



# Theological Hermeneutical Reflections on Paul's Perspective of Pastoral Roles

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine Paul's teachings on the role of the pastor in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and related passages in 2 Tim. 4:1-5 and Acts 20:26-31 from a theological hermeneutics perspective. Through theological interpretation of 1 Tim. 3:1-7, it becomes clear that Paul's primary emphasis is on highlighting key images that illustrate the character and vital responsibilities of the pastor. These qualities are holistic, covering social, managerial, and spiritual maturity, as well as social and emotional competencies necessary for effective pastoral ministry. Theologically reflecting on Paul's conception of pastoral roles reveals certain implications for academia and the ecclesial community. Contrary to traditional views that depict pastors mainly as shepherds, teachers, missionaries, and evangelists, and taking care of themselves and their families, this study contends that the pastor's multifaceted role guides contemporary leaders and pastors to create balance and ensure that the church and community become therapeutic.

*Keywords: Pastoral Roles, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Therapeutic community, Theological Hermeneutics*

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## INTRODUCTION

There have been diverse views about pastoral roles within biblical and theological scholarship. The ambiguities surrounding pastoral duties have arisen due to factors such as contextual readings and expectations of pastoral roles, diversities in ecclesial orientations regarding pastoral duties, and different approaches to biblical interpretations of passages depicting pastoral roles and expectations.

There has not been a scholarly consensus on the subject of ecclesial leadership with reference to reading biblical passages such as 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Whereas some scholars from a secular perspective regard the passage as an interpolation, and thus attribute the list and the requirements of ecclesial leaders recorded in the text of 1 Tim. 1:1-7 as non-Pauline,<sup>1</sup> others, such as Sampson M. Nwaomah, from a contextual perspective, argue that the passage uniquely offers ideal character requirements for leaders to serve as models of righteousness in the church and society.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding these diverse views, the significance of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 to the church has been widely affirmed within theological scholarship.<sup>3</sup> This paper aims to study Paul's teaching on the role of the pastor from the perspective of theological hermeneutics. By analysing 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and its relations to other Pauline thoughts on the subject, inferences are made, in a summary sense, to reflect on what it means to be a pastor in contemporary *glocal* church contexts. This paper, therefore, argues that pastoral duties go beyond the

<sup>1</sup> George W Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Sampson Nwaomah, "A Contextual Reading of 1 Timothy 3:1-7," *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* 24, no. 26 (2023): 15.

<sup>3</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 248.

traditional roles of preaching, shepherding and teaching to creating balance and making contemporary multicultural churches and global societies a therapeutic community.

## METHODOLOGY

By surveying Paul's teaching on the role of the pastor and making relevant applications to the contemporary church, this paper employs the academic tool of theological hermeneutics. Theological hermeneutics is about interpreting any kind of text (especially biblical texts) from a theological perspective.<sup>4</sup> It pertains to the diverse efforts to read the biblical texts theologically within biblical scholarship.<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Luz gives five essential features of theological hermeneutics in recent times.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, Fosu has well observed that, following Schleiermacher, Luz regards the meaning of the New Testament canon and thus the entire biblical canon as the co-text of every biblical passage.<sup>7</sup> Next, theological hermeneutics is related to the church.<sup>8</sup> As a third feature, theological hermeneutics attends to both the hermeneutical traditions of the church and the biblical witness.<sup>9</sup> The fourth characteristic of theological Hermeneutics is its dialogue nature. Luz amply posits that "*Kirche ist nur Kirche im Dialog mit der Welt und mit anderen religiösen Gemeinschaften.*"<sup>10</sup> Lastly, Luz describes biblical texts as "*sprechen von Gott.*"<sup>11</sup>

The choice of using theological hermeneutics in this study is strengthened due to its creative balance of reading and reflecting on biblical text with dual purposes of establishing relevance both to academia and to the ecclesial community.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, interpreting and reflecting on biblical texts theologically prepares the reader not to meet the challenge of postmodernism without the Bible, but by using it judiciously, theologically and efficiently. In the observation of P. J. H. Adam, "if we abandon theological reflection on the meaning of the text of the Bible, we will indeed be blind guides."<sup>13</sup>

## PAUL'S VIEW OF PASTORAL ROLES WITHIN THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarly discourse on Paul's view of pastoral roles has been done within different disciplines, ranging from Christian ethics, systematic theology, hermeneutics and exegesis perspectives within the broader spectrum of theological studies. To begin, from an exegetical-descriptive perspective, Cletus C. Orgu analyses 1 Tim. 3:1-9 and concludes that the text presents a prescriptive set of leadership qualities that are not only meant for admiration but for emulation and the promotion of godly leadership in the church.<sup>14</sup> Drawing from Paul's instruction to Timothy (1 Tim. 3) and having the African context in mind, Orgu calls for the need for reputable church leaders who are further charged with the responsibilities of selecting, training, regulating, and disciplining church leaders in Africa.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, writing from the South African ecclesial context, Rabson Hove has recently argued that the meaning

<sup>4</sup> Werner Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Developments and Significance* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) is of the view that to interpret Scripture is to encounter God. Stephen Fowl, ed., *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik Des Neuen Testament* (Göttingen: Neukirchener Theologie, 2014), 26 - 27.

<sup>7</sup> John Kwasi Fosu, "Mother-Tongue Theological Hermeneutics: In Search of Relevant Glocal Interpretation of Scripture," *Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology* 5, no. 6 (August 11, 2023): 85–94, <https://doi.org/10.38159/motbit.2023561>.

<sup>8</sup> Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik Des Neuen Testament*. 26 from this perspective understands the church to be the Christian community and not a particular denomination or the ecumenical church. Here, Luz sees the church as "*eine Interpretationsgemeinschaft, für welche die Bibel ein Schlüsseltext ist*" (an interpretative community for which the Bible serves is the key text).

<sup>9</sup> Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik Des Neuen Testament*. 27.refers to the tradition of the Church Fathers and the reformers. The latter include those who were regarded as *dissenter* and *Häretiker*.

<sup>10</sup> Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik Des Neuen Testament*. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Luz, *Theologische Hermeneutik Des Neuen Testament*. 27. draws his first, fourth and last features from Gerd Theißen's *Exegese und Theologie*.

<sup>12</sup> P. J. H. Adam, "New Dictionary of Biblical Theology," in *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Adam, "New Dictionary of Biblical Theology," 106.

<sup>14</sup> Cletus C. Orgu, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Its Implications for Godly Leadership in the African Church," *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS)* 3, no. 3 (2020): 123–31.

<sup>15</sup> Orgu, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Its Implications for Godly Leadership in the African Church," 123.

and role of the pastor is that of a teacher, irrespective of the fact that the pastoral roles are multi-dimensional in nature.<sup>16</sup>

Relatedly, from a hermeneutical perspective and thus reading 1 Tim. 3:1-7 from a contextual perspective, contrary to some understanding that the list of leadership qualities is not exclusive to Paul and that they are not to be applied to ecclesial leaders, Nwaomah has well argued that “the passage challenges leaders to live worthily of their calling and task in their moral life, teaching ministry and attitude toward money.”<sup>17</sup>

Reading 1 Tim. 2, 3:1-11, from the perspective of gender and, for that matter, the feminine interpretation of the Bible, it has been observed that Paul's description of the role of women as being deacons (1 Tim. 3:11) and not permitted to teach has been critiqued as limiting women role in the church and thus to be considered problematic. To many feminist scholars, Paul, in this context, employs a language that seems unduly harsh and sexist. On the one hand, some scholars have argued that Paul in 1 Tim. 2-3 prescribes divinely mandated gender roles. On the other hand, other scholars have interpreted Paul's instruction as socially conditioned remarks suitable for a particular context rather than presenting a timeless truth that applies to every culture. Paul's use of the phrase, “one-woman man,” seems to literary suggest ministerial roles that are masculine-determined. Rather than interpreting the phrase to describe women's role as married partners to ecclesial leaders, many scholars opine that *μίας γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ* should be better understood in this context as consistent with Paul's emphasis on self-control and purity.<sup>18</sup>

Within pastoral theological scholarship, the legitimacy of Paul's pastoral theology has been questioned in the light of his calling as a missionary. In this case, Paul's primary identity and apostolic calling in relation to his pastoral theology generate mixed feelings among scholars.<sup>19</sup> It is argued that Paul's primary calling and ministry do not seem to fit the modern conception of a pastor. However, recent Pauline studies have awakened interest in Paul's contribution to pastoral theology.<sup>20</sup> Following Jonathan W. Lo, Paul's relationship with his congregations and his concern for their total well-being can rightly be understood from the perspective of pastoral care.<sup>21</sup> In this light, Paul's letters demonstrate his sense of closeness to and pastoral responsibility for his churches.<sup>22</sup> In other words, as a missionary, Paul had a pastoral heart.<sup>23</sup>

## THE CONCEPT OF A PASTOR AND ITS COGNATE TERMS IN PAUL'S THOUGHT

A clearer understanding of Paul's concept of a pastor and thus pastoral roles can be attained by examining the various related titles of the pastor as a minister of the gospel. To begin, following Paul's pastoral theology, the pastor serves as a servant of God. Paul sees himself as *doulos*, that is, servant, even slave, of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2 Cor. 11:23), of God (2 Cor. 6:4) and of the gospel (Eph.

<sup>16</sup> Rabson Hove, “The Pastor as the Primary Teacher in the Church: The Meaning and Expectations of Pastoral Ministry within the Mainline Denominations,” *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 104(5) (November 2023), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.54>.

<sup>17</sup> Nwaomah, “A Contextual Reading of 1 Timothy 3:1-7,” 16.

<sup>18</sup> Nwaomah, “A Contextual Reading of 1 Timothy 3:1-7,” 8; Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2009), 408-409.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan W. Lo, “Pastoral Theology in the Letters of Paul: The Basis for Paul's Pastoral Responsibility,” *Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary* 2 (2014), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas C. Oden, “Pastoral Ministry,” in *That Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, ed. Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2012); Eugene H. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975); Derek Tidball J., *Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: Apollo, 1997). Seward Hiltner, “The Meaning and Importance of Pastoral Theology,” in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. J. Woodward and S. Pattison (Oxford/Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2000), 28.

<sup>21</sup> Although the modern understanding and language of the pastoral office is largely foreign to Paul, James W. Thompson contends the term “missionary-pastor” is appropriate for describing Paul; see “Paul as Missionary, 26. Lo, “Pastoral Theology in the Letters of Paul: The Basis for Paul's Pastoral Responsibility,” 36. Although the modern understanding and language of the pastoral office is largely foreign to Paul, James, W. Thompson contends the term “missionary-pastor” is appropriate for describing Paul.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, “Theology and Ministry in the Pauline Letter,” in *A Biblical Basis for Ministry*, ed. E. E. Shelp and R. Sunderland (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 111.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1983), 50. According to Oden, “the pastor is a member of the body of Christ who is called by God and the church and set apart by ordination representatively to proclaim the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to guide and nurture the Christian community toward a full response to God's self-disclosure.”

3:7; Col. 1:23), for the sake of the church. The essential role of the pastor in this regard is to serve God through the body of Christ.

Another important related word depicting pastoral responsibility is *διάκονος* (diakonos). The Greek word *διάκονος* has come to be used in the more specific sense to describe leaders within the church who have practical responsibilities in caring for the fellowship (Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8-13).<sup>24</sup> The next title is *steward* (1 Cor. 4:1; Tit. 1:7). This dimension of the pastoral role emphasises that the minister's responsibility is to manage God's resources and fulfil the commission of the master rather than to create any basis for ministry in himself or herself.<sup>25</sup>

A further number of titles highlight ministry from the perspective of the government. The pastor as a shepherd serves as overseer (*episkopos* or presbyteros, Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-20; 1 Pet. 5:1-4), leader (1 Cor. 12:28), or president (Rom. 12:8).<sup>26</sup> The pastoral ministry from this perspective is to give direction to the community of Christ's people and individuals within it. Whilst evidently referring to a recognised position within the church, the greater emphasis of New Testament teaching is not on the authority of their role but on the spiritual responsibility which falls to them in their role (1 Cor. 9:27; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the word "evangelist" in Eph. 4:11 literally means "one who preaches good news" or "one who brings the gospel message." These are believers who are given the gift of evangelism. Believers possessing this gift have a unique ability to present the gospel effectively to unbelievers and a unique ability to train other believers in evangelism, thus making it possible for all Christians to be a part of this task.<sup>28</sup>

Three other particular names draw attention to the specific roles of the pastoral ministry, namely the priest, teacher and the counsellor. The priest draws attention to the liturgical dimension of pastoring. It is, however, not commonly used by Paul. Rom. 15:16 appears to be the only instance where Paul uses it to refer to a leadership role. In this instance, what makes the pastoral role 'priestly' is the 'duty of proclaiming the gospel of God.' Priesthood, in the new covenant, is conferred on all the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). The leadership of worship is not explicitly referred to as the task of the priest or president (1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1). Teacher and its cognates is a much more frequent concept (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11, 20-21; Col. 1:28) and receives special emphasis in the pastoral letters (1 Tim. 2:7; 3:2; 4:11; 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 1:11; 4:3; Tit. 2:1, 15). It involves learning of right doctrine (2 Tim. 1:13). Teaching is undertaken both by verbal instruction and the imparting of example (1 Tim. 4:11-14). Its effectiveness is dependent on the ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-10).<sup>29</sup>

D. J Tidball has opined that there is no exact equivalent in the New Testament to the contemporary term 'counsellor' functioning as the accepting listener who enters into the problems of another and gives encouragement and a possible direction.<sup>30</sup> The role of the counsellor which is, however, related to the work of the Holy Spirit (*paraklētos*, Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) is an extension of the ministry of exhortation (*paraklēsis*, Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 14:31). It can be seen as a frequent aspect of Paul's ministry. The contemporary emphasis on individual counselling may owe more to an absence of corporate teaching and a lack of agreed doctrinal consensus in our churches than to an exact role model within the New Testament (1 Cor. 12:28). Others would refer to 'confronting' or 'setting right'

<sup>24</sup> D. J. Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology," in *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, ed. David Atkinson and David H. Field (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 42–48.

<sup>25</sup> From the Greek *οικονόμος* Jacobson has well noted that a *steward* in ancient times described a person who was placed in a position of responsibility over the property, possessions, or household of another person, to whom the household actually belonged. Rolf A Jacobson, "'Stewards of God's Mysteries': Stewarding as a Model for Congregational Ministry," *Word & World* 26, no. 3 (2006): 249.

<sup>26</sup> Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology," 46.

<sup>27</sup> The understanding here is that as the shepherd, the pastor fulfils his or her responsibility on behalf of Christ, the great Shepherd. H. Moyo, "The Pastor and Embryonic Pastoral Identities in Southern Africa in the 21st Century," in *Pastoral Care in a Globalized World: African and European Perspectives*, ed. H. Moyo (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2015), 2-28.

<sup>28</sup> Hove, "The Pastor as the Primary Teacher in the Church: The Meaning and Expectations of Pastoral Ministry within the Mainline Denominations." Hove has well described the significant role of the pastor as a preacher. To him, effective preaching leads to the transformation of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2) thereby leading to cognitive development and subsequent behavioural change.

<sup>29</sup> Tidball, *Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology*.

<sup>30</sup> Tidball, *Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology*.

(*nouthesia*, Eph. 6:4, Col. 1:28; Tit. 3:10) as a neglected aspect of biblical counselling, but Col. 1:28 and 3:16 both connect admonition to teaching.<sup>31</sup>

### **THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S VIEW OF A PASTOR**

Paul has given some instructions on pastoral leadership. However, for the sake of brevity, this write-up limits itself to the text of 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Similar canonical passages, namely Acts 20:26-31 and 2 Tim. 4:1-5 are also looked at as co-texts.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 identifies Paul's instructions to his mentee, Timothy. Paul brings out the desirable qualities to look for in selecting leaders, particularly the qualifications and work of a pastor or one entrusted with overseeing the church. In Ephesians, the pastor is listed as one of the gifts to the body of Christ. Paul begins 1 Tim. 3 with the needed encouragement to participate in church leadership. Paul's subsequent instructions seem to imply that the personal desire of the individual is however, not sufficient for engagement in church leadership.<sup>32</sup> To Paul, therefore, certain qualities ranging from professional, spiritual, moral, ethical and social dimensions all serve to confirm one's calling into the pastoral ministry. Among others, Paul observes that the leader should be above reproach. The Greek carries the idea that the pastor should not be given any reason for blame. It has nothing to do with perfection or blamelessness. As a test for stewardship of God's resources and the body of Christ, Paul expresses that the Pastor should be able to manage the home well. A proof of faithfulness is the pastor's commitment to his or her spouse.

To Paul, the pastoral candidate should also possess certain inner qualities of temperate and self-control. In addition to the inner quality of self-control, Paul instructs that the pastor should be respectable as an outward quality. An important social quality that also describes the role of the pastor is the quality of hospitality. This practice was contextually relevant in that it was helpful, especially to itinerant gospel preachers of those days. Another prominent quality that Paul talks about is the leader's ability to teach. The strategic importance of this teaching ministry is its ability to safeguard the truth amid the prevalence of false teachings in those days. Here, the primary responsibility of church leaders was to communicate sound doctrine. To Paul, the pastoral candidate was not to take excess wine.<sup>33</sup>

Other qualities that Paul gives in the text of 1 Tim. 3:1-11 include being gentle and not quarrelsome, connoting the idea of being peaceful. Important to Paul that the leader is not to be a lover of money. Since promoting spiritual maturity was important to Paul, the pastoral candidate was not to be a recent convert. It seems clear that the above qualities are not exhaustive from Paul's perspective. However, they point to the seriousness of the gospel ministry and so cover the church leaders morally, spiritually, socially and intellectually.

In his final instructions to Timothy, Paul charges him to "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). The motive for this specific instruction is given in the subsequent verbs depicting the need for sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3). To Paul, preaching the gospel was connected to fulfilling one's total ministry as a pastor/leader. Timothy was encouraged to fulfil his ministry by discharging all his duties, which included doing the work of an evangelist. Paul thus reminded Timothy that his ministry must centre on evangelism. The idea is that the preacher should keep those outside the faith in mind.

Acts 20:26-31 is found in the broader context of what has come to be known as Paul's farewell speech to the team of leaders of the Ephesian Church. The content of Paul's message is similar to Paul's pastoral letters. It thus stands as an exhortation to church leaders (1 Tim. 4:1-16, 2 Tim. 3:1-4:8). By this sermon, Paul reviews his past ministry to make the elders in the church become aware of the danger of false teaching, unfaithfulness and division in the ongoing life of the church. Paul further sought to commit them to the Lord and the word of grace. Having explained the circumstances of his ministry as compelled by the Spirit and the purpose of his ministry as proclaiming the whole purpose

<sup>31</sup> Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology."46.

<sup>32</sup> John Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (London: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 2. John Stott has observed that the selection of people for the pastorate in addition to conscientious screening by the church, entails "the call of God, the inner aspiration and conviction of the individuals concerned.

<sup>33</sup> Orgu, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Its Implications for Godly Leadership in the African Church," 126. Generally in scripture, wine was especially prohibited for certain notable personalities such as Kings, Prophets, Judges and Priests. It is capable of affecting their sense of judgment and their performance of other functions.

of God, Paul charges the Ephesian leadership team to realise the same aim. The leaders are to guard themselves, serve as shepherds of the flock, and exercise a ministration of the word that both nurtures and protects the sheep.

### **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON PAUL'S PASTORAL THEOLOGY: IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORS' SELF-UNDERSTANDING OF PASTORAL ROLES**

This section of the study gives a theological reflection on the roles of the pastor from Paul's perspective. A careful examination of the selected passages surveyed above identifies certain key pictures that are thematically relevant and worth reflecting on for contextually relevant pastoral ministry. Five views on the role of the Pastor in Paul's line of thought are inferred. These pictures include the pastoral roles of shepherding, stewardship, preaching, evangelism and service (*Kerygma* and *diakonia*), hospitality and safeguarding oneself.

Significant implications are drawn for the pastoral ministries of the increasingly *glocal* ecclesial contexts, given the realities of the intercultural and international nature of congregations in contemporary times, which may reflect the Early Church.<sup>34</sup>

#### **The Pastor's Role of Shepherding and Teaching for Spiritual Maturity and for Ministry**

The words "pastors" and "teachers" are combined in the Greek text and thus could be read "pastor-teacher." This indicates that a pastor-teacher has a dual function: overseeing the spiritual lives of congregational members and instructing them in the Word. The pastor's role in this regard is the preparation of God's people for works of service. That is, to train the believers of the body of Christ to do the work of the ministry. Clearly understood, the ministry of the pastor is to help believers grow toward spiritual maturity and to train them to minister. The work of the ministry (of fulfilling God's mission in the world) is the responsibility of all believers. In that way, the body of Christ will be built up. According to Chris Wright, "Only one thing could be described as a competence, or ability, or skill – 'able to teach.'"<sup>35</sup> In this regard, the pastor should be a teacher of God's word, able to understand, interpret and apply it effectively (as Paul further describes in 1 Tim. 4:11-13; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:1-15; 3:15-4:2).<sup>36</sup>

#### **The Pastor's Role of Integral Mission (Kerygmatic and Diakonia)**

Paul's instruction on the pastoral role of proclamation alongside evangelism and social work implies that these roles belong together. Evangelism is sharing one's faith and conviction with other people and inviting them to discipleship. *Diakonia* is the gospel and our faith in action, and is expressed through loving one's neighbour. Knud Jørgensen has insightfully observed that "evangelism and *diakonia* are like the two blades of a pair of scissors. They give the church identity and functions."<sup>37</sup> This goes beyond simply practising social work and evangelism, parallel to and in balance with one another. Instead, evangelism and proclamation have *diaconal* and societal consequences as we call individuals to be salt and light in all spheres of life and to make disciples. Social engagement and

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<sup>34</sup> Attention has been drawn to the fact that the nature of the New Testament church was multicultural and thus international. This becomes clearer within the context of Acts of the Apostles, beginning with the empowering and communicative presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts). This is further exemplified in the cross-cultural ministries of Peter and Paul, as well as the example of the churches in Acts. Peter not only preached to Jews in Acts 2 but also shared the gospel with the Samaritans and later with Gentiles. It can be inferred that these converts from diverse cultural backgrounds were all incorporated into the church by the Holy Spirit. Next, the ministry of Paul and Barnabas was affirmed by a spiritually gifted, multicultural congregation. Interestingly, though not surprisingly, the composition of church leadership included representatives from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Under this context, the church prayed for Paul and Barnabas to enable the gospel to reach Europe. Later, through the churches founded by Paul, the New Testament Church is shown to be intercultural. Accordingly, while recognising our unique cultural identities among believers in Galatia, Paul encourages them to redefine their identities in Christ (Gal. 3:28). To Paul, there is no distinction of male or female, slave or master, rich or poor. Instead, we are all one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>35</sup> Chris Wright, "Theological Education, Bible and Mission: A Lausanne Perspective," in *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission*, ed. Stephen Bevans et al. (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2015). 149.

<sup>36</sup> Wright, "Theological Education, Bible and Mission: A Lausanne Perspective," 149.

<sup>37</sup> Knud Jørgensen, *Evangelism and Diakonia in Context*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary series Volume 32, Edited by Rose Dowsett, Isabel Phiri, Doug Birdsall, Dawit Olika Terfassa, Hwa Yung and Knud Jørgensen (Oxford: Oxford Centre of Missions, 2016), 1, 33.

*diakonia* have evangelistic effects because they allow us to witness for transformation and to demonstrate our faith in action. As a result, the phrase “integral mission” has come to define Christians who previously disagreed on the importance and functions of *diakonia* and evangelism.<sup>38</sup>

The gospel of the kingdom of God is to be shared with those who have not heard about it. Similarly, Christian doctrine, church history, and Christian ethics are to be transferred from one generation to the next. This is made possible through words. However, Christian faith without works is a dead faith. The Scripture enjoins us to love God and our neighbour as ourselves. Our neighbour is made in the image of God and loved by God. We therefore honour God by looking at our fellow humans from God’s perspective and by loving others as God loves them. Following the words of Jørgensen, “God does not need our works for the sake of our salvation, but He needs them to secure the well-being of His creation. We are God’s ambassadors.”<sup>39</sup>

These pastoral roles of proclamation and evangelism, supplementing social actions from the perspective of Paul, appear to be an inseparable phenomenon. This perspective, to some extent, challenges the popular perception of mission as devoid of evangelism and proclamation or witnessing in some ecclesial contexts. The common assumption in some other ecclesial contexts seems to be that modernity and religion/Christianity have failed to provide answers to the basic human quest for satisfaction. From this perspective, Christianity has historically been used to foster certain hegemonic tendencies. Hence, in the attempt to be cautious, there has been an emphasis on missions and ecumenism devoid of evangelisation.<sup>40</sup> While affirming that conversion is solely the work of God’s grace, it is essential to highlight that the role of proclamation as a human factor is necessary in the process.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Pastor’s Role of Serving as Faithful and Fruitful Steward of God’s Household**

Paul identifies the role of the pastor as a steward. The word picture depicts someone who has been entrusted with resources to manage. Since the church is the household of God, the pastor then possesses a unique responsibility for its smooth running. In this regard, to Paul, the pastor should first of all be able to manage his/her home, signified by being faithful to the spouse. In the church, the pastor should also be in the position to be a faithful steward, not only in the ministry of the gospel but in handling money.

This stewardship role of the pastor could be seen as the expression of obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under the pastor’s control, which is all-encompassing: ranging from physical, social, spiritual and mental graces received from God. Stewardship is therefore the commitment of one’s self and possessions to God’s service, thereby recognizing that pastors do not have the right of control over their properties or themselves. A basic pastoral principle of stewardship has to do with responsibility, faithfulness and accountability first to God, to one’s family, to the local church and the pastor’s denomination. Managed well will serve as an example to the community at large.

### **The Pastor’s Role in Making the Church a Therapeutic Community**

The pastor is called to make the church hospitable and thus make the church to become a therapeutic community. Paul’s idea that the pastor should be hospitable implies that the pastor should be willing and ready to create spaces for all kinds of “people”, and most importantly, strangers and visitors. In other words, the pastor should make the church and thus the body of Christ truly reflect its nature as a therapeutic community. The pastor is called in this regard to create an atmosphere of safety in the congregation. This means the pastor should endeavour to manifest the church’s inclusive nature.

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<sup>38</sup> Jørgensen, “Evangelism and Diakonia in Context: Obeying the Great Commission and the Great Commandment Now and Tomorrow,” 32-33.

<sup>39</sup> Jørgensen, “Evangelism and Diakonia in Context: Obeying the Great Commission and the Great Commandment Now and Tomorrow.” xiii.

<sup>40</sup> John Kwasi Fosu, “The Phenomenon of Conversion in Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity: A Critical Reflection,” *Interkulturelle Theologie* 45, no. 2/3 (2019): 249–67.

<sup>41</sup> Reinhold Immanuel Strähler, *Coming to Faith in Christ: Case Studies of Muslims in Kenya* (University of South Africa (South Africa), 2009).

Made in the image of God for relationships with one another, the pastor plays a therapeutic role in facilitating progress toward wholeness. Unlike any other therapeutic community built around a psychological counsellor for his clients, the pastor does not seek to create an artificial community. The pastor in this light is to emphasise acceptance (Rom. 15:7), forgiveness (Eph. 4:32), compassion (Phil. 2:1; Col. 3:12) and grace in an unconditional and divine love (Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:13). The basis of this therapeutic roles is that all (both the pastor and the congregation) have received acceptance, forgiveness, compassion and grace from Christ themselves. What this means is that the pastor is responsible for creating a true fellowship (*koinonia*). In the words of Tidball, creating fellowship is not limited to sharing common interests but participation in the receipt of grace.<sup>42</sup> Thus, from the perspective of Paul, fellowships which are formed based on a common interest in race, colour, sex, class, status, age or even moral background are questionable (Col. 3:11). For a true therapeutic fellowship provides security that hurts can be healed and at the same time pulling down hierarchical barriers through mutual respect. From the point of view of Tidball, this relationship-building role of the pastor in the congregation differs from the doctor/patient or therapist/client relationship. For all members, pastors no less than others, stand in a common need of grace and should stand in common submission under God's Word.<sup>43</sup> The therapeutic role of the pastor is, therefore, an attempt to help their members release themselves from the scars left by past mistakes and to grow towards maturity and wholeness.

### **The Pastor's Role of Creating Balance and Maintaining Equilibrium – For Personal and Total Development**

Among others, Paul's final speech to the pastors/leaders of the Ephesian Church is that they are to guard themselves (Acts 20:28). Given the pastoral realities of finding oneself in ministerial dilemmas and tensions, the pastor is invited to create balance and thus maintain ministerial equilibrium. The complexities and multidimensional nature of the roles of the pastor subject him or her to a continuous web of tensions and conflicts. On the one hand, for instance, the Pastor has God to please. On the other hand, the pastor has the congregation and, in some circumstances, the institutionalised church to serve. Drawing a clear line of allegiance sometimes brings about some inner conflict. Differences in the spheres of service can also sometimes generate some inner conflict, especially in the context of intercultural churches. What may be considered the Pastor's private life is not regarded as such since the pastor is to serve as a role model both at home, in the church and in the communities. Not all, the unique pastoral position of serving in a representative position makes the pastor play the role of solidarity in identifying himself/herself with the suffering of the parishioners and in some circumstances, questioning God for the congregational member's predicaments, and at the same time representing God to the people in a prophetic role of providing comfort to the people. Moreover, the pastoral dilemma is evident in the pastor's attitude. The pastor is called upon to follow the footsteps of Jesus in humility and gentleness, and at the same time, the pastor must be confident or bold in assuming pastoral duties.

These dilemmas and tensions surrounding the understanding of the pastoral ministry's role thus demand creative balance and, therefore, the maintenance of emotional and spiritual equilibrium. The impulse here is to create a balance between private and public life, home and community spheres of pastoral ministries, humility and confidence, and meeting the demands of God and those of the congregation. The pastoral role of creating balance further implies that while others look to the pastor, the pastor also looks to God.

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<sup>42</sup> Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology," 47.

<sup>43</sup> Tidball, "Practical and Pastoral Theology," 47. Many contemporary structures within the church seem to have failed to model this adequately, as hierarchical, patriarchal, and other structures of respectability have come to dominate. In so far as these exist, the church needs to repent and discover afresh the true basis for its community. Some tension inevitably arises because the church is a purposeful community. Christ did not only accept the sinner unconditionally but commanded him or her to 'Go, and sin no more' (John 8:11, AV).

## RECOMMENDATION

In light of Paul's discourse on the role of the pastor in the ecclesial context, some recommendations and thus implications are made. First, the multidimensional role of the pastor implies that theological education should be interdisciplinary in its approach. Next, the task of theological hermeneutics that seeks to balance academic theology with ministry needs to be revisited so that theology and for that matter, theological education will serve the church and the community at large. Since the church is going *glocal*, it is recommended that pastors become more resourceful in terms of intercultural openness and spirituality in context. This calls for a shift in comfort zones in doing church as a pastor, as it will require reading biblical texts from the eye of the other and sharing resources together with others in our respective local church context and denominations. Often, the pastor's roles of shepherding, proclamation (preaching), and teaching predominates within Paul's pastoral theological scholarship. In addition to these basic responsibilities, this study argues and thus recommends that the pastor's roles of making the church and societies therapeutic communities and creating balance should be greatly emphasised in contemporary *glocal* ecclesial contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Studying the texts of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and the related passages of 2 Tim 4:1-5 and Acts 20:26-31 reveals a list of qualifications that Paul provides for church leaders he established. These churches were overseen by elders like Timothy and Titus. Theologically analysing the qualities and criteria outlined in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, it becomes clear that Paul's main emphasis was on highlighting key portraits that define the character and vital roles of the pastor. It has been noted that these qualities are comprehensive, encompassing social, managerial, spiritual maturity, and emotional skills essential for effective pastoral ministry. Importantly to Paul is how well the pastor conducts himself or herself not only within the church but also at home. In this context, the pastor's life must reflect the content of their teachings.

Reflecting on the inferred pictures of the role of the pastor from Paul's perspective brings out the fact that the pastoral ministry is holistic. Contrary to the traditional roles and qualifications of the pastor as mainly shepherds, teachers, mission and evangelising as well as caring for oneself and the family emphasised within theological scholarship, it has been argued in this article that the multi-dimensional role of the pastor informs contemporary leaders and the pastor to create balance and ensure that the church and the community become therapeutic.

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