“God, who giveth us richly”

Wealth, Authorship, and Audience in 1 Timothy 6

Jackson Reinhardt

Vanderbilt Divinity School

jackson.t.reinhardt@vanderbilt.edu

Abstract

While prior biblical scholarship has firmly rejected the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy and Titus), rarely has analysis focused on socio-economic context. I argue that examining the economic conditions and theology of 1 Timothy provides additional reasons to reject the letter’s authenticity. While Paul’s audience was primarily impoverished urbanites, the author of 1 Timothy (i.e., the Pastor) was writing to a prosperous congregation who needed instruction on the proper handling of their wealth. Paul’s theology of wealth, in turn, reflects the context of his audience: he supported inter-ecclesial programs of mutual interdependence and a rejection of the prevailing modes of economic exploitation that existed in first-century Palestine. The Pastor does not promote any similar alternative economy among believers. He contends that wealthy believers should be charitable so as to build up a heavenly treasure and secure posthumous favor.

Introduction[1]

Since the genesis of modern critical biblical scholarship in the eighteenth century, the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy and Titus) have been relegated to the demarcation of pseudepigraphal literature—they are letters whose authorship has been falsely attributed to the apostle Paul of

[1] All biblical quotations are from New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

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Tarsus.[2] The majority of contemporary New Testament scholars dispute authentic Pauline authorship of the Pastorals on a variety of stylistic, theological, and thematic grounds, which includes everything from a noticeably distinct syntax to frequent usage of philosophical idioms.[3] In the realm of ideological criticism, the Pastorals represent a drastically different sociopolitical outlook than the genuine epistles of Paul or even the Deutero-Pauline tradition. Marcus Borg and John D. Crossan designate the author of the Pastorals as being a "Reactionary Paul," one who "is not simply developing Paul's message, but *countering* it at important points."[4] The Pastor, the scholarly moniker for the pseudonymous author, deradicalizes the Pauline tradition via severely limiting female participation within the assembly and explicitly embracing the moral legitimacy of Roman chattel slavery.

However, the materialist claims of the Pastorals—specifically in 1 Timothy—have rarely, *if ever,* been discussed when evaluating Pauline authorship,[5] even though they arguably demonstrate a similar reactionary mutation. In this paper, I wish to provide further evidential support within this debate: I contend that the discourse on the proper use of wealth in 1 Timothy 6 provides a materialist argument for rejecting Pauline authorship of the epistle for two reasons.[6] First, the audience of the letter is significantly more prosperous than any of the congregants of Paul's assemblies. While members of the Pauline communities were almost entirely composed of impoverished urbanites, the Pastor's audience is one of significant means. Second, the Pastor's theology of wealth is materialistically accommodating. To Paul, there was an overriding emphasis within his theology on caring for the poor, via the Jerusalem collection,[7] which entailed an implicit

[2] Bart D. Ehrman, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 95. Ehrman depicts Schleiermacher as the first theologian to publicly argue against Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy, specifically. Cf. Hermann Patsch, "The Fear of Deutero-Paulinism: The Reception of Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'Critical Open Letter' Concerning 1 Timothy," *Journal of Higher Criticism* 6, no. 1 (1999), 3-31.

[3] For a full discussion on the arguments and counterarguments concerning the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, see Mark Harding, *What are They Saying about the Pastoral Epistles?* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 9-27 and Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 49-85.

[4] Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 15; emphasis mine.

[5] Many have argued that the claims on wealth in 1 Timothy are wholly congruent with teachings of the genuine Paul and thus implicitly provide support for Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. See Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 149.

[6] The brevity of this paper prohibits a broader investigation of the entire Pastoral corpus; however, 1 Timothy features the only sustained discourse on wealth among the three texts.

[7] The Jerusalem collection or 'the collection for the saints' (1 Cor. 16:1), was "the relief fund that [Paul] organized among the largely Gentile churches of his mission in Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia for the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem. David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 1.

rejection of the vertical model of Roman imperial economic exploitation that emphasized patronage and benefaction. The Pastor, in contrast, makes no mention of the collection or the assembly-wide support for the materially desperate across the new Jesus-movement communities. Rather, the author of 1 Timothy prioritizes the salvific benefits that the rich can accrue via unspecified charity.

The Assemblies of Paul and the Pastor

While many scholars in the twentieth century depicted the congregations of Paul as possessing a materially diverse body (this position being the so-called "New Consensus"[8]), recent scholarship has demonstrated quite the opposite. Steven J. Friesen's research on the economic context of the Corinthian correspondence elucidates several key findings to reject any presence of the ultra-wealthy within the assembly. First, Paul's letters "provide no evidence for any assembly participation from members of the super-wealthy."[9] Friesen defines the ancient Greco-Roman ultra-wealthy as those belonging to the imperial elite (the royal dynasty and senators), the regional and/or provincial elite (high-ranking military officers, equestrians, etc.), and the municipal elites (the decurial class, wealthy men and women without an official position, etc.).[10] In the typical city where Paul would minister, these three classes on the poverty scale (labeled PS1-PS3 in Friesen's study) would compose a mere 2.8 percent of the population.[11] In the first century CE, "the overwhelming majority of the populations [living] under Roman imperialism lived near subsistence levels," with subsistence usually defined as "the resources needed to procure enough calories in food to maintain the human body."[12] Estimates put those living below subsistence compromising over a quarter of the population (28 percent), with those sustaining just enough subsistence for life amounting to about 40 percent.[13] (Friesen denotes these bottom two categories as PS7 and PS6.) There is no indication that anyone within the Pauline assemblies possessed a relatively high amount of financial power and prestige. The supposedly wealthy individuals named by Paul in his correspondence are, in fact, members of the middling class within the Roman empire. Figures such as Erastus (Rom 16:23), Philemon (Phlm 4-22), and Stephanus and his household (1 Cor 16: 15-17) were far from having the official or financial strength to be in PS1-3, as was argued by New

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[8] For a brief overview of the New Consensus, see Steven J. Friesen, "The Blessings of Hegemony: Poverty, Paul's Assemblies, and the Class Interests of the Professoriate," in *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times*, ed. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, and Jonathan A. Draper (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 117-128.
[9] Steven J, Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26.3 (2004): 348
[10] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 341.
[11] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 343.
[12] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 343.
[13] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 347.

Consensus scholars. These figures, among others, were primarily at near stable subsistence levels (PS5). Only two figures in Paul's genuine letters could be classified as having surplus resources (PS4): Gaius (Rom 16:23) and Chloe (1 Cor 1:11), yet there is debate over whether the latter individual was a congregant.[14] Members of PS5 were merchants, manual laborers, wage-earners, traders, shop-keepers, those lacking in any of the regal-provincial-municipal splendor associated with groups higher up on the poverty scale.[15] Thus, the most wealthy members of the typical Pauline assembly were economically closer to bare subsistence than elite comfort.[16]

Paul indicates in several locations within his correspondence that his audience was almost exclusively impoverished: they were either right below or just at the level of necessary subsistence. The references to the Jerusalem collection in 1-2 Corinthians and Galatians "make no provisions for large gifts," and instead "all in the group are asked to set aside on Sundays *whatever they can spare.*"[17] 2 Corinthians 8 provides even greater detail to the assembly participants' impoverishment as Paul notes that his audience should give "whatever [they] can afford; never mind what is beyond [their] needs" (8:12-13) to help the church in Macedonia, which is crippled by "*extreme poverty*" (8:2; emphasis mine). Such a policy might be beneficial to the Corinthians in the long run, Paul argues, for "one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need" (8:14) in case future "extreme poverty" strikes the Corinthians. Friesen argues that these references, particularly in 2 Corinthians, suggests that the majority of Corinthian saints belong to PS6, "that is, the urban poor who faced the prospect of sliding [into] economic crisis" at any given time.[18] Across the Pauline communities, there is a shared economic experience of subsistence-level poverty, potentially alleviated by the congregational collection network centered around Jerusalem.[19] Donations are not simple alms from the ultra-wealthy to the destitute—such calls are

[14] Steven J. Friesen, "Injustice or God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty" in *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*, ed. Susan R. Holman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 30.
[15] For a full treatment of economically locating each individual Paul mentions, see Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 351-358.
[16] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 28-30.
[17] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 351; emphasis mine.
[18] Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 351.
[19] While my argument so far has primarily relied on the analysis of Friesen, over the past two decades there has been a growing body of research that indicates that the members of the Pauline assemblies lived in subsistence-level poverty (although there are differing methodological and definitional understandings of what poverty means amongst these studies). See Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 97-152 and Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 220-258. Also, see Robert Moses, "Discerning the Body of Christ: Paul, Poverty and the Powers," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40, no. 4 (2018), 473–493. In the article, Moses examines how Paul's theology of "the powers" presupposes an audience that was, by and large, economically powerless. He writes: "Paul's explicit connection between poverty and the powers […] suggests that he […] viewed being weak […] or powerless […] as a major characteristic of poverty" (476). Prevalent in Paul's Corinthian correspondence, terms (and conceptual synonyms) of weakness and powerlessness are utilized to denote both himself (1

absent in the authentic Pauline corpus—but rather, as Friesen concludes, gifts from "many moderately poor saints in order to provide for brothers and sisters who were desperately poor."[20]

While there are difficulties in ascertaining the precise audience and background of 1 Timothy, enough information and inferences can be drawn to depict a markedly distinct socio-political and economic context. According to the work's introduction, Paul is writing to his compatriot Timothy that he must "stay at Ephesus" in order to counter the false teachings plaguing the Jesus-movement communities there (1 Tim 1). Yet, the text is not for merely one person, but an addressed community as given in the final verse: "Grace be with you [all]" (1 Tim 6:21; cf. 2 Tim 4:22, Titus 3:15). As with the other letters in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline tradition, this epistle was to be read directly to the assembly (cf. 1 Tim 4:13). Similar, to an extent, with Philemon, the content of 1 Timothy is addressing the concrete problems and social locations of the particular audience, while utilizing a literary conceit of being written to one person. Further, there is good reason to accept the Pastor's audience resides in Ephesus (if the identity of the recipients as Ephesian is not a fictional device), home to an oft-mentioned Jesus-movement community (cf. Eph 1-6, Rev 2, Acts 19).[21] In fact, the bustling first/second-century CE Ephesian economy only further clarifies why the context of 1 Timothy is so materially distinct from that of Paul's assemblies.[22] Reggie Kidd finds three points of divergence between the communities of Paul and the Pastor, the latter being (1) "*socially ascendant*," (2) "*culturally accommodative*," and (3) "*unheroically conservative,* or static in enthusiasm."[23] Thus, the audience of 1 Timothy consists of a deradicalized congregation,

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Cor 2:3; 4:10; 9:22) and his audience (1 Cor 1:26-7). Thus, even in Paul's theological rhetoric, if Moses' argument is accepted, there is overt evidence of a Corinthian community bound in poverty.

[20] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 28.

[21] As per I. Howard Marshall, who does not subscribe to Pauline authorship: "It is most reasonable to associate the letters with the leaders of congregations in the two areas mentioned in the PE [Pastoral Epistles], Crete and Ephesus/Asia Minor […]. It can be taken for granted that the sort of problems that Paul encountered continued after he ceased to be active in the area, and it is not at all surprising that the kind of doctrinal aberration found in Corinth crossed the Aegean Sea to Ephesus […]." *The Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 1999), 85. Similarly, Luke Timothy Johnson also makes a more implicit case for the Ephesian destination of 1 Timothy: "the mis-en-scene for 1 Timothy is plausible, if not probative. It matches perfectly the assignments given to delegates, and it reflects as well the busy traffic among Macedonia, Corinth, and Ephesus that is revealed in our other sources." *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 137.

[22] Ancient authors attest to the great wealth in Ephesus. The second-century CE Egyptian orator Athenaeus mentions the luxury of the city and its residents on numerous occasions in his multi-volume *Deipnosophistae.* See Gary C. Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 194-226.

[23] Reggie M. Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles: A Bourgeois Form of Early Christianity?*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 122 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 9-25, quoted in Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus,* 5. Emphasis in the original.

accommodating, if not supporting, the broader cultural, political, and economic features of Roman imperialism. They belong to an institutionalized church (e.g., the discussion on the proper role of elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 4 and Titus 2), one utilizing the language, customs, and standards of the broader Greco-Roman society.

Yet, this contextual disjuncture between Paul and the Pastor is made clearer by the material make-up of the Ephesian audience in 1 Timothy 6: there is a sizable contingent of ultra-wealthy congregants who are to be exhorted on the proper use of their finances. The Pastor uses the term πλουσίοις (*plousiois*), typically translated as "the rich."[24] Gary Hoag explains the phrase as those who have "an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience."[25] Such terminology, therefore, indicates that the wealthy among the audience goes beyond mere moderate subsistence but wealth that allows for the rich "not need[ing] to work for a living, as they possess material resources" from inheritance and/or the labor of others.[26] Simply put, the word choice of the Pastor reveals an extraordinarily affluent audience.

The Pastor's message to the rich further reflects this detail. In 6:17-19, the Pastor calls out "those who in the present age are rich" and warns them to not look down on others and not set their hope on money. The rich are instructed to "do good, and be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share." If they do this, "they can save up a good capital sum for the future [i.e., eternal life]." There is no discussion concerning the poor, in and out of the assembly, in the entire epistle, in stark contrast to 2 Corinthians or Galatians. While the Pastor refers to the care of widows (i.e., via economic sponsorship) in 1 Tim. 5:3-16, it seems their presence is intentionally negligible as the author limits the scope of this care by placing a variety of limitations on what kind of widow is allowed to be sponsored. The presence of the Jerusalem collection, or any cross-ecclesial financial network, is absent.[27] Slaves are mentioned in 1 Tim. 6:1-2, but they are not directly addressed by the author such as in Colossians, Ephesians, or Philemon. Timothy is instructed to promote slave obedience to masters rather than the quasi-egalitarian message of mutual affection between the master and slave within the Household Codes of the Deutero-Paulines (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-25).[28] Yet, while Justin Meggitt notes that "many poor people owned

[24] W. Hall Harris III, Michael W. Holmes, and Rick Brannan, eds., *The Lexham English Bible: English-Greek Reverse Interlinear Testament (With Strongs Greek-English Glossary)* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 1062.
[25] Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus,* 197.
[26] Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus,* 197.
[27] This, of course, is an argument from silence. Yet, it would seem odd for Paul to place the burden of the collection on poorer Corinthians rather than evidently rich Ephesians.
[28] See Borg and Cross, *First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon,* 53-58.

slaves in the ancient world, and that a mere reference […] is not a good indication of wealth,"[29] it would be strange if the author were *only* referring to poor slave-owners. With the exhortation to the rich following shortly after the message to the slaves, it seems reasonable to presume that these servants belonged to the assembly's wealthy faction.

While one can develop a general picture of the Pastor's audience, there is very little personal detail in the above description. Aside from Timothy, the Pastor mentions only a few names, some of whom are only referenced within the Pastoral corpus.[30] In light of this, we cannot cross-reference mentions between letters or even extra-biblical material, as has been done with the Erastus inscription in Corinth.[31] Yet, even in this compact discussion on wealth, the Pastor has revealed a crucial aspect of his audience: they were, unlike the members of Paul's assembly, very wealthy. He writes, in 1 Timothy 2:8, that women are to "dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes." Indeed, their wealth was so great that the Pastor took it upon himself to spend the last section of the epistle addressing their attitudes towards and behavior with money. I do not find it spurious to presume many of these Ephesians possessed moderate, or even abundant, surplus resources (PS4 and PS3). The Pastor, unlike Paul in 2 Corinthians, does not mention that their almsgiving would stretch their resources nor that it would make them any less wealthy! These individuals had to have possessed enough capital that the Pastor's suggestion would not cause them serious economic harm. Thus, while Friesen was only able to surely locate one member of a Pauline congregation around PS4, it is not doubtful that the audience of 1 Timothy had *several*. If there was not an audience with disposable wealth, I find there would be little reason for the Pastor to include a sustained exhortation as it would be contextually irrelevant.

The Theology of Wealth— Paul and Pastor

While Paul's theology of wealth is not immediately clear in his epistles, it is nonetheless a present and vital aspect of his public ministry. However, many scholars, past and present, have extrapolated from Paul's unsystematic treatment of wealth as evidence that he did not necessarily care about the poor, the right usage of money, general socioeconomic inequality, etc. To some, Paul's belief in an imminent eschaton colored his entire perception of the destitute. Leslie Hoppe writes, "the apostle's belief that Christ's return was near made dealing with socioeconomic problems at any

[29] Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul Poverty, and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 129-132, quoted in Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 353.
[30] For example, figures like Hymenaeus (1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 2:17), and Eubulus and Pudens (2 Tim 4:21), etc.
[31] Friesen, however, is quite skeptical of the connection between Paul's Erastus and the one mentioned in the inscription. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus," 354.

great length unnecessary."[32] These views, however, possess two problems. First, while Paul did believe in the coming return of Christ in his lifetime, the apostle desired "to establish communities that resembled the eschatological age [...] [as much] as possible."[33] As Bruce Longenecker notes, "Paul was seeking to do precisely this [...] not least in regard to the unity of the Jew and gentile in Christ. So why should the concern for the poor be any different?"[34] Second, there was an overriding concern for the care of the poor via economic assistance between assemblies, even if not explicitly pronounced. Paul commands his audience in Galatians 6:9-10 that they must "not grow weary in doing what is right [...] whenever we have an opportunity [from God], let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." This dictation, as Longenecker states, is "an ethical task of the Christian community [...] [they must be] supporting those in need with material aid—the need within the communities of Jesus-followers [...] but not exclusively so."[35] When Paul states that the assembly "must do good to all," this terminology is specifically related to the giving of money.[36] The end of the theological discourse in the profound epistle to the Galatians is a practical admonition: "to care for others, among whom the economically insecure [...] would have taken pride of place.[37] For Paul, the concluding praxis of his theology is *doing good for others.*

This praxis, however, goes beyond mere personal generosity and extends into the economic relationship between assemblies, as well as the ideological interaction of Pauline communities within broader Greco-Roman society. The Jerusalem collection, as Friesen writes, was "a dramatic initiative by Paul," one which hoped to not only provide material assistance to congregations and build stronger ecclesial ties with the Jewish faction in Jerusalem but more importantly represents a counter-economy in which goods would flow generously and freely between assemblies.[38] Friesen notes that "Paul's gospel called for a network of horizontal sharing among Mediterranean assemblies" which is perfectly explicated in 2 Corinthians 8:13-14, in which the apostle states that there should be a "fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance." Paul calls for a mutual economic interdependence between assemblies so that there is both a support system to help the impoverished in those communities and a means to lessen any potential financial inequality which might exasperate network ties. This "horizontal sharing" is in contrast to the economy of

[32] L. J. Hoppe, *There Shall Be No Poor Among You: Poverty in the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004), 158.
[33] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 138.
[34] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 138.
[35] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 141-42.
[36] N. T. Wright notes that the phrase was "in regular use in Paul's word, referring to financial contributions in civic and community life." *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians* (London: SPCK, 2002), 79, quoted in Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 142.
[37] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*, 142.
[38] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 28.

Roman imperialism, which Friesen characterizes as "an exploitative vertical flow of resources."[39] Instead, the Jerusalem collection "entailed the renunciation of the ideals of patronage, where large occasional benefactions would come from a patron whose wealth was built on the daily exploitation of the masses."[40] This collection was funded by the poor *for* the poor; it was not regulated or officiated by the ultra-wealthy representatives of the empire. Thus, Paul's theology of good works is inherently tied to his broad socio-economic vision of assemblies liberating themselves from the exploitative modes of production and distribution within the empire.

As previously noted, the Pastor does not discuss the collection, the extremely poor, or economic interdependence between assemblies. Instead, the author focuses on how the rich within his audience are to properly utilize their financial resources. The Pastor's theology of money, however, is not simplistic. He states that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils" and rhetorically maligns the false teachers in the congregation for pursuing money in detriment to their faith (1 Tim 6:10). Yet, while greed *qua* mortal vice is condemned, possessing an abundance of wealth is not intrinsically problematic. In fact, wealth is a gift from God, who "out of his riches, give us all we need for our happiness" (1 Tim 6:18). The Pastor believes that the rich enjoying their wealth is a legitimate enterprise, as God has provided it to them for their "happiness." This is not enjoyment that is "self-indulgent, but is [a] rational, deliberate conduct."[41] The rich are not supposed to be hedonists, yet the Pastor makes no indication that pleasurable use of resources *ipso facto* is immoral. Thus, the rich in Ephesus must thank God for all of their riches and the enjoyment wrought but realize that they are "[not] to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches" (1 Tim 6:17). In order to avoid the denial of the faith via greed or self-indulgence, the Pastor recommends that the rich "[be] generous, and ready to share [...] storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life." (1 Tim 6:18-19). If the rich are charitable, they can secure a place in God's favor during the final judgment. For the Pastor, the rich have within their bank accounts a pathway towards salvation.

The Pastor's theology of wealth is a subtle capitulation to the exploitative economics of Roman imperialism. The text does not call for justice or any sort of inter-ecclesial community of sharing, hospitality, and mutual economic assistance. Instead, charity is reduced to a personal decision of supplying the poor (though this is an assumption, as the Pastor does not direct the rich on whom they should financially assist), which in turn helps the wealthy secure posthumous, heavenly favor with God. The Pastor does not specify how much should be given to charity. He does not recommend a complete denial of worldly goods, as Jesus did (Matt 19:21), nor does he even

[39] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 28.
[40] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 28.
[41] Abraham J. Malherbe, "Godliness, Self-Sufficiency, Greed, and the Enjoyment of Wealth: 1 Timothy 6:3-19 Part II," *Novum Testamentum* 53 (2011): 86.

provide a rough estimate of giving like Paul ("whatever [they] can afford"). It is reasonable to read 1 Timothy 6 and conclude that wealthy people need not give much of anything as long as they purposefully demonstrate the act of charity to someone in potential need. This position reads similarly to the second-century CE *Shepherd of Hermas,*[42] written roughly around the same time as the Pastorals. Much like the Shepherd, 1 Timothy offers a "plutocratic perspective" in which "poverty and wealth are not simply recognized as facts of social life; they are justified as crucial components of the life of the assembly."[43] The poor/needy are *soteriologically necessary,* for if there were no impoverished citizens, how could the rich dispense with their finances so as to be obedient to God? The Pastor does not question the potential injustice of the ultra-wealthy or the systems that breed such economic inequality. Instead, he provides a pathway for the rich to stay faithful members of the assembly, while also holding on to a large majority of their wealth. The Pastor allows the rich to have their cake and eat it!

What is implicitly embraced, however, is the vertical economy mimicked within the assembly. The rich have become ecclesial patrons who dispense with their exploitative gain towards the poor within the assembly. There is no longer a generous sharing, but a calculated decision of who gets what and when. If the strict decision-making of qualifying who is truly a "deserving" widow in 1 Timothy 5 is any indication of the kind of discriminatory behavior the Pastor and his audience engage in when determining those deserving of financial support, it is not unreasonable to infer the same attitude existed towards the poor.[44] It is quite possible that the rich of the Ephesian assembly expected the same kind of praise and honor from those whom they had financially supported as existed within the patronage system of the Roman economy.[45] The Pastor has thus legitimized a theology of wealth that empowers the ultra-rich and the general economic system they are enmeshed within.

Additionally, John M. G. Barclay indicates that the economic implications of the Pastor's ecclesiology are in opposition to the Pauline inter-ecclesial horizontal distribution. To the Pastor, the church itself was not the primary means for financial support for either congregations or the dispersed,

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[42] Herm. Sim. 2:10 (51.10): "Happy are those who have possessions and understand that their riches have come from the Lord; for the one who understands this will also be able to perform a good ministry." Bart D. Ehrman, ed., "The Shepherd of Hermas," in *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Bart D. Ehrman, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 315.

[43] Friesen, "Injustice of God's Will? Early Christian Explanations of Poverty," 34.

[44] Barclay remarks on this strictness: "the age limit [of 60 to be considered a legitimate widow] is striking: on average life expectancy, not many women lived to that age, and of those who did, not many would live much longer. The rule therefore severely limits those who could be supported […]." John M. G. Barclay, "Household Networks and Early Christian Economics: A Fresh Study of 1 Timothy 5.3-16," *New Testament Studies* 66 (2020), 278.

[45] On the nature of patronage relations in Ancient Rome, see Richard Garnsey and Richard Salley, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 131-146, 173-183.

emerging assemblies. Rather, the author "conceives of the church as a network of Christian households connected by mutual economic support."[46] It is the family, first and foremost, that should help one another before they go to the assembly for assistance. The Pastor speaks strongly to those who do not help their own: "whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8). The "radical Christian alternative,"[47] as per Barclay, of substitute, fictive families and egalitarian, socioeconomic arrangements have no place in 1 Timothy for the "church is composed of […] households […] [it] does not supplant them."[48] Barclay's insights thus demonstrate another key aspect to charity in the Pastor's theology: the assembly *should not* be the first location to search for aid. Its charitable function (2 Cor 8:14) has been severely hindered, whilst the poor, weak, and needy are to look first to their families. The Pastor is silent on what one should do in the case of a hostile, non-Christian family (especially for one who does not meet the qualifications of a widow).

Gary Hoag contends that the Pastor's teachings on wealth are actually *consistent* with the genuine Pauline tradition.[49] Hoag finds three major similarities between 1 Timothy 6 and major sections of the Pauline corpus which deal with wealth (2 Cor 8-9, Gal 6, Rom 12): "[First] the wealthy must voluntarily share with a view towards equality. [Second] they must exhibit good deeds […] as distributors of God's generous provision. Lastly, the generous lifestyle demonstrates obedience of the [wealthy]".[50] While this argument appears valid if one reads 1 Timothy and the authentic epistles of Paul rather superficially, it lacks persuasiveness in light of the contextual differences discussed above. The audience of Paul in Galatia and Corinth *were not wealthy.* They were overwhelmingly poor and even the supposedly rich congregants were barely above general subsistence. In fact, 2 Corinthians does not explicitly mention wealthy individuals in the same sense as 1 Timothy— Paul is speaking to those who have evidently limited resources (8:12-13). Further,

[46] Barclay, "Household Networks and Early Christian Economics," 268.
[47] Barclay, "Household Networks and Early Christian Economics," 275.
[48] Barclay, "Household Networks and Early Christian Economics," 275.
[49] Craig L. Blomberg also argues this, yet with an emphasis on the supposedly Pauline tendency against broader Greco-Roman society. He writes: "Paul may not issue any of Jesus' wide-ranging or radical calls to abandon everything, although we have already argued that none of those calls was intended to be normative for all believers in the first place. But he does insist that Hellenistic Christians be equally counter-cultural in rejecting the systems of patronage and reciprocity so endemic in their culture. And he calls all believers to act as generous benefactors regardless of their net worth and with no thought of any material reward in this life. Should they fall into acute need, they should be able to count on their fellow believers to minister to them, even as they are expected to give from their surplus at the moment. In short, Paul commands generosity simply because it honors God; the only guaranteed reward awaits in the life to come. Paul as much as Jesus recognizes the danger of mammon as an idol and its potentially damning effects. Christ must be served rather than money." *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions,* New Studies in Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 212.
[50] Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from Ephesiaca by Xenophon of Ephesus,* 224.

while Paul does speak of equality (or "fair balance") between congregations, the Pastor makes no similar claims. There is no statement in favor of congregational egalitarianism, and it appears from the text that there will always be rich within the assemblies whose best path of salvation is charitable donations. Hoag fallaciously reasons that because Paul and the Pastor both implore the same action (e.g., generosity), then they speak to essentially the same audience.

Conclusion

The discourse to the wealthy in 1 Timothy 6 has provided two reasons for rejecting Pauline authorship of the epistle. First, there is a drastically different economic context between the assemblies of Paul and the audience of the Pastor in Ephesus. While the former's congregants were very poor and lived around subsistence level, the latter spoke to a contingency of ultra-wealthy individuals who most likely did not work, owned many slaves, and represented the economic elite of their city. Secondly, the theology of wealth between Paul and the Pastor is noticeably different. To Paul, the practical outworking of his theology were egalitarian communities that mirrored the coming eschatological reality: money was to be generously given amongst assemblies, and amongst all outside peoples also, in order to establish an alternative, horizontal economy of mutual interdependence among churches and believers. While the Pastor instructs the rich to provide generously, they do so in their own self-interest: to secure eternal life. The Pastor's arguments do not lead to the same radical economic implication of Paul and instead appear to embrace the vertical, exploitative nature of the Roman imperial economy: the means by which the wealthy accrue their resources is not questioned and the relationship between rich and poor appears to mirror the Roman patronage. It is wholly unlikely that somehow Paul changed his views (not to speak of the other theological and textual problems) in the few short years between his Corinthian correspondence and the Pastorals. The great dissimilarity between the context and claims of the undisputed Pauline epistles and 1 Timothy is so great that, as with theology and style, it is clear that the texts belong to distinct traditions in the early history of the Jesus movement.

As we continue to flesh out the distinctions in theology and context between various portions of the New Testament, materialist readings must continually be at the forefront of our analysis. Paul calls on his listeners to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) and that normative command, I believe, should continue to inform Christian economic practices today. If we as biblical scholars do not speak to the various ways in which New Testament writers, such as the Pastor, marginalize the poor and provide ideological-theological justification to the wealthy, we are performing a disservice to the impoverished in our own time. By elucidating the radicality of Paul and the reactionary character of the Pastor, biblical scholars can hopefully work towards constructing nuanced, emancipatory theologies of wealth that denounce exploitative economic practices and lift up the global destitute. The longer that scholars continue to shoehorn the Pastor within a Pauline theology of wealth (as Longenecker and Hoag do) the longer the liberative message of Paul is distorted into supporting structures and systems of economic oppression.

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