was spent there.” 54 Few had the opportunity to discuss such matters at their leisure and Hock writes that,

we can affirm that the workshop, including that of the shoemaker or leatherworker, was recognised as a conventional social setting for intellectual discourses, a setting, though, that was used primarily by Cynic philosophers. On occasions the philosopher was also the artisan, whose shop became known as the place to engage in philosophical discussion. 55

Paul was not without good company in this approach as Socrates, the Cynic Micyllus and Crates are also remembered as reading or teaching in workshops and the marketplace. 56 While there were those who questioned his approach it was not without precedent. 57

Private houses, the synagogue, workshops, and other public places were the venues for communicating the gospel. Timothy would have spent many hours alongside Paul as he worked at his trade, engaged in discussion, taught the believers, and shared the gospel. In accommodation he shared with Paul he would have been a listener or participant in the discussions with hosts and their invited guests. If Timothy had to rely on the hospitality of others, it would have offered scope for his own proclamation and sharing of what he had learned from Paul. Along the way he had the opportunity to observe, to listen and to learn — not just from Paul’s words, but also from his actions, and from the growing network of believers.


57 “Paul fixes his manual labor in a setting that has distinct analogies to a philosophical ideal of his day.” Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 20.
On the road

Paul and his companions also travelled between cities. Distances have not changed but means of travel and accommodation have. By today’s standards travel was not comfortable, not safe, and definitely slow. F.F. Bruce estimates that pedestrians might have covered 15 to 20 miles (24 to 32 kms) a day and that the use of horses would have extended that to 25 to 30 miles (40 to 48 kms).58 Edwin M. Yamauchi suggests “[t]he average traveller walked three miles per hour for about seven hours a day — or about 20 miles [32 kms] per day.”59 There can be no doubt that the many hours spent walking together provided extended opportunities for teaching and theological reflection.

An indication of the challenges of travel is given in 2 Corinthians 11:25–27 where Paul highlights some of his ministry experiences.

Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked.

There is no doubt that Timothy travelled with Paul, and must have shared in some of these travel dangers.

This brief summary seems quite dramatic, but our understanding of travel conditions confirms the report by Paul. As an itinerant artisan Paul was better off than an unskilled labourer, but not wealthy. Since “how you travelled depended on how

much money you could afford to spend",\textsuperscript{60} we could expect that most of the time Paul would have walked. On major roads, staging posts were about 25 Roman miles (20 miles/32 kilometres) apart, and a walker might struggle to cover that distance in a day in adverse conditions. The realities of travel make it “obvious that on occasion he found himself far from human habitation at nightfall.”\textsuperscript{61} Paul and his companions would have been sleeping rough on numerous occasions.

Along the road hospitality in private homes was not readily available, since so “many demands were made upon those who lived near the road [particularly by military or civilian officials] that they would not be apt to offer aid gratuitously.”\textsuperscript{62} Paul’s trade meant that he could offer something in return for accommodation, should he find it. When they had to resort to inns, the accommodation was notoriously bad and “uniformly criticized . . . for . . . adulterated wine, filthy sleeping quarters, extortionate innkeepers, gamblers, thieves and prostitutes.”\textsuperscript{63} Although we have no record of Paul staying at an inn it is likely that he did so on occasions. To avoid inns, well-to-do Romans took their own tents or stayed with friends on long journeys. We should not discount the possibility that Paul may have taken his own tent while travelling, since that was his trade after all. Whatever accommodation Paul had, his companions may have been fortunate enough to share it with him.

Whilst actually travelling the conditions were not always safe either. Despite the famed \textit{Pax Romana}, life was not always civilised. Murphy-O’Connor cites Apuleius’s \textit{Golden Ass} as depicting situations of lawlessness in cities or towns

\textsuperscript{60} Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, "On the Road and on the Sea with St. Paul," \textit{BibRev} 1, no. 2 (1985), 39.

\textsuperscript{61} Murphy-O’Connor, "On the Road and Sea," 41.

\textsuperscript{62} Murphy-O’Connor, "On the Road and Sea," 41.

\textsuperscript{63} Yamauchi, "On the Road," 18.
outside the reach of provincial governors and the Roman military and notes that “[i]f towns were chaotic, anarchy ruled the countryside. Even the relatively populous region between Athens and Corinth, the section of the road called the Sceironian Rocks, was notorious for its number of highwaymen”. 64 Travellers would be easy victims, and it was certainly wise to travel in groups. This was one of the roads Timothy travelled with Paul, and may have travelled as Paul’s messenger when returning from Thessalonica.

Dangers extended beyond the inns and bandits. Roads were often unpaved and uneven, and in various places wild animals — bears, wolves and wild boar — could also pose problems for travellers. 65 Land travel involved risk and danger.

By sea things were not much better. Sea travel was dangerous, and most travellers went by ship only when absolutely necessary. Ships available for travel were cargo ships with no cabins for passengers and no shelter provided. As a result experienced travellers brought their own tents for protection. 66 Here, as on land, group travel was safest.

If Paul needed companions on the road for the slight degree of security they provided, a friend would be equally necessary on board. It would be difficult for one person to carry on board the provisions necessary for an extended voyage, and it was imperative to have someone to keep an eye on them. 67

While we have only one recorded shipwreck in Acts, Paul mentions three (2 Cor 11:25), two of which must have taken place prior to the journey to Rome. We have

64 Murphy-O'Connor, “On the Road and Sea,” 44.
no idea who was with Paul at this time, but some of his companions, perhaps even Timothy, would have endured the same trials.

Yamauchi estimates Paul travelled 27,186 kilometres during his life, 12,874 on the three missionary journeys. Apart from his own expeditions, Timothy was with Paul on many occasions. Based on Jewett’s calculations for the ‘second journey’ Timothy would have travelled 1830 kilometres in approximately seventy days of travel after joining Paul. If Timothy were with Paul for half the missionary journeys it would amount to over 6,000 kilometres — at least 240 days of travel. Travel was dangerous, slow, and usually in groups. It allowed ample time for leisurely or lively discussion. For Paul, Timothy, and any with them, a great deal of time was available for conversation, discussion or debate.

An itinerant school?

So there can be little doubt that travelling would have “provided Paul with opportunity to engage in various intellectual pursuits.” When time was available it would hardly be surprising for Paul to find occasion to instruct or coach his young associate. There were particular persons who served eagerly and effectively with Paul, and Günther Bornkamm observes that,

[t]his would be inconceivable had not Paul been, with some of them at least, in constant communication on matters of theology, in which he was the pupil as well as the teacher. While the sources do not go into this, it is a necessary inference supported by analogy from the practice of contemporary pagan itinerant teachers in their teaching and schools, and certainly also from that of the Hellenistic synagogue.

68 Yamauchi, ”On the Road,” 18.
69 Jewett, Dating Paul’s life, 59-60.
70 Hock, Social Context, 28.
The parallels to such schools do not fit Paul’s situation exactly. His associates were never referred to as his disciples or students, and there is no indication that any of them paid to learn from him. Paul described himself as an apostle, not as a teacher. Lohse outlines the training of Jewish scribes, where “a group of pupils would gather around a famous teacher”. A pupil would enter into a life long association with his teacher and would have “accompanied him on his journeys, listened to how he approached and solved problems, and questioned the teacher in order to glean his knowledge.” Paul’s situation shared some common factors with the scribal ‘schools’. His companions gathered around their leader, travelled together, shared together in the various activities of ministry, and were involved with Paul as he wrestled with problems encountered amongst the churches.

The development of the scribal profession in the face of Hellenistic influence is described by Eduard Lohse.

They were obliged . . . to make use of the methods and intellectual equipment of the Greeks . . . and they learned . . . how to conduct a didactic conversation of questions and counter questions such that a teacher and learner would simultaneously derive answers to the questions at hand.74

Acts 22:3 identifies Paul as a student of Gamaliel, although this is not confirmed by the Pauline Corpus. It does point to a model in which Paul, as a Pharisee, would have been educated as one of a group who attached themselves to a teacher. Even the work ethic was part of Paul’s educational heritage as,

Every scholar was responsible for providing for his livelihood through the work of his own hands. Thus even the apostle Paul worked as a tentmaker to remain independent of the churches (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:8; I Cor. 4:12; 9:6–23, et passim).75

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Lohse views Paul’s position as similar to that of a scribal teacher.

Loveday Alexander’s exploration of Hellenistic schools, while focussing on the churches Paul founded, poses the question, “Is the term properly used of a specialist, central Pauline ‘academy’, clustered around the master in his lifetime and dedicated to the preservation of the Pauline tradition after his death?”\textsuperscript{76} The features she identifies in Hellenistic schools (the attaching of a pupil to a teacher, daily conversation, occasional or enduring patronage) can clearly be seen in Paul’s methodology. Timothy could readily be perceived as Paul’s pupil, and “[t]he teaching missions of Paul and the other apostles can be readily assimilated to the pattern of operation of the Hellenistic teachers.”\textsuperscript{77}

Summary

It may be difficult to sustain the concept of a ‘school of Paul’ in a formal sense or locate a school in terms of place and personnel. Nonetheless, for all practical purposes, those who travelled with Paul were part of a philosophical school. For over ten years, Timothy was a regular member of the group who shared with Paul in ministry, travelled with him on land and sea, and participated in all aspects of life with Paul. Whether engaging in daily dialogue and discussion, listening to private and public conversations, or working at the artisans’ bench, Timothy had many opportunities to be steeped in the teaching of Paul and shaped by his example. Not only would Timothy have learnt about theology, he would have learnt about its application. From Paul he could glean the skills of debate and discussion, be exposed

\textsuperscript{76} Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools,” 61.

\textsuperscript{77} Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools,” 79. See also Bornkamm, \textit{Paul}, 86 who finds evidence for a school in the post-Pauline tradition.
to the art of rhetoric, and be shown how to deal with people in a variety of situations. All the while he was living with and learning from the example of Paul’s work ethic.

Whether in the city or on the road Timothy learned from his mentor. He was a long-term student of Paul, learning from spoken word, public teaching, and in the school of life.
Chapter 3: Timothy in Paul’s eyes

We catch a glimpse of how Paul viewed Timothy through six of the undisputed letters of Paul. Many of the terms used of Timothy were also used of others, but none were named as frequently or identified as positively. He is named amongst the senders in four undisputed letters, and in letters to Thessalonica and Corinth reference is made to Timothy’s role in communicating between Paul and the respective communities. On three occasions Timothy is specifically commended to the recipients of letters — 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and Philippians. An exploration of these references to Timothy helps us to develop an understanding of Timothy as Paul saw him.

In these letters Timothy is described as brother (1 Thess 3:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phlm 1:1), God’s fellow worker (1 Thess 3:2), my fellow worker (Rom. 16:21), and servant of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:1). One remarkable description comes in 1 Corinthians where Timothy is referred to as “my beloved and faithful child” (1 Cor 4:17). In a similar vein we are told in the Letter to the Philippians that “Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.” (Phil 2:22). I will explore here the possible dimensions of these designations of Timothy by Paul.

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78 Timothy is named 12 times in the undisputed letters, and Titus eleven. He is named in the address of four undisputed letters and mentioned in six. He is also referred to in Acts (six times), other Pauline letters (six times) and in Hebrews. Titus is named only in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and is addressed in the Epistle to Titus.

79 1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon.
Brother

It is difficult to know what response to make to Paul’s identification of Timothy as “brother”. In the seven undisputed letters the “ἀδελφός – root occurs 122 times”. It is by far the most common designation used by Paul for fellow Christians and ‘brothers’ occurs more frequently in Pauline letters than anywhere else in Christian literature. Only on three occasions is it directly applied to Timothy, when he is referred to as “our brother”. Apart from Timothy, Quartus (Rom 16:23), Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1) Apollos (1 Cor 16:12), Titus (2 Cor 2:13), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Onesimus (Phlm 1:16) and Philemon (Phlm 1:7,20) are named as brother. Strangely there is also the unnamed but ‘famous’ brother (2 Cor 8:18) and ‘our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters’ (2 Cor 8:22) as well as ‘our brother’ who was urged to go with Titus (2 Cor 12:18). No-one is named as brother more often than Timothy.

Reidar Aasgaard investigates the use of “brothers and sisters” in the Pauline corpus, reviewing scholarship, exploring family structures, and examining specific texts. His work focuses upon the terminology as it relates to the ‘family of God’ rather than the specific designation of Timothy or others as ‘brothers’. Among the ideas identified is that the designation was part of the process of the development of Christianity — changing from a circle of disciples around a founder, through to a brotherhood, and then a church with a clearly organised hierarchical structure. In the brotherhood

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82 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phlm 1:1.
83 Pheobe (16:1) and Apphia (Phlm 1:2) are identified as ‘sisters’.
84 J Wach and E Troeltsh held that along with all other religions Christianity displayed this three stage development. Troeltsh maintained that equality belonged to the religious sphere but not to
stage there is a “strong sense of solidarity and belonging”. The use of ‘brother’ terminology aligns the state of the church at the time of the undisputed Pauline letters with this second stage of development.

Roman society traditionally identified the *familia* and the *domus*. All under the authority of the head of the family, including children, slaves, freedmen, adopted family, and others, were part of the *familia*. *Domus* was the term used for the ‘cohabitational unit’. This could also refer to a large number of people including parents, their children, slaves and freedmen and their children as well as clients and others. It differed from the *familia* in that it could include people from both male and female ancestral lines. Greek society had ‘tribe’, ‘clan’ (similar to *familia*) and ‘house’ (close to *domus*). Jewish society identified similar groupings — ‘tribe’, ‘clan’ and ‘father’s house’. It is not easy to distinguish clearly between ‘familia’ and ‘household’. Groupings “were quite open-ended: they were not strictly defined and had no definite boundaries. The household was especially pragmatically oriented: not only biologically or conjugally related persons could belong to it, but also others, such as freedmen and slaves.”

K. O. Sandnes contends “that the Christian groups functioned as ‘family-like’ alternatives for alienated converts and that the early Christians adopted family metaphors and practices to compensate for the losses of family relationships which many converts suffered.” The use of sibling terminology emphasized the family

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85 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 15.

86 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 42.

nature of the followers of Christ, and strengthened the bonds between diverse groupings of peoples. It reinforced their solidarity and their identity, and extended the concept of family beyond the ‘domus’ or ‘tribe’ to the ‘household of God’, the church.

In this context did the designation of Timothy as ‘brother’ have any special significance? Charles A. Wanamaker suggests that ‘brother’ is used “not only in a general sense of all believers but also in a restricted sense of Paul’s co-workers (see 1 Cor. 16:19–20 and Phil 4:21–22 where the “brothers” seem to be distinguished from the church at large).”

It appears to imply more than a fellow Christian or even a close friend. The Corinthian reference is more general, ‘all the brothers’ (όι ἀδελφοὶ πάντες 1 Cor 16:20), while Philippians 4:21–22 is more particular, distinguishing them as the “brothers with me” (όι σὺν ἐμοί ἀδελφοί ). The former could simply refer to fellow believers, but is more likely those known to the church at Corinth. Given the interaction between Paul and the church at Corinth it could include members of the Corinthian church in Ephesus with Paul at the time of writing. Philippians could also be understood in this way, but the circumstances of this epistle would support Wanamaker’s view that it refers to Paul’s entourage.

There are a number of other references to a select group as ‘the brothers’. For example, 1 Cor 16:11 anticipates Timothy’s return ‘with the brothers’ and 2 Cor. 9:3 and 5 has Paul sending ‘the brothers’ to finalize the arrangement for the collection — while the majority of references are to a wider group of believers who are too numerous to mention by name. E. Earle Ellis concludes that “one may regard it as

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89 Rom 16:14; 1 Cor 15:6; 16:11,12,20; 2 Cor 9:3,5; 11:9; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:14; 4:21; 1 Thess 4:10; 5:26,27 (2 Cor 8:23 = ‘our brothers’).

90 Romans 16:14; 1 Cor. 16:20; Phil 1:14; 1 Thess 4:9–10; 5:26. These uses of the plural specifically associate ‘the brothers’ with a place or with a named person or persons.
probable that, when used in the plural with an article, ‘the brothers’ in Pauline literature fairly consistently refers to a limited group of workers, some of whom have the Christian mission and/or ministry as their primary occupation.”\(^91\) This also appears consistent with its use in other New Testament writings.

Two references to Timothy as ‘brother’ in letter greetings (2 Cor 1:1 καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός, Phlm 1 καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός ) place Timothy firmly as one of the family of believers with Paul. Philemon 1 indicates that Timothy was with Paul and Onesimus, and that Philemon knew him. Timothy, Philemon and Onesimus are all described as ‘brother’ in this personal epistle. This does not highlight anything special about Paul’s relationship with Timothy, but emphasises their mutual relationship. Timothy is also included with Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:1 and was well known to the Corinthians as being part of the ‘family’\(^92\).

In the Thessalonian correspondence reference to Timothy as ‘brother’ is part of the commendation of Timothy as Paul’s envoy. He is referred to as τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν — “the brother of us” or “our brother”. This commendation emphasizes the mutuality of their relationship — they are all brothers. Most often the references are to ‘brothers’ (ἀδελφοί) but the use of pronoun in the third person plural only occurs on three occasions — twice in reference to the unnamed “our brother” (2 Cor 8:22 τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν, 2 Cor 8:23 ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν) and once of Timothy (1 Thess 3:2 τὸν ἀδελφόν ἡμῶν). The emphasis on each occasion is that Paul, the letter recipients and the ‘brother’ are part of the one ‘family’.

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\(^91\) Ellis, “Paul and His Co-Workers,” 447.

\(^92\) See 1 Corinthians 4:15–17, 16:10–11; Acts 18:5.
Aasgaard explores the use of the sibling metaphor in general, for co-greeters, individual co-workers and messengers. General references “give all Christians a common frame of reference.” Referring to co-greeters as siblings (1 Cor 16:20; 16:11; Gal 1:2) seems intended to strengthen the bonds between believers. Use of sibling terminology in Philippians identifies two indistinct groups — those who have been encouraged by his imprisonment (1:14) and those who are with him (4:21). Two different constructs are used to identify co-workers as siblings. With the personal pronoun ‘my’/ ‘our’, it “apparently is to emphasize the emotional aspect, and to further a sense of solidarity between Paul, the person named, and the addressees.” The use of the definite article appears to have a different purpose.

Paul’s use of sibling terminology with the definite article (‘the’ and no possessive pronoun) is ‘somewhat striking’. It may be a substitute for ‘my’/ ‘our’ or be used in a ‘more absolute sense’; that is they are ‘somehow siblings in their own right’. These people seem to be distinguished by a position of authority in relation to the addressees and to Paul. While not assigning these people to a particular position or office “Paul employs it [the sibling metaphor] here to assign to them a particular status and authority.” All but one instance of messengers as siblings occur in 2 Corinthians. The other is in 1 Corinthians 16:12. All relate to persons engaged in Paul’s missionary work — and 2 Corinthians seems to give the impression that the Corinthians “have become ‘less’ siblings vis-à-vis Paul than they were in 1

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93 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 295.

94 Phil 4:21 refers to some believers who are in Rome but may have come from Philippi, as greetings are also sent from “all the saints” (4:22) indicating the other believers in Rome.

95 Pheobe (Rom 16:1), Titus (2 Cor 2:3), Ephaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Timothy (1 Thess 3:1), unnamed (2 Cor 8:22).

96 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 297.

97 Quartus (Rom 16:23), Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1), Apollos (1 Cor 16:12), Timothy (2 Cor 1:1) & Philemon (Phlm 1), Apphia (Phlm 2), unnamed (2 Cor 8:18).

98 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 297.
This is not surprising given the difficulties in the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians.

In exploring kinship in 1 Thessalonians, Trevor J. Burke draws our attention to the breadth of the family metaphors used by Paul. The cultural expectations of brothers must be added to our general understanding of being members of the family. ‘Brothers’ occurs more frequently in 1 Thessalonians than the rest of the Pauline corpus, and Burke suggests that Paul is “reflecting the normal social expectations of brothers in regulating and controlling relations between the Thessalonians.” Significantly Burke directs our attention to Paul’s recognition of “a hierarchy or difference in status/seniority between brothers.” In 1 Thessalonians Timothy is named as a co-sender (1:1), and identified as brother (3:2). He is clearly aligned with Paul in this hierarchy and is given a more significant status than just being another brother. William F. Orr and James A. Walther note this elevated status in the commendation of Timothy to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:14–17): “Lest their be any doubt about their duties in filial imitation of Paul, he sent Timothy with a commendation which seems to designate him the elder brother in loco parentis”. Timothy is a senior member of this new family of faith.

99 Aasgaard, *Brothers and Sisters*, 299.

100 Paul refers to himself as Father (1 Thess 2:11), as a nursing mother (1 Th. 2:7), the Thessalonians as his children (1 Th. 2:11; cf 5:6–7), himself as infant (1 Th. 2:7), and orphan (1 Th. 2:17). Trevor J. Burke, *Family Matters: A Socio-Historic study of Kinship metaphors in 1 Thessalonians*, (London: T&T Clark, 2003). The textual variant in 1 Th. 2:7 is noted, with νηπίατα (babes, infants) preferred over ἄγαλμα (gentle), but there is a considerable degree of doubt in this case. See also UBS3, 706 n.1


102 Burke, *Family Matters*, 256 (italics original)

Family terminology is a feature of the undisputed letters and Paul affirmed the identity of the followers of Jesus Christ as a ‘household’. References to Timothy as ‘brother’ emphasize that Timothy is ‘one of them’. Timothy is an insider, one of the new family of Christians. The fact that Timothy was also among a select group named as ‘brothers’ suggests that he was a close member of the family, one of the inner circle of active workers, who had a greater level of contact both with Paul and with others than the majority of believers. In this circle Timothy should be considered an older brother, with seniority, and greater influence in the new family.

**Fellow-worker** (God’s fellow worker)

Another of the designations used of Timothy by Paul is “fellow-worker” (συνεργόν). The nouns (συνεργόν, συνεργής, συνεργεῖ and verb (συνεργέω “to work together with, to cooperate”) are found in different forms fourteen times in the New Testament, mainly in the undisputed letters. The breadth of usage can include helper or fellow worker, or colleague and in Greek texts can mean comrade, or co-partisan. The term and its cognates are used in a variety of ways. Paul uses it to align himself and his audience with God as God’s co-workers (2 Cor 6:1), with each other as workers together for God (1 Cor 3:9), and to encourage unity in the service of Christ (1 Cor 11:17; 2 Cor 1:24). The term is also used to identify particular individuals as co- 

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105 The cognates of συνεργέω occur in 1 Cor 16:16, 2 Cor 6:1; Mark 16:20; James 2:22; Romans 8:28; and of συνεργής, συνεργεῖ, συνεργόν are found in Rom 16:3,9,21, 2 Cor 1:24; (1 Cor 16:16; 2 Cor 6:1;and Mk 16:20 are present participles), Phlm 1, Phil 4:3, 1 Cor 11:17, Mk 3:30. (William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 435. *BAGD* includes Phil 2:25; 1Th 3:2; Phlm 24; Col 4:11; 2 Cor 8:23; 1 Cor 3:9. (*BAGD*, 787–788).


workers (Rom 16:3,9,21; Phil 2:25; 4:3; Phlm 1,24). It is used sparingly of Timothy.

A number of people are grouped together and described as fellow workers in the undisputed letters. Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke (Phlm 1,24), and Clement and the rest (Phil 4:3) are two such groups. Aquila and Prisca (Rom 16:3) are also noted together (as elsewhere in the New Testament) while Apollos (by implication 1 Cor 3:9), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Philemon (1:1), Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Urbanus (Rom 16:9) are identified separately. On two occasions Timothy is identified as a “fellow-worker” (Rom. 16:21; 1 Thess 3:2), and some would consider γνήσιος σύζυγος (‘true yokefellow’) in Philippians 4:3 to be a reference to Timothy. The same image is evident in 1 Corinthians 16:10, where Timothy is described as doing the work of the Lord with Paul (τὸ γὰρ ἐργὸν κυρίου ἐργάζεται ὡς κάγῳ), and Philippians 2:22 where he is noted as having “served with me in the work of the gospel” (σὺν ἐμοί ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον).

Chronologically the first reference to Timothy as co-worker comes in the Thessalonian correspondence (1 Thess. 3:2). Here we face the issue of textual variants. The UBS Greek New Testament renders the phrase καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεου, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγέλιῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ and assesses it as ‘fairly certain’. Among the variants for συνεργὸν

108 Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25) and Timothy (1 Thess 3:2* note the textual variant) as they are commended to the letter recipients; Prisca, Aquila and Urbanus when acknowledged (Rom 16:3,9); Timothy (Romans 16:21), Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (Phlm 24) as they send greetings; Philemon in the letter address (Phlm 1) and Clement (Phil 4:3) by association.

109 Philemon is identified as a co-worker with Paul and Timothy.

110 “Our view then is that it is Timothy, who has arrived in Philippi to re-establish harmony, that Paul is addressing in this way.” Jean- Françoise Collange, The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians, (London: Epworth Press, 1979), 143.

111 UBS3, 700 n. 4
τοῦ Θεοῦ are διάκονον τοῦ Θεοῦ (Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus plus others), συνεργὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ (Codex Claromontanus), while Codex Vaticanus omits τοῦ Θεοῦ. Two other alternatives conflate these variants (i.e. to διάκονον καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ and διάκονον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν) and can be acknowledged as not original. Victor P. Furnish comments:

[i]t seems likely that the autograph copy of 1 Thess 3:2 read συνεργὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, and that at least some of the early copyists understood Paul to be referring to Timothy as ‘God’s fellow worker.’¹¹²

This may have been perceived as a somewhat elevated status for Paul’s assistant, so the text was modified and made more ‘acceptable’. While I. Howard Marshall¹¹³ and Leon Morris¹¹⁴ opt for διάκονον, the more difficult reading that accounts for the other variants is more probable.¹¹⁵ Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman are not so confident of any translation and urge caution, concluding that “whatever choice is made among the three chief variants, every candid critic must acknowledge the strength of the other two”.¹¹⁶ In the absence of other evidence the most difficult reading (‘God’s fellow worker’) must be preferred.

A later description of Timothy as Paul’s fellow worker (Rom 16:21) posed no problems to the scribes and copyists. References to Paul and Apollos as “God’s

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¹¹² Furnish, “Fellow Workers,” 367.


fellow-workers” (1 Cor. 3:9) also appear to have caused no difficulty.\textsuperscript{117} Paul may have been willing to include Timothy as God’s fellow worker, but the textual variants in 1 Thessalonians 3:2 indicate that scribes were not. Clearly Timothy was not to be considered as an equal of Paul and Apollos as far as later Church scribal traditions were concerned.

The second reference to Timothy as fellow-worker lists him first among eight who send greetings to the church at Rome (Romans 16:21–23). While possibly a postscript penned by Tertius,\textsuperscript{118} Timothy is the only one of this group referred to as ὁ συνεργός. A number of factors could have influenced this particular reference including Paul’s desire to introduce Timothy to the church at Rome, and Timothy’s absence when Paul began to write this epistle.\textsuperscript{119} Identifying Timothy in this way differentiated him from the others and gave a status equal to that of Prisca and Aquila (16:3), and Urbanus (16:9).\textsuperscript{120} It may have even prepared the way for Timothy’s presence with Paul when he finally arrived in Rome.

While there are only two occasions when Timothy is referred to as a “fellow-worker”, συνεργός in general is used in a restricted way by Paul. Ellis notes that the word “often refers to itinerant workers.”\textsuperscript{121} Raymond F. Collins comments that Paul uses the term,

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\textsuperscript{117} Furnish addresses the way θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμέν συνεργοὶ in 1 Cor 3:9a is to be understood. Either they are ‘fellow workers with God’ — stressing the relationship between apostles and God, or ‘fellow workers together in God’s service’ — emphasising the relationship between the apostles. Furnish, “Fellow Workers,” 367


\textsuperscript{119} Dunn, \textit{Romans 9–16}, 909.

\textsuperscript{120} Urbanus is only mentioned in this epistle but may be a member of the imperial household. Dunn, \textit{Romans 9–16}, 895.

\textsuperscript{121} Ellis, “Paul and His Co-Workers,” 440.
[t]o describe those who share with him a common ministry of evangelization . . . He normally employs the terms in contexts that suggest the commendation of those who are described as his coworkers.\footnote{122}

Furnish agrees as “the συνεργάς or συνεργοί are understood to be fellow laborers in the service of Christ, his gospel, and his church.”\footnote{123} Timothy is among those who share in Paul’s ministry of evangelization.

The description of Timothy as co-worker identifies his involvement in the itinerant ministry of evangelization with Paul. He is one of a select group that Paul refers to in this way, and is granted a status and recognition given to only a few who served with Paul, and ministered in the churches.

**Servant of Jesus Christ**

Only once in the undisputed letters is Timothy referred to as a ‘servant’ or ‘slave’ (Phil 1:1). Paul and Timothy are servants/slaves of Christ Jesus (δούλοι Χριστοῦ Ιησοῦ). Paul identifies himself in this way on two other occasions (Rom. 1:1; Gal 1:10) and uses the term rhetorically of himself in Romans 7:25. In four undisputed epistles Paul identifies himself as an apostle (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1). There is no self-designation in 1 Thessalonians, in Philemon he is a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” (Phlm 1,9), but in Philippians he is a “slave of Jesus Christ” with Timothy. Why does he identify himself as a slave, rather than an apostle, on this occasion?

\footnote{122}{Raymond. F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 605–6.}

\footnote{123}{Phil 2:25; 4:3, Phlm 1, 2 Cor 1:24 Furnish, "Fellow Workers," 366.}
One suggestion is that he wanted to present Timothy as his equal. Timothy was not given the title apostle at any time, so Paul refrained from identifying himself in this way on this occasion. In 2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul identifies himself as an apostle, and Timothy as “our brother”, in Philemon 1:1 Paul is prisoner of Christ Jesus and Timothy is “our brother”, while no descriptors are used in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 where Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are named. Philippians is unique among the letters where co-senders are given some designation in that both share the same status. That Timothy was sent to Philippi as Paul’s envoy or representative (2:19) may have been a factor in this particular address. This was a “letter of friendship” to “a community with which Paul enjoys exceptionally warm and friendly relations”. Paul had no reason to assert his authority and would lose no respect by referring to himself and Timothy in this way. This greeting is considered appropriate by Markus Bockmuehl, as Timothy shared “a degree of joint responsibility for Paul’s Gentile mission.” While this may be so, Timothy shared in mission in Thessalonica and Corinth, but was not given equal status in the letters to Corinth.

The theme of Philippians may have influenced the self-description. Gordon Fee observes that “the heart of the letter is a call for greater unity to be achieved through humility like that demonstrated by Jesus Christ who ‘took the form of a slave’ (doulos 2:7).” Paul and Timothy shared that status. They, too, were δοῦλοι.

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126 Bockmuehl, Philippians, 2.

127 Bockmuehl, Philippians, 49.

Identifying themselves in this way “anticipates a significant motif of the letter.”

Later (Phil 2:19–24) Timothy is commended “as a Christ-like example, who is sure to represent the Pauline gospel faithfully.”

Of the use of the term in this context Fee writes,

here the Greek word *doulos*, used for true “slaves” of course, was used to designate “servants of God,” where it carried the sense of distance from and dependence upon God, but at the same time served as a kind of honorific title for those in special service to God.

The call to the church at Philippi to have the same mind as Jesus who took the form of a slave (Phil 2:5,7), and to the church of Rome to be “enslaved to God” (Rom 6:22), or to the Galatians to become “slaves to one another” would seem to work against identifying Timothy with some kind of honorific title.

Philippians was one of the last letters written by Paul to a church he founded. By this time Timothy had been working as his close associate and learning from his words and deeds. Paul may well have responded to the characteristics he saw in Timothy, and deliberately applied the same phrase to Timothy that he used of himself. Timothy was fully submitted to God and was a slave at the disposal of his Master.

**Son**

Family metaphors were commonly used by Paul, and sibling terminology frequently adopted but “only Timothy and Onesimus (Phlm 10) are identified by name as being

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130 Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 49.

131 Fee, *Philippians*, 63.

Paul’s children.”\textsuperscript{133} Timothy is referred to in this way twice (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22). On each of the three occasions Paul uses the term $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\omicron\omicron\upsilon$ he “is commending to the addressees, a person coming to them from him.”\textsuperscript{134}

$\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\omicron\omicron\upsilon$ can be translated literally or figuratively, i.e. a child in relation to a mother or father, or as a form of familiar address. In Philippians 2:22 it must be understood as referring to “a spiritual child in relation to his master, apostle or teacher.”\textsuperscript{135} Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida identify a range of uses for $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\omicron\omicron\upsilon$, including immediate offspring,\textsuperscript{136} descendants,\textsuperscript{137} “a person of any age for whom there is a special relationship of endearment and association”,\textsuperscript{138} “a person who looks to another as being so to speak, a father in the faith and thus becomes a disciple of that person”,\textsuperscript{139} and as a kind or class or persons, with the implication of possessing certain derived characteristics — “son of, child of, kind of, one who has the characteristics of, person of.”\textsuperscript{140}

The Epistle to Philemon reveals that Onesimus was brought to faith by Paul. “I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment” (Phlm 10). Paul was his ‘spiritual father’. Later in the same epistle Paul refers to Onesimus as his ‘beloved brother’ (Phlm 16) in a “mixture of kinship

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Collins, First Corinthians, 199.
\item[134] Meeks, First Urban Christians, 87.
\item[135] BDAG, 994b.
\item[137] Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 115b (10.28).
\item[138] Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 110b (9.46).
\item[139] Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 471b (36.40).
\item[140] Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 588 (58.26).
\end{footnotes}
language . . . typical of Paul.” What is clear of Onesimus’ relationship with Paul is not as clear with regard to Timothy. On two occasions he is referred to as Paul’s ‘son’ without the identification that Paul is his spiritual father. In Acts we learn that Timothy was “the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1). This points toward Paul as a spiritual father to Timothy.

When Timothy was sent to the church at Corinth he was commended as “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord” (μου τέκνου ἤγαπητόν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ 1 Cor 4:17). This is generally accepted as indicating a spiritual relationship. Collins notes that “Paul describes himself as a father insofar as he had brought people to faith ([1 Cor] 4:15; Phlm 10) and fostered their leading a Christian life.” C. K. Barrett identifies the “relationship between the convert and the preacher responsible under God” as corresponding to the father-child relationship, which parallels the Jewish tradition that “[i]f a man teaches his neighbour’s son Torah, Scripture counts it as if he had begotten him.” Timothy has a special relationship with Paul and on the evidence of the text and the conventions of the day it is reasonable “to say he was converted by Paul.”

This reference (1 Cor 4:17) is “an epistolary convention” where the “the author’s love” for his representative, and the “trustworthiness” of this representative are highlighted according to Collins. Commendation to a community is also the

141 Collins, First Corinthians, 199.
142 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22
143 Collins, First Corinthians, 196.
146 Collins, First Corinthians, 200. Collins also identifies that sibling language is used to identify believers, and paternal language to draw attention to his part in bringing them to faith (199).
context for the second reference to Timothy as Paul’s child. Here the affectionate references are not present but attention is drawn to Timothy’s attitude and actions for “like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.” (Phil 2:22)

Paul uses sibling and parent/child metaphors in the letter to the Philippians. Epaphroditus is linked with Philippians as their messenger, and the brother metaphor used emphasizes mutuality and solidarity. Timothy is referred to as τέκνον and the parent/child metaphor,

stresses his parental care for Timothy, but indirectly also his care for the Philippians: Timothy acts on his behalf, and it is his mission to convey Paul’s care to them. At the same time it is evident that he has authority over Timothy.\footnote{Aasgaard, {	extit{Brothers and Sisters}}, 298.}

Once again we should understand the relationship between Paul and Timothy as a spiritual one, but that also carries with it other subtle overtones. Aasgaard suggests that the metaphors help “regulate the power relations between Paul and his addressees”\footnote{Aasgaard, {	extit{Brothers and Sisters}}, 298.} and in the process give Timothy a place of authority in relation to the churches addressed – and perhaps over all the churches in which Paul had some influence.

Being addressed as ‘son’ affirms Paul’s relationship with his protégé and elevates Timothy above others who work with Paul in spreading the gospel.

\textbf{Summary}

\footnote{Aasgaard, {	extit{Brothers and Sisters}}, 298.}
While consideration of each of these terms individually does not single out Timothy for special attention, their cumulative effect highlights the nature of Paul’s relationship with Timothy. He “was undoubtedly the co-worker closest to Paul’s heart”\textsuperscript{149} and he alone is referred to as brother, fellow-worker, slave/servant and son.

Through these undisputed letters we gain a picture of Timothy’s ongoing involvement in mission as a worker and trusted lieutenant. In the process Timothy was given a place of prominence as one who shared Paul’s faith, attitudes, and ministry.

As a brother he is one of the family of believers yet is in a select group, ‘the brothers’, and has greater status within the family hierarchy. As a fellow-worker he shares the itinerant ministry and has a role in the formation and growth of the early church. He is also a ‘servant/slave’ and held up alongside Paul as an example of those who are under the authority of, and at the service of, the Lord Jesus Christ. Describing Timothy in this way raises his profile and enhances his reputation. References to Timothy as ‘son’ identify his spiritual heritage, and close relationship with Paul. When combined with the other designations, Timothy is given a unique status within the church.

His personal qualities and unique status meant that Paul could use him as a trusted emissary. More than that, Paul could also commend him with confidence because of his faithfulness to both Paul and the gospel. Timothy was not just part of the family, he was one of ‘the brothers’, a fellow worker with Paul, and a ‘son’. His relationship with Paul and his contacts across the churches enhanced his status and established him as a prominent figure in the churches Paul planted. Perhaps, in the process, Timothy was also being positioned by Paul as ‘heir’ to his authority.

\textsuperscript{149} Bengt Holmberg, \textit{Paul and Power. The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as reflected in the Pauline Epistles}, (Sweden: CWK Gleerup, 1978), 60.
Chapter 4: Timothy as co-author

Rembrandt’s painting, “The Apostle Paul”, depicts Paul sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room with pen in hand, writing an epistle. As wonderful as the artwork is, the image presented is significantly different from what is known of ancient letter-writing. While he could write, it is unlikely that Paul wrote more than a small portion of his letters,\(^{150}\) and when the letters were written Paul would not have been alone. Scribes were responsible for the writing, Paul for dictating the content. As much as the letter writing process of Paul differs from our time, it also appears to have differed from the normal practice of his era as well. Two aspects of Paul’s letters distinguish them from other similar writings of his time — the naming of co-senders and the extraordinary length of his letters.

Exploring the mechanics of composing and writing a letter will provide a better perspective on the process, and lead to an examination of the naming of co-senders in Paul’s letters. The wide range of style and structure across the Pauline corpus raises many questions about the authorship of particular letters. Co-senders are named in five of the undisputed letters of Paul, four of these name Timothy.\(^{151}\) Commentators often discount the input of Timothy (or other co-senders) and diminish the possible contribution of Paul’s associates into the correspondence. Examining the letter-

\(^{150}\) That Paul wrote in his own hand is made clear in Galatians 6:11 and 1 Corinthians 16:11.

\(^{151}\) 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Phlm 1:1. Romans and Galatians are the two exceptions – and even Galatians adds “all the members of God’s family that are with me” (1:1).
writing process will help understand the possible involvement of Paul’s associates, and particularly Timothy, in these communications.

**Literacy and letter writing**

It is difficult to establish with confidence the level of literacy in the first century CE. Estimates vary significantly. According to Werner Kelber “writing was in the hands of an élite of trained specialists, and reading required an advanced education available only to a few.” This is confirmed by an estimate of William V. Harris that “the combined literacy level in the period before 100 B.C. is unlikely to have much exceeded 10%”, who also notes that under Roman power the “overall literacy level may have declined somewhat from the Hellenistic age”. Evidence suggests that “quite a lot of people could read to some extent” but this seems to have been at a functional level, recognising markings on containers or coins for example, rather than capacity to comprehend legal notices or even personal letters. Few would have the ability to read the letters Paul wrote to the churches. Fewer would be capable of writing any response.

Paul was one of the better-educated men of his time. The content of his letters reveal a level of education available to only a few, and a strong intellect. He could

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154 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 330.


write, but even one as well educated as Paul would not actually have written letters of such length or complexity. The letters of Cicero are the ‘benchmark’ and source of much information about letter-writing in this era.\(^{157}\) Richards rightly questions the validity of using the practices of “an ultra-wealthy aristocrat” to compare Paul’s letter-writing processes.\(^{158}\) Even Paul’s “most personal of all letters” (Philemon) was longer than most personal letters of the time,\(^{159}\) and others viewed his correspondence as “weighty and strong” (2 Cor. 10:10) and at times “hard to understand” (2 Pet. 3:16). Any examination of the practicalities behind Paul’s letters must take into account the resources available to Paul, and the distinctive characteristics of his correspondence.

Writing was the province of professionals, trained scribes who held a “virtual monopoly” even through to the first century C.E.\(^{160}\) It is highly likely that a secretary was involved in the writing or composition of all Paul’s letters. Tertius acted as scribe or secretary for Romans (Rom 16: 22) and it is possible that Silvanus was another who acted as scribe for Paul.\(^{161}\) We do not have names of others who served in this capacity, but it is probable that a scribe was used for most, if not all, of Paul’s letters.\(^{162}\)

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159 Witherington III, The Paul Quest, 103.

160 Millard, Reading and Writing, 168.

161 1 Peter 5:12 raises the possibility that he was scribe for Peter. Silvanus is also mentioned in 1 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1 although not specifically identified as the scribe.

162 Richards abstracts detail from Bahr (Gordon J. Bahr, "The Subscriptions in the Pauline Letters," JBL 87: 1968), which estimates that between 58 and 98% of the words in the undisputed letters were written by a secretary. E. Randolph Richards, The Secretary in the Letters of Paul, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 177.
The scribe was not the only person with Paul as letters were written. M. Luther Stirewalt highlights the communal nature of the letter writing process for Paul, which contrasted with the general practice of the day. He noted that “often preparing a letter was a solitary endeavour; few commoners had a secretary like Cicero’s Tito or an organized, supportive community like Paul’s” and “[a] staff of volunteers supported him; some of them contributed to the formulation of his messages, while others aided in the actual writing.” While we cannot be sure that the scribe was a volunteer, the presence of a secretary, and the potential input of the community around Paul require consideration.

The Secretary

Secretaries could be used in a variety of ways. A secretary could act as a recorder taking down the spoken word, an editor correcting the authors’ own notes, a co-author, or a composer. Within each of these there is some variation – for example the recorder could take dictation at the speed of normal handwriting (syllabatim) or normal speech (viva voce). The former required only the ability to write, the latter the remarkable degree of proficiency or form of shorthand (tachygraphy) that was the province of the skilled professional. At the other end of the scale a scribe may have been given a freedom to respond on behalf of his employer, or to utilize a standard form of response. E. Randolph Richards acknowledges the distinctions between these roles as artificial, as circumstances and situations could result in a secretary being used in different ways at different times. Given the tools available, it would have been impossible for a scribe to record a letter dictated at normal speech. Writing on papyrus with a reed pen is a slow process, and for the writing to be


164 Richards, *Secretary*, 24–53.
legible the dictation would need to be syllable by syllable rather than word for word. Accordingly “we must allow for a process that includes editing; that is, Paul had notes and rough drafts.” Gordon Bahr identifies the most important tasks of a secretary as taking dictation and preparing the final draft of the letter. This scenario presents ample opportunity for others to have input into the content of a letter.

The challenge of composing letters of any length also required a degree of forethought and preparation. “The penning of a document the length and content of Romans, for example, was a challenge which required planning, drafting, mental and physical labor, and time.” Stirewalt and Richards provide estimates of the time taken by a secretary to write each of Paul’s letters. The longest, Romans, would have taken over eleven hours, and the shorter letters (Philippians and 1 Thessalonians) close to two and a half hours. This does not include time to compose, dictate, or edit the letters — which would have added significantly to the time involved. Our consideration of letter writing comes from a literate society, with the resources to produce documents of considerable length without the need for assistance. Producing documents for publication requires significant time and effort even with the use of modern technology. It is difficult to comprehend the effort involved in the writing of the Pauline letters. It was hardly a task to be accomplished alone. The role of the secretary was vital in the process.


A brief note in 2 Timothy 4:13 points us to the existence of “books, and . . . all the parchments” (τὰ βιβλία, μάλιστα τὰς μεμβράνας) that belonged to Paul.170

Writing tablets were used for a variety of documents not considered lasting, including “a writer’s first draft”.171 These tablets gave way to parchment notebooks (membranae), which were also reusable.172 The notebooks may have been, the bound sheets of parchment on which [Paul] had recorded traditional items which impressed him, or noted ideas for sermons, or roughed out approaches he felt might be effective with different communities whose difficulties had been reported to him.173

That Paul had the skills to make such notes is not doubted. That he would use such materials is not questioned. It points towards the likelihood that Paul ‘roughed out’ letters, or dictated first drafts to the secretary. The content could then be reviewed and refined by Paul and possibly his associates before finalising the correspondence for a secretary to prepare for dispatch. We cannot know how many revisions or refinements took place before completion but this process would allow for the formation of the lengthy and complex letters in the Pauline corpus. It also opens up possibilities for the significant input of others into the letter-writing process.

If we accept the possibility that the scribe did more than simply take down dictation, differences discerned in language and style between letters need to be re-evaluated. While each scribe may have operated slightly differently and shaped the letters in a particular way, the most likely scenario for Paul’s letters involves the taking of notes, preparing a draft, and having that draft reviewed and corrected before writing the

170 The approach of this paper with respect to the Pastoral Epistles is outlined in Chapter 6.


final product. If Paul was in prison the scribe may have had more freedom in composing the letter, resulting in greater variations in style. Ultimately the responsibility for the letter was still with Paul.

The community around Paul

Paul’s world was ‘group-oriented’ and the challenge is to consider how the letter-writing process sat within this social environment, and the role of those named as co-senders in his letters. The place of Paul must always be recognized. While he may have seen himself as “articulating the values and views of his group”, it is his group. Paul was the dominant figure in thought, speech and action. He was the leader of the team.

Paul’s mission was “a collective enterprise, with something that can loosely be called a staff” and Stirewalt identifies “a kind of voluntary ad hoc secretariat” made up of helpers, co-senders, scribes and congregational representatives. The people around Paul were acquainted with the churches. Some may have brought news or information as delegates of congregations seeking Paul’s advice, or been representatives sent to assist Paul. What role did this secretariat play in the writing of the letters? It is impossible to ascertain the part played by each of Paul’s co-workers, but it would be naïve to expect they made no contribution to the correspondence. Discussion about the various situations being faced by the churches, personal conflicts or theological disputes present in the communities, and such mundane

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174 Richards, First-Century Letter Writing, 93

175 Richards, First-Century Letter Writing, 26.


177 Stirewalt, Paul the Letter Writer, 10.
matters as travel plans would have contributed to Paul’s thinking. There is also the possibility that particular individuals had input into the content, not only by bringing questions or issues from their communities, but also by offering their views on possible solutions. None of this is to suggest that Paul would have given up authorial control, or that his views and perspectives did not dominate. It does, however, acknowledge the potential impact and influence of the group gathered around Paul. The mention of others present with Paul at the time of writing, and particularly the naming of co-senders, reflects their presence and possible input.

Richards challenges the individualist perspective of modern letter writing and presents a picture of Paul composing and dictating his letters in company with his understudies. Apart from the sociological setting, the physical environment militated against letter writing as an individualist activity. Without the basic conveniences we take for granted — desk, lighting, etc. — and living in the houses of hosts (if not in prison), the scribe would have made himself as comfortable as possible to write, and Paul would have used the reference material available to him – either his own, or that of his hosts. Written material would have been meagre by modern standards, and possibly even by the standards of the day, due to the itinerant nature of Paul’s ministry life-style.

It is reasonable to assume that Timothy was among those associates on many occasions. Timothy was around Paul when at least six of these letters were written. He would have observed the process, and most likely been part of the discussions surrounding the content. Could Timothy have had more input into the correspondence than the others? Was he somehow more than just one among Paul’s associates when it came to writing some of the letters?

178 Richards, First-Century Letter Writing. See especially 31 and 45.
Co-Senders and/or co-authors

In the undisputed letters a limited number of people are named as co-senders – Timothy (1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians and Philemon), Sosthenes (1 Corinthians) and Silvanus (1 Thessalonians). Despite the existence of a large number of ancient letters, very few mention co-senders. Epistolary co-authorship was rare, and seemed to be a “Christian phenomenon”. Witherington observes that “it was equally rare for the opening line of a letter to formally mention the name of someone who had nothing really to do with the document.” Some correspondence of that time reveals instances where “individuals who have a special relationship to the recipient” were named in the address. Cicero, however, “mentions all those with him who have a relationship to the recipient, even when this makes for an extremely cumbersome address.” This was not Paul’s practice. Cicero also commented in a letter to Atticus: “your letters – both that which you write in conjunction with others and the one you wrote in your own name”. While pointing to joint authorship, it also highlights the unusual nature of the practice. This

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179 Richards mentions seven, one from Atticus and six from a collection of 645 from Oxyrhynchus, Tebtunis and Zenon. None of the letters examined is a good parallel to the letters of Paul. Richards, First-Century Letter Writing, 34.

180 Richards, First-Century Letter Writing, 33.


182 Murphy-O’Connor, Paul the Letter-Writer, 17.

183 Murphy-O’Connor, Paul the Letter-Writer, 17.

184 Prisca and Aquila were with Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians (16:19), Titus when he wrote 2 Corinthians 1-9 (8:6) and most likely Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke when Philemon was written (23,24).

185 Cicero, Cicero: Letters to Atticus, (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1913), 363. (Att 11:5) In the same letter he also requests Atticus to “…write in my own name to Basilus and to anyone else you like, even to Servilius, and say whatever you think fit.”
is “confirmed by research into multiple named senders.” While rare “the most common type of letters with co-authors was from religious groups”. 

Given this scenario, how are we to understand Paul’s naming of co-senders? The Church Fathers attributed this to Paul’s ‘modesty and courtesy’. Many have followed that lead, ignoring the potential input of those so-named to Paul’s letters. Some more recent commentators have at least attempted to consider the issue. Richards’ exploration of the letter-writing process drew him to argue that “Paul’s letters were a team project, but not a team of near-equals. Paul was the leader and the dominant voice; the others were his disciples.” Paul was the dominant voice, but in a group-oriented society the comments and input of those around him would not have been interruptions or diversions. They would have been part of the process of further defining the group’s thoughts. In considering the actual writing of the letter Richards states,

[e]ither the authors discussed and determined the content which one then dictated verbatim to a secretary, or the authors discussed the content with a secretary and then allowed the secretary to draft the letter. Yet, in either case, the vocabulary, grammar, and style are of one individual, although the thought of all senders could be expressed.

Paul was responsible for the final product. And this responsibility actually allowed others input since it is “unlikely . . . that Paul’s references to others by name in his address was intended to indicate anything less than an active role in the composition of the letter.”

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187 Richards, *Secretary*, 153.
190 Richards, *Secretary*, 47.
191 Richards, *Secretary*, 154.
Of the thirteen letters ascribed to Paul, only seven are undisputed. Much of the authorship debate gathers around vocabulary and style. An area of uncertainty in the exploring of this aspect of the epistles is the role of others, particularly the scribe, in shaping the vocabulary. Murphy-O’Connor suggests that the input of others “might have . . . imposed different vocabulary and verbal patterns” on Paul’s dictation. A different scribe could impact the vocabulary, and those around Paul add their own expressions to those of Paul. Bahr observes that we cannot know how much of the “body of a given letter represents either the thought or diction of Paul” and suggests that we perhaps have “more a record of primitive Christian thinking than the theology of one particular person”. There is a corporate dimension to the theology, but I agree with Murphy-O’Connor’s view that “a single mind lies behind most of the Pauline corpus.” Paul did not create a new theology for the church, but certainly sought to articulate it clearly and shape it in ways he believed appropriate. Even though Paul was ultimately the author those gathered around Paul would have influenced his thinking and the epistles that resulted.

**Timothy as co-sender**

Often the debate about the role of the co-senders turns on grammar, particularly use of the first person plural. Many argue that the use of “we” instead of “I” is a stylistic or rhetorical device. Uncritically adopting this view ignores the possible input of those mentioned in the address, and accepts the default position that the letters came from the mind and mouth of Paul alone. Murphy-O’Connor challenges this view, as naming of associates “should be explained in terms of the letter” and Paul “selected

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them to play a role in the creation of the epistle as coauthors.”¹⁹⁵ In four undisputed letters Timothy is named as co-sender.

1 Thessalonians

Morris argues that consistency of style across Paul’s letters rules out any possibility of co-authorship by Silvanus and Timothy in 1 Thessalonians, concluding that they “merely consulted and endorsed the letter.”¹⁹⁶ Others offer different perspectives. Murphy-O’Connor cites a variety of commentators who grant Silvanus and Timothy a “substantive role in the composition of 1 and 2 Thessalonians”¹⁹⁷ and discusses C. E. B. Cranfield’s view on the interpretation of the first person plural in these letters. Despite the fact that the first person plural predominates (38 times in 1 Thess, 16 in 2 Thess) Cranfield suggests that it should be interpreted in the light of the first person singular. This, however, occurs only three times in the first letter and twice in the second. Of the three first person singular references in 1 Thessalonians there is a stress on Paul’s personal desire to visit (2:18), an expression of his personal affection and concern (3:5), and his own charge that the letter be read “to all the brothers” (5:27). Each of these adds Paul’s personal touch and emphasis.

The desire to ascribe the letter wholly to Paul is evident as Earl J. Richard acknowledges that “that the sentiments of all three are being expressed, especially when the first person plural is used.”¹⁹⁸ Despite this he identifies Paul as the “sole writer” on the basis of the occasional use of the first person singular and because the

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¹⁹⁵ Murphy-O’Connor, Paul the Letter-Writer, 19.

¹⁹⁶ Morris, Thessalonians, 47.

¹⁹⁷ Murphy-O’Connor, Paul the Letter-Writer, 19, citing Weiss 1910 (2), Frame 1912 (68), Bruce 1982 (xi, 6), Fee 1987 (30), and Prior 1989 (40).

“minutiae of style, word order, vocabulary, and thought compares favourably with
the other authentic Pauline letters and so points to a common authorship.”199 While
the first person plural indicates “some role for all three apostolic figures” as it is
“neither an epistolary plural or a plural of majesty” there is a reluctance to recognise
those named as co-authors. For Richard they are only co-senders, even though Paul
speaks “in the name of all three” and “the content and sentiment are from all
three”.200 For him the repeated use of the plural pronoun highlights the relationship
between the three and the Thessalonians, and Paul’s reluctance to exert his apostolic
authority. On the one hand Richard wishes to acknowledge the input of Silvanus and
Timothy, on the other he gives sole responsibility for the letter to Paul. Why then
does Paul mention the co-senders? I believe that the answer lies in the relationship
of the three with the Thessalonians — and the corporate nature of the letter writing
process.

Murphy-O’Connor notes that Harnack argued against joint authorship because
Timothy would not send himself (1 Thessalonians 3:2)201 and Furnish observes that
“[e]ven in 1 Thess, Timothy cannot be included in the first personal plural of 3:3–
6.”202 As groups often send individuals as representatives, this argument is not
conclusive. Paul, as leader, probably initiated and endorsed Timothy as his delegate.
His associates would have agreed203 although Bruce suggests it was Paul and
Silvanus who sent Timothy back with Paul taking responsibility for that decision
(3:5).204

199 Richard, Thessalonians, 39-40.
200 Richard, Thessalonians, 40.
201 Murphy-O’Connor, Paul the Letter-Writer, 20
203 Frame, To the Thessalonians, 121.
204 Bruce, Thessalonians, 61.
Timothy was not just a co-sender, but a co-author of this epistle. He cannot be regarded as equal in status with Paul, but his relationship with Paul and the Thessalonians, together with the language of the letter, points to some input into this letter.

2 Corinthians

Accepting the hypotheses that 2 Corinthians is comprised of two separate letters, both sections (chapters 1–9 and 10–13) need to be considered. Furnish accepts that the salutation in 2 Cor. 1:1-2 “is perfectly intelligible as an original Pauline salutation and shows no marks of editorial alteration.” Whether the salutation is applicable to both sections will not be pursued in this paper.

Once again we have commentators who minimize the potential input of Timothy. Paul Barnett states “we do not sense that he participates with Paul in the virtuous and passionate interchange with the Corinthians readers.” Furnish maintains it is “implausible to think that Timothy (or others) played any substantial role in the actual composition of Paul’s letters” and asserts that the first person plural is used to intentionally “to include one or more associates who are with Paul as he writes”. He describes Timothy as a co-sender, not a co-author. Margaret E. Thrall recognises that some discussion would involve Timothy, but “that he actually had a

205 See Furnish, II Corinthians, 35–41. (also Windsich, Bruce and Barrett)
206 Furnish, II Corinthians, 102.
208 Furnish, II Corinthians, 103.
hand in composing the letter is more doubtful.” Jan Lambrecht is open to wider involvement in concluding, “one is allowed to suppose that Paul alone wrote or dictated the letter, with Timothy’s approval, of course.” It is not clear why Paul would have required Timothy’s approval.

The consensus seems to emerge that Timothy was involved in discussions about the situation in Corinth, but had no part in actually composing the letter. If so, why name Timothy as co-sender when he had so much involvement with the church at Corinth? Having been involved in ministry at Corinth, and acting as a Paul’s delegate to the church, Timothy was familiar with the people and the situation. Murray J. Harris highlights the fact that Timothy was well known to the Corinthians, who are being reassured of his on-going pastoral care, and the importance of Timothy’s identification with Paul. Importantly, Harris considers the possibility that Timothy was Paul’s amanuensis (not co-author), but rejects this on the basis of similarity of style with letters in which Timothy is not mentioned. Additionally scribes were not usually named in the salutation. That Timothy was the bearer of the letter is also deemed improbable. The fluctuation between the plural and singular first person pronoun is ultimately decided on the expression in 2 Corinthians 1:19 (δι’ ἐμοῦ καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου) where Paul’s authority is evident.

Murphy-O’Connor identifies the “variety of implausible explanations” for the naming of Timothy in the address. Included in this list are to show Paul’s support


213 2 Corinthians (NRSV) has 88 uses of the first person plural “we” and 87 of the singular “I”.

and rehabilitate Timothy in the eyes of the Corinthians, and to fulfil the Deuteronomistic requirement of two witnesses.\footnote{Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul the Letter-Writer}, 25.} Citing various studies on the use of the first person pronoun he concludes that the “variety of usage of the first person plural is in no way opposed to coauthorship.”\footnote{Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul the Letter-Writer}, 25.} Further exploration reveals patterns of usage in chapters 1–9 (predominantly a “we” letter) and chapters 10–13 (an “I” letter).\footnote{Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul the Letter-Writer}, 26. Murphy-O’Connor cites Carrez (Carrez, M. (1980) “Le ‘nous’ en 2 Corenthiens. Paul parle-t-il au nom de toute la communauté, de groups apostolique, de l’équipe ministérielle ou en son nom personnel? Contribution à l’étude de l’apostolicté dans 2 Corentiens.” \textit{NTS} 26, 747–86) who identifies 81 uses (26%) “I” in 2 Cor 1–9, cf. 225 (74%) “we”; and 147 (74%) “I” in 2 Cor 10–13, cf. 51 (26%) “we”.} By examining where and why the first person singular was used, Murphy-O’Connor identifies these as matters that did not involve Timothy (1:15–17; 1:23–2:13; 7:3–12), or were concerned with the collection where the exercise of Paul’s authoritative voice was needed (8:1–15; 9:1–15). The occasional breaking in of the first person plural does not diminish the possibility of corporate authorship when content and context are explored. I would agree with Murphy-O’Connor’s conclusion that “[t]here can be little doubt that Timothy modeled his pastoral practice on that of Paul and, once this is recognized, there can be no objection to finding him consciously and deliberately reflected in the first person plurals of 2 Corinthians.”\footnote{Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul the Letter-Writer}, 29.}

How much input Timothy had is harder to determine. Furnish dismisses the suggestion that Timothy could have been the author of 2 Corinthians 1-9 on the basis that it does not explain such passages as 2 Corinthians 1:19, 1:23–2:13, and 7:4–13.\footnote{Furnish, \textit{II Corinthians}, 34.} Murphy-O’Connor may also be overstating the case in suggesting that Timothy’s input brought about the change in “tone and tactics” from the “the inept
approach of 1 Corinthians.” While a convenient explanation for what Murphy-O’Connor sees as refinement, it does not take into account the passage of time and the significant interactions that took place in an effort to restore the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians, and implies that Paul himself was incapable of such a change of attitude. On the other hand, Timothy’s initial experience of the church at Corinth (2 Cor 1:19) and subsequent visit (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Cor 16:10–11) equipped him to offer another perspective on the situation. This perspective may have resulted in a moderation and refinement of language and approach.

2 Corinthians 10-13 also poses difficulties. The first person singular predominates in this section, but Murphy-O’Connor detects “the hand of a coauthor” in 10:12–18. Given that it speaks of the strategy and mission in which Paul and his associates are engaged, it is the strategy Paul as leader has determined, and in which those gathered around him participated.

It seems most likely then, that Timothy had significant input into the composing and editing of 2 Corinthians and was, at the very least, an active participant in the authorship of chapters 1–9.

*Philippians*

Philippians offers a contrast to the two previous letters considered. After the unusual address “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus” (1:1), where Timothy’s status is equivalent to Paul, we find that the first person singular pronoun dominates the language. This causes no difficulties for most commentators, who begin from the premise that Paul is the real or sole author. The plural form of address followed by

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the use of ‘first person’ language does require consideration. Fee endeavours to respond to this noting, “it is probable that Timothy served as Paul’s secretary, as the actual writer of the letter at Paul’s dictation.”222 This is offered without great confidence as “a reasonable proposition”. That Timothy was well-known to the Philippians did not mean he was “involved in the actual composition of the letter”, but if he was secretary he would have been able “to offer reminders and/or corrections as the need may arise.”223

The thanksgiving that follows is focussed on by Peter T. O’Brien who notes “Paul is the sole author of the letter; after the salutation he begins εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου (‘I thank my God’), not as in Col. 1.3, εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ (‘we thank God”).”224 Gerald F. Hawthorne seeks to explain the status given to Timothy. He does not consider Timothy co-founder of the church, there is “no evidence that will permit the assumption that Timothy was one of [Paul’s] secretaries”,225 and he suggests that Paul had to remind the Philippians of Timothy’s character and worth (Phil 2:20-22). According to Hawthorne the best explanation for Timothy being identified with Paul as a “slave of Jesus Christ” (1:1),


seems to be that Paul by such condescension, was most effectively able to teach the Philippians a lesson they needed to learn – that relationships in the bosom of the church between collaborators were not those of authority, superiority or inferiority but of humble equality (Collange: cf Phil 2:5–11).226

This language of “condescension” does not sit comfortably with me, as the letter is one of friendship, and the example of Paul and Timothy accords with that of Jesus

222 Fee, Philippians, 61.
223 Fee, Philippians, 61.
224 O’Brien, Philippians, 44.
226 Hawthorne, Philippians, 4.
Christ (Phil 2:5–11) who himself took the form of a slave. First by their example, and then by their letter, the message of humility and equality was highlighted for the Philippians.

But was it necessary for Timothy to be named as a co-sender? Since he was held up as exemplar in the body of the letter, as was their own Epaphroditus (2:25–30), it would seem unnecessary to add his name in the address. Surely there were other factors at work. Paul was in prison at the time this letter was written. Timothy may well have been the key link through which the letter was both formed and sent. Beyond this, naming Timothy would grant him a status in that community as Paul’s delegate and possible successor in ministry. Naming Timothy as co-sender reflects the reality of the letter-writing process and his participation in authoring the epistle.

**Philemon**

The shortest of Paul’s letters also names Timothy in the address. The first person singular is used and the reality of the moral force behind the letter is emphasized in verse 21 — ‘I am writing to you’ (ἐγραψάμενος σοί). Again we must address the issue of why Timothy is mentioned in the address, particularly when five others are mentioned in the body of the letter. If it is not co-authorship it would seem that Timothy worked in some way with Paul on this letter.

Murphy-O’Connor suggests that a letter from one individual to another is broadened by reference to others (Appia, Archippus and the church in ‘your house’) to ensure that it is read aloud. The resulting subtle pressure could be what was needed to

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secure Paul’s intended outcome. It still does not explain the inclusion of Timothy’s name in the address, unless the strategy came from Timothy.

Both Philippians and Philemon are among the letters traditionally known as the ‘captivity epistles’. One possible scenario is that Paul dictated some notes, which were then formulated into a complete letter by a scribe. The possibility that Timothy was the conduit for the information or the notes should not be discounted. This could readily account for the singular thanksgiving formula, while the inclusion of Timothy’s name in the greeting recognises his input into the letter.

*Common themes*

In each of the above situations the inclusion of Timothy in the address points to his contribution in the letter-writing process. Richards notes that “Paul uses a plural thanksgiving formula only in letters he coauthored with Timothy”\(^{229}\) and does not use in a letter without Timothy. 1 Corinthians, where Sosthenes is mentioned in the greeting, uses the singular thanksgiving formula. The singular thanksgiving in Philippians and Philemon is also acknowledged. Witherington suggests that “in Pauline letters where more than one person is mentioned in the address *and* the first-person plural *we* is used to refer to the senders of the letter, we should probably assume that collaborators were involved in composing the letter.”\(^{230}\) Following Witherington's argument would mean that on the basis of grammar alone we would only recognise the role of Timothy in writing 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians. The group-oriented nature of that society, and the practicalities of letter-writing, require that we look beyond the words alone, toward the probability that Timothy was a

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\(^{229}\) Richards, *First-Century Letter Writing*, 35. Richards includes Ephesians and 1 & 2 Timothy in the Pauline letters that have a singular thanksgiving formula. Romans, 1 Corinthians and Philippians are the undisputed letters that use the singular in the thanksgiving (35 n.17).

collaborator with Paul in the four undisputed letters where his name appears in the opening greeting.

Murphy-O'Connor maintains the perception of the Church is a greater obstacle to accepting Timothy as a co-author than matters of style or language.\textsuperscript{231} While most commentators resort to a default position of Paul as sole author, what we know of Paul’s epistolary practice (which contrasted with the practices of the time) and letter content point to joint authorship. While Paul saw himself as the equal of Peter and James (Galatians 2:14) he was willing to identify others as his equals unless the situation required the exercise of his authority.\textsuperscript{232} Paul was the leader, but others collaborated closely with him. They engaged in the same ministry as Paul. It was ‘team’ work – and members of the team worked with Paul and under his direction, even when writing letters.

**Timothy as co-author?**

What role did Timothy play in composing or writing the letters in which he was named in the address? The naming of co-authors was rare, and not epistolary custom. It seems most likely that the individuals named had some input into the situation – perhaps as part of a wider discussion about the issues and the correspondence, or directly in making suggestions about the particular content, or even overseeing the writing of the letter by a scribe who had taken notes. If there is any progression that can be seen, it is in Paul as a new leader and inexperienced letter-writer to the confident and experienced apostle who outlines his credentials and


\textsuperscript{232} Gal 1:1; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1 cf. 1 Thess 1:1, Phil 1:1, Phlm 1.
theology to the church at Rome. At the outset the “committee of three” produce the letters with ideas being offered, but Paul doing the dictating.

When it came to the Corinthian correspondence, Paul was more experienced and was consulted by the church at Corinth. Sosthenes aided in formulating 1 Corinthians and was perhaps “briskly insightful in conversation but complicated and overly subtle in formulating a text.” We cannot know whether he was used for the ‘tearful’ letter, but 2 Corinthians 1–9 has no reference to him. Instead Timothy’s expertise is drawn on, with a much more positive outcome.

The later letters involving Timothy reveal a different role, more subtle perhaps, as Paul draws on the growing experience of his associate to assist in framing his epistles. Mention of Timothy is not mere politeness and courtesy. Rather it reflects Paul’s inclusive approach to ministry, Timothy’s development as a leader, and involves the preparation of his closest associate to take up the mantle when Paul’s time was over.

We are also alerted to the difficulty posed by the process of letter-writing for Paul, and the likely impact of a scribe on language and style by Murphy-O’Connor.

Our inability to determine in precise detail the contribution of a coauthor, to set out the extent of secretarial involvement, and to fix the number of secretaries employed makes it difficult to define Paul’s style in such a way as to permit the detection of significant variations from that norm.

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233 So Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 33. If Galatians were written prior to 1 Thessalonians, and prior to Timothy joining the group, he would not be mentioned. The tone of the letter also contrasts with the rest of the Pauline correspondence, especially with no thanksgiving, and this could reflect inexperience in written communication as well as the situation in that church.

234 Sosthenes is named only in 1 Corinthians 1:1 as co-author/co-sender. The other reference to him is in Acts 18:17 – in association with Paul’s ministry in Corinth.


With vocabulary and style among the key criteria for determining authenticity, recognition of the input of scribes and co-authors is a complicating factor as assessments are made about authenticity and authorship of the Pauline letters. It does, however, offer a possible explanation for the stylistic variations found in the Pauline corpus. To this must be added the various factors involved in producing the letters and the constraints that may have applied while Paul was working from in prison. Timothy was a participant with Paul in the forming of at least four letters. The degree to which he contributed cannot be accurately determined, but he was not just a co-sender of these letters, he was a co-author.

**Timothy as writer?**

Questions abound about the authorship of the Epistles to the Colossians. From 1838 when Mayerhoff noted significant “lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and theological differences” scholars have debated its authenticity. If letters are considered ‘disputed’ questions about the identity of their creators arise. Seven of the thirteen letters that form the Pauline corpus are in this category. Reasons for questioning the authenticity of Colossians are numerous, and focus around issues of vocabulary, style, theology, and church order. Many names are offered as potential candidates for the authorship of the various letters, and Eduard Schweizer suggests that Timothy wrote Colossians.

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Though it gives “every appearance of being a genuine Pauline epistle”, including the naming of Paul and Timothy as co-senders (1:1), many factors suggest otherwise.\textsuperscript{238} Schweizer concludes,

\begin{quote}
    a mass of observations that can be proved statistically and evaluated carefully produce a uniform picture, and point to an author who, although following Paul completely in vocabulary and theological concepts, differs from him altogether in his mode of argument. The letter can neither have been written nor dictated by Paul.\textsuperscript{239}
\end{quote}

Helmut Koester agrees that Paul did not write the epistle, and concludes that the author of Colossians was “a student of Paul, who was quite familiar with Paul’s language” but suggests that he “wrote this letter after Paul’s death”.\textsuperscript{240} This raises the prospect of Colossians being a pseudonymous epistle. Schweizer rejects this scenario on the basis of the destruction of Colossae in 61 CE, personal notes and greetings (4:17–18) and the commendation of Epaphras. The most convincing argument for Schweizer is the personal notes (all those named in Colossians are also named in Philemon apart from the addressees). This then leads to the question: “if it follows that the letter is \textit{neither Pauline nor post-Pauline}, then what is it?”\textsuperscript{241}

For Schweizer the answer is that Timothy composed Colossians at Paul’s instruction.

If Paul was imprisoned at the time this would ensure the letter was written even

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Schweizer notes the following factors indicating Paul’s influence: the personal signature at 4:18; beginning with the experiences of the community and proceeding from there, structured indicative promise of salvation then ethical admonition, structure roughly corresponds to Romans, typical Pauline expressions, and no hierarchical church order apparent. Aspects that point to another writer are stylistic and theological. Stylistically some words are completely deemphasised, synonymous expressions combined, genitives strung together, explanations pedantically added, long and difficult sentences, hypotaxis and logical connection are largely absent, and the reader is not needed as a partner in dialogue. References to the sufferings of Paul to fulfil what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (1:24), the prominence of Paul “I, Paul” (1:23,26) in schema of salvation, law as a shadow of fulfillment (2:17), but no discussion of law, commandments, righteousness, justification [and this is against rigorists], and the complete lack of reference to the Spirit distinguish this epistle theologically from undisputed Pauline epistles.

\textsuperscript{239} Schweizer, \textit{Colossians}, 18,19.

\textsuperscript{240} Helmut Koester, \textit{History and Literature of Early Christianity}, (Walter der Gruyter, 1995) 268.

\textsuperscript{241} Schweizer, \textit{Colossians}, 21 (italics original).
\end{small}
though he was unable to dictate it to a scribe. Timothy may well have been given the responsibility for formulating this epistle. Once the composition was substantially completed the addition of closing greeting (Col 4:18) would attest Paul’s involvement. This situation acknowledges the leadership of Paul, as first named, and Timothy as a legitimate co-author. It also explains why there is a more exalted view of Paul than Paul would ever have expressed. Given Timothy’s long and close association with Paul it is not surprising that there should be affinity with the undisputed letters. If composed and dictated primarily by Timothy the theological and stylistic differences can be explained, while the hand of a scribe offers possible explanation for other differences.

Schweizer recognizes that in the Pauline letters “the joint authorship is taken seriously to the extent that those who are named alongside Paul appear either in the opening verses or else in the list of those who send greeting, but never in both.”242 His solution regarding the authorship of Colossians avoids the issues of pseudonymous writing. It does not offer any insights into the situation that initiated the letter. It must be acknowledged that the possibility of Timothy as author is ‘speculative’, 243 but perhaps less so than other suggestions that do not accept the address (1:1) at face value. Despite some of the difficulties posed by this option244 it takes seriously the ascription to Paul and Timothy, accounts for the possible physical limitations that may have existed, and is consistent with letter-writing practices of the time.

242 Schweizer, Colossians, 23.

243 Furnish, "Colossians, Epistle to the," 1094.

244 For example, the use of first person singular pronoun in Colossians 1:23.
Summary

As one of Paul’s closest associates, Timothy contributed to the writing of the epistles in which he is named in the address. We cannot know the extent of his contribution, but the inclusion of his name along with Paul and others cannot be dismissed as mere courtesy or epistolary custom.

There is sufficient evidence in the extant letters of the time to reveal that naming of co-authors was rare, but not unknown. That others are named as co-authors, and not simply mentioned in greetings, indicates some role in formulating the text or shaping the ideas contained therein. Timothy worked with Paul in establishing or communicating with the churches or individuals concerned. He was not simply a bystander as Paul engaged in mission and ministry activities. Timothy was a participant in the process of writing letters, and may even had been entrusted with the responsibility for formulating letters while Paul was in prison.

A trusted co-worker, Timothy was without peer among Paul’s associates, and had spent years alongside Paul, listening to him speak, discussing situations and theological concepts and consequences. He knew Paul’s heart, knew how he thought, and knew the people to whom they were writing. Given the environment in which letters were written, the letter-writing processes of the time, and the naming of Timothy in the opening salutation as co-sender or coauthor we must take seriously his contribution to these letters. Timothy was not a mere spectator mentioned out of courtesy or custom. He was named because he collaborated with Paul in the writing of these letters, and was co-author and co-sender of at least four letters, and may have been composer and editor of the Epistle to the Colossians.
Chapter 5:  Paul’s delegate

We are not given specific details of all the tasks undertaken by Timothy while working with Paul, but know he was sent to churches as Paul’s representative. There is no record of others travelling with Timothy on these occasions, but it was unlikely that he travelled alone. He may have been accompanied by some other associates, or joined with companies travelling the same road. If others went with him their presence was as travel companions, not as Paul’s delegates. Timothy carried that responsibility.

The undisputed epistles highlight two occasions when Timothy gathered information, or represented Paul when he was unable to be present in person.\textsuperscript{245} The first was to Thessalonica, the second to Corinth. His return from Thessalonica is recorded and he was named as co-sender of 2 Corinthians. There is also a probable visit to Philippi, as Paul wrote of his desire to “send him as soon as I see how things go with me” (Phil 2:23) and then to visit the Philippians himself. Philippians was written when Paul was in prison, and we have no confirmation that he was able to send Timothy, or make a subsequent visit to Philippi. On at least these three occasions Timothy had the task of representing Paul when Paul was not able to visit, or when he chose to exert his influence through Timothy.

\textsuperscript{245} 1 Thess 3:1–7; 1 Cor 4:14–21 (1 Cor 16:5–10).
Apostolic presence

Robert W. Funk identifies three forms of apostolic presence — Paul’s own presence, an emissary and a letter.²⁴⁶ These are arranged in his order of significance – with letters and envoys believed less effective than the apostles’ own presence.²⁴⁷ Margaret M. Mitchell questions the assumption that letters or envoys were necessary but inadequate substitutes. Rather, these may have been employed because of “the relative ineffectiveness of Paul’s personal presence and his own creative recognition of that limitation.”²⁴⁸ In contrast to Funk, Mitchell argues that “Paul chose which of the three – a letter, an envoy, a personal visit (or some combination) – would be most effective.”²⁴⁹ Whatever the rationale the circumstances of the time would have shaped Paul’s specific response.

It is the role of Timothy and his effectiveness in representing Paul that is of importance as we explore Timothy’s participation and development in ministry. Before examining those specific situations, the role of envoys in that cultural environment will be examined.


²⁴⁷ Funk, “Apostolic Parousia,” 258. “The presence of Paul in person will . . . be the primary medium by which he makes his apostolic authority effective, whether for negative (1 Cor. 4:19) or positive (Phil. 1:24 ff.) reasons. Letter and envoy will be substitutes, less effective perhaps, but sometimes necessary.”


Envoy or delegate?

The role of envoys in antiquity was well attested and the practice continues today, and is particularly obvious at government levels. At an interpersonal level intermediaries, or envoys, often act to convey information, or to establish or restore relationships. While documentation may allow the exploration of official and formal relationships from the past, it is important to recognize the different levels at which envoys or ambassadors operate. Many of these interactions have not been documented.

It is accepted that “communication by ambassadors and embassies was a long-established practice in the areas comprising the Greek east of the Roman Empire.”\textsuperscript{250} This was the area in which Paul’s missionary endeavours were located, and to which the majority of his correspondence was directed. According to Anthony J. Bash, the role of ambassadors was to carry out a particular task involving communication on behalf of another, travel to another place for this purpose, promote the interest of those sending them and then return to the place from which they had come.\textsuperscript{251} In exploring terms for ambassadors in the Latin west and in the Ancient Near East, Bash noted that “various words were used to describe the same basic functions carried out by discrete categories of person.”\textsuperscript{252} The Ancient Near East did not have the “technical language relating to messengers and messages”\textsuperscript{253} nor is there

\textsuperscript{250} Anthony Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ. An Exploration of Ambassadorial Language in the New Testament}, (Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1997), 3. The focus of his study was epigraphic evidence. Bash notes the distinction between formal and stereo-typical language and the language of everyday encounter. (69) That people would have known or recognized this language is undoubted, and I would agree that it is “inconceivable that Paul and those in his churches would not have been aware of ambassadorial practice and language” (70). Awareness, however, does not mean that the ambassadorial language and practices were applied in the same manner in the language and practices of the church.

\textsuperscript{251} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 4.

\textsuperscript{252} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 10.

\textsuperscript{253} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 10.
evidence of the “sophisticated conventions or practices”\textsuperscript{254} of the Roman and Greek culture. It is notable that almost all the inscriptions that formed the basis of his thesis were “from the Greek east of the Roman empire and principally concern the regulation of relations between colonies and provinces and the emperor or senate (or their respective representatives)”,\textsuperscript{255} and that the ambassadors involved were “leading citizens, usually of considerable wealth and influence.”\textsuperscript{256} Paul had certain people undertake tasks on his behalf and Bash questions whether these delegates were ambassadors. In the absence of ambassadorial language Bash acknowledges that ambassadorial encounter almost certainly took place “because of the cultural and political milieu in which the documents were written or in which the events took place.”\textsuperscript{257}

Interestingly Bash suggests “agency rather than entreaty or supplication” was their prime role and that the delegates acted “in place of the Sender and for the Sender”.\textsuperscript{258} Further he notes that the roles of Paul’s agents were to teach, remind, encourage, to report to Paul or to collect money. Literary and epigraphic evidence does not obviously include these categories and the communication between Paul and the churches “cannot easily be described by any of the categories . . . which an educated first century person would have recognised.”\textsuperscript{259} Bash describes Paul’s representatives as delegates, and these can be defined as those who are “sent or

\textsuperscript{254} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 11.

\textsuperscript{255} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 58.

\textsuperscript{256} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 62.

\textsuperscript{257} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 34.

\textsuperscript{258} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 120–1.

\textsuperscript{259} Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 122.
deputed to act for or represent another or others.”260 The term is appropriate for those who represented Paul, as Timothy did when it was not possible, or not desirable, for Paul to go himself.

Paul does not use a set term for the office or function of the envoy, rather “Paul’s envoys are . . . described both by authenticating terms (such as ἀδελφὸς or συνεργός) and by the mission that they are to undertake.”261 These or similar terms are found in formulas that conform to criteria for sending an apostolic emissary. The four parts of this formula — specifically name, relationships (to sender and addressees), qualifications and assignment262— can be found in a number of places. Where Timothy is concerned these features are found in 1 Corinthians 4:17 (16:10–11) and Philippians 2:19–23. While Mitchell does not include 1 Thessalonians 3:2–3, it includes a statement about Timothy being sent, his credentials, and the purpose of his mission.263 It could be considered that referring to Timothy as “our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ” (1 Thess 3:2) covered both his relationships and qualifications.

The envoy is “[o]ne of the most pervasive concepts in all of NT literature”.264 Mitchell defined an envoy as “someone who is ‘sent’ by Paul to some other party.”265 Social and diplomatic conventions of the time influenced how an envoy or delegate was received, and Mitchell identifies two principles that underlie the role of envoys.

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260 “1. A person sent or deputed to act for or represent another or others; one entrusted with authority or power to be exercised on behalf of those by whom he is appointed.” Simpson and Werner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol IV, 1989, 411a.


263 Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 60.


Firstly, “proper reception of the envoy necessarily entails proper reception of the one who sent him.”\footnote{Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys,” 645.} The converse also applies. The conduct of the envoy should then be appropriate or worthy of one the sending, and they should be received as having the status of the person who sends them, not the status they hold in the community. Secondly, the envoy has the power and authority to act in accordance with the instructions given them.\footnote{Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys,” 649.} Evidence from Greco-Roman letters reveals that “the envoy represents the one by whom he was sent out of an intimate relationship which guarantees that he can accurately represent him or her.”\footnote{Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys,” 650.} Bash considers Mitchell’s definition so broad as to include a range from ambassadors to letter carriers for whom different conventions would apply.\footnote{Bash, \textit{Ambassadors for Christ}, 34.} A review of Paul’s activities reveals a variety of communications with congregations and individuals. Some of these would not technically be considered ambassadors or envoys, but they were important in maintaining communication with various groups.

It is important to remember that the relationships that existed between Paul and the churches were not those of ruler and subjects or master and servants, nor between people of equivalent status. Paul’s power was not a formal power, nor was he appointed to a particular position. He was an ‘apostle untimely born’, and the influence he exercised came out of his relationship as founder of churches, and the leadership he provided in these various communities. It came through a combination of personality, God’s action in his life, the work of God through him and the response of the people to him. Social customs added to this influence, and as an ‘apostle’ and teacher and there was respect due to a person in these roles. While
technical language may be explored Paul’s influence was exercised through relationships.

The undisputed letters record significant interactions between Paul and various churches. Galatians and Romans are exceptions to the pattern, but the letter to the Galatians was prompted by Paul’s knowledge of what is happening within the church (Gal 1:6) and Romans includes a surprisingly long list of names (Rom 16) in a church that Paul had not visited. There was certainly communication with these churches, even if not from official representatives of the church or groups within the church.

We can identify a number of specific occasions when envoys or delegates were either sent or received by Paul. Timothy was sent to Thessalonica to alleviate Paul’s concerns (1 Thess 3:2–6). There were a series of contacts with Corinth including a report from Chloe’s people (1 Cor 1:11), the sending of Timothy (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10), visits from Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17), and a visit from Titus and the unnamed but ‘famous’ brother (2 Cor 8:16–18; 9:3–6). We also read of a request that Apollos visit (1 Cor 16:12), and of Paul’s willingness to send someone approved by Corinth to Jerusalem with the gift. Paul’s hopes to send Timothy are revealed to the Philippians (Phil 2:19), as is the plan to have Epaphroditus, a messenger from the Philippians (2:25), return to them (2:28). Some of those involved may not be recognisable as “envoys” in official terms, but it is the occasions when Timothy represented Paul that we are most concerned.

In the Greco-Roman world it was “assumed that emissaries enjoyed a considerable amount of power. In some respects they were virtually plenipotentiary envoys.”

Plenipotentiary envoys had the full and absolute power of the person sending them.

Collins, First Corinthians, 198.
An envoy for a civil or military authority could exercise power by force of law, or military might if necessary, to bring about the desired result. Paul had to rely upon persuasion (2 Cor 5:11), his “charismatic authority”\(^{271}\) and the “estimation . . . rightly accorded a founder and ‘father’”.\(^{272}\) His delegates had to rely on persuasion and the authority of Paul to bring about the desired outcomes. As Paul’s appointed representative Timothy was sent with Paul’s authority, and was entrusted to speak for him in his absence. The two occasions where we know Timothy acted as Paul’s delegate provide opportunities to examine his impact. Two different times, two different churches, and in both situations we can discover something of the result.

**Dispatched to Thessalonica**

Timothy’s first task as Paul’s delegate was to the church in Thessalonica. After Timothy joined Paul at Lystra, the company travelled to Philippi and Thessalonica before moving on to Athens. The departure from Thessalonica was hurried due to the disturbance at Jason’s house (Acts 17:5–10) and Timothy was sent back from Athens because of Paul’s concern for the church in that city (1 Thess 3:1–7). Thessalonica was the second recorded stop for Paul and his associates after Timothy joined them. Timothy was thus one of the co-founders of the church at Thessalonica, and his work among them established something of his own character and worth.

According to Mitchell it was good diplomatic practice to choose an envoy who would be acceptable to those to whom they were sent.\(^{273}\) Timothy was clearly considered by Paul to be acceptable to the Thessalonians, and after visiting Thessalonica was able to return to Paul with news that alleviated his concern.

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\(^{271}\) Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 155

\(^{272}\) Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 157

It seems that there was “not much more than eight months between Paul’s first arrival and the writing of the first letter.”274 The events that led to their departure, and subsequent reports received, were quite disturbing. Paul’s inability to return to Thessalonica made it necessary to send someone in his place. When he could endure the separation no longer (1 Thess 3:5) Timothy was sent back as his ‘official representative’ and “renewed the personal contact of the missionaries with their converts after a period of enforced separation.”275 Timothy’s visit had two purposes — ‘to strengthen and encourage’ (3:2) and provide information on their well-being to Paul (3:5). This “dual role for envoys is attested also in Greco-Roman diplomatic and personal correspondence.”276

Wanamaker suggests that it is reasonable to suggest Timothy was the bearer of a prior letter (our 2 Thessalonians)277 and considers that this could be the visit referred to in 1 Thessalonians 3:1–5. Wanamaker states that “Paul sent (ἐπέμψαμεν) Timothy back to Thessalonica as his official representative, and therefore Timothy was authorized to act in his place in dealing with the community.”278 As the letter-bearer who was known at Thessalonica would Timothy have carried the full weight of Paul’s authority? If Timothy were Paul’s chosen letter bearer one would expect 2 Thessalonians to include some commendation. There is none. Timothy is mentioned but is identified with Paul and Silvanus as a co-author.

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275 Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 126.
277 Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 58
278 Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 127.
1 Thessalonians includes Timothy as a co-author and he is commended in the verses under consideration. Such commendation appears more as reassurance or confirmation for the Thessalonians that Timothy had Paul’s full support when he visited. It does not require that Timothy carry 2 Thessalonians, nor any other letter. That Timothy was well known to the Thessalonians is affirmed rather than established by the reminder that he was “our brother and co-worker” (1 Thess 3:2). Wanamaker is correct in stating that Paul attributed “considerable status to Timothy in order to confirm his past work among the Thessalonians on Paul’s behalf and prepare for his possible return to them”, but Paul affirmed an existing status, rather than granting new status.

In Paul’s mind the situation in Thessalonica was critical, and “[t]he impression that Paul skillfully creates is that it was as much his circumstances as the Thessalonians’ need which necessitated Timothy’s visit.” Conversion to the Christian faith brought with it great social pressures and often resulted in oppression or persecution from family or community. Paul would have been aware that,

conversion brought with it social as well as religious and intellectual dislocation, which in turn created bewilderment, dejection and even despair in the converts. An emphasis on the newness of the converts’ experience and standing might be accompanied by discouragement at the slow progress in the new life. This distress was increased with the break with the ancestral religion and mores, with family, friends and associates, and by public criticism..

The danger of reverting to the former way of life was great and so there was a “pressing need to continue the resocialization to the new Christian way of life and to

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280 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 63. Among the interesting features of this passage is the switch from the plural pronoun (vv. 1–4) to the singular (5) and back to the plural (vv. 6–10). The use of the singular emphasises Paul’s personal concern for the believer in Thessalonica, while the plural identifies the co-operative nature of the mission, and indeed the authorship of the letter.

further inculcate . . . new beliefs and values”. The situation in Thessalonica was critical. With the relative newness of their faith and the pressure the church was experiencing it is a remarkable expression of confidence in a young Timothy that he was dispatched to this fragile new community.

Seyoon Kim suggests that the success of the mission in Thessalonica was related to Paul’s conduct amongst the Thessalonians. It is interesting to note that in each of the passages Kim cites (1 Thess 1.5; 1:9–10; 2:1; 2:2–12; 3:6) the plural is used. The success of the mission is rightly linked to the conduct of those who carried the mission, but the focus upon Paul ignores the corporate nature of the mission. The epistle is sent from “Paul, Silvanus and Timothy” (1 Thess 1:1). Silas and Timothy were involved in the mission to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–8).

The conduct that is referred to is that of Paul and his associates. Sending Timothy back to Thessalonica was possible because he was known to them, and had established his credentials as he worked among them with Paul.

Paul’s fear that their work might be in vain prompts the return of Timothy. The impact of “temptation and persecution of the ‘tempter’” is a focus of concern. Kim notes that the “tempter” (1 Thess 3:5) refers to Satan and is used to designate the human opponents who are, in effect, “Satan’s agents”. Apart from the sociological pressures the new converts would feel, the influence of Satan is also evident. Kim argues, on the basis of multiple references to their behaviour among the

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282 Wanamaker, Thessalonians, 129.

283 Seyoon Kim, “Paul's Entry (ἐλαττάος) and the Thessalonians' Faith (1 Thessalonians 1–3)”, NTS, no. 51 (2005), 519–521.

284 Acts 17:1,4,10,14. Timothy had joined Paul in Lystra (Acts 16:1–3) and is next mentioned in Acts 17:14 implying his presence throughout this time.

285 Kim, “Paul's Entry,” 523. Σατανα is specifically identified in 1 Thess 2:18 as hindering a return to Thessalonica.
Thessalonians, that the work of the ‘tempter’ included “denigrating specifically the integrity of his [Paul’s] εἴσοδος.” The attack on the messenger is often successful in drawing attention away from the message. That Paul’s authority and integrity was questioned is evident in other epistles, and may have been the case in Thessalonica also. Meeks comments that “intermediaries . . . become mediators not only of information but also of the personal relations which the leaders are careful to emphasize.” Timothy’s presence assured the Thessalonians of his personal concern for them, and his integrity reassured them of Paul’s integrity.

Paul was right to be concerned for the new converts in Thessalonica. Everything he could do to encourage them was warranted. Why then did he not send the more experienced Silas? Silas was not sent, and “this event marks the emergence of Timothy as a major figure in the mission.” Timothy was sent back to the church because Paul could not go. He may or may not have carried a letter of commendation. The tone of 1 Thessalonians, with language of a friendship letter, suggests that no such authorisation was needed. Timothy’s reputation had been established and he could return as one of Paul’s co-workers, bringing words of encouragement and support. As one who had worked among them, Timothy could affirm the integrity of the message, and his own conduct would remind them of the integrity, character and conduct of the mission team. He could then carry his own report, and the expressed wishes of the Thessalonian congregation, to Paul. His

286 Kim, “Paul's Entry,” 524.
287 Galatians 1:11–2:21 is a defence of Paul’s apostleship; as is 2 Corinthians 10–12.
288 Meeks, First Urban Christians, 87.
289 Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 62–63.
290 Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 62–63.
venture was a success, and Paul was able to write of the joy they felt before God as a result of the good news Timothy carried.

Timothy completed his first task as a delegate for Paul. As a relatively new member of the team, who had experienced many changes in his own social and living environment, Timothy was sent back to this new and vulnerable faith community. Like the Thessalonians he had observed his friends experience opposition and persecution, and possibly been affected by it himself. The choice of Timothy as delegate carried with it risk but Timothy’s own situation provided many points of connection with the church at Thessalonica.

He was able to bring a positive report to Paul of the faith of the Thessalonians, and there would be little doubt that his presence would have been an encouragement to them. For one who was a relative novice among those working with Paul this was a significant task, and it was completed successfully.

**Challenges at Corinth**

The situation in Corinth was far more complicated than dealing with the Thessalonians. Toward the end of his second missionary journey Paul came to Corinth where he worked with Priscilla and Aquila and ministered first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Acts 18:1–11). Paul stayed in the city for approximately eighteen more months before departing for Syria. The Corinthian correspondence reveals a number of communications that took place between Paul and the church in Corinth subsequent to the founding of the church there. There were significant tensions within the community at Corinth, and between Paul and the Corinthian church. Timothy was one of those sent to act on Paul’s behalf in this challenging situation (1 Cor 4:14–21; 16:10–11).
There is no definitive outline of all the communication but there appear to have been at least four letters from Paul and two visits to Corinth by his delegates, Timothy and Titus. Colin Kruse reconstructs the contact, much of which took place during Paul’s two-year stay in Ephesus. From Ephesus he posits a ‘previous letter’ from Paul (1 Cor 5:9), which was followed by visits to Paul by Stephanus, Fortunatus, Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17) and by Chloe’s people (1 Cor 1:11–12) bringing reports of the quarrelling and division in the church. Paul also received a letter from Corinth (1 Cor 7:1) raising a number of issues. The tension between Paul and the Corinthians is evident (1 Cor 4:18–19; 1 Cor 9:3–4; 1 Cor 14:37–38) and 1 Corinthians is the response to all that has taken place. Timothy was sent to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10–11). By the time Paul began writing 2 Corinthians Timothy had returned. Kruse suggests that Timothy’s news caused him to change his plans (1 Cor 16:5–9) and go directly to Corinth. Paul’s visit was a painful one (2 Cor 2:5; 7:12; & 2:3) and not successful. It was followed by a ‘severe’ letter that may have been carried by Titus. Titus’ return to Paul (now in Macedonia 2 Cor 2:12–13) with good news prompted a further letter (2 Cor 1:9), and then Titus was sent to expedite the collection. Things had deteriorated, and Titus’s return to Paul prompts a final letter from Paul (2 Cor 10–13) defending his ministry and warning of a third visit. On the basis of Acts 20:2–3 it is assumed that this visit took place and as Romans was written from Corinth it appears to have been successful. The inclusion of only two letters to the Corinthians in the canon, and issues surrounding the integrity of 2 Corinthians mean that any reconstruction of the interaction between Paul and the church at Corinth is tentative and subject to challenge.

The mission of Timothy is our immediate concern. As a result of news received he was sent (ἐπιμυσία) to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17). While Kruse would have Timothy sent

subsequent to the writing of 1 Corinthians, it seems more likely that he was dispatched to Corinth prior to the writing of this epistle. John Gillman examines the language of the text and offers two alternatives for its translation.

The sending of Timothy is indicated by the verb *epempsa* in 1 Cor 4:17, which may be translated in two ways. As a regular aorist the sense is “I sent . . . Timothy,” implying that he was sent before the letter (note that he is not mentioned in the prescript in 1 Cor 1:1, suggesting that he was not present when Paul wrote it). The verb may also be read as an epistolary aorist, “I am sending . . . Timothy,” indicating that he was sent at the time of the letter, and possibly that Timothy himself brought the letter with him to Corinth.²⁹³

One possibility is that this journey is referred to in Acts 19:22, when Timothy was accompanied by Erastus. The journey was to take them through Macedonia first before Timothy continued on to Corinth.²⁹⁴ If correct, the choice of a land route would suggest that Timothy was not the bearer of this letter. The likelihood of Timothy bearing the letter is also undermined by 1 Cor 16:10 “εὰν δὲ έλθῃ Τιμόθεος” — “if Timothy comes”. This points to an element of doubt about Timothy’s arrival, but εὰν is perhaps better translated as ‘when’ or ‘whenever’.²⁹⁵ The implication is clear. Timothy will not arrive in Corinth with the letter.²⁹⁶ While Timothy was sent to Corinth he was not dispatched with the urgency associated with

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²⁹⁶ So Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1995), 147. n31. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, recognises that most modern commentators think Timothy was sent before the letter, via the land route (222 n 198) but asserts that 16:10 may permit his arrival with the letter (293).
the letter (or its contents) which had been sent directly to the Corinthians subsequent to his departure. Timothy was in an unenviable situation.

Gregory Tatum\textsuperscript{297} and Murphy-O’Connor\textsuperscript{298} agree that Timothy’s departure preceded 1 Corinthians. Tatum, however, has Timothy’s departure prior to the visit from ‘Chloe’s people’\textsuperscript{299} but Murphy-O’Connor believes it to be a response to their report that ‘stunned Paul’. The latter situation is more urgent – while the former would allow a more leisurely journey to Corinth via Macedonia. Even an urgent journey from Ephesus to Corinth is estimated to take a minimum of two weeks, and a likely absence of at least six weeks.\textsuperscript{300} Should Timothy have been despatched subsequent to the visit from Chloe’s people, and in advance of the letter, comments regarding Timothy’s reception (1 Cor 16:10–11) would be unwarranted. Unless something unforeseen had happened, or there was a planned time for Timothy to reach Corinth, a letter written after Timothy’s departure was unlikely to arrive at Corinth before him. A scribe would have taken about two days to write 1 Corinthians, excluding preparation, note taking and the preparation of any drafts.\textsuperscript{301} We could readily expect a further week, perhaps two, before a letter the length of 1 Corinthians was dispatched. The multitude and complexity of the issues in Corinth militates against a quick response. The rhetoric and the imagery of the letter suggest a more considered response from Paul – all of which require time.\textsuperscript{302} Accordingly we should view the departure of Timothy to Corinth as some time prior to the letter, and without full knowledge of the issues he would face on arrival.


\textsuperscript{298} Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 279.

\textsuperscript{299} Furnish, \textit{II Corinthians}, 54–55.

\textsuperscript{300} Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 279–280.

\textsuperscript{301} Richards, \textit{First-Century Letter Writing}, 165.

\textsuperscript{302} Witherington III, \textit{Conflict and Community}, 147.
It was previously noted that 1 Cor 4:17–19 has the characteristics of a letter of recommendation. While the emissary may carry a letter of recommendation in this case it appears to have been sent after the emissary, with an expectation that it would arrive before him. In the Hellenistic world the primary function of the letter was that of *parousia*, presence, specifically making oneself present when, in fact, one was absent. Paul’s reflections on the purpose of this letter (4:14–16) are immediately followed by a ‘letter of recommendation’. Paul explicitly wrote of his absence and expected presence in the future. Meantime Timothy had been sent to exercise a charge on his behalf. In these few verses Paul dwells on the motif of presence in person (4:19), by letter (4:14), and through an emissary (4:17).303

Instead of Paul’s presence, the Corinthians received a letter. It was Paul’s response to the issues he heard about and the matters that were raised. What the Corinthians heard is what Paul wanted to say about those matters. Paul was present with them through that letter. In it he commended Timothy (1 Cor 4:14–16) who would stand before them as his representative.

When he arrived Timothy’s task was clear but he lacked the detailed information available to Paul. Paul wrote that Timothy would “remind you [the Corinthians] of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.” (1 Cor 4:17b). The specifics of the situation, and Paul’s written response, may not have been known to Timothy but he knew Paul and his teaching. What Timothy would share with them was what Paul had taught everywhere. Orr and Walther recognise in this a commendation which seems to designate [Timothy] the

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elder brother in loco parentis.” 304 It is a remarkable expression of confidence and trust in Timothy.

There are indications of concern about how Timothy would be received in 1 Corinthians 16:10–11. A number of factors may have contributed to Paul’s uncertainty on this matter. Division within the church in Corinth may have resulted in some rejecting Timothy because he was from Paul, and they had associated themselves with other apostles and teachers (1 Cor. 1:12). Others may have resented the younger colleague believing they were worthy of Paul’s presence, or Paul may have been concerned about Timothy’s effectiveness. 305 Barrett understands this as reflecting fear in Timothy:

we do not know what circumstances might have made Timothy afraid. Paul may have already encountered those aspects of Corinthian behaviour, alluded to in the second epistle . . . , which suggest that the Corinthian church could, when it chose, make itself a very unpleasant and threatening society, and have wished to shield his assistant. 306

While Barrett is questioning Timothy’s character unnecessarily, he may be close to the mark when it came to understanding the Corinthian church.

The reason for this remark may be pinpointed by Mitchell, who writes that,

[b]ehind his concern for Timothy’s friendly reception is not Paul’s concern about Timothy’s youth or shyness, but the epistolary convention that shows one’s acceptance of the message of a letter by the way in which one treats the sender’s envoy. 307

304 Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, 182.
306 Barrett, Second Corinthians, 390-1.
307 Mitchell, Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 293.
Paul was concerned that his children in the faith (1 Cor 4:16) would accept the advice and direction he had given in this epistle. Their response to him would be shown through the way they treated his emissary.

How did this visit turn out? Was Timothy able to speak confidently for Paul and address the issues present in the Corinthian church? We cannot be certain of the impact of Timothy’s visit, as there is no other information about it in the Corinthian correspondence. What does seem certain is that shortly after this letter Paul changed the plans he had advised (1 Cor 16:1–9) and visited Corinth. It may be that Timothy returned with news that caused greater concern. But Paul’s own visit was so painful that he refused to return for the time being. Titus was sent back to Corinth, not Timothy. Perhaps for Paul and Timothy the issues were so great that “for the present, neither of them [was] a persona grata to the community”.  

That Timothy was not sent back to Corinth may suggest his initial visit was a failure. Second Corinthians is from Paul and Timothy (2 Cor 1:1), and the Corinthians are later reminded of Timothy’s ministry among them (2 Cor 1:19). Gaston Deluz translates 1 Corinthians 16:11b as “speed him on his way” and notes the possibility of a favourable welcome from those who aligned themselves with Paul. Timothy may have become an unwitting contributor to the factional division if he remained too long, but this verse suggests that “Timothy was a man on a mission” and would be expected to report back to Paul (as in 1 Thess 3:6). His return was expected sooner rather than later, and the request to “send him on his way in peace” implies that the Corinthians should supply all he needed for his prompt return to Paul.

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308 Fee, First Corinthians, 822-3.
309 Fee, First Corinthians, 823.
311 Collins, First Corinthians, 597.
In 2 Corinthians 7–8 we learn of a positive encounter between Titus and the church at Corinth. Like 1 Thessalonians 3:1–6 this is “a retrospective narrative depicting in detail the full extent of the envoy’s mission from Paul’s vantage point: the envoy’s sending, return, report, and his own response, all described in formulaic terms”. Although Titus was used as a delegate to Corinth after Timothy, I would agree with Gillman that we need not “conclude that Timothy was incapable of the task at hand”. Titus’s role appears to have been to handle the collection, and it would have been appropriate for him to complete that task. Further, if Romans was written from Corinth, Timothy was present and his greetings are the first mentioned (Rom 16:21). Relations may have been strained, but through the use of letters, envoys and personal visits, they had been restored.

Literary convention expresses the social custom that underlies it, namely that “the role of envoys, as the go-betweens for separated parties, is to confirm and reaffirm the affection and loyalty of each party to the other.” In Corinth Timothy had been caught in a difficult situation when he arrived in Corinth. He was able to report back to Paul in keeping with the dual role of envoys in that “they bring official messages from those who sent them, but . . . were capable of telling much more about the circumstances they saw in the second party.” Subsequent correspondence and events reveal that the relationship was restored. In that process Timothy played his part as Paul’s delegate, and his contribution was one part of the struggle to bring unity in Corinth, and to have them live as sanctified people.

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Potentially to Philippi

The third clear reference to Timothy acting on Paul’s behalf is in the Epistle to the Philippians. Philippians was written while Paul was in prison, most likely from Rome. Since he was not free to travel at that time Paul’s plan was to send Timothy as his delegate.

Hawthorne notes that after stressing the servant role of Christ, and the example of his own life, Paul uses the model of Timothy’s life as a third stratagem to combat what appears to be too great a concern among the Philippians for their own interests.316 The difference between “I hope” (ἐλπίζω) with respect to the sending of Timothy (Phil. 2:19,23) and “I am confident” (πιστεύω) (Phil 2:24) seems reflect that Paul is more certain of his own visit to Corinth than of Timothy’s. The plan was for Timothy to visit Philippi, and for Paul to return there later. Before either of them will do so Epaphroditus is to return to Philippi, and Paul followed the commendation of Timothy by extolling the virtues and worth of this fellow soldier (2:25–30). Fee observes that “[t]ypically for Paul, both paragraphs also serve as ‘letters of commendation’ — for two brothers who scarcely need such.”317 Mitchell includes both passages (2:19–23 and 2:25–30) among the identifiable commissioning or dispatching formulas used by Paul, while noting that the dispatch of Timothy was still in the future.318 There is no doubt that Paul’s plan was to send Timothy as his envoy to the Philippians “to see how they are doing in their suffering and in holding firm to the gospel in the unity of the Spirit”,319 and to bring news back about their welfare.

316 Hawthorne, Philippians, 108.
317 Fee, Philippians, 259.
318 Mitchell, Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 652.
319 Fee, Philippians, 261.
Hawthorne interprets this commendation as necessary. Since he played no significant role in founding the church the Philippians would question the sending of Timothy. He also suggests “it is conceivable that in the eyes of the Philippians he may even have contributed negatively to that mission.” Hawthorne’s assumptions ignore the role and format of the commissioning formula, discount the significance of Timothy as co-author or co-sender of the epistle, and rely too much upon the absence of any reference to Timothy in the Acts account of ministry in Philippi (16:12–40). The founding of the church at Philippi is the first significant description of anything but travel after Timothy joined the group in Lystra. It is not surprising that Timothy is not mentioned in these accounts. His part in Acts is as one of the associates of Paul. It is Paul who takes centre stage through the latter half of the drama of Acts. Stephen Fowl rightly observes “there is no reason to assume that Paul’s commendation of Timothy is designed to counter questions or accusations against Timothy.”

Rather than defending Timothy, Paul is affirming that a visit from Timothy is almost the same as a visit from Paul himself. Timothy is “like-minded with Paul, especially in his genuine concern for the Philippians” and “can be expected, like no other, to reflect the concerns, love and attention of Paul.” Carolyn Osiek remarks that that the translation ‘like him’ is “a rather weak rendering of the rare word isopsychos.” This compound word carries the idea of “a social equal, a companion and friend” and

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320 Hawthorne, Philippians, 109. So also Collange: “His appearance at this point left a doubt whether his authority was unanimously accepted at Philippi.” Collange, Philippians, 116. This is in contrast to O’Brien, where the issue is timing, not capability or acceptance. O’Brien, Philippians, 320.


322 O’Brien, Philippians, 320.

323 Fowl, Philippians, 132.

324 Carolyn Osiek, Philippians, Philemon, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 76.
states: “Paul sees Timothy as a ‘soul friend’.”\textsuperscript{325} There was no one else among Paul’s associates who could represent Paul as well. Paul intended to come himself when able, and in the meantime planned to send them the closest to himself, Timothy. The issue here is not whether he “wants to send Timothy; it is, rather, that he cannot send him now.”\textsuperscript{326} Paul’s circumstances at the time of writing “called for the support that only a confidant such as Timothy could provide.”\textsuperscript{327} Paul writes to affirm that he is going to send Timothy when circumstances allow, and that he himself will come when he is able.

We have no record of whether Timothy was able to visit Philippi, but the intention to send him reflects his competence, and the confidence Paul continued to place in him. Timothy was an effective and valued delegate who was Paul’s best representative.

**Summary**

Timothy not only worked alongside Paul but shortly after joining him at Lystra was entrusted with the task of being his delegate to the church at Thessalonica. Despite his relative inexperience Timothy was preferred in this role over Silas. This shows a remarkable degree of confidence in Timothy’s ability. That Timothy worked with Paul and Silas in Thessalonica would have been a factor in that decision. Not only had Paul’s reputation been established when they were in Thessalonica, but Timothy’s as well. Sending him back to Thessalonica is an indication that his loyalty to Paul was strong, and his behaviour and lifestyle made it possible for him to be received as an envoy who would faithfully and accurately represent Paul. Timothy

\textsuperscript{325} Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 77.

\textsuperscript{326} O’Brien, *Philippians*, 320.

\textsuperscript{327} Moises Silva, *Philippians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 138.
successfully completed the task and was able to encourage both the Thessalonians and Paul.

Some years later Timothy was sent to Corinth. On this occasion Timothy could not have been adequately prepared for the challenges he faced in this fractious community. In one visit Timothy was not able to bring a resolution to the complex issues involved. Timothy’s task was difficult, but his visit was only one of a number of tactics Paul employed in his efforts to correct the Corinthians and restore their relationship with him. In a complex situation it is important to use the best resources. One of Paul’s first steps with the Corinthians was to send Timothy, a sure sign that he had great faith in Timothy’s ability. As the ground rules changed Paul had to respond differently, and when Timothy finally arrived in Corinth his lack of information made his task very difficult. That Timothy was a co-sender of 2 Corinthians indicates that he acted discreetly in this complex situation, and continued to have the respect of both Paul and the Corinthians.

Although Timothy’s visit to Corinth did not bring about an immediate resolution his actions at that time did not disqualify him from representing Paul in the future. The last references to Timothy acting on Paul’s behalf come as his worth is affirmed to the church at Philippi. Timothy was a co-sender of this letter, and the “laudatory description”328 of him reflects the respect and confidence Paul had in him. Timothy had Paul’s trust and could be relied on to represent him effectively.

328 Osiek, Philippians, Philemon, 76.
Timothy was Paul’s co-worker, and was entrusted with the important task of representing Paul as his delegate in Thessalonica, Corinth and Philippi. While each church had its distinctive character and particular challenges Timothy was able to perform his task with appropriate effect. As Paul’s delegate Timothy played a vital role in instructing and encouraging the believers to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.
Chapter 6: Timothy as Paul’s Heir

The church’s image of Timothy is shaped significantly by the Pastoral Epistles. The letters addressed to Timothy are a rich source of information about him, and appear to offer intimate glimpses into the story of Paul and Timothy. They are often the first resource for personal information about Timothy. All scholars who explore these texts must first address the much-disputed matter of authorship. Many scholars, if not most, accept the view that they are the product of the early church, pseudonymous epistles written early in the second century. Others maintain that Paul wrote them late in life, perhaps shortly before his death. Some scholars accept the hypothesis that they are pseudonymous and contain fragments of authentic Pauline letters. For the purposes of this paper the epistles are considered to be the product of a Pauline school that seeks to preserve the teaching and tradition of Paul, and the person or persons who produced these letters will be referred to as ‘the Pastor’. 329

The scenario of the two epistles has Timothy in charge of a settled congregation, the church in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). The effect of these letters is to provide “backing to Timothy as church leader”, 330 or those who “stand in the succession of Timothy and hence ultimately of Paul.” 331 The content provides direction for Timothy as the ‘model leader’ for the early church and for leaders who followed in the tradition of Paul.

329 See Appendix 3 for a more detailed consideration of authorship.


331 Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 354.
In exploring these epistles our attention will be focussed on Timothy’s background, character and constitution, relationship with Paul, and qualifications for ministry.

**A background of faith**

Timothy was a disciple who was recruited by Paul in Lystra. His mother was a Jewess and a believer, his father was Greek, he was well regarded by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, and was uncircumcised (Acts 16:1-3). This is the extent of the personal information we have of him from Acts. It is from the Pastoral Epistles, especially 2 Timothy, from which additional detail is gleaned.

We discover that his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were people of “sincere faith” (2 Tim 1:3–5), and that Timothy had known the sacred writings “from infancy” (2 Tim 3:15). These details follow reference to Paul’s faithful service to God in the tradition of his forefathers (2 Tim 1:3) and “may be trying to establish an encouraging parallel between [Paul] and Timothy, whose Christian faith can also be traced back to his forebears”.³³² As a rhetorical device drawing attention to their common heritage it is a strategic move shoring up support for Timothy as Paul’s successor. As a pointer to the realities it invites further exploration.

Paul’s Jewish heritage was orthodox and legalistic, and he was zealous in following the traditions of the Jewish faith (Gal 1:13–15; Phil 3:4b–6) even though Acts records he was from Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3) and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37–38).³³³ We find parallels with Timothy in that both were of Jewish

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³³³ There is no claim by Paul to Roman citizenship in the Pauline epistles, nor any reference to Tarsus as his birthplace.
heritage and possibly born outside Israel. But Timothy had a Greek father, and was not circumcised when he was invited to join Paul on his journeys. Timothy’s faith heritage was distinctly different to that of Paul.

That he was the child of a mixed marriage “reflects a less rigid degree of social separation than was customary in Jewish Palestine” and in the Greco-Roman world Timothy would be expected to adopt his father’s religion. Bruce, noting the imperfect tense of ὑπηρέτησεν, suggests that his father was dead. This does not resolve the question of his upbringing in the faith and how his community viewed Timothy. Shaye J. D. Cohen observes, “when the Israelite woman moved abroad to join her Gentile husband, her children were considered Gentile” and concludes that Timothy was not a Jew. Ernst Haenchen, on the other hand, cites similar Jewish law and draws the opposite conclusion. The laws and Rabbinic interpretation are one side of the picture, how the Jews in Lystra understood those laws is another. Luke noted that his mother was a Jew and that Timothy was circumcised “because of the Jews” (Acts 16:3). This reveals a respect for Jewish sensibilities and may point to a community understanding of Timothy’s ethnicity. The use of γὰρ (‘for’ or


336 “The tense of ὑπηρέτησεν probably indicates that his father was dead; otherwise the pres. rather than the imperf. would have been more natural after ἤδεισαν.” Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, 352.


339 Quinn and Wacker note that Eunice is a Greek name, which also indicates that Lois (if the mother of Eunice) had not been particularly observant of the law either. The possibility that Lois was Greek, and the mother-in-law of Eunice, must also be considered. Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, The First and Second Letters to Timothy, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 582.
‘because’ (Acts 16:3)) suggests his Greek father was the reason Timothy had not been circumcised. If his father was now dead, that barrier no longer existed. Although significantly delayed his circumcision would reflect “a belated but genuine commitment to the Jewish heritage by one previously prevented from it” and “gain a hearing for [Paul] and his entourage in the synagogues.”

While there are conflicting views regarding Timothy’s ethnicity, the Pastor described the environment in which Timothy was raised as one of sincere or genuine faith (ἀμυνόκρίτου πίστεως — 2 Tim 1:5). Sincere faith could be translated literally as “the unhypocritical faith within you” but Collins states “[t]his genuine faith includes ‘intellectual orthodoxy, pious conduct, faithfulness, and loyalty in keeping obligations’ (TLNT 1.134–38, 135). It is at once a faith that is whole and a faith that is not perverted.” This surely cannot mean that he was raised as a devout Jew, especially since Eunice married a non-Jew and Timothy was uncircumcised, but does indicate an evident level of piety.

This points to a less legalistic understanding of faith not determined by the keeping of law but by believing in God, and in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Timothy was raised on the stories of faith — “the sacred writings” (2 Tim 3:15) can be none other than the Hebrew Scriptures. He had a background in the faith and would have been aware of his Jewish heritage. Collins suggests that this “is the Pastor’s descriptive way of affirming that genuine faith is firmly rooted within the Jewish tradition.”

342 Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 192.
343 Witherington III, Acts, 474.
344 Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 193.
While Timothy shares something of Paul’s Jewish heritage he also shares the same Christian faith. The Pastor implies that it was also the faith of Lois and Eunice. Paul’s use of the term ‘son’ in respect to Timothy led us to conclude that Paul was instrumental in his conversion. Here we are reminded “Paul is Timothy’s father insofar as he had passed the faith along to him.”

The picture in 2 Timothy is of a faithful maternal line, and a mother who shared with the infant Timothy the great stories of the faith. This heritage of faith provided a solid basis on which Timothy could build. More than this, Timothy became a follower of Jesus Christ and had a spiritual father who provided guidance as he grew in faith and developed in leadership.

**A special relationship**

With this heritage of faith Timothy became a Christian and joined Paul in ministry. Their strong bond is depicted in 1 and 2 Timothy as the Pastor expressed this relationship with, and affection for, Timothy in various ways.

In these epistles we note the use of τέκνον (child) in two different contexts. In the greetings Timothy is “my loyal child in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2) and “my beloved child” (2 Tim 1:2). Unusually we also find a reference to “Timothy, my child” in the body of the letter (1 Tim 1:18). This was not standard epistolary practice but served to “underline and legitimate the very close relationship between Paul and his

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346 As noted in Chapter 3 τέκνον is used of Timothy twice in the undisputed letters (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22).
appointed successor for the sake of the congregation.”

Through the use of τέκνος the idea of Paul as Timothy’s father in the faith is continued.

In the first of these epistles stress is on Timothy’s loyalty and faith heritage as he is addressed as “my loyal child in the faith” (Τιμοθέω γνήσιο τέκνο ἐν πίστει) (1 Tim 1:2). William D. Mounce translates γνήσιος as “true” and understands this phrase to convey legitimacy, intimacy and authority. So, too, Timothy’s sonship “in the faith” (ἐν πίστει) which clarifies the relationship as a spiritual one. He is also Paul’s true child “because he has received and transmits the Pauline preaching and teaching, and in fact, the apostle’s whole way of life (see 2 Tim 3:10–11,14).” Murphy-O’Connor recognizes this text as a more formal expression, ‘my legitimate child in the faith’, which carries overtones of institutionalisation. This greeting is consistent with the presentation of Timothy as Paul’s legitimate heir, who carries his authority, will carry on his work, and is to be respected by the faithful whom he will lead in Ephesus. Timothy is granted the unmistakable seal of approval as Paul’s heir and successor.

The depth of the relationship is expressed in 2 Timothy. Timothy is addressed as “my beloved child” (Τιμοθέω υἱὸν ἀγαπητὸ τέκνῳ — 2 Tim 1:2) echoing the language of 1 Corinthians 4:17. Here “the dominant note is Paul’s friendship with Timothy” and

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347 Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 407. This text is included in the ‘authentic core’ posited by Miller (See n.6). Miller, The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents, 499.


349 Mounce also asks if ἐν should be translated as in an instrumental, locative, objective or subjective sense – concluding that while is could be translated “because he has been faithful” it is best seen as clarifying the spiritual sonship of Timothy. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 8.

350 Quinn and Wacker, Letters to Timothy, 56.


352 Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 464. It may also reflect the different literary genres of these letters – so Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 24; Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 158.
reference to “my beloved” sets scene for the detail that follows in 2 Timothy 1:3–2:13. This greeting may also reflect the more personal nature of the greeting and the epistle. Reference to Timothy being remembered “in my prayers day and night” (2 Tim 1:3) evokes images of a close relationship, even though such terms were characteristic of letter writing in antiquity. A longing to see Timothy again is expressed and a tearful parting recalled (2 Tim 1:4). Whatever event or occasion the Pastor is seeking to recall, the dominant image is the depth and intimacy of the relationship.

The image of close friendship is continued toward the end of 2 Timothy where we read that seeing Timothy again would bring Paul great comfort. Mounce suggests this is “a clear look into a lonely man’s heart, a man who loves Timothy and wants to see him (4:9–13) even though Timothy’s work in Ephesus is not done.” That may be so if the epistle was written by Paul or if this particular text is an authentic fragment. If not, the depth of the relationship is certainly portrayed, and Timothy’s status as Paul’s trusted and loved co-worker and heir is affirmed.

Out of that heritage of faith and intimate relationship with Paul we have a picture of Timothy being left in charge at Ephesus under the authority of Paul. The importance

353 Johnson states that it “means consistently and faithfully” rather than every time he prayed. Johnson, *First and Second Timothy*, 338.

354 There is no indication in the New Testament of when this may have occurred, although a number of scenarios have been suggested. See Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 192. Johnson also raises the possibility of the tears reflecting “a deeper spiritual state of depression and fear”. It is more likely to be conventional epistolary language in friendship letters. Johnson, *First and Second Timothy*, 338.


356 Mounce also identifies 1 Tim 4:6-16 as “one of the most personal sections in all the NT” even though the advice is apt for all ministers of the Gospel. While it is good advice, there is little that is “most personal” about it. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 265.
of the solid background of faith, and the role of a mentor is certainly emphasised in these passages.

A ‘young’ man

One powerful image arising from these epistles is Timothy’s youthfulness, and it is depicted as a barrier to effectiveness in leadership. References to Timothy as ‘child’ not only describe the relationship, but also infer something about his age. The specific reference to Timothy’s youth is set in the context of encouraging Timothy and providing instructions for him to continue and be sustained in ministry.\(^{357}\)

The statement is clear, “Let no one despise your youth” (μηδείς σου τῆς νεότητος καταφρονεῖτω 1 Tim 4:12), but the force of καταφρονεῖτω is not. Even in its mildest form it suggests some consider Timothy, and hence his teaching or leadership, of no value. From one definition, “[t]o look down on someone or someth(ing), with contempt or aversion, with implication that one considers the object of little value, look down, despise, scorn, treat with contempt”(my emphasis),\(^{358}\) we can gauge something of the challenge that Timothy’s ‘youth’ might pose.

Does the reference to Timothy’s age agree with other information we have about him? The initial information in Acts 16 makes reference to his mother, which suggests that he was still within the maternal home before he joined Paul. Since Acts makes little of Timothy’s departure from Lystra we can assume that either Eunice

\(^{357}\) Johnson also sees a possible in the references to purity (hagiaia) in 1 Tim 4:6–16 as in “.. Polycarp’s Philippian’s 5:3, hagiaia is among the first responsibilities of young men.” Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 252. Paul’s undisputed letters make clear that sexual purity is expected of all men (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:9–11; 6:18; 7:1,28; 1 Cor 10:8; 1 Thess 4:3) but the only occurrences of ἁγνεῖα in the New Testament are in 1 Timothy (4:12 and 5:2). BGAD, 12a.

\(^{358}\) BGAD, 529b.
had other means of support, or Luke simply ignored the issue as not relevant to his
narrative. We also know he was old enough to be sent back to Thessalonica less than
a year after joining Paul. That he could undertake this responsibility indicates that he
was not a ‘mere youth’ at that time.

Neotēs is used elsewhere in the genitive singular (νεώτητος) on only three occasions
man, youth, young man”359) is more commonly used in the New Testament.360 In
these contexts νεώτητος is spoken by a “man” (Mk 10:17) or “a certain ruler” (Lk
18:18) who had kept the commandments “ἐκ νεώτητος” (out of/since my youth), or
out of the mouth of Paul when before King Agrippa asserting that the Jews knew his
way of life “ἐκ νεώτητος” (Acts 26:4). The time referred to are the years just beyond
childhood or the early years of manhood, what we would now call the teenage years.
Yet this need not be the case. Mounce reviews the use of such terminology in non-
canonical and secular writings and suggests it can refer to a very young person or
young men of military or athletic age, even up to the age of about forty.361 So, too,
Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker identify youth as a period that began in the
early teens, and could last into the mid-forties362 or for as long as a person could bear
arms.363

How old was Timothy believed to have been at this time? Collins suggests “the
Timothy whom the Pastor has in mind is a young man in his early twenties (see 2

359 BDAG, 667a (italics original).
360 Mt 19:20,22; Mk 14:51; 16:5; Acts 2:17;5:10;23:18,22; 1 John 2:13,14
361 Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 258.
362 Quinn and Wacker, Letters to Timothy, 382.
363 Quinn and Wacker, Letters to Timothy, 388. “It seems that one would, in the ancient world, have
neotēs as long as he could bear arms (see Spicq, EP, p.512), and thus into his mid-forties.”
This might be the idea of the Pastor but it does not match what we know from other sources. As Timothy joined Paul at the start of his second journey (around 50 CE) he is ten to fifteen years older in the scenario of the Pastorals. For Timothy to have joined Paul and been “well spoken of” (Acts 16:2) in his hometown we could assume that he was well out of childhood at that time. This would mean that he would be at least in his late twenties, more likely into his thirties, at the time Paul was supposed to have written the Pastorals.  

Youth can also be a relative term. Males aged 20 years and over were included in the census (Leviticus 14:29) and liable to enter military service and pay taxes. Aasgaard outlined the life expectancy of males at this time as around 45–50 years. If Timothy were thirty he would have been ‘middle aged’, hardly young enough to be looked down upon or despised. On the other hand, in a society where elders were held in high esteem, and parents respected as holding authority over the household, Timothy might still be considered ‘young’ even though middle aged!

Was Timothy ‘young’ as represented in the Pastorals? Hardly. Timothy is not a young man, and at his particular stage of life the number of his years was unlikely to be a significant barrier to his ministry. The Pastor may well have overstated the issue about Timothy’s age, but his comment may still reflect an early church perception of Timothy who would always be ‘young’ in contrast to his mentor.

364 Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 128. Reference to 2 Tim 2:22 identifies another use of terms that may imply youth or youthfulness “Shun youthful passions” (NRSV). This is most likely a general reference meant to apply to all youthful leaders (Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 113b, and is unlikely to be a specific reference to Timothy’s behaviour but to the tendencies toward novelty or impetuous or rash acts that were evident within the church (Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 400; Philip H. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006) 544; Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 764).  

365 See also Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 258.  

366 J. Gordon Harris, “Old Age,” ABD Vol. 5, 11a. Males aged 20 to 50 also paid fifty shekels of silver in payment of a vow while younger men paid only twenty.  

367 Aasgaard, Brothers and Sisters, 37.
Character and Health

Timothy’s own attitude could well have been a great barrier to his effectiveness, and we find a hint in the text that he may have been timid or even fearful. One commentator notes his “apparent timidity and need for encouragement”, an image not helped by references like 2 Timothy 1:7 which declare that God does not give “a spirit of cowardice” (NRSV) or “a spirit of timidity” (NIV), seeming to imply this is Timothy’s natural state. Collins connects this with Timothy’s mission to Corinth (1 Cor 16:10–11) and notes “that Timothy was somewhat fearful in the exercise of the task Paul had entrusted to him.” Add a reference to taking “a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (1 Tim 5:23) and we envisage Timothy as “somewhat sickly, full of timidity, and lacking in personal forcefulness.” Is it likely that Paul would have a person like this to take charge in his absence, or to be his successor in ministry?

Philip H. Towner suggests “the turbulent church situation depicted in 1 and 2 Timothy gives enough reason for his reluctance.” Luke Timothy Johnson, however, concentrates on the person of Timothy and notes, he is in danger of giving way to cowardice (1:7) and letting his commitment to the gospel die out (1:7). This cowardice is shown by avoidance of the suffering being experienced by Paul (1:8). The most specific sign of this avoidance is the refusal to come to Paul in his final and shameful moments (1:4; 4:9,21).

369 Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 192.
371 Towner, Letters to Timothy and Titus, 462.
372 Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 359.
Is Johnson correct? Is Timothy a coward, or at least cowardly?

This image is challenged by Christopher R. Hutson as contrasting with “positive portrayals of the historical of Timothy in both Acts and Paul.”³⁷³ That Timothy went as Paul’s delegate to the Thessalonians where the believers had been attacked (Acts 17:1–9), and visited the difficult Corinthians (1 Cor 4:14–17), does not indicate a “spirit of cowardice”. Hutson argues for a reading of 2 Timothy 1:7 in its rhetorical context. The phrase ‘spirit of cowardice’ comes in the first major section of the letter where many rhetorical devices — such as example, reminder and a series of imperatives — are used. Paul is the exemplar for his protégé and here the picture is of “what Timothy (or someone like him) should be, not what he is.”³⁷⁴ Hutson illustrates the use of similar rhetoric urging students to achieve what is possible. Plutarch suggests one might be excluded from becoming a philosopher because they are either “presumptuous” or “a coward” where cowardice includes reluctance to ask questions in the classroom. Epictetus “pushes the hot button of cowardice as he exhorts his students” not to give way to obstacles or difficulties.³⁷⁵ References to certain behaviours as cowardly use the sense of honour or shame to promote actions that are honourable and praiseworthy. This appeal to a person’s sense of shame was “a familiar motif on Hellenistic rhetoric.”³⁷⁶

Given this background the reference to a “spirit of cowardice” is unlikely to be a personal reflection on Timothy’s attitude, rather an urging to take hold of the gifts God had given in the light of the challenges to be faced. We do not infer that


³⁷⁴ Hutson, ”Was Timothy Timid?” 68.

³⁷⁵ Hutson, ”Was Timothy Timid?” 71.

³⁷⁶ Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 197.
Timothy was “intemperate or lacking in love or that he failed to appreciate the power of God” from 2 Timothy 1:7. This we read as urging growth in grace and faith. We should read the early portion of the verse in the same light and accept it as “encouraging Timothy to continue on as he is doing, to keep his spiritual gift continually . . . at its full potential, perhaps to refresh it continually.” He was not a coward, and while there may have been reluctance to face a challenging situation such reluctance is no more than anyone would feel. Failure to move forward may be cowardice; reluctance to move forward is not.

What may have made it difficult for Timothy to face challenges with overwhelming confidence may have been his health. A passing reference alerts us to some physical issues that may have been part of Timothy’s life. Timothy is urged to “[n]o longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (τὸν στόμαχον καὶ τὰς πυκνὰς σου ἀσθεναίας —1 Tim 5:23). This seems a digression within a section on the appointing of elders, but we may be wise to consider it as more than just medical advice.

This reference contributes to our image of Timothy as “less than robust”. ἀσθεναία can be translated as “a state of debilitating illness, sickness, disease”, “incapacity for someth[ing], or experience of limitation, or weakness” or even “lack of confidence or feeling of inadequacy, weakness”. In context the meaning is clearly related to physical weakness or illness, but we have no further knowledge of

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377 Hutson, "Was Timothy Timid?" 68.
380 Johnson, *First and Second Timothy*, 282.
381 BGAD, 142 a b (italics original).
the nature of these ailments. Gastric difficulties were well known in ancient times. Greco-Roman doctors prescribed wine, and the Talmud identified wine as the primary medicine. If Timothy had a weak stomach the advice of the Pastor was in line with contemporary thinking.

The conviction to abstain from wine reflects a personal discipline that contrasts with the idea of a weak and timid Timothy. A variety of scenarios have been suggested for the inclusion of this remark. Marshall explores five possibilities including a qualification to the injunction to “keep yourself pure” (1 Tim 5:22b), urging to avoid his opponents asceticism, an attack on a Gnostic understanding of ἀγνώς, a contrast to the sins of the elders (1 Tim 3:3,8), or a reaction against the use of wine at pagan festivals. While some may have validity, the most obvious connection is to Timothy’s health, which seems to be of prime concern.

Timothy is presented here as taking a stand and drinking only water as a habitual practice. Υδοποτεῖν may mean to prefer water for drinking or to drink only water. Preference is not indicated here, practice is. The Pastor is concerned to emphasise that drinking a little wine for health reasons is not in conflict with a religious stance. Abstinence from wine could be obedience to an ancestral command, fulfilment of a vow, or a personal response to particular circumstances. The urging to cease this habit suggests it was the latter that was in

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383 Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 149.
385 BDAG, 1023b.
387 As with the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:1–10).
view. Health and the capacity to serve God were a greater priority for the Pastor. Even though it was a strong declaration of piety, Timothy’s true character would ultimately be revealed by his conduct (1 Thess 5:25). Undue asceticism is to be avoided (1 Tim 4:2–5) and godliness enjoined (1 Tim 4:8). Drinking a little wine does not diminish Timothy’s purity, or that of any leader, and a healthy servant of God will be more effective in ministry.

**Equipped and endorsed**

Timothy’s heritage, character, and health do not, of themselves, qualify him for leadership in the church. His close relationship and years spent working with Paul were preparation, but did not automatically mean Timothy was equipped for the tasks that he was given. Paul was the evangelist extraordinaire and the dominant figure in the growth of the church. Others assisted, but Paul’s ministry and leadership was the key to the establishment of many communities of faith. Timothy had been with Paul in Ephesus during his extended stay (Acts 19:22), and would have been known to that community. But Timothy was not a native of Ephesus. How then does an outsider like Timothy gain recognition and exercise authority in a community like the Ephesian church? What is required for one like Timothy to exercise leadership in Ephesus?

References to the laying on of hands, gifting and prophecy, provide public endorsement of Timothy. None of the information is confirmed by other New Testament writings about Timothy, and the two references about laying on of hands offer slightly different scenarios and generate some internal tensions. In one account Paul lays hands on Timothy (2 Tim 1:6), while in the other (1 Tim 4:14) elders are involved. Can these events be reconciled or are we forced to,
face the question whether in these passages we are reading an account of the actual institution in the Church of the writer’s time, if not before, or whether we are seeing his preoccupation with the handing on of true authority and authentic tradition.\footnote{J.L. Houlden,} The cumulative effect of these texts is to affirm Timothy’s leadership and, by implication, the leadership of those who follow in this tradition. Prophecy, laying on of hands, and gifting, become markers that identify leaders within the church.

\textit{Prophecies about Timothy}

We learn of prophecies made about Timothy in what reads like a passing comment: “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you” (1 Tim 1:18). With this unusual epistolary use of Timothy’s name we might expect a personal reference if Paul were the agent through whom the prophecy was made. The impersonal tone may be explained by the nature of 1 Timothy (a public letter couched as a personal, pastoral letter), or the understanding that God is the source of the prophecy. Reference to prophecy points to an event in the past that may have been associated with Timothy’s appointment (see 1 Tim 4:14). The possibilities include “words of exhortation and orders spoken by the elders prior to the laying on of hands”\footnote{Marshall,} in a more ‘institutional’ ceremony, or an event similar to the setting aside of Saul and Barnabas for ministry (Acts 13:2). We cannot make this link with any degree of certainty. No other New Testament writings provide any useful information that would allow us to identify this with any greater confidence. We are simply told prophecies were made.


\footnote{Marshall, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 409.}
Collins writes that “[a]ccording to Paul, prophecy is the sine qua non of the Christian community (see 1 Cor. 12–14). When Christians come together for prayer, the gift of prophecy is present and active.” Prophecy is one of the prime gifts of the Spirit to the church, a gift to be highly valued. Mention that prophecy has been made about Timothy is significant in itself. Whether the prophecy came through Paul or through others, it was God who spoke.

What were these prophecies? Alfred Plummer linked the prophecy with leadership, suggesting it “either pointed out Timothy as a chosen vessel for the ministry, or publicly ratified the choice which had already been made by St. Paul and others.” This would seem to be confirmed by the association of the prophecy with leadership in 1 Timothy 1:18. Following this reference we find instruction about the offering of prayer and the behaviour of women in community (1 Tim 2:1–15). Timothy is urged to “put these instructions before the brothers and sisters” (1 Tim 4:6) and to “insist on and teach” these things (1 Tim 4:11). Leadership seems a reasonable suggestion as the main import of the prophecy, but this cannot be stated with certainty or in any greater detail. The Pastor’s reference to these prophesies effectively ratified Timothy as ‘a chosen vessel for ministry’ even if the prophecy itself did not. For the hearers or readers of the Pastorals Timothy’s authority is subtly endorsed because prophecy has been made about him. Any who follow in his footsteps will also find their authority enhanced through prophecy about them.

The laying on of hands

Known in Jewish circles, the act of laying on of hands carried with it significance for leadership. It was associated with the transferral of authority (Num 27:18–23; Deut

391 Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 131.
34:9) and linked with bestowing the spirit on others (Num 11:16–17, 24–25). These associations were also evident in the early church and in Judaism of that time. Collins recognises that,

> [t]he church’s use of the imposition of hands to symbolize the transference of power, appointment to office (see Acts 14:23), and conferral of the gift of the Spirit (see Acts 8:16–19; 9:17; 19:5–6) as a kind of “ordination ritual” was parallel with a similar development in late first-century and early second-century Judaism.\(^{393}\)

Given this background it is not surprising to read of the ‘laying on of hands’ involving Timothy. What is surprising are two references which do not agree at significant points. Paul is the key figure in 2 Tim 1:6, while 1 Tim 4:14 gives priority to the elders. Collins observes that the Pastor’s circle knew of two traditions, but sees no contradiction between the two. He notes that the “parallelism between 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6 suggests . . . that the wording of 4:14 means that a group of elders laid hands on Timothy.”\(^{394}\) If Collins is right, who were the elders, and what was the significance of the event? Other scholars identify two separate events, one at Lystra, the other at Ephesus. These two references need to be explored separately, but the treatment of the Pastorals as a collection, the ordering of the epistles, and the overlapping of ideas creates tensions in our examination of the text.

Johnson raises the possibility that 2 Timothy 1:6 could refer to “Timothy’s initial enrolment as a worker in the Pauline mission (Acts 16:3).”\(^{395}\) The Acts of the Apostles does not record the laying on of hands in the recruiting of Timothy. In this his circumcision is of more interest to Luke. By way of contrast, Acts 13:3 specifically mentions the laying on of hands when Barnabas and Saul were sent out

\(^{393}\) Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 196.

\(^{394}\) Collins, 1 & 2 Timothy, 131. The genitive (τῶν χειρῶν μου) is to be taken as a subjective genitive rather than a qualifying genitive.

\(^{395}\) Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 345.
from the church at Antioch. It is not improbable that the church at Lystra also laid hands on Timothy as a form of blessing and endorsement for his mission with Paul even if not recorded in Acts. With reference to the events of Acts 16:1–3, Bruce notes that “[t]here are indications in the Pastoral Epistles that the leaders of Timothy’s home church associated themselves with Paul in commissioning him for the gospel ministry”, yet the text that Bruce refers to is 1 Timothy 4:14. Such links cannot be made with any degree of certainty.

Second Timothy clearly links Paul, Timothy and the laying on of hands. The reader is left in no doubt that some form of authority and power has been given to Timothy by Paul. More than this is implied, as we also read of “the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands”(2 Tim 1:6). To those who heard the letter read, Timothy’s authority and status was confirmed as the one chosen and equipped for the task, regardless of when or where this event may have taken place.

A different scenario is presented in 1 Timothy 4:14 this time involving the ‘elders’. Johnson notes it “clearly suggests some sort of appointment or authorization, through the leadership of the Ephesian community itself.” Collins refers to the laying on of hands as “a ritualized gesture signifying a transfer of power,

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396 The Acts of the Apostles notes five occurrences of the ‘laying on of hands’. Two refer to the filling of the Spirit (8:17; 19:6) and one to the return of sight for Paul and the filling of the Spirit (9:17). The others are the ‘commissioning’ of the seven (6:2) and of Barnabas and Saul (13:3). Other references in the NT are in the Gospels (Jesus placing his hands in blessing (Mt 19:13,15//Mk 10:16) or for healing (Mk 8:5,25; Lk 4:40; 13:13)), in Timothy (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6 and 1 Tim 5:22 ‘do not be too hasty’), and in Hebrews 6:2 with a reference to instruction about ‘laying on of hands’.

397 F.F. Bruce, The Book of Acts, (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 304–5. Bruce assumes Pauline authorship of the Pastorals but the verses he cites actually raise a question of consistency in this position. (“In 1 Tim. 4:14 Timothy is said to have received his spiritual gift “by prophetic utterance” when the elders of his church laid their hands on him (cf. 1 Tim 1:18); in 2 Tim. 1:6 he is said to have received it when Paul laid his hands on him.”, 305 Note 10) This assumes the two things happened at the same time i.e. prophetic utterance and laying on of hands.

398 Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 256.
communicating to the one upon whom hands are laid something that resides in those who impose their hands”. 399 Care must be taken not to impose a contemporary understanding of this ritual on the events referred to in 1 Timothy. The ‘laying on of hands’ was the imposition of hands, more than a mere touching. The Hebrew phrase means “the leaning on of elders” and a Semitic understanding includes the idea of this conveying elder status. 400 But Timothy was not an elder. He was a servant of Christ and a representative of Paul. Walter F. Liefeld identifies the setting apart of Levites (Num 8:14,19) and Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2) when there was an imposition of hands by peers, rather than superiors. 401 As Witherington notes “it may be anachronistic to speak of ordination here.” 402 Whatever happened it was at most a “kind of ‘ordination ritual’”. 403 If it took place at Ephesus it was a communal affirmation of the work of God in the life of Timothy and a recognition of his role within the church.

Johnson’s exploration of this text, while viewing Paul as the author, highlights other difficulties. He identifies a minor variant of 1 Timothy 4:14 in Codex Sinaiticus and MS (69) where an iota is eliminated. While this suggests the laying on of hands “by an elder” (prebyterou), the understanding that it was “by a board of elders” (presbyteriou) “is better attested and makes more sense.” 404 Reference to ‘a board’ is anachronous and it is better to consider them simply as ‘elders’. In Judaism, persons were qualified to be elders on the basis of advanced age (indicating maturity and

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399 Collins, I & 2 Timothy, 130.


401 Walter L. Liefeld, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 168.

402 Witherington III, Letters and Homilies, 259.

403 Collins, I & 2 Timothy, 130.

404 Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 253.
experience), esteem and public reputation.\textsuperscript{405} R. Alastair Campbell suggests that early Christian communities adopted this model.\textsuperscript{406} These elders were not an elected group, rather they emerged out of the faith community and carried authority in it. It is difficult, however, to conceive of anyone or any group in the Ephesian church apart from Paul himself who would have carried the authority for “a gesture symbolizing the transfer of power.”\textsuperscript{407}

Paul founded the church in Ephesus and ministered there for an extended period of time. It makes no sense to refer to ‘an elder’ or ‘elders’ if Paul was involved. In the church at Ephesus it would have been Paul’s authority that was transferred to Timothy and passed on to successive leadership through the ‘laying on of hands’ by Timothy. Timothy was left in Ephesus on Paul’s authority. Timothy’s appointment was derived from Paul and came on Paul’s authority. Those who succeed Timothy in leadership continue under that same authority.

There are other difficulties with 1 Timothy 4:14. The idea that Timothy’s gifting came through prophecy and with the laying on of hands by the elders does not align comfortably with Paul’s view of gifts. Gifts are given by the Spirit alone (1 Cor 12:11). That the laying on of hands was associated with the prophecy and gifting does not exclude the sovereign action of God, but it does introduce an uncomfortable dimension of human agency. Witherington clarifies this by arguing that the “preposition here is meta, not dia, and should be translated “with,” referring to an accompanying action: the human recognition by church leaders that God had done


\textsuperscript{406} Campbell, \textit{The Elders}, 189.

\textsuperscript{407} Johnson, \textit{First and Second Timothy}, 253. Johnson cites Exodus 29:10; Lev 1:4; 4:15; 16:21; Num 8:10; 27:18-23; Deut 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:3 as examples of this transfer of power.
something in Timothy’s life.”  

Public recognition of the hand of God upon an individual in leadership is an affirmation of the important part they play in the life of a faith community. In combining references to gifting, prophecy and laying on of hands the Pastor assures the readers that Timothy’s leadership had been well and truly confirmed by God and the community.

Johnson seeks to harmonize the two events, suggesting that “[t]here is no reason why Timothy could not have received authority from Paul personally and then had that authority confirmed or legitimated by a local assembly.” This combination of Paul’s involvement as the key figure and the elders as representatives of the local community seems a reasonable way of associating the two — but is it necessary?

Timothy was sent as Paul’s delegate to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17) but did not need the authority of the leaders of the Corinthian community to act on Paul’s behalf. If it was not needed in that instance, why would it be required in Ephesus if Timothy was left there to instruct and remind them of all that Paul had taught them? The picture in the Pastorals is of a more settled community where Timothy is to teach and instruct, seemingly a much longer stay than he had when visiting Corinth. The personal appeal to “do your best to come to me soon” (1 Tim 4:9) reflects the temporary nature of the stay, but this contrasts the more enduring time frame reflected throughout both epistles. While one could envisage an event which involved Paul, Timothy, and the leaders of the church ‘authorizing’ him to exercise ministry and lead the church, and there is “no intrinsic reason why Timothy’s service in the Ephesian church could not derive from the appointment of both Paul and the board of

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408 Witherington III, Letters and Homilies, 259.

409 Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 354.
elders”⁴¹⁰ we must ask whether it was either necessary, or likely, or whether it is imposing a later understanding of ordination on the events.

What is achieved through these references is the endorsement and affirmation of Timothy’s leadership in the church. The role of Paul, and references to the elders, makes clear that Timothy had their endorsement. His leadership legacy was legitimate, and those who follow in this tradition should have their support as well.

Timothy’s gift

Timothy has been affirmed by leaders of the church, and we are told of his gifting. He has been publicly identified as “possessing the necessary gifts(s) to do his task”⁴¹¹ and is not to “neglect the gift that is in [him], which was given to [him] through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders” (1 Tim 4:14). Timothy’s fulfilment of the charge entrusted to him requires that the gift be acknowledged and used.⁴¹²

What was that gift? It is never specified. Johnson opts to translate charisma here and in 2 Tim 1:6 as ‘special gift for service.’ Like charis, the term refers in the broadest sense, to a sign or favor or a gift (…) and is sometimes used that way in the NT (e.g. Rom 1.11; 5:15; 11:29; 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Cor 1:11). Paul also uses the word for those gifts given to the community that are to be used for the common good – that is, to edify the church (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:4,9,28,30,31).⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 256. 1 Tim 4:7b–16 is seen as touching on the organization of the church at Ephesus. In this passage Johnson also translates presbyterion as ‘by a board of elders’ (trs. page 249).

⁴¹¹ Mounce, Pastoral Epistles, 476.

⁴¹² Collins, I & 2 Timothy, 130.

⁴¹³ Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 253.
Paul asserts that each believer is given gifts by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7,11). Timothy is gifted, as are all believers. But what was his gift?

For Collins it is likely that “the charism of which the author is thinking is the gift of prophecy”. For Collins, “the charism of which the author is thinking is the gift of prophecy”.

The role of the prophet and the gift of prophecy have to do with speaking “on behalf of God and on behalf of God’s people.” For Fee it “almost certainly has to do with his calling and gift for ministry as a preacher/teacher of the Word.” It is notable that Timothy is urged to “command” (1:3; 6:17,18), to “insist on and teach” (4:11), to “instruct” (4:6), to “teach and urge” (6:2) which fit within the leadership, prophecy, and teaching array. The Pastor writes that this instruction is in accord with the prophecies made about Timothy (1 Tim 1:18). Marshall rightly recognizes that we are unable to be specific about the particular gift but “what is surely meant is the spiritual gift to enable Timothy to perform his specific task in the church.”

Mention of Timothy’s gift affirms him as being equipped by God to exercise authority in the Ephesian church. Similar gifting would be expected in those who succeed him.

Summary

The Pastorals add little to our knowledge of Timothy’s travels, but greatly influence our understanding of his character and conduct. The strong bond between Paul and Timothy is affirmed. As we learn more of Timothy’s background and heritage of faith that information confirms what would be expected – one who spent so much time with Timothy knew about his family and his upbringing. We also learn of his

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414 Collins, I & 2 Timothy, 195.
415 Collins, I & 2 Timothy, 196.
416 Fee, I & 2 Timothy, Titus, 108.
417 Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 564-5.
physical condition — a relative youth who suffers from stomach ailments — which predisposes us to envisage a young and timid Timothy who needs to get a backbone.

This image of Timothy, however, does not accord with the other information at our disposal. The weakness is a physical one, and may have been little more than the experience of many travellers of that day (or this). Timothy’s abstinence from wine may have been a contributing factor in his illness, and this is the only fragility that we need to draw from the information in the Pastorals.

The Timothy presented in the Pastorals is probably in his early thirties, and brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to the task at hand. He had a heritage of faith, a mentor of the highest quality and of significant stature, and was entrusted with the task of dealing with the people and problems of the Ephesian church. Not only had he been well schooled by his mentor Paul, his ministry has been endorsed by God. Prophecy had been made about Timothy and God had equipped him with the gifts needed in ministry. The church elders and Paul are seen to have recognised this and publicly endorsed his ministry as a leader in the church at Ephesus.

The scenario of the Pastorals is that Timothy assumed leadership in the church at Ephesus, and the older statesman offered advice and instruction to one who carried the mantle of leadership within that community. What we are presented with is a pattern to be followed. The personal details may conform to the shape of the historical reality, but present an image that is to be conformed to by generations that follow in the Pauline tradition. Paul is the older mentor, Timothy his protégé and successor. The pattern of the Paul–Timothy relationship is a valuable one. Timothy was the loyal and faithful son who passed on the teaching he had received. Those who follow in Timothy’s footsteps will do likewise.
In the Epistles to Timothy we have instructions for young (or not so young) leaders who follow after Timothy. In the same way as he was faithful, they are to be faithful. This is advice to be followed as successive generations teach, instruct, remind and lead the church. Here we find the qualifications that are needed in every age. The prophetic word and the gifting of the Spirit will both authenticate and empower their ministry. Here we find direction for how they should live as leaders, and a pattern for healthy and holy living. Purity of doctrine and conduct are components of effective ministry. Here we find encouragement in the face of challenge. God gives “a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (2 Tim 1:8b) and, even though there will be resistance to new or ‘young’ leaders, they should not be discouraged. Cast in the form of words from Paul to Timothy these are words of an older mentor to his younger successor. As such they are not meant to be words just for Timothy or the congregation at Ephesus, they are for the next generation of leaders and the congregations in their charge.

Timothy had been entrusted with leadership in his own right. Paul’s teaching and mentoring were seen to have a continuing part to play in guiding, advising and encouraging Timothy as he instructs at Ephesus, but Timothy had been left in charge. The Pastorals affirm that he came of age as a leader in his own right.

The Paul–Timothy relationship is presented as the ideal relationship as young men grow into leadership within the church. We are to assume that the loyal and faithful Timothy took these words to heart, and responded as his mentor had urged. So, too, all who follow in his footsteps are to take these words to heart. If Paul is the model missionary and mentor, Timothy is the model disciple and successor. For many in the church Timothy may never emerge fully from Paul’s long shadow, but the enduring nature of his impact is made possible by those who respond to his teaching, follow in his footsteps, and carry on the tradition. Timothy is remembered in the
church as the one who faithfully continued Paul’s tradition. It is in the footsteps of Timothy that others are to follow.
Chapter 7: Timothy as a leader

While mapping the relationship between Paul and Timothy has its difficulties the challenge of assessing the effectiveness of Paul’s development of Timothy, and of Timothy’s effectiveness as a leader is greater. The relationship between Paul and Timothy has been documented. Paul’s leadership in the early years of the church is evident. Acts and the Epistles give testimony to the magnitude of his impact, even to the point where the question was posed — was Paul a follower of Jesus Christ or founder of Christianity? The same cannot be said of Timothy. He is a secondary character in this drama, and even the records of the early church say little about Timothy and the second generation of leaders. After the Pastoral Epistles the only record we have is in the writing of Eusebius where Timothy is reported “to have been the first appointed bishop of the diocese of Ephesus.” That we have the Pastoral Epistles testifies to the existence of this second generation, but their impact is harder to quantify. Of their independent direct impact we have scant knowledge, but there may be other ways to evaluate their effectiveness.

Modelling Leadership: Howard Gardner

A more recent approach to leadership may serve to clarify the significance of Paul and Timothy as leaders. Gardner defines a leader as “an individual . . . who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings and/or behaviors of a significant number

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of individuals.”

This definition lifts the discussion of leadership to a level that is beyond families or small groups. While others may argue his definition, this level of leadership is required in churches, communities and societies.

Gardner’s perspectives on leadership arise from the study of a limited selection of a diverse range of leaders, people who have impacted thought and action in a variety of areas. His work draws “attention to an unrecognized phenomenon — indirect leadership.” Central to his approach is the place of story, since “[l]eaders achieve their effectiveness through the stories they relate.” But a story can be presented in different ways. In particular, leaders embody their stories and convey them “by the kinds of lives they lead and, through example, seek to inspire in the lives of their followers.”

Thus Gardner identifies two primary areas of leadership — direct and indirect. Further analysing his subject, he classifies leaders as ordinary, innovative and visionary leaders. These leaders may also operate in different arenas — and Gardner differentiates between domain and diverse leaders. Domain leaders are those who operate within a specific discipline, while diverse leaders have impact beyond their particular area of expertise.

The categories that Gardner identifies offer alternatives to examining the leadership of Paul and of Timothy by direct comparison with each other or others. It becomes

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421 Gardner’s study focuses upon eleven leaders – Margaret Mead, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Alfred P. Sloan, George C. Marshall, Pope John XXIII, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jnr., Margaret Thatcher, Jean Monnet and Mahatma Gandhi.


possible to consider each of them on their own merits — and provides a framework to assess their effectiveness in their particular fields.

**Direct and/or indirect leadership**

Direct leadership is that which most would clearly see or identify. It includes those whose presence shapes a community, and whose force of personality or charisma draws others to follow. These are the people who get things done or make things happen. They are visible and obviously shape the communities in which they live.

It is not unreasonable to identify Paul as a direct leader. Missionary journeys, personal encounters, and regular preaching and teaching were used to commence churches across Asia Minor, in Macedonia and in Greece. As a direct leader Paul had a profound impact on the church. Timothy’s role as a direct leader is clearly not as significant. He worked with Paul over an extended period of time, including occasions where he worked as Paul’s delegate. His impact in this area is much less significant than that of Paul. One might even say that compared with Paul his impact was negligible. We must note, however, that of the associates of Paul it is Timothy who is mentioned more than any other, it is Timothy who receives the most frequent commendation by Paul, and it is Timothy to whom two of the three pastoral letters are addressed. In terms of the identifiable influence of followers of Jesus in the New Testament Timothy ranks behind Peter, Paul and John. Among the next generation of leaders he is one of the most prominent in the New Testament.

Indirect leaders may not be so visible. Of them Gardner writes that they “exert influence through the works they create.”\(^{425}\) One of the questions to which he returns is the question of which leader had the greatest influence — the direct leader or the

indirect leader. While this issue is not a topic of this paper, the indirect influence of Timothy is. Paul’s indirect leadership is evident. Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are associated with or linked to Paul. Even if we accept only the seven undisputed letters, Paul’s indirect leadership stands far above other followers of Jesus of his time, and perhaps of all time. Where does Timothy stand? Once again, he is in Paul’s shadow. We have seen that he is named as co-author and co-sender of four epistles, and have considered the possibility that he may have written Colossians. This is indirect leadership that has influenced others. Two epistles have been addressed to Timothy. These epistles present the Paul–Timothy relationship as the pattern to follow. Timothy is the exemplary follower who faithfully carries on the tradition of the church. His example has left a legacy that continues in the church today. His leadership has been used as a model for others to follow — yet more evidence of an indirect influence on the church through the ages. Only Timothy and Titus were used as exemplars in this way, and this would not have been possible if the Pastorals conflicted obviously with the reality of their lives.

**Ordinary, innovative, or visionary leadership**

Whether direct or indirect a leader may be ordinary, innovative, or visionary. The ordinary leader “simply relates the traditional story of his or her group as effectively as possible.”

Under Gardner’s scenario the continuing of the community or group is in view. Even continuing in a particular direction or maintaining certain community standards or activities requires and involves leadership.

If there is a hierarchy of leaders — and Gardner would suggest simply different types of leaders rather than a hierarchy — the next step ‘up’ is that of innovative leader.

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This type of leader “takes a story that has been latent in the population or among the members of his or her chosen domain, and brings new attention or a fresh twist to that story.” The visionary leader, however, “actually creates a new story, one not know to most individuals before, and achieves at least a measure of success in conveying this story effectively to others.” In Gardner’s schema, Jesus is a visionary leader.

Gardner’s study does not deal with ordinary leaders — and he acknowledges the difficulty of distinguishing between innovative and visionary leaders. For the purposes of his study the distinction is not critical — and his range of subjects includes both sorts of leaders. Interestingly Gardner identifies religious leaders of the past as visionary leaders. Included in this group with Jesus are Moses, Confucius, Buddha and Mohammed.

Where does Paul fit? I would suggest that Paul was an innovative leader, who took the Jesus story and carried it throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and on to Rome. More than this, he carried it beyond his own time and space through the records we have of his activities and the letters that he wrote. Where might Timothy fit? On the evidence we have thus far he would be considered an ordinary leader. He acted under Paul’s authority, and embodied Paul’s story as Paul had embodied Jesus’ story, but took it only to places where Paul had been. There was no innovation in what Timothy did; there was faithful transmission of the message.

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427 Gardner, Leading Minds, 10.

428 Gardner, Leading Minds, 11.
Domain or diverse leadership

Classifying the arena in which a leader exercises influence is another way of evaluating their effectiveness. While some people are effective in leading in a restricted area, Gardner’s definition requires significant influence over a significant number of people. While no definition is offered for ‘significant’, the leaders studied by Gardner shaped different fields of human activity (physics, education, anthropology), affected national governments, or reached across the globe. Clearly those leaders selected were outstanding individuals — and relatively few individuals exercise leadership of that stature and impact.

The concept of domain leadership and diverse leadership offers another dimension in classifying and assessing the impact of an individual leader. Domain leadership is exercised within a particular field of expertise. A medical scientist, poet, mechanic, or theologian could exercise leadership in their domain. Their research, artistry, technical innovation or insight can shape the way others in their domain approach their work and understand their craft. Within a domain the understanding is that one is already communicating with people who share a certain knowledge and experience. They share a story, and “one is communicating with experts.”

Diverse leadership reaches beyond specific domains and affects the wider community. It crosses groups and disciplines. Gardner notes that “leaders of recognized domains need to be distinguished sharply from individuals who would presume to reorient a political entity, like a nation, or a broadly based institution, like the church or the military.” Paul’s missionary activity, and the message that was repeated through Acts and the Pauline epistles sought to reorient the church, from

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429 Gardner, Leading Minds, 11.

430 Gardner, Leading Minds, 12.
Jewish righteousness through obedience to the law, to righteousness through faith in Christ. Paul’s leadership was diverse leadership. Timothy’s role in following in Paul’s teaching was to confirm this orientation. Paul’s diverse leadership effectively created the domain in which the leadership of Timothy was exercised.

**Evaluating Timothy as a leader**

When comparing the leadership of Timothy with that of Paul, Timothy will always be dwarfed by the achievements and impact of Paul. We do know that the influence of Timothy was greater because of his association with Paul than it would have been had he stayed in Lystra. The Pastorals present Timothy as exercising leadership in the church at Ephesus, and we have seen how he was active in many other places. That Paul enlisted Timothy as an assistant paved the way for contact with many other people in many places.

Banks and Ledbetter note that research “suggests that both hereditary and situational factors are at work in most examples of leadership.” Alastair Mant identifies qualifiers and disqualifiers for leadership. For Mant, intellectual firepower and psychological damage are the two key qualifiers/disqualifiers, and knowledge, skill and motivation the supporting qualifiers. One of the key qualifiers, intellectual firepower, would seem to be hereditary, and psychological damage the result of the environment. Although many writers suggest that all have the potential to be

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431 Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 50.


433 Mant does not view intellectual firepower as being revealed by IQ tests. He accepts Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences embracing Linguistic, Logical / Mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily / Kinesthetic, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal dimensions. He also acknowledges that all individuals are subject to potential psychological damage that shapes their personality – but the best leaders learn through these experiences and allow it to inform but not determine their responses. Mant, *Intelligent Leadership*, 108-121.
leaders,\textsuperscript{434} from an early age there are those whose natural abilities suggest a greater potential than is evident in others.\textsuperscript{435}

We know little about the raw material that was Timothy. We have seen that he was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra (Acts 16:3), and are aware that he was the child of a mixed marriage. It is possible that his father was deceased, but this would not be anything exceptional in an age of lower life expectancy. The impression is certainly given of a stable family situation where faith was significant. None of this helps us to identify any attributes that would mean Timothy stood out among his contemporaries. Paul chose Timothy to be with him. Paul’s choice means that he recognised in Timothy the potential to work with him and be of assistance in the work of ministry.

Warren Bennis noted that “more leaders have been made by accident, circumstance, sheer grit, or will than have been made by all the leadership courses put together.”\textsuperscript{436} Circumstances, or the leading of God, placed Paul at Lystra at a time when Timothy was able to join him. From there Timothy worked with Paul and became his closest associate, one who knew Paul’s mind and concerns like no other. This was no leadership course. For Timothy it was on-the-job training, the apprentice with the master, gaining knowledge and learning skills that were important for an apostle or servant of Jesus Christ.

\textsuperscript{434} Banks and Ledbetter, \textit{Reviewing Leadership}, 53.

\textsuperscript{435} Mant, \textit{Intelligent Leadership}, 47.

Developed in leadership

We have seen that through the years Timothy spent with Paul he had many opportunities to learn and grow in competence, confidence and responsibility. In terms of knowledge Timothy shared with Paul in public and private settings. As a listener to Paul’s speeches and conversations he would have heard the message of the gospel many times. As an associate Timothy would have engaged in conversation with Paul (and many others) when domiciled or travelling, and had the opportunity to participate in debate and discussion over matters of doctrine, faith and life. Effectively Timothy was a long-term student in the school of ministry with Paul. One would expect that the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills that would take place over the years would stand Timothy in good stead.

Bennis wrote:

I know of no leader in any era who hasn’t had at least one mentor: a teacher who found things in him he didn’t know were there, a parent, a senior associate who showed him the way to be, or in some cases, not to be, or demanded more of him that he knew he had to give.437

While Paul had many associates with whom he shared, Timothy had Paul as a mentor over an extended period — perhaps the major part of his adult life. Timothy was not confined to minor roles, but was able to share in the day-to-day tasks of ministry, to participate in discussion regarding issues that arose, to share in the formulation of letters with Paul, and to stand in the place of Paul with at least three different congregations. While Timothy was publicly affirmed in the epistles the process of learning makes it likely that there were times when Timothy was challenged, rebuked or disciplined in some way, even though we do not gain a sense of this from the text. We would anticipate that there were experiences along the way when things went wrong. These, too, would have been opportunities to learn and grow in leadership.

437 Bennis, Becoming a leader, 91-92.
Conclusion

In the relationship with Paul and Timothy we have a model for the developing of leadership within the church. From the time Paul chose Timothy until his last contact Paul shared his life with Timothy. Timothy not only worked with Paul but at times worked independently as Paul’s delegate, ultimately being left in charge of the church in Ephesus. During that time responsibility was given, and Paul’s confidence in Timothy often expressed. Timothy was affirmed for his industry, and his understanding of Paul’s teaching and concerns. Of all Paul’s associates Timothy and Titus are identified through the Pastoral Epistles as staying the course. From the time Timothy was recruited in Lystra, until the final days of Paul the picture we have is of a faithful and committed co-worker, who shared in Paul’s ministry and grew in responsibility.

Timothy met the criteria established earlier in the definition of a leader as “an individual who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviours of a significant number of individuals so that they might accomplish the will and purposes of God.” He did not accidentally fall into the role. Timothy was chosen by Paul to accompany him in his missionary endeavours, and for many years worked closely in the service of the gospel. Timothy is the most prominent among the ‘second generation’ leaders that we know of in the church. Paul’s influence in enlisting, teaching and training Timothy paved the way for his growth as a leader who would not only influence others directly, but whose faithful exercise of ministry would become an example for successive generations.

In the relationship between Paul and Timothy we have a model for developing leaders that can be profitably employed and adapted in any era. A strong and long-
term relationship with a mentor is important, as is the teaching and training of potential leaders, and a willingness to entrust to them increasing levels of responsibility. Timothy ‘shared life’ with Paul, experiencing the highs and lows of ministry and sharing in the day-to-day activities where faith was lived out, and the gospel shared. He learned from Paul’s life and from his teaching, and was supported and guided by his mentor as he was entrusted with the tasks of leadership.

Paul was an outstanding leader. There are few individuals in the history of the church have had such enduring and significant impact. Timothy was selected by Paul to work with him, and was developed as a leader who could continue the mission and ministry God had entrusted to Paul. All who follow in the same tradition of faith do well to learn from the practical ways in which Paul developed Timothy as a leader.
## Appendix 1: Leadership Terms

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**Sources used:**


Appendix 2: A working chronology

The Acts of the Apostles presents the story of the early church, and traces the life of Paul from his early contact with the followers of Jesus as Saul (Acts 8:1). It continues through his various missionary journeys and activities, to his arrival in Rome (Acts 28:14) and two years of ministry from “his own rented house” (Acts 28:30–31) in that city. From the first mention of Paul (c. 34 CE) to the account of his time in Rome (c. 62 CE) encompasses a period of almost 30 years.

Among the challenges to establishing a chronology is the nature of the Acts of the Apostles, and how we are to treat the information that this record provides. While many treat Acts as history it cannot be read as a modern narration of facts or a chronological collection of events.

Bornkamm observes:

[i]n the ancient world a narrator had much more free play in the matter of literary art, and precisely as a historian he made use of particular ways of presenting his subject which are not at the disposal of the present-day historian. His contribution consisted not only in transmitting the tradition, but in reproducing it in such a way as to make things vivid and meaningful.\(^\text{439}\)

‘History’ is always interpreted through the lens of the culture of the day – whether in the first or twenty-first century. The data available in Acts must be treated carefully as we seek to develop a picture of the events involving Paul and Timothy, and their relationship.

\(^{439}\) Bornkamm, Paul, xvi.
The Epistles of Paul are the primary source of Paul’s activities, but these records are ‘occasional’, written at particular times to specific people for a particular purpose without the inclusion of the date or place of writing, and with few references to externally dateable events.

The approach in this paper is to give priority to the Epistles, and accept the reliability of Acts where it does not conflict with the Epistles. Even in doing so it is difficult to avoid having the scenario presented in Acts in mind, as this is the only record available which provides sequential or ordered material.

Hans Dieter Betz identified four fundamental problems that beset this process:

1. establishing the most probable sequence of Paul’s letters and letter fragments, and the events to which they allude;
2. evaluating the sequence of events narrated in the book of Acts;
3. connecting the events reported in Acts with those mentioned in the letters; and
4. assigning actual dates to specific events.  

Even establishing a letter chronology is a difficult task that cannot result in absolute certainty.

Following a relationship, and seeking to understand its impact on the development of the parties in that relationship, requires the establishing of chronology. This will avoid making untested assumptions about times and locations within which the people, and their relationships, develop. Despite the difficulties involved in establishing a chronological framework, this must be our starting point.

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441 McRay identifies the establishing of a Pauline chronology as “one of the most baffling problems of New Testament study.” John McRay, Paul: His life and teaching, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 60.
For the purposes of this paper, events prior to Timothy leaving Lystra with Paul are of little significance. It is acknowledged that it is not possible to trace accurately the activities of Paul from that time on. Since Timothy was a secondary character it is even harder to determine what Timothy did while with Paul, or when dispatched to undertake tasks for Paul. However, it is necessary to establish some framework that will allow the exploration the dynamics of this relationship.

**In the ‘undisputed’ Pauline correspondence**

In the seven undisputed letters Timothy is mentioned in all except Galatians. He is identified as a co-writer with Paul in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon; mentioned as acting on Paul’s behalf in 1 Corinthians (and 1 Thessalonians), and as sending greetings in Romans.  

With the numerous attempts at establishing a chronology there is a basic sequence and timing that emerges, even if there is divergence in dates postulated for various events.

A possible letter sequence is as follows:

- 1 Thessalonians (traditionally from Corinth approx 50 CE)
- Corinthian Correspondence (from Ephesus approx 53 CE)
- Romans (from Corinth approx 54 CE)
- Philippians and Philemon (from Rome approx 60 CE).

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442 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1:1; 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Thess 3:2,6; Rom 16:21.

443 Witherington, Robinson, McRay and Bruce accept this order. Jewett, O’Connor and Roetzel date Philippians to Paul’s time in Ephesus, prior to Romans, and around the time of the Corinthian Correspondence.


445 The location from which Paul wrote these epistles is strongly debated. Rome is assumed by Fee as the location from which Philippians was written. (Fee, *Philippians*, 34–37) He argues that it ‘fits the data best’. Bockmuehl concludes that “in the absence of definitive evidence the case for
Galatians is understood either to have been written first (Witherington, McRay, Bruce, Kümmel), or around the time of the Corinthian correspondence (Robinson, Murphy-O’Connor, Jewett, Roetzel, Lüdemann).

Within the sequence outlined above there is also scope for further variation. For example Murphy-O’Connor (and others) take the view that 1 Thessalonians is two letters — Letter A (1:3–2:12; 4:3–5:28) and Letter B (2:13–4:2), and it is generally accepted that the Corinthian letters are two of a series of at least three letters, and many scholars identify 2 Corinthians as two or more letters (or letter fragments).

Arguments surrounding the integrity of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians are beyond the scope of this paper. Even if such theories can be substantiated it is my view that the correspondence would still fall within the timeframe and sequence outlined.

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446 Rome remains the least problematic” Bockmuehl, Philippians, 32. He notes that majority continental scholarship has favoured Ephesus, and many also support Caesarea. Issues of the distance between Philippi and Paul’s place of writing, and the references the ‘those of Caesar’s household’ and silence about the collection are arguments in favour of Rome as Paul’s writing site (25–32).

447 Rome is favoured, but if Colossians is post-Pauline Ephesus becomes a possibility. If Colossians was written during Paul’s lifetime Rome seems more likely. James D.G. Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 307–8. Dunn notes “[t]his is the other great bone of contention among commentators on Philemon.” (307).


450 See Furnish, II Corinthians, 35–54.
The Epistle to the Galatians

As the Epistle to the Galatians does not mention Timothy, the issue of exact dating does not impact on the information available to us. Rather, the fact that Timothy is not mentioned in the letter should impact on our understanding of the dating and the destination of this letter.

Timothy is named in the other six undisputed letters of Paul. If Galatians was written from Corinth (subsequent to Timothy joining Paul) why is there no mention of Timothy? He was a native of Lystra in South Galatia. The issue of destination (North or South Galatia) may need to be examined in more detail to offer some explanation for the omission of any reference to Timothy.451

The greeting of the letter includes reference to “all the brothers with me” (1:2) but the only living persons specifically identified in the letter apart from Paul are James (1:19; 2:9), Cephas (1:18, 2:7,10) and/or Peter (2:7,8), John (2:9), and Barnabas (2:1,9,13) and Titus (2:1,3). These are mentioned in connection with a visit to Jerusalem. Scholars traditionally associate this reference with the Jerusalem conference, but the alternative is an earlier ‘private’ visit and meeting with the elders.

The majority of undisputed letters include many names. Even Romans, written to the churches in a city Paul had not visited, includes a long list of contacts in the final

451 Betz notes the fragile foundations upon which attempts to date Acts are built. He does not address the North-South debate. He favours an early date for the letter. Hans Dieter Betz, Galatians: A commentary of Paul’s Letter to the Churches of Galatia, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 9–12. Witherington also favours an earlier date, and believes that Paul’s missionary activities and correspondence were in the Roman province of Galatia (south), rather than the ethnic region of Galatia (north). Lystra, the home of Timothy, was one of cities in the south. Ben Witherington III, Grace In Galatia: A Commentary of St Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1998), 2–13.

452 Abraham, Sarah, Hagar and Isaac are also referred to in Galatians 4:21–31.
chapter. Twenty-seven names are noted in the list of people to greet, and greetings are sent from eight, including Timothy. In 1 Corinthians Timothy is specifically mentioned in the letter body in connection with a visit to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17; 16:14). The remaining undisputed letters include Timothy as a co-sender (2 Cor 1:1, 1 Thess 1:1, Ph 1:1, Phlm 1:1). It would seem unusual for Timothy not to be mentioned in Galatians if it were written, from Ephesus (as Jewett suggests) around the time of the Corinthian correspondence, Philippians and Philemon. Murphy-O’Connor suggests a later date for Galatians because the “verbosity of Galatians betrays the nervousness of one who has lost his legitimizing base” and so “must have been composed on a later journey” after Paul had lost his mandate from the church in Antioch. The long stay in Ephesus that Jewett postulates would allow for significant changes in circumstances, and the possibility of Timothy’s absence at the time Galatians was written must be acknowledged. It could also be that Paul deliberately omitted any reference to Timothy. If Acts 16:2 is accurate, and Paul took Timothy to be circumcised, his actions may be seen to run counter to his argument. Such a deliberate omission seems out of character with the Paul of the letters. Along with the other evidence the omission of any reference to Timothy in the Letter to the Galatians suggests that an early date for this epistle may be preferable.

The other undisputed letters

Along with the references to Timothy as a co-sender or sending greetings there are specific references to Timothy in 1 Corinthians, Thessalonians and Philippians that reveal something of his movements. These are important in establishing a chronology that involves both Paul and Timothy.


Timothy’s visit to Thessalonica is noted in 1 Thessalonians 3:1–10. The correspondence between Paul and the Thessalonians appears to have been written from Corinth shortly after the establishment of the church in Thessalonica. Timothy was sent from Athens (1 Thess 3:1), meeting up later with Paul and bringing a favourable report on happenings in Thessalonica.

Timothy was sent to visit the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10) and Paul was in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8) when the letter was written, probably during Paul’s extended stay in that city — a city close enough to Corinth to allow for regular communication (both oral and written) between Paul and the Corinthian believers.

In Philippians hope is expressed that Timothy might visit the church in Philippi (Phil 2:19). The situation surrounding this epistle has resulted in three possible ‘imprisonments’ being used to help locate the place from which this epistle was written. Rome (approx 60–62 CE)\(^455\) is the latest date offered, Ephesus (spring 53 CE)\(^456\) the earliest, and Caesarea (57–59 CE)\(^457\) the middle course. The information contained in the letter does not allow any certainty over this issue. Murphy-O’Connor notes that the future scenario presented in Romans, an expedition to Spain\(^458\) after visiting the believers in Rome, is inconsistent with the hope of a personal visit to Philippi by Paul (Phil 2:24). A visit to Spain, however, does not rule out a subsequent visit to Philippi. In terms of ascertaining the movements of Timothy, the letter adds little substantive information. It only expresses Paul’s intentions. The dating is significant in determining a timeframe for Paul’s association

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\(^{458}\) Romans 15: 24,28.
with Timothy. If we accept that it was written whilst Paul was in Rome it extends their association to at least 62 C.E.

**Taking into account the Acts of the Apostles**

Using the information available from the letters, and adding the detail in Acts a tentative outline of the activities of Timothy and Paul can be established. In doing so we note the limited amount of information available in Acts about Timothy, who is only mentioned seven times.\(^4^5^9\) Haenchen points out that,

> Luke spends as little time as possible on such secondary persons, and for him Timothy also is a secondary person . . . To recount at each point what Timothy did or where he stayed (for instance during the time Paul and Silas lay in gaol) would have detained Luke unduly, without contributing anything to the edification of the reader.\(^4^6^0\)

Luke’s focus on Paul leaves many unanswered questions about the secondary characters.

Absence of any references to Paul’s written correspondence in Acts is a further complication. Luke neither acknowledges their use nor cites any content. Bornkamm concludes that at the time of the writing of Acts there was no representative collection of Paul’s letters.\(^4^6^1\) Betz asserts that “[t]here can be hardly any doubt that Luke did not know Paul’s letters.”\(^4^6^2\) The “we” sections of Acts are generally understood to have included Luke.\(^4^6^3\) If this is the case it seems surprising that Luke would not be aware of Paul’s letter-writing activities.

\(^{459}\) Acts 16:1,3; 17:14,15; 18:5; 19:22 & 20:4. These seven references involve only five different situations.


\(^{461}\) Bornkamm, *Paul*, xx. See discussion in Chapter 4.


Timothy was ‘recruited’ by Paul whilst in Lystra (Acts 16:1–4) on what is generally referred to as Paul’s second missionary journey. We know that he was a disciple, his mother was Jewish and a believer, and his father was Greek. He had a good reputation amongst the believers in Lystra, and was circumcised before he travelled with Paul. Major cities visited on this second journey included Philippi (16:11–40), Thessalonica (17:1–10), Athens (17:16–34), an extended stay in Corinth (18:1–18), and a brief visit to Ephesus (18:19–21) followed by a visit to Jerusalem before Paul’s return to Antioch (Acts 18:22).

From the point where Timothy joins with Paul and Silas, we are told, “they travelled from town to town” (16:4). The group travelled through Phrygia and Galatia on their way to Troas before moving across to Macedonia, and then to Philippi. Details of the time taken, and the specific cities or towns visited, are not provided.

Acts 16:6–12 records that they (presumably Paul, Silas and Timothy) “went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia” (16:6). Here we may be meant to understand ministry in various unnamed places as they made their way to Troas, but have no details of places visited, stops made, or activity undertaken on this journey. Yamauchi cites Budrick, who argues for a central route from Antioch to Dorylaem

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464 While Paul may not have considered this to be his ‘second journey’ the traditional approach of identifying significant journeys that begin and end in Antioch (except for the third journey) is a convenient way of segmenting Paul’s mission activities.

465 “To have had a member of his entourage be of Jewish lineage and yet uncircumcised would have hampered his effectiveness among the Jews. It was at the very least a matter of missionary strategy to circumcise Timothy (1 Cor 9:20). It may have been much more. Paul never abandoned his own Jewish heritage. He may well have wanted Timothy to be true to his (cf. 1 Cor 3:1f.).” John B. Polhill, Acts, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 374.
through Scepsis and on to Troas,\textsuperscript{466} and Bowers suggesting it was a purposeful journey from Galatia with a particular destination, Macedonia or beyond, in view.\textsuperscript{467} If correct the group are unlikely to have paused for any significant periods of time. Murphy-O’Connor comments that “[t]he absence of any letters to churches in Mysia suggests, either that Paul made no attempt to evangelise that area, or that he failed disastrously.”\textsuperscript{468} It is perhaps more plausible to accept that there was no attempt to evangelise than to posit complete failure by Paul and his companions.

The alternative to this view is that missionary activity took place in North Galatia during this time. Galatians 4:13f. suggests a period of illness and Jewett’s calculation of plausible date ranges suggest that these verses embrace a minimum 28 days of travel, and at least six months of missionary activity in Galatia before arrival at Troas.\textsuperscript{469} The absence of supporting evidence means this must be considered an interesting speculation. It is more likely that Paul concluded his travel through the region he had previously visited “with the intent to go straight to Asia, rather than that he . . . took a visit to North Galatia.”\textsuperscript{470}

Acts 16:10 commences the first of the “we” passages. Paul was not alone in his travels through Galatia and Phyrgia. There it would seem that Luke joined Paul and his companions.\textsuperscript{471} The “we” passages give the impression that the author was


\textsuperscript{467} W.P. Bowers, “Paul’s Route Through Mysia,” \textit{JTS} 30, no. 30 (1979), 511.

\textsuperscript{468} Murphy O’Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 163.

\textsuperscript{469} Jewett, \textit{Dating Paul’s life}, 59-60.

\textsuperscript{470} Witherington III, \textit{Acts}, 478.

\textsuperscript{471} Acts 16:10 commences the first of the “we” passages in Acts, which is traditionally understood to indicate the presence of Luke in the party.
present, but it is by no means certain that the eye-witness is Luke,\textsuperscript{472} nor even that an eye-witness is required.\textsuperscript{473} The impression is given that the report came from one who was with Paul. If Luke was not the source, the information could have been provided by Timothy or even Silas.

From Troas the 250 kilometre sea journey west to Neapolis (16:11) took two days, a good time for a journey of that distance.\textsuperscript{474} Arriving at Neapolis there was another 16 kilometres before they would reach Philippi. Later we learn that the return journey from Neapolis to Troas took five days in adverse winds (Acts 20:6).\textsuperscript{475}

**Philippi**

Acts 16:12–40 record events in Philippi. Lydia was converted (16:13–15), and a demon-possessed slave girl exorcised (16:16–18). The latter incident prompted a disturbance that resulted the imprisonment of Paul and Silas (16:19–24). Acts then records a miraculous jailhouse conversion, and the release of Paul and Silas who then departed the city (16:25–40). It is not clear how long Paul and his associates spent in Philippi. Murphy-O’Connor concludes that this stay included “at least the winter of AD 48-49” on the basis of “a well-organized, generous community, with the energy to support Paul’s missionary endeavours elsewhere”\textsuperscript{476} and other indicators.

\textsuperscript{472}“Nothing that is said in the present passage points to the identity of the fellow traveller implied by the first person plural.” Barrett, *Acts*, 766.


\textsuperscript{474}Jewett, *Dating Paul’s life*, 47.

\textsuperscript{475}Yamauchi, “Troas,” 666.

in the letter to the Philippians. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas may well have cut short the stay.

Reference continues to be made to the group.\textsuperscript{477} It must be assumed that Timothy was still among them, observing and sharing in missionary activity. The group was clearly being led by Paul and Silas as they “are the only ones mentioned as having been brought before the magistrates”\textsuperscript{478} in Philippi. The Epistle to the Philippians affirms Timothy’s participation in ministry as Paul writes “Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Phil. 2:22). How he served is not made clear. The departure of Paul and Silas from Philippi after their release is noted, but again there is no mention of Timothy.

\textbf{Thessalonica}

The next recorded ministry is in Thessalonica (17:1–8). After being able to preach in the synagogue for three Sabbaths Paul and Silas were again forced to leave and headed to Berea. Success in Thessalonica is evidenced in that “some attached themselves to Paul and Silas”\textsuperscript{(17:4)}. We read that Paul visited the synagogue and “argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead” (17:2,3). The stay appeared brief, encompassing three Sabbaths (17:4), before a disturbance at Jason’s house (presumably the place where Paul and his companions were staying) precipitated their departure. Luke’s picture of ministry in this city, however, may be somewhat condensed.

\textsuperscript{477} Acts 16:12,13,16 “we” and Acts 16:14,15,17 “us” (NRSV) — the plural is consistently through this passage.

\textsuperscript{478} Gillman, “Timothy,” 558 b.
Wanamaker comments,

1 Thess. 2:9 gives the impression, however, that Paul was located at Thessalonica long enough to establish himself in his trade and provide the Christians there with a model for their behaviour. A period of three or four weeks hardly seems to be sufficient for this, and in any case Phil. 4:15f. Paul mentions that the church in Philippi sent financial aid more than once while he was at Thessalonica. It seems unlikely that the stay of three Sabbaths would have necessitated or even allowed time for such active support, given the distances involved (approximately 150 kilometres).

Later Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica as Paul’s envoy. He is commended to the church and described as “our brother and God’s fellow-worker” (1 Thess 3:2). This fulsome description seems unusual for a known associate of Paul if he had a role of significance during the time in Thessalonica, and if the stay had been an extended one. It is best understood as a conventional commendation of an envoy.480

A focus on the ministry of Paul and his companions in Thessalonica is evident in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-10, highlighting their “labor and toil” both “night and day” (2:9) and the depth of their care for the Thessalonians (2:8). The group who ministered in Thessalonica would seem to include Paul, Silvanus and Timothy — the co-senders of the letter. Although not prominent enough for Luke to record his participation in ministry in this city Timothy was present. He is described as a “co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ”(1 Thess 3:2), and we conclude that he was an active participant in the task of preaching and teaching in Thessalonica.

After being welcomed in Berea trouble again followed Paul and Silas, and this time it was Paul who moved on (17:14) while Silas remained. While in Berea they found their way to the synagogue, and the Jews there “examined the scriptures everyday”


480 Three of the four elements of the conventional formula for dispatch of envoys - name, relationships, and assignment are present in 1 Thess 3:2. See Mitchell, ”New Testament Envoys,” 652.
(17:11), testing the veracity of Paul’s message. Here we have a clear indication of the presence of Timothy who stayed with Silas, with instructions to join Paul as soon as possible (17:14–15), while Paul moved on to Athens. The role Timothy and Silas played in the activities in Berea is unclear.

**Corinth**

Paul preached in Athens (17:17–34) before heading to Corinth, where he was later joined by Silas and Timothy (18:5). In Corinth Paul found accommodation with Prisca and Aquila — fellow Jews who were of the same trade (18:2–5) and with whom Paul worked — and met and argued (debated) with Jews in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

After staying there “for a considerable time” (ἐπὶ προσμείνας ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς — 18:18) Paul’s journey continued. More specific information is given about the duration of this stay since we had already been informed that Paul “stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them”(18:11). While the eighteen months may not encompass the entire time spent in Corinth it must be regarded as the minimum length of stay in Corinth.⁴⁸¹

Timothy and Silas rejoined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5), yet 1 Thessalonians 3:1 indicates that “we” (Paul, Silas and Luke?) decided to be left alone in Athens and sent Timothy back to Thessalonica. It appears that Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul in Athens, and from there Timothy visited the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:1–6), before meeting Paul again in or near Corinth. I would suggest that shortly after Timothy was able to bring a report of his visit to the Thessalonians, Paul (with Silvanus (Silas) and

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⁴⁸¹ ἐπὶ προσμείνας “suggests the addition of a relatively short stay . . . to the 18 months of v.11” Barrett, *Acts*, 876.
Timothy) wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1). The scenario presented above still presents some difficulties. Because Paul could “bear it no longer” (1 Thess 3:1), Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica. Why, if Paul could bear it no longer, would he journey on towards Corinth rather than wait in Athens for Timothy’s return, or even venture towards Thessalonica. Murphy-O’Connor’s concludes, “[i]t is out of the question that Paul should have delayed his reunion with Timothy, by going in the opposite direction, toward Corinth, a strange city where Timothy would have had enormous difficulty finding him.”\(^{482}\) An alternative to this view is the possibility that plans were made for a rendezvous at a specific place and in an appropriate time frame.

In an effort to synchronise the two accounts John B. Polhill suggests that,

both Luke and Paul may have been right, each giving only part of the picture. Paul may have travelled to Athens alone. Summoning Timothy and Silas to join him there are soon as possible (Acts 17:15), they did so, and then Paul dispatched them both from Athens, Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1) and Silas to parts unknown. One can never be dogmatic about any such harmonization for which the text itself gives no specific warrant, but the possibility of some such simple solution guards against overhasty conclusions about the unreliability of a text. In any event, Timothy and Silas did finally join Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5).\(^{483}\)

Whether despatched to Thessalonica from Athens or Corinth, Timothy was sent as Paul’s emissary to the church.\(^{484}\) His task was relatively straightforward, to reassure the Thessalonians, gather information and return to Paul. On the basis of the distance travelled and Paul’s “ardent temperament” Murphy-O’Connor calculates a time of about ten weeks from Paul’s departure from Thessalonica to the news


received from Timothy.\footnote{Murphy O'Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 107.} Timothy’s first solo assignment involved a 1,000 km round trip to Thessalonica, a journey that may have taken about forty days. Given the hostility that had prompted Paul’s departure it may also have involved a degree of risk in Thessalonica if conditions had deteriorated.

We know that Timothy rejoined Paul, and was with him in Corinth. It would seem reasonable to assume that in Corinth he shared in the activities, and probably even the work, that occupied Paul’s time and energies. Silas and Timothy may have lodged with Priscilla and Aquila\footnote{“It is probable that they were wealthy and entertained not only Paul but other Christians too.” Barrett, \textit{Acts}, 863-4.} while they joined with Paul in proclaiming the word in the synagogue or later in the house of Titius Justus (Acts 18:7). Timothy was involved in proclaiming the gospel in Corinth (2 Cor 1:19), but there are no further details of any specific role.

Difficulties in calculating the duration of this ministry remain. As Gillman points out: “[i]t is uncertain . . . how long Timothy remained in Corinth after his Thessalonian mission. Was it for 18 months, the duration of Paul’s stay (ca. 51–52, cf. 2 Cor 1:19; Acts 18:11)? Also unclear is Timothy’s path over the next few years.”\footnote{Gillman, “Timothy,” 559a.} Here again we encounter the problems of dealing with a historiography such as Acts. On departing Corinth Paul leaves “the brothers” (τοιαὶ ἄδελφοι),\footnote{The reference to ‘the brothers’ may be to the believers, and so the ‘they’ who arrived in Ephesus may include Silas and Timothy.} and continues his journey with Priscilla and Aquila. These two were then left at Ephesus as Paul visited Caesarea and Jerusalem on his way to Antioch. The text seems to indicate that Paul travelled alone through this time. For safety and security
reasons he would most likely have travelled in the company of others. Traditionally the return to Antioch is seen as the end of the second missionary journey of Paul.

*Paul’s ‘third journey’*

According to Acts, Paul’s third missionary journey includes an Ephesian sojourn of perhaps two to three years and a stay of some time in Greece, probably in Corinth.

From Antioch Paul again travelled through Galatia and Phrygia “strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:23) and spent some time passing “through the interior regions” (Acts 19:1). We have no indication of the places visited during this time — but the journey itself would have been well over 750 kilometres. Such a journey would have taken a minimum of three weeks at rapid walking pace, without even pausing to visit any churches. Coming to Ephesus (19:1) Paul spent some time in that city — including three months speaking in the synagogue (19:8) and two years having “discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (19:9–10). This extended stay is encompassed in relatively few words in Acts, with no mention of Timothy until the end of this time. Paul decided to go to Jerusalem and “sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia” (Acts 19:22).

Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus. Ephesus is identified as place where 1 Corinthians was written (1 Cor 16:8), and letters include detail of Timothy’s involvement involved in communication between Paul and the church in Corinth. Bruce notes that “[a]ccording to 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10, he was sent to Corinth at some point during the later phase of Paul’s stay in Ephesus. Paul expected him back in Corinth before his own departure (1 Cor 16:11).” At the time of writing 2 Corinthians Timothy had returned and was with Paul (2 Cor 1:1). These references

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give us some picture of Timothy’s movements, yet there are still unanswered questions. Did Timothy travel with Paul to Antioch or could he have been one of “the brothers” left in Corinth? If he remained in Corinth, how long did he remain there? When and where did he rejoin Paul? Did he meet up with Paul on his return to Ephesus, or return to his parental home in Lystra until Paul came through on his journey towards Ephesus? These are all questions that cannot be answered from Acts.

The concluding reference to Timothy in this section of Acts (19:22) would seem to indicate a mission of a different nature for Timothy. Bruce writes, “[t]he chief purpose of the mission of Timothy and Erastus was no doubt to help the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to complete their collection for Paul’s Jerusalem fund (see on 24:17).”

Timothy was entrusted with yet another mission on behalf of Paul. That he was first named may indicate that he had responsibility for this task.

The challenges in ascertaining what took place during in Ephesus are significant. Information in Acts is insufficient to fill in the details, and questions remain about the composition of both the canonical Corinthian Epistles. The working hypothesis is that a letter from Corinth was received by Paul (7:1) after Paul had sent Timothy to

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491 There is a *prima facie* case for this assumption on the basis of the pattern of naming in Acts. Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2,7 refer to ‘Barnabas and Saul’. The dynamic changes in 13:42,43,46,50; 14:1 where ‘Paul and Barnabas’ are identified, indicating a shift in significance. There is a reversion in Acts 14:14; 15:12,25 to ‘Barnabas and Paul’ – the latter two at the Jerusalem Conference. Paul is also consistently named before Silas (16:19,25,29; 17:1,4,5,10) and Silas named before Timothy (17:14,15;18:5). Perhaps most significantly Prisca is named before Aquila after the characters are introduced in Acts 18:2 (Acts 18:18,25). Fitzmyer notes “He is the more important of the two, as we know from Paul’s own writings.” Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles*, (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 652-3.

492 Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 2–4. Betz and Mitchell note “the unity of 1 Corinthians has more often been assumed (Marxsen 1968: 76; Bornkamm 1969: 244) or conceded (Barrett, HNTC, 14–17; Conzelmann, 2–4) than argued for.” Hans Dieter Betz and Margaret M. Mitchell, “Corinthians, First Epistle to the,” *ABD*, Vol 1, 1143.
them to remind them of Paul’s ways and his teaching. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in response to that letter and then travelled to Corinth himself. Afterwards Paul wrote a letter, “with many tears” (2 Cor 2:4), possibly when back in Ephesus. Titus was then sent to Corinth and Paul travelled to Macedonia where he met Titus on his return from Corinth (2 Cor 2:12ff; 7:5ff). Titus then went again to Corinth and Paul followed later for his last visit (Acts 20:1–3). During this visit to Corinth, the letter to the Romans was written (which meant Timothy was with him - so Rom 15:21). From Corinth, Paul commenced his last journey to Jerusalem.

Murphy-O’Connor identifies the visit of Chloe’s people with their report and observations of bizarre behaviour as the catalyst for Timothy’s ‘investigative’ visit. The urgency of the situation makes it very unlikely that this is the journey referred to in Acts 19:22. A six-week journey can be assumed for this expedition to Corinth. It is from Ephesus that the epistles to the Corinthians are written, and it is clear that emissaries also journeyed back and forth between the two cities extending the communication between Paul and the Corinthians. One of those bearing letters or bringing news to Paul subsequent to the writing of 1 Corinthians was Timothy. Titus (not Timothy), it would seem, was the bearer of a “stinging, forceful letter” which followed Paul’s ‘painful’ visit. Anxious to hear news Paul sought out Titus in Macedonia (Acts 20:1–6), which means he must have left Ephesus for a time, and then was able to send a somewhat relieved response to the

495 Witherington III, *Acts*, 84. This is identified as possibly being 2 Cor 10–13.
496 Titus is not mentioned in Acts, but was with Paul in Jerusalem (so Gal. 2:1,3). The only other references to Titus in the undisputed correspondence are in 2 Corinthians. Here the integrity of 2 Corinthians and the ordering of different parts of the letter shape our understanding of the sequence of events. See 2 Cor 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18.
Paul then stayed for about three months in Corinth before returning to Philippi.

Paul’s journeys continued after spending a little more time in the province of Asia (19:22) and we assume most of this was spent in Ephesus (19:23–41). After a major disturbance Paul departed for Macedonia. A three-month stay in Greece (20:3) is noted, but no specific locations are mentioned. It is assumed that the stay is in Corinth,\footnote{Betz, “Paul,” 189a,b. Betz cites 1 Cor 16:1–11; 2 Cor 1:8–11, 15–18; 2:12–13; 7:5–7,12–13 & Romans 15:22–31 as roughly correlating with the activities through this time.} which suggests a successful conclusion to the problems experienced with that community.

Here again we can add information from another source, the Epistle to the Romans, which is understood to have been written from Corinth. Timothy is among those who send greetings (Rom 16:21). The presence of Timothy with Paul is confirmed, as he is one of seven companions named as accompanying him as he departed for Syria.\footnote{“He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.” (Acts 20:4 NIV).} This is the last time that Timothy is named in Acts. The seven were not the only persons travelling with Paul, as Acts 20:5 indicates that the seven went ahead and waited for “us” at Troas. Paul and those with him joined them at Troas (Acts 20:6). From this point forward the group with Paul is referred to only by pronoun as ‘we’ or ‘our’, and only one is actually identified by name —Trophimus the Ephesian. He was identified as the cause of the disturbance that resulted in Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:29). Trophimus was previously named in Acts 20:5. Perhaps we are also to understand that Timothy was present and it was this group that travelled with Paul to
Jerusalem. Acts 27 and 28 tell the story of the journey to Italy, again the plural occurs, but here there are no clues as to those who remained with Paul.499

The fate of Paul and Timothy is left unresolved in Acts, except that that Paul “lived there [Rome] two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:30–31).

With no further mention of Timothy in the last seven chapters of Acts, the involvement of Timothy with Paul through this time depends on our understanding of where Philippians and Philemon were written, and our approach to the Pastoral Epistles.

A time frame

As can be seen it is difficult to chart with certainty the movements of Paul, let alone Timothy, from the available sources. While we cannot date with any certainty the actual movements of Timothy it is possible to identify the length of time that he was associated with Paul.

Jewett’s chronology dates Timothy’s association with Paul from the visit to Lystra around 46 CE (prior to the Jerusalem conference).500 On the basis that Romans was written around 56/57 CE from Corinth the association between Paul and Timothy extends to at least ten years. If Timothy was with Paul in Rome a further two years can be added to this time.

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499 There are numerous plurals in Acts 27 & 28, the majority apparently referring to all on board the ship. Acts 28:7,10, 14 & 16 appear to refer specifically to the believers accompanying Paul.

500 Jewett, Dating Paul’s life, Graphs of dates and Time Spans (page unnumbered).
Witherington places the second missionary journey around 50–52 CE subsequent to the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), with the writing of Romans around late 56 or early 57 CE, before Paul departed for Jerusalem via Philippi and Troas. Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem is followed by confinement in Caesarea Maritima for approximately two years (57–59 CE) before being transported to Rome where he was under house arrest for a further extended period (60–62 CE). At the very least this allows for an association between Paul and Timothy of 5–7 years from his recruitment at Lystra until Paul left Corinth for Jerusalem, or ten years inclusive of the time at Rome. While what we know of Paul’s journeys beyond the record of Acts is “largely inferential and conjectural”\(^{501}\), Witherington posits that Paul was able to continue his missionary activity beyond that recorded in Acts and was free to do so until a subsequent arrest under the rule of Nero. If Paul wrote the Pastorals, it would have been during this time. This would extend the duration of their relationship out to a time of over 12 years.

**Summary**

We cannot be absolutely certain of how long Timothy was with Paul as an associate and fellow-worker. What does seem clear is that the involvement continued for at least a decade. During this time Timothy travelled throughout Asia, Macedonia and Greece sharing as a ‘co-worker’ of Paul, and at times was sent as an emissary of Paul to different congregations (Thessalonica, Corinth, and probably Philippi).

There are indications that responsibility was given to Timothy. In Philippi and Thessalonica he laboured with Paul and Silas, and shared in the preaching and teaching ministry. From Athens he was sent back to Thessalonica as an emissary to

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check on this fledgling congregation and “strengthen and encourage them” (1 Thess 3:2). From Ephesus, he was sent to investigate troublesome reports from the church in Corinth. This was a serious task carried out with a fractious and divided church. From Ephesus again he may have been dispatched with Erastus to deal with the matter of the collection, and later (if Philippians was written from Rome) continued to be an important envoy for Paul.

For a period of at least ten years Timothy worked with and for Paul. He was an important member of Paul’s entourage, who participated in the tasks of ministry, and accepted responsibility for specific assignments on Paul’s behalf.
Appendix 3: The Pastorals - Authorship and Purpose

The first and second epistles to Timothy bear the hallmarks of a mentor advising his protégé. The predominant view of scholarship identifies these epistles as pseudepigraphical, while the more traditional view accepts Paul as the author. Those adopting the traditional view understand them as being written by Paul in the years after release from his imprisonment in Rome (c. 62 CE) and before his execution. They are accepted as being written at a time when his life and ministry were drawing to a close. An alternate view, and probably the view of the great majority, is that these letters are pseudonymous and were written early in the second century by one of Paul’s school. Luke Timothy Johnson writes that “[s]ome scholars persist in thinking that conclusion to be precipitous. Even those who like myself are not absolutely convinced that they come directly from Paul, think some of the reasons given for assigning their composition to a pseudepigrapher unconvincing.” Many scholars continue to acknowledge a level of uncertainty.


Authentic fragments

Not all scholars are content to accept the dichotomy between viewing the Pastorals as authentically Pauline or pseudepigraphical. P.N. Harrison advanced the idea that the Pastorals contained fragments of genuine letters that had been considerably expanded.\footnote{P.N. Harrison, The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles, (Oxford: Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1921) Revised in P.N. Harrison, "Important Hypotheses Reconsidered: The Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles," ExpT 67, no. 3 (1955).} Harrison believes that the Pastorals were written by a devout, sincere and earnest Paulinist who was very familiar with the other Pauline letters, and had access to other personal notes written by Paul. These fragments are found in Titus and 2 Timothy. Harrison identified fragments thought to constitute the last letter of Paul, written shortly before his death.

Our 2 Timothy, which was the first of the three to be written, consists of this last letter expanded and brought up to date by the auctor ad Timotheum to meet the requirements of his own day, with three shorter notes, which had really been written earlier, two of them years earlier, added as a sort of appendix or postscript.\footnote{Harrison, Problem of the Pastorals, 8. The fragments identified are 2 Tim 4:13–15,20,21a; 2 Tim 4:16–18a (18b?); 2 Tim 4:9–12, 22b. Harrison also believed 2 Tim 1:16–18 and 4:6–8 to be ‘as certainly the utterance of Paul himself as anything that has come down to us under his name’(125) and included them in his reconstruction of Paul’s last letter.}

While a later modification of his thesis saw a change in the number of ‘original notes’ included in 2 Timothy, the actual content of these notes did not change.\footnote{Harrison, "Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles," 80. Two fragments previously considered distinct were viewed as combined i.e. 2 Tim 4:13–15,20,21a and 2 Tim 4:9–12, 22b.}

James D. Miller also views the Pastorals as composite documents, built on an authentic Pauline core, and preserving the community’s tradition.\footnote{James D. Miller, The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18 & 146. The authentic core for Miller is 1 Tim 1:1–7; 18–20; 3:14–15; 6:20–21 (147); Titus 1:1–5; 3:9–11,12-15, 3:15c (149); 2 Tim “A” 1:1–2 (1:3-37?); 15–18; 4:6–8, 22a (149) and 2 Tim “B” 4:9; 10–18,19–21;4:22b (150) For him the ‘author’ may have been a group who sought to both preserve and circulate Pauline teaching and tradition. Included in the material considered authentic are the...}
fragments identified by Harrison, whose "argument for accepting the presence of some genuine material within the Pastorals seems compelling." While recognizing that the reason for preserving these fragments is not clear, Miller is persuaded of the authenticity of these fragments.

The fragment hypothesis does not command universal support, and many scholars are concerned at the implications for "the integrity of the canon and the authority of scripture" if the Pastorals are accepted as pseudonymous writings. As an alternative Marshall suggests that writing in another's name without intent to deceive be called "allonymity and allepigraphy" thus seeking to minimize the negative modernist views about pseudonymous works. He would include work written by a secretary or delegate, material edited or compiled posthumously, or even someone close to a deceased person continuing to write as they thought he/she would have done in this category. Adopting this perspective would locate the Pastorals squarely in the Pauline tradition, without the active involvement of Paul in the writing process. Marshall’s introduction of a new term indicates the difficulty that scholars have in wrestling with the Pastorals. While acknowledging the Pauline nature of the text ‘allonymity’ separates the text from the undisputed Pauline letters. It may not gain wide broad support, but the term affirms the continuation (and reshaping) of the Pauline tradition as his followers seek to pass on what they have learned of Paul and apply it to the situations they face. It is a positive approach that recognises the intrinsic value of the Pastoral Epistles, and acknowledges their content as being in line with Paul’s teaching and carrying on the tradition of Paul.

508 Miller, *Pastorals as composite documents*, 145.
509 Harding, *What are they saying?* 27.
Statistical Approaches

Statistical approaches add some light to our understanding, but do not provide definitive conclusions. Stylometric analysis does not provide a clear determination as to the authorship of the Pastorals as a group. Anthony Kenny locates 2 Timothy close to the centre of the Pauline corpus, while Titus is the only epistle “deserving the suspicions cast on the Pastorals”.\footnote{Anthony Kenny, \textit{A Stylometric Study of the New Testament}, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 100. The ‘constellation’ of the Pauline corpus is arrayed as follows: Romans (at the centre), Philippians, 2 Timothy, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Philemon, 1 Corinthians, Titus.} In contrast, K. Grayson and G. Herdan, using statistical linguistics, identify an “excessive number of words peculiar to the Pastorals, [which] thus provides evidence against their authenticity.”\footnote{K. Grayson and G. Herdan, “The Authorship of the Pastorals in the Light of Statistical Linguistics,” \textit{NTS} 6 (1959–60), 11.}

If the letters are actually from the hand of Paul, they provide personal and direct insights into the Paul–Timothy relationship. If the letters are in the name of Paul, but from a later generation of Pauline followers, they reveal an understanding of that relationship by those who followed in the tradition of Paul’s successor. In either case we learn about Timothy, but the information is understood differently. If written by Paul, it is an intimate and personal view of Timothy. If not written by Paul, it is the perspective of another (or others) about Paul, Timothy and their friendship. In many respects, this latter retrospective view may tell us more about the significance of the relationship for early Christianity, but at the level of secondary interpretation rather than primary source material.

The Pastorals cannot be ignored, and do offer insights not available elsewhere. J. Christiaan Beker observes that “Paul’s portrait in the \textit{P.E.} is actually a composite of
If tradition has shaped Paul’s portrait we must admit the influence of tradition on the picture we gain of Timothy. This is not to suggest that this tradition is contrary to reality, but does allow for the possibility of the reality being reframed by selective memory and the apologetic agendas of the later Church communities. Lewis R. Donelson, who asserts the pseudepigraphical nature of the Pastorals, identifies that the “the pseudo-author and pseudo-recipients all behave in a fashion consistent with what the author and his readers knew about them.” What we learn of Timothy in the Pastorals allows us a glimpse of what the early church understood about him, and of how they perceived the role of his mentor.

For the purposes of this paper the view is taken that the epistles are pseudonymous, and come from a source (“the Pastor”) familiar with the life, teaching and letters of Paul. The priority of 2 Timothy is accepted, both in terms of time and content. The likely inclusion of genuine fragments and the more personal nature of this epistle suggest it should be given a greater weight as we explore the historical Paul–Timothy relationship. The Pastor was concerned with carrying on the Pauline tradition, and providing guidance for leaders who stand in this line. Information regarding Timothy is thus incidental to that purpose, but presents Timothy as a ‘proto-type’ of church leaders in the Pauline succession. What we learn of Timothy adds to the image gleaned from the undisputed Pauline letters and the Acts of the Apostles. Since it must have been aligned with what was known to the readers, it also provides evidence of how Timothy was viewed by the early church.


Written for the church

The Pastorals have come to us in the form of a letter collection, but the letters should be considered individually for a better understanding of the purposes for which they were written.\(^{515}\) It is the epistles of Timothy that demand our careful attention, since the epistle to Titus contains no reference to Timothy. Plummer describes the relationship between Paul and Timothy as “one of those beautiful friendships between an older and a younger man which are commonly so helpful to both”\(^{516}\) and so we might expect epistles addressed to Timothy to reflect that friendship. We discover, however, that these epistles are not personal, as we would understand the term, but rather pastoral in offering advice about the exercise of ministry. Any personal information is incidental to the purpose, and the amount of personal information varies significantly from one epistle to another. We learn very little of Timothy from the first epistle, while much of the church understanding of his character and background comes from 2 Timothy.

In terms of their literary characteristics there are significant differences between 1 Timothy (which is similar to Titus) and 2 Timothy.\(^{517}\) In 1 Timothy “personal elements fade into the background, and the letter’s primary purpose is to transmit regulations.”\(^{518}\) Fee says 1 Timothy was intended for the church as a whole but because of defections in leadership was addressed to Timothy.\(^{519}\) The letter is all

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\(^{515}\) The earliest manuscripts of the PE are in codex form (there are no papyrus fragments), and the arrangement of the New Testament suggests they were included in the canon as a separate collection, since 1 Timothy is longer than 1 Thessalonians. See Jerome D. Quinn, “Timothy and Titus, Epistles to,” *ABD*, Vol 6, 562.


\(^{517}\) Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85. “It may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that, if it were not for the existence of its two companions, a plausible argument could be made for the Pauline authorship of 2 Tim.”

\(^{518}\) Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 1a.

\(^{519}\) Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 10. Fee argues for Pauline authorship.
business, and is written to the church, even though it is addressed to Timothy. The purpose of the personal touches is to “demonstrate the authorship of Paul.” In contrast 2 Timothy is more personal in nature and “seems to be a genuine personal communication.” Nonetheless the plural benedictions indicate that they are for the benefit of the congregation as a whole and are “implicitly overhead by the Christian believers associated with the named recipients.” Both 1 and 2 Timothy are meant to be read to the whole church.

The first epistle is a clear direction to a subordinate, giving advice on church order and personal behaviour, while the second also includes direction, but has a much more personal and intimate tone. Johnson identifies 1 Timothy as “the form of royal correspondence called the *mandata principis* (literally, “commandments of a ruler”) letter”, while 2 Timothy is “our most perfect example . . . of the *personal paraenetic* letter.” Some scholars would characterise 2 Timothy as of the testamentary genre, the farewell discourse of an aging patriarch offering his last advice to his successor. It does contain many characteristics of this genre, which is “paraenesis par excellence because no one can argue effectively with it”. The personal paraenetic letter “seek(s) to reinforce the moral character of the recipient

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526 See Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy*, 183–185. Johnson rejects this categorization as a farewell discourse is written by one who records the words and produces the letter posthumously. (Johnson, *First and Second Timothy*, 97) This could well be the process if Timothy was involved in passing on traditions and fragments of letters relating to Paul for later editing.

527 Quinn, "Timothy and Titus,” 564.
through the creative invocation of memory, the presentation of models for imitation, and instruction through moral maxims.” This certainly fits the content of 2 Timothy, but it does not automatically follow that Paul wrote the letter even though 2 Timothy 4:6–7 gives the impression that this is the Paul’s last bit of advice to his protégé. While recognising the differences between these two epistles, we seek information about Timothy and his relationship with Paul from the content of these letters.

Summary

The Pastoral Epistles were written in the name of Paul to provide guidance and direction to the leaders and the believers who followed in the Pauline tradition. In them we find glimpses that shed light on how the early church understood Timothy, guidance for leaders who follow in the tradition of Paul, and teaching about church order. These epistles add to our understanding of the Paul–Timothy relationship, and present Timothy as a model leader for those who follow in the Pauline tradition.

528 Johnson, First and Second Timothy, 340.
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