

Evangelical Christian responsibility within Political Elections and General Involvement in South Africa (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

Professor Martin Pohlmann, North West University Research; Baptist Theological College Adjunct Lecturer.

Abstract

There is more in common between Christians and the general population than is often given credit. The Baptist principle (Baptist Union of Southern Africa) of 'separation of Church and State' does not deny this. Rather, there is a complimentary role between the two. Everyone shares God's created earth which further makes all responsible for fulfilling the Creation ordinance. This includes the instruction to "rule over the earth" as stated in Genesis 1:26 because all are created in the 'image of God'. As generally conservative biblically based Evangelical Christians, yet informed hermeneutically, acknowledge this fact through their 'faith' and so are even more responsible when it comes to Political Elections and involvement within society. Paul's admonition to Timothy his younger colleague in 1 Timothy 2:1-6, while he was situated in the city (πολις) of Ephesus, is worthy of consideration within our South African context. It is specifically directed at Christians, but not exclusively – which is part of the research problem. Rather, Christians should exemplify political responsibility which they should be taught at Church. The further exhortation to only appoint "blameless" overseeing leaders in the Church (1 Tm 3:1) sets the pace (or example) for all appointed leaders in civil society. Overseers, deacons and the women (γυνε) in the Church context are all equally told to "likewise" be known as people of sound character. There is no rank when it comes to the way leaders conduct themselves. Good sound character and responsibility is by implication and application expected of all – and could reach to civic personnel. This article intends to first encourage Bible-believing Evangelical Christians to be responsible and respectful 'political' citizens both within and beyond the Church because the Church inevitably models life within the Kingdom of God. Depending on the political scenario afforded Christians are to participate as far as their consciences allow. Within the South African context all eligible citizens are allowed to exercise their responsibility at Municipal, Regional and National level since the dawn of our Democracy launched in 1994.

1. Introduction

For many Christians around the world and within the South African context, there is often a separation of Church and state to the extent that the two are thought by some; not to meet. While it is true that for Baptists, one of the cherished principles is a 'Separation of Church and State', this will be explored more fully in this article. From the very beginning in Genesis 1:1, we are led to believe that God created everything and everyone on planet earth. Christians are part and parcel of society in general and every State is influenced to one extent or another

by the Church. The Baptist handbook of 2022 states concerning Church and State, that, “in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions” (2022:276). This includes engaging each other as well.

For example, Moll (2023:5-40) was born into a Baptist family on 12 March 1956 and was also immediately taken to the local Baptist Church which his family attended. Moll says: “My family and our cousins were staunch Baptists, stemming from our German origins” (Moll, 2023:6). As Moll (2023:7) tells his story in his publication, ‘Conscientious objector to the Apartheid Army’ (2023), he was to find out early in his Christian life that, “...segregation had become part of our lives without our even needing to reflect on it. It never occurred to me, as I was involved with the Young People’s meetings, that we might never get together with young coloured or African Baptists.”

As Moll (2023:9) grew up in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, he was to discover that it was not only the Church that was segregated, but also the schools of education he attended. By the time he entered high school, he became aware that: “All the pupils were white.” There was a growing awareness that, “...all the places we lived when I was a boy – Whittlesea, Alice, Lady Frere, East London and Umtata – our house was in a ‘white’ area except for Umtata where after about 1976 black people started to move in” (Moll 2023:15).

Moll’s story (2023) is very similar to many fellow Christians growing up in the same era and area as borne out for example by Steele (2023:2,3,32,35). The general attitude was to accept the status quo of the time. One of the consequences of this era in South Africa at least, was that only ‘whites’ were allowed to vote in the political elections. The majority of the population of South Africa at that time was not allowed to vote. The prime subject of this article is not to recount or discuss the past era – but to be aware of it and look at the issue of Evangelical Christians participating politically today within the new era. Every citizen of voting age is now allowed to vote. The question posed in this article is essentially how Evangelical Christians’ view political responsibility now and what guidelines could help them along this path.

Years later, as a young adult and university graduate, Moll (2023:74) was faced with one of the biggest decisions of his life. Sparked by the need to answer to the military conscription to attend a short camp after he had already completed military training, he replied to a small military court: “I objected that Dr Allan Boesak, a highly trained theologian and author of a famous book, *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* should surely have the same voting privileges as white people who had not even completed high school.” In this instance an Evangelical Christian had crossed the line of his quiet private faith and upbringing to engage in the wider matter of politics and responsibility within God’s wider Kingdom.

Stott (2006:43-45) warns Evangelical Christians (A term re-addressed by Stott), who have not always been engaged in wider Kingdom responsibility to be careful of despair and cynicism on the one hand; and being naïve and even simplistic on the other hand. “All individual Christians should be politically active in the sense that, as conscientious citizens, they will vote in elections, inform themselves about contemporary issues, share in public debate, and perhaps write to a newspaper, lobby their member of parliament or congress or take part in a demonstration” (Stott 2006:43). Harold (2018:22) confirms: “During the apartheid era, the Evangelical Church adopted a system either explicitly or implicitly, by adopting a ‘policy of no comment’. While there were personal members who supported political parties, there was no collective voice against the dehumanisation of the masses.” This imbalance needs continued correction. I plan to develop this article around the injunction of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Church for all of us today to reconsider our approach, both Christians and all those we are called to pray for within the wider community.

2 A Study of the Admonition from 1 Timothy 2:1-6

This section by expounds on a very important and pivotal passage of Scripture, 1 Timothy 2:1-6. The traditional Evangelical hermeneutic, the *historical-grammatical* will be my primary method of interpretation. However, I will engage the more ubiquitous *historical-critical* adopted in many circles more recently. I do this with the caution given by Machen (Harrisville and Sundburg 1995:194) where he objects to this liberal hermeneutic: “as a religion which is so entirely different from Christianity as to belong to a distinct category.”

The reason for choosing this passage is because it covers the five concentric circles operating in the Apostle Paul’s teaching, namely: The created world – the Kingdom of God – Jesus Christ – the Church – and the need for all people to be saved. Paul understood that he lived in God’s world (1 Cor 10:26). Within the universe, God’s world was uniquely positioned; and God was personally involved in the affairs of His Kingdom. Jesus Christ is not viewed as a ‘private’ Saviour for the Church alone – but the One, “through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” (Jn 1:3-4 *NIV* 2011).

It was Jesus who founded the Church by His Spirit to testify to the Kingdom of God and represent the Gospel to all humankind. The Church is essentially, “the household of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Salvation is *potentially* for everyone in the world! God “wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4), which may only be accomplished at various levels due to people’s unbelief and not God’s provision.

Fee (2013:429) comments: “This second christological passage in 1 Timothy

2:1-2 is intended to offer theological support for the recurring emphasis on *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* (all people), in a passage that encourages prayers of all kinds be made for all people.” Without respect of religion, race or creed – every human being carries the image of God and is deserving of respect and recognition. What is interesting in this passage is that Paul calls on the Church ‘*first of all*’ to pray for *everyone*. This could have been limited to prayer; at this stage of political rights afforded Christians. Within an open democracy that is now enjoyed in many parts of today’s world; this injunction to pray could also include voting, peaceful protest or the like.

By way of personal testimony, Paul demonstrated a respect for the political arena as well as an appreciation for some of its benefits afforded him. On the one hand he submitted to the authority of Rome and the Jewish rulers (Sanhedrin). He was tried in several courts and submitted to the punishment sentenced on him even though he believed he was innocent. On the other hand, he cherished his Roman citizenship and used it to his advantage: “The commander went to Paul and asked, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?’ ‘Yes, I am,’ he answered. Then the commander said, ‘I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.’ ‘But I was born a citizen,’ Paul replied” (Ac 23:27-28). These experiences could have been in the back of his mind as he wrote to the Ephesian context.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people.” (Verse 1). This verse links primarily to verse 4, in that God “wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” A ‘petition’ is generally a specific request concerning a specific situation or person. A ‘prayer’ is a general engagement of communication with God agreeing with similar things found in Scripture. ‘Intercessions’ seem to have a greater focus on engaging spiritual forces and principalities. ‘Thanksgiving’ needs to be given wherever it is fitting and for every person that comes to mind. An example of this is Ephesians 1:15-16, “For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” Here is one case where ‘prayers’ and ‘thanksgiving’ are also linked.

There almost seems to be a pause in Paul’s thinking as he anticipates the questions from Timothy and the congregation at Ephesus after their reading of this injunction. Could Paul include political leaders in this injunction? Rome had brutal leaders within its ranks periodically which sometimes included the emperor. Yet in verse 2(a), Paul clearly states: “For kings and all those in authority.” It is interesting how Paul uses the word *βασιλεων* which literally means a ‘king,’ but is probably used by him to refer to the person in the highest office – including the emperor. 1 Timothy 6:15 gives biblical perspective as the same word is used: “God, the blessed only Ruler, King of kings and Lord of lords.” He then broadens the injunction to include “all those being in eminence.”

These would be various ranking authorities who had power to hinder the advance of the Gospel and forbid Christian's even meeting in homes. Richards (2004:834) suggests that: "Paul urges prayer for all in authority, that the government might permit free expression of Christian faith."

Verse 2(b) is very important for understanding the purpose and plan of good governance: "That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." An article in the Africa study Bible rightly says: "We must offer intercessory prayer for our leaders. We should pray that they have wisdom, do justice, have compassion for the poor, and act with honesty and integrity" (Hoehner et al, 2016:1782). Romans 13:3 follows this sentiment of 1 Timothy 2:2, "For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." The problem is when political rulers and civic rulers are corrupt and don't act properly. Paul himself suffered under this. He hints at this in 1 Corinthians 6:1, "If any of you has dispute with another, do you dare take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the Lord's people."

Moll (2023: xlii) discovered this very thing in his own life as an Evangelical Baptist being forced to engage militarily with his own people of different race groupings barred from the vote. He says: "We are reminded of Thielicke's concept of 'derived authority'. The state derives its authority from God, but if it practises wickedness it ceases to derive that authority. We must juxtaposition our understanding of Romans 13 with Revelation 13." This stand cost him his employment as a young actuary, a prison sentence and continued sentencing to solitary confinement *within* the prison context!

Perkins (2003:1434) adds an important insight from the socio-political time of writing: "The terms 'godliness' and 'dignity' express a Greco-Roman ideal of virtuous citizenship." This was the *first step* expected of everyone living in an orderly society. "The Christian shift occurs with 2:3b-4. Godliness is not just the cultural ideal of an upright member of the community. It is not to be had without conversation to a particular god as one's savior/benefactor. The expression 'knowledge of the truth'; serves as a synonym for conversion to Christianity (*cf.* Heb. 10:26)" (Perkins 2003:1434).

Paul's injunction to the Ephesian Church is based on the understanding of 1 Timothy 6:15. Though rulers, governors and military regulations may breach the acceptable code of conduct – God is "King of kings," and the prayers of Christians are sacred to Him. For example, the early Church was threatened by their authorities to not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and they rightly prayed: "'Sovereign Lord', they said, 'you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them'" (Ac 4:24). They continued to preach and faced the

consequences of imprisonment.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” God is committed to the global population. “The only reasonable reading of this word here is generic; in that, it is referring to *all people* in general and not to the male gender specifically. Yet many translations use the word ‘men’ for translation purposes” (Pohlmann, 2016:38). More than that, *anthrōpos* is being used of every *human being* – not just Christians in the Church. Even though it is understood that only Christians were the readers of this letter from Paul to Timothy.

The flow is seamless in the passage of Scripture ending with a factual theological statement in verses 5-6: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has been witnessed to at the proper time” (See also Gl 4:4). This is the essence of the revelation given to Paul at his conversion concerning the global nature of the Gospel including the Gentiles (See Eph 3:7-12).

3 Assessing One’s Political Context

Everyone needs to assess the political context they happen to be living in. In South Africa it is important to understand the ‘before 1994’ and the ‘post 1994’ context. In May 2024; it is also important to understand what a ‘Ruling Party Government’ looks like as opposed to a new future ‘Government of National Unity’ (GNU). Looking wider, Stott (2006:38-43) suggests that there are three models of politics to choose from.

The first is Authoritarianism: “Authoritarian governments impose their vision of the world on the people. They do not have checks and balances of a constitution, bill of rights or free and fair elections. Authoritarian governments are obsessed with control and have a pessimistic view of human nature” (2006:38). This can be expressed in a common model; for example, fascist, communist or an expression of dictatorship – depending on where in the world you live.

The second is Anarchism: “In this philosophy there is such optimism about the individual that law, government and indeed all authority are seen not only as superfluous but as a threat to human freedom” (Stott 2006:39). The overly optimistic view of human nature ignores the Fall of humankind taught in the Bible and countries who adopt this approach are often ironically plagued by violence and dangerous protest.

The third option is Democracy. This is difficult to define because there are so many variations of it. Stott (2006:40) gives a simple and rather inadequate statement of what Democracy is, rather than giving a definition: “It is the political expression of persuasion by argument.” He goes on to say that: “Democracy, being realistic about human beings being both created and fallen, involves

citizens in the framing of their own laws” (Stott 2006:40). Indeed, it is a rather fragile approach; and also open to abuse; especially if leaders emerge within it who do not have the interests of the citizens as their primary focus of attention. The newly drafted Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was approved by the Constitutional Court on the 4th December 1996 and came into effect on the 4th February 1997. This changed the landscape of every person in the Republic of South Africa as it brought an end to the former laws of Apartheid

3.1 Our Country’s Constitution

The plan next section of the article will narrow the focus and research intent of seeing this new Constitution from the perspective of the Church as it represents the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. No Constitution, no country and no set of governing authorities are perfect. However, in this case South Africa has been given the best chance granted to any country in the world. It depends on the *ανθρωποι* (The people Paul asks us to pray for). Cain (2005:39) gives one perspective: “God has put limited responsibility on civil government. Its prime purpose is to protect its citizens. This is why the symbol of the state is the sword (Rom 13:4). It is to protect them from crime by maintaining a police force and an independent judiciary. It is to protect them from external aggression by maintaining a volunteer army.”

3.1.1 Human Rights as a Biblical Principle

The newly drafted Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is shaped essentially by the biblical principle of the *Imago Dei* stated originally in Genesis 1:27, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” This single verse sets the stage for human rights in South Africa, thus eclipsing anything the former Apartheid system had held dear in terms of understanding the human being.

Thielicke (1979:171) links this foundational Creation fact to the Christological reality aligning with much of what Paul does in 1 Timothy 2:1-6. “This chapter of the *imago Dei* as an *alienum*, something alien, is supremely brought out by the fact that a *proprium*, as a true ontic possession, an attribute in the strict sense, it is ascribed solely and exclusively to Jesus Christ.” The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the primary witness to this human reality. This calls even more on Evangelical Christians to take up their responsibility, all the more seriously on the foundation of the biblical teaching regarding the *imago Dei* within all human beings.

While the *imago Dei* gives impetus to ‘human rights’ enshrined in a democratic constitution – there is another reality that casts a dark unsettling shadow over this encouraging truth. Many people within democracies have, “...exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles” (Rm 1:22) The consequences of this are listed in varying degrees of degradation from Romans chapter 1 verses 24 to

32. This reality of degradation in human behaviour is carefully documented over the years in every newspaper.

3.1.2 Freedom of Speech

The human being created in God's image, scarred or marred as it may be at times has the ability to *speak out* - which nothing else in Creation can do. Thieliicke (1979:511) addresses both the problem and potential of words spoken by human beings. "The problem of the 'the church and the mass society' arises out of the fact that in the word's filed a force of two completely different worlds collide."

Freedom of speech within democratic societies assumes a certain humane trust and credibility assigned to the speaker. However, many political speeches given by eminent people and leaders proves that this is not always the case. The worst protagonist of the abuse of the *freedom of speech* in modern history was Adolf Hitler. There are contemporary examples that have and are following in that model and amazingly to most rational responsible listeners, they achieve similar disastrous results! Harold (2018:28) describes well what Hitler did with 'words': "In the place of justice and righteousness, normal society brandished violence and oppression – and called it justice."

3.1.3 Access to the Ballot Box

One of the signs of a democratic society is the free access that registered voters have to the ballot box. As much as possible, people should not be coerced, threatened or bribed. Every individual who stands in a ballot box should have the right to act according to their conscience and knowledge in the moment of action. Thieliicke (2009:298) may be helpful when he says: "My view of conscience is determined by my understanding of what is the normative factor determining human existence, e.g. practical reason, utility, or the sociological or biological structure. Conscience is always incorporated within the framework of a particular anthropology." The anthropology of this article is stated in the previous section.

3.2 Freedom of Movement and Movement and Infrastructure.

After all, Stott (2006:42) gives a sober comment on affairs: "Christians should be careful not to 'baptize' any political ideology (whether of the right, the centre or the left) as if it contained a monopoly of the truth and goodness. At best a political ideology and its programme are only an approximation to the will and purpose of God". Those parties labelling themselves as Christian need also to be aware of this.

It is for this very reason that 1 Timothy 2:1-6 calls the Church to pray for all leaders. It also states that prayer could enhance the better options if leaders and everyone else were 'saved'. Hoehner *et al* (2016:1782) suggest that this could contribute to leaders realising that: "The authority they have is given to them by God and is just a shadow of his power."

On the practical side, countries need to allow people the freedom of movement and the infrastructure required for people to express their political will. We don't live in perfect societies and countries. But hindering people and facilitating people are two different things.

4. The Character of Leadership Candidates as a Key Factor. (Exodus 18:20-23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)

While it is important for some people who claim to be Bible-believing Evangelicals to broaden their responsibility beyond their Church to a Kingdom perspective, as well as people appreciating a fitting model of political engagement and giving opportunity to all qualifying citizens – a further key factor is the character of those who stand for office. We will now commence by looking at this from Exodus 18:20-23 (National appointments), Titus 1:6-9 (Missional appointments), and finally 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (Congregational appointments).

The Exodus 18 chapter sets the Old Testament backdrop to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The issue at stake is the *leadership of a group*. In Exodus 18 Moses was faced by his father-in-law Jethro and challenged about his autocratic leadership style of a migrant nation. Jethro recommended that this be revised. In 1 Timothy 3:1, the 'oversight' of the church community is also addressed. 'Επισκοπος' is not a Christian word and not listed under the spiritual gifts in the New Testament; not even the leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:12. It is a 'secular' word used of anyone assuming the role of the oversight of a household (Like Philemon – see letter of Philemon), or a community, or a city, or a country or a church! Hence, I there is connection with 1 Timothy 2:1-6 in one sense to 1 Timothy 3:1-7; in that it could also apply to 'overseers' in politics as well. Cain (2005:72) observes rightly that, "Unfortunately, there are many leaders in civil government who are attempting to govern their nation but are unable to effectively control their own lives."

Perkins (2003:1435) helps with this: "Translation of the terms *episkopos* (bishop, overseer), *diakonos*, (deacon, minister, or servant), and *presbuteros* (elder, old man) is difficult both because they have both official and non-official meanings, and because the relationship between the two groups so designated and their communal functions are unclear." This article emphasises that people appointed to oversight and service to any community should preferably be people of sound character, dignity and ability in what they are appointed to do.

Cain (2004:35-39) makes the point that there are essentially five levels of government ordained by God and each level interplays with the others. The first level is the government of God, or the "Kingdom of God" often spoken of in Scripture. The second level is self or individual government. We are made rational and responsible people by very nature (See Romans 2). The third level is family order and management. 1 Timothy 3:5 makes an astute observation: "If

anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church." Its interesting that "care of God's church" here is the same word as that of the Good Samaritan 'caring' for the injured man in the story, while the word for 'managing' a family or a household is more of a business word. The fourth level is Church government linked to the fifth level of governing the State and/or the community.

4.1 A Turning Point of Leadership Appointments in Exodus 18:20-23

The Old Testament gives many examples for the New Testament to learn. 1 Corinthians 10:11 reaches a point after the chapter has outlined some of the history of Israel: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come." Exodus 18 is one of those milestone passages of Scripture teaching us about leadership under God within a nation. In this case it was Moses the pioneer leader of a migrant nation. Pioneer leaders mostly exemplify strong 'central' governments and benevolent leadership traits: "When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, 'What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?'" (Ex 18:14). Something had to change as Moses shifted from the pioneer leader of a migrant nation to being a leader manager of a more settled nation, and delegating responsibilities to suitable judges (as they were called).

Moses acted on Jethro's experienced advice: "Listen now to me and I will give you some advice and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. ...But select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens" (Ex 18:19-21). Armed with the 'constitution of the day' (verse 20), these leaders were to be people of *sound character* and *functioning ability* suited to their capacity.

Speaking from an African perspective, Kunhiyop (2008:164) confirms the wisdom of Jethro's advice which was duly implemented by Moses. "Corruption is a feature of African social, political and even religious life, with dire consequences." Throughout Scripture, sound character in keeping with the *imago Dei* is of utmost importance. "Corruption can be defined as making someone morally corrupt or becoming morally corrupt oneself" (Kunhiyop 2008:165). He agrees with Exodus 18:19 by singling out one character flaw which often results in the practice of bribery and extortion. It is important that, "The Church needs to be modelled by its leaders and needs to be 'salt' and 'light'. Jesus Christ has come to shine into the live of people so that they shine within their communities" (Pohlmann, 2021:69).

4.2 Leadership Within Christian Community Sets the Example (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

The 'overseer' of 1 Timothy 3:1 is a *secular* community term that is *adopted* by Paul in a ministry missional context to address the issue of leadership: "Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task." Against the backdrop in the Ephesian church, where Ephesians 1 outlines the unwarranted aspirations by some who wanted leadership for the sake of their own agenda, Fee (1993:79) cautions: "Thus Paul is not commending people who have a great desire to become leaders; rather, he is saying that the position of **overseer** is such a significant matter, **a noble task**, that it should indeed be the kind of task to which a person might aspire."

Because of the nobility and importance of the task, "The overseer must therefore be above reproach" (Verse 2). Fee (1993:80) says: "The term **above reproach**, however, which is repeated regarding the widows in 5:7 and of Timothy himself in 6:14 (in an eschatological context), has to do with irreproachable observable conduct." This sets the tone for all the qualities listed below in verses 2-7. The list below is also set against a sociological context within the Ephesian community, just as the list in Titus 1 is set against a context that is sensitive to the sociological realities of the island community of Crete. For example, Paul found it necessary to circumcise Timothy for his ministry context at Ephesus and surrounds (Ac 16:3); but chose not to do the same to Titus (Gl 2:3) for his different context.

The qualities listed in verse 2-3 are all typical personal behaviours needed by a leader to counter the negative ones in the city of Ephesus (e.g. Faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, teachable see Phillips, LSV, ISV, not given to drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money). They all lead up to verse 7: "He must have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." Fee (1993:83) points out that the, "... list has to do with observable behavior of a kind that will be a witness to outsiders." This Ephesian Church context, as recorded in Timothy 2 had the opportunity to set the tone for all *political* or *community* leaders.

Verses 4-5 then presents *the family* as the testing ground of character and leadership. Starting with marriage; if the leader is a married person, he/she should be married to one person at any one time (Verse 2a). Then if the leader has a family, "He should manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect." These are simply good micro tests to ensure that the best and proven candidates are elevated to any and every "noble task" affecting the lives of constituencies and countries.

4.3. Leadership Within the Missional Context (Titus 1:6-9)

The missional context and content of Titus 1:6-9 are both the same and decidedly

different to that of the Ephesus context. Firstly, Crete seems to have had very different sociological problems than Ephesus (See e.g. Tt 1:10-13). Secondly there is no mention of ‘deacons’ in Titus 1. Thirdly, Titus 1:5 and 6 uses the word *πρεσβυτερος* (age and status) to refer to the *overseers* (function) that are to be appointed. It is likely that a traditional and more rural environment like Crete would do better to appoint older people already respected in the community for the very purpose stated in 1 Timothy 3:7 of “having a good reputation with outsiders.” Fourthly, there is no mention of the *γυνή* mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:10 (See e.g. Lk 8:2), probably because the Crete church was still a missional context and undeveloped as stated in Titus 1:5, “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished ...”

What is interesting and probably unique to the requirement of Crete elders was probably the need for a counterbalance to local corrupt sociological problems. For example, the elder/leader at Crete should not be “overbearing”, nor “quick-tempered”, needs to “love what is good”, needs to be “upright and holy”, and needs to be “disciplined”. In terms of *political* leadership, it would also be wise that those appointed would be strong enough within their constituencies to counter some of the acknowledged problems. These would differ from country to country.

5 Conclusion

A way forward.

In many ways, South Africa has been viewed in the world community as an exemplary country in terms of its way *forward* after 1994. The first step was to have fully democratic elections for all eligible voting people on 27th April 1994. This officially buried the former Apartheid era and launched a new South Africa for its citizens. This resulted in a government of national unity (GNU) led by the president, Nelson Mandela and even included the former State President, F.W. de Klerk as one of two vice presidents and a few cabinet positions from leaders of the former South Africa. The main reason for this was the big-heartedness of Nelson Mandela with his focus on the *future well-being of the whole country*. In all of these cases sound character derived directly or indirectly from the Church played a part in this (1 Timothy 3).

This was followed by drafting a new Constitution by a long process of consultation and negotiation by a wide array of representatives. It is still regarded globally as one of the most fair and liberal constitutions. Within it, the *imago Dei* of every human being in the country is implicitly honoured. The one thing no one expected was how some people elected to office over time would use and abuse positions of leadership trust. The Zondo Commission of Enquiry (21 August 2018-22 June 2022) has documented this fall from grace and its perpetrators. The Church is urged to pray about this and engage the process ever more meaningfully.

This leads to the challenge introduced by Paul to the Ephesian congregation (1 Timothy 2:1-6) which is the educating of the church, especially the Evangelical church which professes a deep commitment to the Bible, in its reading of Scripture and understanding of the Kingdom of God. One example in South Africa's more recent history is the national consultation held, known as, *The Rustenburg Conference* (November 1990). Christian leaders, most of whom could be described as Bible-believing Evangelicals from a very wide set of perspectives participated. About 230 Christian Church leaders from about 80 denominations and 40 organizations met, to talk, listen, pray and plan the future with a clearer vision of their *biblical mandate*.

Finally, addressing the importance of *praying* as instructed to pray in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Does prayer work? I end by returning to the testimony of Moll (2023:131-133). He was eventually sentenced to prison in Voortrekkerhoogte Detention Barracks in Pretoria with the added repeated sentencing to solitary confinement. This news eventually filtered through to many concerned people all over the world, especially in Cape Town. Protests were organised, letters of appeal drafted, and eventually prayer and fasting periods were organised. This eventually led to Peter Moll being given the 'benefit of the doubt' and he was notified on 8th August 1980 that his 'category' had been changed to 'political conscientious objector'. Finally, he (Moll,2023:193) gratefully says: "I was released on 2 December 1980 amid thorough reporting by the press." Prayer does also work in our days in terms of the appeal of 1 Timothy 2:1-6.

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Author's Declaration

The author declares that there is no financial gain or personal relationship(s) that inappropriately influenced him/her in the writing of this article.

Email: martin@btc.co.za