

Pastoral Leadership in a Multicultural Context, with Special Reference to the Pastoral Epistles

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Introduction

This essay examines the resources the Pastoral Epistles (PE) provide for church leadership in a multicultural context. Australia's increasingly multicultural, multi-faith context makes this a useful topic for the contemporary Australian church. Two recent, seemingly contradictory approaches to multicultural ministry are the homogenous vs. heterogeneous approaches to church ethnic makeup. The PE provide resources for leadership of both kinds of churches, because they demonstrate how people from every nation must reform their thinking and living in accordance with the divinely authoritative Pauline gospel. We examine three areas where the PE challenge traditional ethnic values: marriage and family; wealth and career; and honour and shame.

Australian Immigration and Multiculturalism

Australia is becoming increasingly diverse in ethnicity, language and religion.

At 30 June 2011, 27% of the estimated resident population was born overseas (6.0 million people)... an increase from ten years earlier at 23.1% (4.5 million people).¹

In the ten years 1997-2007, net overseas migration (NOM) contributed just under half of total Australian national population growth. In the in the year ended 30 June 2007, NOM contributed more to population growth than did natural increase.² Between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the proportion of people claiming Christian religious affiliation decreased by 4.38%, while Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism increased by 85.71%, 29.41%, 25.00% and 19.05% respectively.³ The Australian government is committed to a policy of multiculturalism, which 'recognises, accepts, respects and celebrates cultural diversity', within the bounds of 'mutual civic obligations'.⁴

Australian multiculturalism provides an opportunity to reach out to all nations, not just by sending out missionaries to far-off lands, but locally, as 'foreigners' come here. 'Multicultural ministry' encompasses at least three kinds of churches:

¹ *Migration Australia 2010-11*, Australian Bureau of Statistics publication 3412.0, 15 Aug 2012, www.abs.gov.au, downloaded 5 Sept 2012: 5.

² *Population Projections Australia 2006 to 2101*, Australian Bureau of Statistics Publication 3222.0, 4 Sept 2008, www.abs.gov.au, downloaded 5 Sept 2012: 4

³ No religious affiliation increased by 19.25%. *Australian Social Trends, Data Cube – Other areas of social concern*, Australian Bureau of Statistics Publication 4102.0, 26 June 2012, www.abs.gov.au, downloaded 5 Sept 2012.

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, *Multicultural Australia: United In Diversity* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003): 6. See also Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness* (National Multicultural Advisory Council 1999): 1, 5-8, 36-47.

1. English-speaking ‘Australian’ churches, dominated by people whose ethnic background is traceable to the United Kingdom, which seek to reach out to new immigrants from a non-UK ethnicity;
2. Churches which operate in a language other than English and are dominated by cultures which speaks that language; and
3. Churches which operate in English but are deliberately multi-ethnic. Using the measure popularised by Emerson and Smith:⁵ no one ethnic group makes up more than 80% of the church.

A preliminary theological question is: what does a church need to be, to be both valid as a church, and effective in multicultural evangelism?

Multicultural Evangelism: Homogenous vs. Heterogeneous Churches

Homogenous, Mono-Ethnic Churches

Multicultural evangelism has been heavily influenced by the Homogenous Unit Principle (HUP). In 1970, McGavran, a missionary in India, stated that people ‘like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers’,⁶ citing research that 60-90% of converts were brought to church by a friend or relative.⁷ This social attraction has been deemed the ‘homophily principle... people like to hang out with others who are like them’.⁸ Homogenous churches tend to be successful for sociological reasons: ‘people are recruited into voluntary organizations through social networks made up of people who are similar to them.’⁹ The HUP has led to a focus on planting ethnic-specific churches, which reach out to that particular ethnic group by operating in that ethnicity’s language and cultural forms.

Culturally homogenous churches presuppose that people of different cultural backgrounds may legitimately worship separately without denigrating from their particular church’s identity as part of God’s ‘one, holy, catholic church’. The Knox-Robinson model, and classical Reformed ecclesiology, both assert the sufficiency, but not independence, of the local congregation, for catholicity is an aspect of the heavenly assembly around the glorified Christ, not its earthly expressions. Knox-Robinson asserts the integrity of the local assembly as a spontaneous, Spirit-guided expression of the heavenly assembly.¹⁰ But integrity does not entail independent self-sufficiency; on the contrary:

Both Christians and congregations need fellowship to grow in Christ-likeness [for] they are part of the larger heavenly church of Christ, and [they need] to experience that wider fellowship.¹¹

Representing classical Reformed ecclesiology, Louis Berkhof similarly avers:

⁵ Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 36.

⁶ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, (Fully Revised) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980 [1970]): 223.

⁷ McGavran: 225.

⁸ Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 118.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kirsten Birkett (ed.), *D. Broughton Knox: Selected Works Volume II: Church and Ministry* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2003):20-22, 26-27, 88-89, 93-96.

¹¹ Knox ed. Birkett: 95-96.

Protestants insist that the invisible Church is primarily the real Catholic Church, because she includes all believers on earth at any particular time.¹²

This implies that ethnic-specific churches are valid and sufficient, but not independent. If they are founded on the Apostolic gospel of Triune God's historical enactment of salvation in Christ, then they are part of the church catholic. But, precisely because of this catholicity, they cannot remain entirely disconnected from other churches, but must seek mutual enrichment through inter-church fellowship.

Heterogeneous, Multiracial Churches

Nevertheless, recently, discontent with homogenous churches has grown, and a movement towards deliberately heterogeneous churches has arisen. It has been inspired in part by the sociological observation that despite Western society being, both in policy and reality, increasingly multicultural and multifaith, these different cultures and ethnicities have, instead of harmoniously blending, remained isolated from, and occasionally in tension with, each other. Cultural pride, and consequent disdain of the 'other' – i.e., racism – has been surprisingly difficult to eradicate. Simply throwing people of different cultures into close proximity has not led to mutual appreciation and harmony, but at best indifference, at worst, conflict. International conflicts, such as the 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks and consequent 'war on terror', have exacerbated these local pressures.¹³

Advocates of churches based on a heterogeneous, inter-racial principle (HIP) argue, precisely contrary to the HUP, that biblically valid churches must be agents and embodiments of inter-ethnic reconciliation. Their biblical data include: the fact that Christ deliberately crossed ethnic boundaries, bringing harmony between clashing cultural groups, and doing so precisely in his role as the Jewish Messiah who brings in God's universal kingdom – e.g.: John 4, where Jesus 'had'¹⁴ to go through Samaria; Peter's initial reluctance to accept gentile believers, and God's need to patiently tutor him,¹⁵ as an example of the need to overcome the ongoing effects of racism even among the regenerate; Christ's prayer for a visible ecclesial unity which mirrors the invisible unity of the Trinity;¹⁶ Paul's metaphor of Jew and Gentile being united as one new man and new temple in Christ;¹⁷ and the eschatological vision of an innumerable multiethnic multitude.¹⁸ In light of this, they argue, a theologically valid church must visibly embody, in a 'horizontal', inter-ethnic manner, the peace and reconciliation which Christ achieved for us 'vertically' with God, and which is proclaimed in his gospel.¹⁹

HIP advocates strongly criticise homogenous churches for following Western culture rather than the biblical vision of inter-racial reconciliation, and for consequently, far from

¹² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology, New Combined Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1996 [1932]): 575.

¹³ Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steve King and Gary A. Parrett, *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004): 51-78; Mark Deymaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: John Wiley, 2007): 3-39; Brenda Salter McNeil & Rick Richardson, *The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change Leads to Social Change*, expanded ed. (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009): 17-43; Douglas R. Sharp, *No Partiality: The Idolatry of Race & the New Humanity* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002): 20-57, 235-299; A. Charles Ware, *Prejudice and the People of God: How Revelation and Redemption lead to Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001): 5-26.

¹⁴ John 4:4: δεῖ indicates necessity.

¹⁵ Acts 10-11.

¹⁶ John 17:21.

¹⁷ Eph 2:11-22.

¹⁸ Rev 7:9-17.

¹⁹ Note 12 above.

challenging the recent social fragmentation, complying with and advancing it. Korean-American evangelical sociologist Soong-Chan Rah states:

American evangelicalism has more accurately reflected the values, culture and ethos of Western, white American culture than the values of Scripture... [This] Western, white captivity of the church is most evident in examples like the church growth movement of the latter half of the twentieth century.²⁰

Bruce Milne equates homophilia with sinful self-protection, and suggests that HUP churches may not actually be churches at all:

[I]n the new humanity in Christ, we are not determined by the merely human. If we are, then we have ceased to be the church in any authentically biblical sense. In the love-gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the sole base of Christian belonging and community, we can experience a reality than overcomes the fear-driven antipathies of our natural instincts.²¹

Milne's comments cannot be dismissed as reactionary, theoretical, socially fashionable histrionics: they grow out of seventeen years' experience of church ministry in highly secularised, multicultural Vancouver,²² and Milne is an evangelical theologian of international repute through his systematic theology textbook *Know The Truth*.

The Pastoral Epistles and Church Leadership in a Multicultural Context

The PE provide leadership resources for both types of churches. The PE agree with the HIP that a local church must be a community of embodied evangelical reconciliation. However, the PE do not insist that this reconciliation necessarily be ethnic, for there are other social dimensions where reconciliation can be embodied – e.g.: age; social status. Therefore, the HUP is not necessarily heretical, for racial harmony is not essential to the being of the local church.

Culture

Ethnic ministry inevitably raises questions of culture. Culture relates to patterns of relational behaviour which are learned informally through processes of socialisation within families and communities. Such behaviour is assumed to be normal – ‘everybody does it like that’, or at least ‘to be one of us, you have to do it like this’. They tacitly set the standards of behaviour, and thereby function as boundary markers, for that community.²³

Human culture is ambiguous: it is an aspect of God's good creation, yet tainted by sin. Paul did not expect secular culture to lead to healthy living; on the contrary, he agrees with

²⁰ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downer's Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009): 20, 22.

²¹ Bruce Milne, *Dynamic Diversity: The New Humanity Church for Today and Tomorrow* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press 2006): 63.

²² Milne: 12.

²³ Donald A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2008): 2-3; H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ And Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951): 32-39; David W. Smith, 'Culture', pages 197-200 in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2006): 197; 'Lausanne Occasional Paper 2: The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture' (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978).

Epimenides' negative assessment of Cretan culture.²⁴ His apologetic use of Athenian religion and poetry in Acts 17:22-31, and his affirmation of conscience in Romans 2:12-16, demonstrate that his opposition to secular culture was not a simple reductionistic dualism, where everything in secular culture is wicked and the Godly must leave the world and set up monasteries – Niebuhr's 'Christ Against Culture' type.²⁵ But his critique of idolatry, reorientation of accepted Greek notions of God's transcendence and asceticism (Acts 17:22-31), negative portrayal of the human predilection to distort generally revealed knowledge of God into idolatry (Rom 1:18-23 – which is an underlying assumption of Acts 17), and expectation that such idolatry leads to personally and socially destructive living (Rom 1:24-32) demonstrate that whatever good there is in secular society needs to be reoriented according to the special revelation of the Pauline gospel – perhaps akin to Niebuhr's 'Christ Transforming Culture' type.²⁶

The Universal, Trans-Cultural Gospel

The Pauline gospel is a divinely authoritative final declaration of how to be in right relationship with the one true God, and order one's life in a manner appropriate to this God. This gospel is trans-cultural, universally applicable: Jesus is Lord not of Jews only, but of all people everywhere.²⁷ The church is the international fellowship of those who have submitted to Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, as their Lord. The PE envisage the church as the place where this divinely authoritative Pauline gospel transforms believers from every nation. This transformation is not some individualistic, internal, 'spiritual' thing, but concrete and visible, for it is enacted in the believer's relationships, within the church, and before the watching world.

Paul's²⁸ use of *μυστήριον*, *οἰκονομία* and *οἶκος*-related words in 1 Timothy²⁹ brings together three major biblical-theological topics: God's activity in enacting final redemption from sin; the church as the locus and embodied demonstration of that redemption; and the responsibility of church leaders, like Timothy, to know, teach, and pass on a proper understanding of this redemption so that others may benefit. In Ephesians, *οἰκονομία* refers to God's enactment of universal reconciliation in Christ. Christ has been established as head of, all things, natural and supernatural. The international church displays this universal reconciliation to the natural and supernatural powers, both in its sheer existence as a community of Jews and Gentiles equally saved by Christ, and in the enacted unity wrought by the Holy Spirit. God has supernaturally revealed this *μυστήριον* to Paul, and appointed him to proclaim this final universal reconciliation to the world.³⁰ This is consistent with how Paul speaks in Colossians

²⁴ Titus 1:12.

²⁵ Niebuhr: 32-39.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Romans 1:16-17; 3:9-26; Galatians 3:26-29; etc. This essay assumes, in line with historic Christianity, that the origin of Paul's gospel was not human but divine – it was not the result of human religious genius; Paul genuinely received a unique, supernatural communication from the risen Jesus, which authorised him as a divine emissary – an 'apostle of Christ'. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008): 45-47, 210-215; Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005 (2003): 87-102.

²⁸ This essay accepts Pauline authorship of the PE – but pseudonymous authorship would not alter our conclusions for pastoral leadership in a multicultural context, for such leadership is formed around the Pauline gospel, not, strictly speaking, the historical Paul.

²⁹ 1 Tim. 1:4; 3:4, 5, 9, 12, 15, 16; 5:4, 14.

³⁰ Eph 1:10; ch 2; 3:8-12; 4:1-16, 29-30. Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (BECNT, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010): 65-68; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC, Dallas: Word, 1990): 30-34.

of his divine commission to proclaim Christ's cosmic reconciliation.³¹ In Ephesians 4, the Holy Spirit gives people as gifts for the up-building, οἰκοδομη, of Christ's body, the church. The metaphors are different – in Ephesians 4 it is biological, in 1 Timothy familial – but both refer to pastoral leadership in terms of applying the gospel of Christ's universal redemption to church.

The universal import of Paul's gospel is also evident in the interaction of Christology and eschatology in 2 Timothy. Christ is presented as the universal saviour and judge: he is the risen son of David, judge of the living and the dead, who has graciously destroyed death and ushered in salvation, life and immortality, promised from eternity, for the elect.³² Connecting his resurrection with his Davidic descent evokes the biblical-theological theme of the Davidic Messiah ruling God's eternal kingdom and permanently subduing the nations.³³ His salvation spans all time, from eternity to eternity. The Christ of Paul's gospel is Lord of all people, time and space.

Timothy's and Titus' goal in authoritatively teaching orthodoxy and countering heterodoxy is not merely doctrinal conformity but internal transformation which leads to loving communal harmony. They are themselves not apostles, overseers, or deacons, but unique Pauline Apostolic delegates,³⁴ whose authority derives from Paul's divine apostolic appointment, an appointment akin to military deployment.³⁵ With this authority, they are to teach the authorised doctrine, and authoritatively command believers to conform their lives to it. The purposive ἵνα clause in 1 Tim 1:3 indicates that that this kind of authoritative church reformation motivated Paul to encourage Timothy to remain in Ephesus. But this teaching should not lead to sullen external conformity, but to internal transformation³⁶ which expresses itself in the glad communal harmony of love. As noted above, Paul's the concept of orderly household administration³⁷ metaphorically envisages overseers and deacons as divinely appointed stewards³⁸ over God's household, the church,³⁹ and whose job is to administer the divinely authoritative Pauline gospel, positively through teaching and exemplary behaviour, negatively by refuting heresy. Titus is to authoritatively teach⁴⁰ that God's salvific, universally manifest grace negates ungodliness and enjoins self-controlled

³¹ Col 1:19, 25-27. Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC: Dallas, Word, 1998): 53-57, 81-87.

³² 2 Timothy 1:9-10; 2:8, 10; 4:1.

³³ 2 Sam 7:11-16; Pss 2; 89; 110; Isaiah 9:1-7; 11; Ezekiel 37:24-28; etc.

³⁴ F. Alan Tomlinson, 'The Purpose and Stewardship Theme with the Pastoral Epistles', pages 52-83 in Andreas J. Kostenberger and Terry L. Wilder (eds.), *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: B&H, 2010): 53; Thorvald B. Madsen II, 'The Ethics of the Pastoral Epistles', pages 219-240 in Kostenberger & Wilder, *ibid*: 225.

³⁵ ἐπιταγή, which refers to Paul in 1 Tim 1:1 and to Titus in Titus 2:15, is a military term. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC, Dallas: Word, 2000): 18; Phillip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006): 106.

³⁶ 1 Tim 1:5: a clean heart (καθαρὰς καρδίας), good conscience (συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς) and sincere faith (πίστεως ἀνυποκρίτου).

³⁷ οἰκονομία: 1 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:7.

³⁸ Akin to the way God appointed Paul as steward, or administrator (οἰκονόμος, οἰκονομία), of the gospel: 1 Cor 4:1, 2; 9:17; Eph 3:2, 9; Col 1:25.

³⁹ οἶκῳ θεοῦ, 1 Tim 3:15.

⁴⁰ He is to authoritatively (ἐπιταγή, same word as Paul uses in 1 Tim 1:1 to describe his divine apostolic authority) speak (λαλέω), encourage (παρακαλέω), rebuke (ἐλέγχω), remind (ὑπομιμνήσκω), and insist upon (διαβεβαίωμα) these matters, which are a trustworthy saying (πιστὸς ὁ λόγος): Titus 2:15; 3:1, 8.

Godliness,⁴¹ and that Christ's redemption, and Holy Spirit regeneration, have the purpose⁴² of creating a transformed people who are eager to do good.⁴³

Such reordered lives are necessary not just for internal ecclesial harmony; they also underpin the continuing evangelical mission in the world. Titus is to teach Cretans to reform their lives according to sound doctrine so as to⁴⁴ make the gospel attractive and protect it from ridicule.⁴⁵ The connection of Godliness⁴⁶ with the metaphors of health⁴⁷ and peace⁴⁸ indicate that evangelically reformed lives themselves testify to the gospel's universal, transcultural import. Paul links prayer for secular authorities with publicly peaceful lives and God's desire for universal salvation through the particular mediator, Christ, as proclaimed in the Pauline gospel.⁴⁹ Men and women are to behave in a manner both gender appropriate and manifestly socially harmonious.⁵⁰ Slaves are to honour their masters so as to⁵¹ protect Christ and the gospel from public mockery.⁵² This submission to authority agrees with similar Pauline injunctions in Romans 13, Ephesians 5-6 and Colossians 3-4. The universal gospel leads to individual, familial and overall social health and harmony, because a believer's relationships are characterised not by assertiveness or self-protection, but by other-focused care, modelled ultimately upon Christ himself.

However, the self-evident goodness of evangelically reformed lives does not guarantee public acceptance; on the contrary, 'everyone who desires the Godly⁵³ life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted' (2 Tim 3:12). Sin is, by nature, the irrational and ungodly⁵⁴ suppression of the goodness which is the creator God, and consequent decline into personal and social self-destruction.⁵⁵ Therefore, a sinful society – the 'world' – will naturally respond to a Godly counter-society – the church – with irrational hatred. A significant aspect of Godliness in 2 Timothy is the ability to persevere through this nonsensical persecution of public Christian Godliness. This connection of Godliness with perseverance is manifest in Paul's contrasting timidity with power, self-control, holiness and suffering;⁵⁶ his metaphors of a soldier's hardship⁵⁷ and of different kinds of vessels;⁵⁸ and Paul's exemplary sufferings.⁵⁹

Application to Multicultural Ministry

If the trans-cultural Pauline gospel creates an international church which worships the Christ who is lord over all nations, then multicultural ministry is not marginal, but normal. Church

⁴¹ Titus 1:11-12.

⁴² ἵνα, purposive conjunction: Titus 2:14; 3:8.

⁴³ Titus 2:13-15.

⁴⁴ ἵνα, purposive conjunction: Titus 2:5, 8, 10.

⁴⁵ Titus 2:1-10.

⁴⁶ εὐσέβεια: 1 Tim 6:3; Titus 1:1

⁴⁷ ὑγιαίνω: 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Tit. 1:9, 13; 2:1.

⁴⁸ Godliness (εὐσέβεια) and dignity (σεμνότης) are paralleled with a peaceful, considerate secular life: 1 Tim 2:2; Titus 3:2.

⁴⁹ 1 Tim 2:1-7.

⁵⁰ 1 Tim 2:8-15.

⁵¹ ἵνα, purposive conjunction.

⁵² 1 Tim 6:1; cf. also Titus 3:1.

⁵³ εὐσεβῶς.

⁵⁴ ἀσέβεια.

⁵⁵ Rom 1:18-32.

⁵⁶ 2 Tim 1:7-9;

⁵⁷ 2 Tim 2:3-4;

⁵⁸ 2 Tim 2:20-22.

⁵⁹ 2 Tim 2:8-13; 3:10-12; 4:16-17.

leaders are to be characterised not by homophilia but φιλόξεनिया⁶⁰ – stranger-love, the exact opposite to xenophobia. The HIP is correct: the church must demonstrate healthy, reconciled relationships. However, the PE do not necessarily demand that these reconciled relationships always be embodied, in every local church, through ethnic reconciliation⁶¹ – therefore, the HUP is not necessarily heretical.

But if this Pauline gospel is trans-cultural, then so are its ethical demands. The church is to be a community of repentant godliness: the challenge for churches and church leaders is to recognise, confront, and repent of, patterns of life and thought which are ungodly and therefore personally and socially unhealthy. This is especially difficult when the sins are culturally ingrained – when they characterise a particular community, and people from that community have therefore informally learned such behaviour to be normal. Godliness is therefore a process of re-cultivation, re-normalisation: believers from every culture are to learn new patterns of thought and behaviour which conform, not to their personal cultural background, but to the Pauline gospel. Because culture is an aspect of God’s good creation, some aspects of Godliness will resonate with a believer’s cultural background. Many will be incomprehensible to, or in direct contradiction of, a believer’s cultural assumptions. All will need to be reoriented, re-viewed from an evangelical, Christ-centred perspective.

[T]here are elements in any culture to which the gospel may legitimately appeal, even if... the adoption of the gospel will inevitably transform that culture in important ways.⁶²

Marriage and Family

The PE affirm the goodness of heterosexual monogamous marriage and the familial relationships which flow from it. Overseers and deacons must, if married,⁶³ be exemplary family men, faithful to their wives,⁶⁴ with obedient children,⁶⁵ and wives who live honourably.⁶⁶ The monogamy requirement invalidates cultural acceptance of polygamy.

The Christian community must exemplify the cardinal values of marriage: the system set up at creation by God is monogamous.⁶⁷

A church leader’s leadership of their biological family validates their church leadership: both are ‘households’,⁶⁸ and the use of προϊστημι to refer to leadership of both⁶⁹ evokes images of benefaction:

[H]is leadership should be not dictatorial but caring and protecting... they are servant leaders, following the model of Christ as a leader... who serves.⁷⁰

⁶⁰ 1 Tim 3:1; Titus 1:8.

⁶¹ Nor do any other Pauline epistle – nor is such a requirement explicit anywhere in the New Testament.

⁶² Carson: 61.

⁶³ 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6 do not require marriage of all overseers: Madsen II, ‘Ethics of the Pastoral Epistles’: 231; Mounce: 170-173; Towner: 250-251.

⁶⁴ Taking μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6 to indicate marital faithfulness: Madsen II, ‘Ethics of the Pastoral Epistles’: 231; Mounce: 170-173; Towner: 250-251.

⁶⁵ 1 Tim 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6.

⁶⁶ Taking γυναῖκας in 1 Tim 3:11 to be deacon’s wives, not deaconesses: Mounce: 202-5.

⁶⁷ Solomon Andria, ‘1 Timothy’, pages 1469-1476 in Tokunboh Adeyemo (gen. ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi: Word Alive / Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006): 1473.

⁶⁸ τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου, 1 Tim 3:4-5, cf. the church as οἶκος θεοῦ, 1 Tim 3:15.

⁶⁹ A leader’s family: 1 Tim 3:4-5, 12; church leadership: 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 3:8, 14.

⁷⁰ Mounce: 178.

This exemplary marriage and family is an aspect of ecclesial mission, for it is part of the church leader having a good public reputation.⁷¹

1 Tim 2 founds gender roles in creation order, thus reinforcing the trans-cultural validity of the ethics of the Pauline gospel. Men and women are to act so as to bring peace and harmony: men are not to fight but pray; women not to allure or demand leadership, but dress modestly and learn submissively.⁷² The order of purposive ἵνα clauses in Titus 2:3-5 indicates that older women are to reform their own lives towards Godliness, so that⁷³ they can teach younger women domestic industry and virtue, so as to⁷⁴ prevent the gospel from being slandered. Children are to honour their parents and validate their faith confession by practically caring for needy aged widows.⁷⁵ Paul includes violence against parents and sexual immorality among those behaviours which the law condemns.⁷⁶ False teachers are characterised, inter alia, by anti-marriage asceticism,⁷⁷ sexual immorality,⁷⁸ and disobedience to parents.⁷⁹ All this is consistent with Paul's familial injunctions in Eph 5:21-6:4 and Col 3:18-21.

Such affirmation of family would be, prima facie, attractive to immigrants, whose culture tends to be more communitarian than Western individualism. However, the gospel re-orders the nature of these family relationships. Immigrant families instinctively desire to enculturate their children with their cultural values, so as to advance the honour of their family and ethnicity: it is a great honour to be known, both in Australian immigrant circles and 'back home', as someone with a healthy, happy family, for it validates the costly decision to leave their country of origin and move to Australia. In contrast, the PE require parents to enculturate their children with the values of the Pauline gospel so as to advance the honour of Christ and his church.

For men, the benefactorial sense of προϊστημι, read together with Paul's modelling of a husband's care of his wife on Christ,⁸⁰ and his exhorting fathers to not exasperate and discourage their children but bring them up in the Lord,⁸¹ subvert traditional paternal authority. African commentator Yusufu Turaki says:

Believers should not appeal to traditions or customs as the basis for their relationship and roles in the family and marriage, but to Christ... as we work towards a complementary relationship characterized by love and respect.⁸²

Thielman notes that in the first century, the wife's domestic role served the husband's social prestige, whereas Paul commands husbands to be willing to 'his own social prestige and well-being, indeed his life, for the sake of his wife'.⁸³

⁷¹ 1 Tim 3:2, 7; Titus 1:7.

⁷² 1 Tim 2:8-15. Detailed engagement with the debate concerning women's leadership is beyond the scope of this essay.

⁷³ ἵνα: Titus 2:4.

⁷⁴ ἵνα: Titus 2:5c.

⁷⁵ 1 Tim 5:4, 8.

⁷⁶ ἀτρολῶαις and μητρολῶαις in 1 Tim 1:9 is probably not limited to murdering one's parents but includes beating them: Mounce: 38. πόρνοις and ἀρσενοκοίταις in 1 Tim 1:10 refers to adultery and homosexuality respectively: Mounce: 38-39; Towner: 127-128.

⁷⁷ 1 Tim 4:3.

⁷⁸ 2 Tim 3:6.

⁷⁹ 2 Tim 3:2.

⁸⁰ Eph 5:25-33

⁸¹ Eph 6:4; Col 3:21.

⁸² Yusufu Turaki, 'Ephesians', pages 1425-1438 in Adeyemo (gen. ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*: 1437.

⁸³ Thielman: 382.

Similarly, as fathers, men are to bring up their children, not in their own image, to honour themselves and propagate their own name and heritage, but in the image of Christ, to serve their heavenly father and propagate the Christian gospel. The PE's Pauline gospel thus invites Christian immigrant parents to re-view themselves and their family role from an evangelical perspective: the tradition truly worth handing on is not their family and ethnicity, but the gospel.

The freedoms and opportunities of Western individualism often tempt immigrants to abandon the 'stifling oppression' of family expectations and seek personal fulfilment in work, play, and sexual liberty. In contrast, the PE calls women to domestic fulfilment, and children to them to validate their Christian profession by caring for their parents. The domestic roles Titus 2 enjoins upon women do not necessarily forbid them from paid secular employment and highly responsible, visible, prestigious jobs; it does encourage them to not prioritise such secular employment, but put their family first. Men, too, while certainly not forbidden from secular employment, are encouraged to take responsibility for leading both church and family towards God in Christ, by praying and teaching.⁸⁴ The gospel thereby invites immigrants to see Western individualism for what it is – anti-relational narcissism – and to re-view domestic service and parental care not as oppressive obligations but opportunities to display Christ-like love and compassion to the needy.

Wealth and Career

Immigrants often have a strong work ethic. Reasons for this include: immigrants tend to be ambitious, their motivation for immigrating being an aspiration for personal and familial betterment; a lack of local learning, experience, and personal networks, means they have to work hard to become established; and the difficulties of life in their country of origin increases the effort required to merely survive, therefore, what feels 'normal' to an immigrant is sheer workaholicism in a country like Australia, with significant social capital. This strong work ethic means immigrants and their children may begin life in Australia relatively impoverished, acquire wealth rapidly and righteously through honest hard work, and end up in upper-middle-class comfort, indistinguishable in practice from Western atheistic materialism. Because they achieve this wealth through honest hard work, it potentially leads to 'capitalistic', 'right-wing' social views which disdain 'handouts' to the 'lazy'. Immigrants often encourage their children to seek high-prestige professions, such as medicine and law. Again, such material prosperity and career success honours the family and validates the decision to immigrate.

In strong contrast, the PE explicitly enjoins us not to trust uncertain wealth, but trust God, the source of all wealth; be content with basic life necessities; and store up treasure in heaven through being generous.⁸⁵ False teachers desire wealth; money-love causes people to wander from the faith.⁸⁶ The PE do not despise secular employment – they encourage slaves to submit to, and work diligently for, their masters – but being an overseer is a noble task,⁸⁷ although it comes with persecutions.⁸⁸ Immigrant children who abandon lucrative professions for professional ministry often face parental opposition. Richard Chin, the current National Director of AFES,⁸⁹ has spoken publicly how his father was willing to get on

⁸⁴ 1 Tim 2:8-15.

⁸⁵ 1 Tim 6:7-8, 17-19.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ 1 Tim 3:1.

⁸⁸ 2 Tim 1:8-9; 2:8-13; 3:10-12; 4:16-18.

⁸⁹ Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students: www.afes.org.au.

his knees in public – a significant act of personal humiliation in any culture! – and beg Richard not to give up medicine for full-time ministry. Sri Lankan theologian Ajith Fernando laments that:

... the church suffers from unmotivated workers who do low-quality work... [because] they have lost the sense of the glory of their ministry... [because they have been] influenced by the false standards of society.⁹⁰

The PE's attitude to wealth and career calls immigrants to re-view something as basic as their motivation to immigrate: they may need to repent of money-love.

Honour, Shame, 'Face' and Truthfulness

The above views on marriage, family and wealth have revolved around the immigrant family's honour, both among the Australian immigrant community and their original homeland. Many immigrants, coming from a communal, honour-shame culture, may conduct relationships with a view to 'saving face' – respecting the dignity of people in power – rather than speaking their mind, or admitting the facts of a situation. This conflicts with Western prioritisation of 'truth' – confessing what we actually feel or think, and admitting the objective reality of a situation, even if it embarrasses us or some significant person whom we are in relationship with. In an honour-shame culture, such brutal honesty is not seen as socially beneficial, but as immature and downright rude.

The PE offer a delightfully nuanced solution. Truth matters: Paul's vice list in 1 Tim 1 includes ψεύσταις and ἐπιόρκοις as contrary to the διδασκαλία ἀντίκειμαι of the Pauline gospel;⁹¹ Timothy must correctly handle the word of truth;⁹² this true teaching is contrasted with false teachers who do not possess truth but propagate myths.⁹³ But personal dignity matters too: the requirements for overseers, deacons and their wives amount to a life of public dignity which draws social honour,⁹⁴ in strong contrast to the self-evident folly of false teachers;⁹⁵ if it is necessary to rebuke an older man, Timothy should not do so sharply but with paternal respect.⁹⁶

Like a family, the Christian community consists of people of all ages, and... all need to be treated appropriately... young Timothy... must be careful to address [older people] with all the respect which they are due. They are fathers and mothers. Who would dare speak *harshly* to his parents? In certain African cultures, such a person would be chased from the village!⁹⁷

The PE validate neither ethnic face-saving nor Aussie tall-poppy-chopping: they invite immigrants to speak the truth, in a manner that strengthens existing communal relationships – i.e.: to speak the truth in love.

⁹⁰ Ajith Fernando, *Leadership Lifestyle: A Study of 1 Timothy* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1985): 50

⁹¹ 1 Tim 1:9-10.

⁹² 2 Tim 2:15.

⁹³ 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 2:18; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:14.

⁹⁴ 1 Tim 3; Titus 1:5-9.

⁹⁵ 2 Tim 9.

⁹⁶ 1 Tim 5:1.

⁹⁷ Andria, '1 Timothy': 1474.

HIP vs. HUP?

The above challenges to accepted immigrant culture apply equally to HUP and HIP churches. Homogenous churches risk replicating cultural 'blind spots'; but also may be shining examples of radically counter-cultural behaviour. The enforced cultural proximity of heterogeneous churches may help overcome cultural blind spots; or, if the ethnicities share similar cultural traits, it may reinforce them. The church must be a community characterised by reconciliation – but there are more dimensions to reconciliation than ethnicity. As overviewed above, wives, husbands and children can be reconciled through appropriate behaviour; wealthy, successful immigrants can be reconciled with poor failures; and all such reconciliation can be carried out in an environment which affirms both truth and personal dignity – where truth is reconciled with respect.

Conclusion

Australia's increasingly multicultural, multi-faith context means much future ministry will occur in a multicultural context. The PE indicate that whatever the makeup of a particular church – homogeneous or heterogeneous – it must be a community where people of all ages, economic strata, and ethnicities, reform their thinking and living in accordance with the divinely authoritative, trans-cultural Pauline gospel.

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