

Neophyte Pastors: Can Titus 1 Be Used to Justify Placing New Converts in the Office of Pastor?

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In modern missions, speed has become one of the largest motivating factors for mission agencies as well as individuals. In their haste to plant a church and then move to another group that has never heard the Gospel, the Word of God can be compromised in regard to church order. Some mis-siologists suggest that new converts can be appointed to the office of pastor.¹ This is often proposed based on the historical situation in Crete when Paul wrote to Titus and furthered by the fact that Paul does not explicitly write that pastors must not be new converts in Titus. This two-pronged approach to the Pastoral Epistles leads to the conclusion by some that it is justified to appoint new converts as pastors in frontier missions. While these are not the only arguments that are used to bolster this position, they are two of the most critical. This paper will show that the supposed historical circumstance which has Titus ministering exclusively to new converts is not the most probable explanation of the situation in Crete; more likely, mature believers were present in Crete; consequently, this paper will show exegetically that Titus 1 indicates that a new convert cannot serve as a pastor.

Historical Circumstances in Crete

The historical circumstances of the church in Crete at the time of Paul's penning the epistle to Titus have attracted much attention from commentators. Most are agreed that the churches in Crete are infantile, especially in comparison to the church in Ephesus.² They advance several reasons to sup-

¹David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 187.

²Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 94; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: Timothy I & II, and Titus*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 79; I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 482; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 181; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 257. See also Benjamin L. Merkle, "Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles," in Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder, eds., *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the*

port their hypothesis, the first of which is that Paul did not include in his list the qualifications for an overseer in the epistle to Titus.³ In addition, Titus does not contain a similar list of characteristics for the office of deacon.⁴ Also, Paul did not instruct Timothy “to appoint elders because they already existed. Apparently Paul was with Titus in Crete but had to leave before he could appoint elders.”⁵ The last two points often proposed toward proving a young church in Crete are that Paul did not instruct Titus in the proper method for deposing an overseer, and Paul did not mention widows, who were supposedly a developed order within the church.⁶

Determining the condition of the early Cretan church in which Titus was ministering is admittedly a difficult task because of the paucity of evidence, and the above reconstruction is a plausible explanation of the evidence. It is not, however, the only or even most probable reconstruction. The above explanation fails at multiple points. The first point advanced above is often the major point, if not the only point, advanced for the youth of the Cretan church. The problem with that argument is its circularity. It is proposed that the church is young because Paul left out this requirement.⁷ Then when commenting on the omission in Titus’s list of qualifications, it is proposed that he left this out because the church was young.⁸ Furthermore, Paul may have left this particular word out because he saw that a conceptual parallel existed in the other items in the list.

In regard to the omission of the diaconate this is an argument from silence, which, admittedly, must be done with such scant evidence, but it weakens the argument considerably. Arguing from the lack of instruction as to deposition of elders and the lack of an order of widows also are arguments from silence, which are inherently weak.

One last point in their argument is that Paul left Titus to appoint elders after Paul himself left the island. This argument comes from Titus 1:5 where Paul writes, “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order” (Titus 1:5 ESV). With this translation, it seems as though Paul had previously been on the island of Crete, presumably, but not necessarily, to engage in evangelism and church planting in a place which had never heard the Gospel.⁹ This is certainly a possible explanation of this verse, but it is not the only interpretation.

This verse is slightly ambiguous as to whether Paul left Titus in Crete or if he sent him there. The word used here, ἀπολείπω, has more than one pos-

Pastoral Epistles (Nashville: B&H Academic 2010), 185.

³Merkle, “Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles,” 185.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181.

⁹D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 582.

sible rendering in English. On the one hand, it can mean “to leave behind.”¹⁰ On the other hand, however, it may have been understood as “dispatched, deployed or assigned.”¹¹ If the latter interpretation is correct, Paul may never have actually visited the island for the purpose of starting new churches, but may have instead been exercising his apostolic authority over this area in order properly to organize discrete groups of Christians into actual churches. Further in this interpretation, instead of Paul instructing Titus to put into place that which remained, he may have instead been telling him to correct the problems in Crete.¹² In either case, however, it is not certain that Paul was the pioneer missionary for the Cretan people.

It seems probable from elsewhere in Scripture that at the time Titus was in Crete, mature believers would have been present. Acts 2 records the miraculous beginning of the church, and it notes that the apostles spoke in languages that they did not know, and people heard their message in their native tongues (Acts 2:4-6). Among the myriad of ethnicities that had representatives in Jerusalem on that day were the people of Crete (Acts 2:11). It is likely that those from Crete who heard the message on that day eventually went back to Crete and further spread the message. This is not entirely improbable, as it is an accepted opinion that this could be the way in which the church at Rome was founded.¹³ If the letter to Titus is dated in the mid-60s this would give the believers thirty or more years to mature, and even if it were dated earlier, in 57 as Robinson posits, the believers would have ample time to mature beyond spiritual infancy.¹⁴

Even if the Cretans who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost never returned to Crete to spread the Gospel, there was opportunity for Cretans to be converted. Paul did extensive ministry on the Aegean coast starting with his second missionary journey. The likely dating for this missionary journey is somewhere between 48 and 51.¹⁵ After this journey, Paul took a third missionary journey, probably between 52 and 57, which again involved extensive ministry on the Aegean coast. This provides a nearly fifteen year gap between Paul’s first mission to the Aegean and the writing of Titus. During this interval, it is likely that some of Paul’s converts or associates would have taken the Gospel to Crete.

This appears to be the case with the church at Colossae. Paul affirms that Epaphras, not Paul himself, is the one who carried the Gospel to Colos-

¹⁰J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “ἀπολείπω”; James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v. “ἀπολείπω.”

¹¹Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 150.

¹²John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 81.

¹³Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 395.

¹⁴Ibid., 582; Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 81.

¹⁵Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 369.

sae (Col 1:7).¹⁶ Further, Paul even admits that he had never seen the Colossians (Col 2:1).¹⁷ It is suspected that while Paul was in Ephesus, some of his comrades were spreading the Gospel into the surrounding regions.¹⁸ It seems likely that this group in Colossae would not be the only such group that benefited from Paul's ministry indirectly through either his close associates or converts, and it is therefore possible that this was the case in Crete.

The supposition that the church on Crete was a new church that was devoid of mature believers when Paul wrote to Titus in the mid-60s, then, posits a highly unlikely scenario. It supposes that none of the Cretans who heard the Gospel on the day of Pentecost evangelized on Crete or stayed on the island. It further seems to indicate that even though Paul was working extensively in the Aegean region, none of his associates or converts ever went to Crete and spread the Gospel. Assuming that neither of these happened seems highly unlikely; therefore, it is better to suppose that believers had been present on Crete at the time of Paul's writing to Titus. This may not have been for an extensive period of time, but it seems that it would have been long enough for them to mature to the point that Titus could find non-neophytes to fill the office of pastor.

While this seems to be the most likely historical reconstruction of the setting in Crete at the time of Paul's writing to Titus, it does not, in and of itself, solve the conundrum of the disparity between the lists of qualifications for pastors in 1 Timothy and Titus. Now that it has been shown likely that mature believers were present in Crete when Titus was working to establish pastors in the various churches, attention will now be turned to the exegetical concerns in the two lists to show that Paul intended for mature believers to be elevated to the post of pastor instead of new converts.

Exegesis of 1 Timothy and Titus

First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 list various qualifications that a person must meet in order to serve in the role of pastor of a church.¹⁹ These two lists have a large amount of overlap, but certain differences do exist. The most notable difference is that 1 Timothy 3:6 says that a pastor must not be a new convert, but Titus does not include this exact phrase. This coupled with the supposed historical background of the church in Crete has led some to the conclusion that in missionary contexts, new converts can serve as pastors.

¹⁶James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 63.

¹⁷F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 14.

¹⁸Ibid., 15.

¹⁹John D. Massey, "Wrinkling Time in the Missionary Task: A Theological Review of Church Planting Movements Methodology," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 55, no. 1 (2012): 124. This paper assumes that the terms *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* refer to the same office which is also called *ποιμήν* (pastor).

The historical background has already been shown to militate against this view. Now the issue of the lack of injunction against new converts serving as pastors will be examined, but this must be seen within the context of the passages as a whole; therefore, it is best to begin with an examination of the two lists.

Parts of the material in these lists are introduced in a remarkably similar way:

Titus 1:7	δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι
1 Timothy 3:2	δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημpton εἶναι

The difference between the particles γὰρ and οὖν are easily explained based on the contexts in which they appear in their respective letters.²⁰ The major difference is between the predicate adjectives ἀνέγκλητον and ἀνεπίλημpton, but the two are functioning synonymously as they are both in the same semantic domain.²¹ The idea conveyed here, blameless, being at the head of both lists is the basic requirement expected of pastors in this list, and the following adjectives expound further upon this idea.²² Both lists, then, have the same requirement of the candidate for the pastoral office, and it, being abstract, is concretized by the following adjectives and descriptors; therefore, any difference between the lists could be seen as not being substantive because they are merely attempts at fleshing out the details of the arcane idea of blamelessness with neither list being exhaustive. Scholars tend, however, to see, against this argument, that the differences are real and important, and therefore necessitate explanation.²³ While, in most circumstances, differences between parallel passages betray important issues within the various texts, because of the context of these two lists, namely that they are explaining a difficult, esoteric idea, the differences are not as telling as in other instances. Because this is a major vein of interpretation, however, the differences will be discussed and shown not to be in conflict with each other vis-à-vis the requirement of a pastor not to be a new convert. First, it will be helpful to see the lists parallel to each other in order to appreciate fully the relationship between the various descriptors.

As Table 1 below shows, the majority of the terms in both lists have some sort of parallel in the other. A large number of the parallels are, in fact, verbal parallels, where the exact same word is used in both 1 Timothy and Titus (e.g., μιᾷ γυναικός ἀνήρ). Others, however, are not as straightforward, and present, instead, conceptual parallels or even counterparts that are

²⁰Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 147.

²¹Merkle, "Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles," 185.

²²Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 477. See also John K. Goodrich, "Overseers as Stewards and the Qualifications for Leadership in the Pastoral Epistles," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 104, no. 1 (2013): 82.

²³Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New Testament in Context (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 222.

“broader but still related.”²⁴ An example of this last point would be that in 1 Timothy the pastor must be διδακτικός (able to teach), but in Titus the pastor must ἀντεχόμενος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν (“hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Tit 1:9 ESV)). The two phrases are not exactly the same in a word-for-word manner, but the same concept is intended from both.

Table 1—Synopsis of Pastoral Qualifications²⁵

1 Timothy 3:2-7	Titus 1:5-9
ἀνεπίλημπος	ἀνέγκλητος / ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμου
μῶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ	μῶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ
νηφάλιον	? ἐγκρατῆς
σώφρων	σώφρων
κόσμιος	? φιλάγαθος
φιλόξενος	φιλόξενος
διδακτικός	ἀντεχόμενος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν
μὴ πάροινος	μὴ πάροινος
μὴ πλήκτης	μὴ κλήκτης
ἐπεικῆς	μὴ αὐθάδης
ἄμαχος	μὴ ὄργιλος
ἀφιλάργυρος	μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆς
τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενος, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ	τέκνα ἔχων πιστά
μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος	μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα
μὴ νεόφυτος	
μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἑξῶθεν	
	δίκαιος
	ὄσιος

²⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155.

²⁵George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: 1992), 156-57.

The major problem for the argument at hand is that Titus does not contain a verbal parallel to *μη νεόφυτος* found in 1 Timothy. *Νεόφυτος*, here, means “new convert.”²⁶ It is not found in this sense before Paul wrote 1 Timothy, but usually carried the meaning of “newly planted.”²⁷ This was also a common term in agrarian settings around the time of the writing of the New Testament.²⁸ The implication of this on the text in 1 Timothy is that Paul was likely focusing more on the candidate’s maturity and experience in the faith than he was about the person’s age.²⁹

While verbal parallels are helpful and, in this passage, striking, they are often given more importance than they deserve. It is often the case that conceptual parallels are stronger than verbal ones.³⁰ While most commentators are willing to see a number of conceptual parallels, as can be seen in Table 1 (e.g., *κόσμος* / *φιλάγαθος*), they are unwilling to notice that such a parallel may in fact exist for *μη νεόφυτος*.

In way of conceptual parallels for *μη νεόφυτος* in the Titus list, the place to begin is with the two terms in Titus that find no parallel in 1 Timothy—*δίκαιος* and *ὅσιος*. The first term, *δίκαιος*, is an adjective describing, in this case, someone who is “upright, just, [or] fair.”³¹ It also has a sense that the one described is living in a way that is obedient to God.³² This is to say, then, that the pastor, in Titus, must live his life “in accordance with the divine norm.”³³ This attribute requires a level of understanding and living the Christian life, such that it would be impossible for a new convert to demonstrate this in his life enough to be considered worthy of this designation. This, however, is not the strongest ethical imperative for pastors which points toward the exclusion of new converts from service in this office.

The other description in Titus that lacks verbal parallel in 1 Timothy is *ὅσιος*. This word is much stronger in its designation than *δίκαιος*. BDAG lists the definition, “pert[aining] to being without fault relative to deity, *de-*

²⁶Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. and trans. William F. Arndt, F. Wilber Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker [BDAG], 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “νεόφυτος.”

²⁷Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia: a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 53.

²⁸Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, s.v. “νεόφυτος.”

²⁹A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament: In the Light of Historical Research*, 2d ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 664-65.

³⁰Jon Paulien, “Elusive Allusions: The Problematic Use of the Old Testament in Revelation,” *Biblical Research* 33 (1988): 42-44. Although he is specifically addressing the issue of finding allusions in Revelation to the Old Testament, his caution in regard to placing too high an emphasis on *verbal* parallels to the exclusion of stronger parallels is certainly pertinent to the matter at hand.

³¹BDAG, s.v. “δίκαιος.”

³²*Ibid.*

³³Schrenk, “Δίκη, Δίκαιος, Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαιώω, Δικαίωμα, Δικαίωσις, Δικαιοκρισία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1964), 191.

*vout, pious, pleasing to God, holy.*³⁴ This implies a close relationship with God and a life which is lived in accordance with the apostolic teaching.

Some could possibly argue that these are qualities which imply positional sanctification, and that a candidate's life may not necessarily match with what has been declared by God. Based on the context of Titus 1, however, these two descriptors, δίκαιος and ὅσιος, must be qualities which are externally measurable, as are the others in this list. Furthermore, in their present context, these two words fall into the same semantic domain which refers to "moral and ethical qualities and related *behavior*."³⁵ These are externally visible attributes which imply a pious life. People may be declared holy and righteous on the day in which they believe in Christ, but to match the outliving of this spiritual quality requires a level of sanctification. This implies that they are not new converts; instead, candidates for the office of pastor, in order to manifest these two qualities, must be mature believers. This implies that a conceptual parallel exists between μὴ νεόφυτος and the two related descriptors in Titus, δίκαιος and ὅσιος.

Beyond this, another conceptual parallel likely exists. It is interesting to note that in 1 Timothy, the candidate must be διδακτικός (able to teach), but in Titus, this description is greatly expanded to ἀντεχόμενος τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασκαλίαν πιστοῦ λόγου ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾦ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν ("hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" [Tit 1:9 ESV]). It is clear that in both lists, the candidate is required to be able to teach, but this seems to be too simple an explanation for the extra twenty words Paul saw fit to include in his letter to Titus.

Perhaps the most important expansion in Titus is the phrase τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασκαλίαν πιστοῦ λόγου ("the trustworthy word which is in accordance with the teaching"³⁶). This admonition explains that the candidate needs to have a firm grasp of the apostolic teaching.³⁷ It also adds the idea that the pastor is not to teach some novel idea, but one which came to him from an authority, namely the apostles or their delegates.³⁸ In noting that people must hold fast to the teaching, it implies that they were first taught. This requires a certain amount of time for the entire apostolic message to be handed over to any single person, especially to the point where that person knows it well enough to refute false teachers. This strongly implies that Paul had in mind people who were under the teaching authority of a more mature believer for a time sufficient for those people to mature in the faith, which would

³⁴BDAG, s.v. "ὅσιος."

³⁵Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, s.v. "δίκαιος; ὅσιος." Emphasis added.

³⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary and an Introduction to Titus, I and II Timothy, the Pastoral Epistles*, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible, vol. 35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 92.

exclude any new convert from service in this capacity. Seeing a conceptual parallel, then, between the necessity of a pastor to be able to hold firm to the teaching and the rejection of those who are new converts is an unavoidable conclusion.³⁹

While, at this point, a conceptual parallel between *μη νεόφωτος* in 1 Timothy and the list of qualifications in Titus 1:5-9 has reasonably been established, a further point of contact between the two passages shows that Paul did not intend for Titus to appoint new converts to the role of pastor in Crete. 1 Timothy 3:10 speaks of a time of testing before people are to be appointed to positions of leadership within the church. In this verse, Paul is specifically noting that deacons need to be tested before being elevated to their position, but the phrasing of the beginning of this verse implies that Paul intended for pastoral candidates to be tested as well. The verse begins with *καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν*. *Οὗτοι*, in this context, clearly refers to deacons, but the *καί* before it should be rendered “also” because of the *δέ* which follows.⁴⁰ Because of the “also” before the mention of testing, it implies that the pastors, spoken of just before the discussion of the deacons, are also tested. 1 Timothy 5:22, an injunction against hastily laying on of hands, also supports a testing period before appointment of a pastor. This testing would require a period of time to determine if the believer met the qualifications for the office, an amount of time which could rule out the possibility of a new convert serving in such a role.

Titus 1 also has a reference, although admittedly much more veiled than the one in 1 Timothy, to a testing period of a potential pastor. In Titus 1:10-16, Paul compares false teachers to pastors, the qualifications of whom were delineated in 1:5-9. In verse 16, Paul brings the description of the false teachers to a close with three stinging indictments, the third of which is *ἠδόκιμος*. This word refers to the failure to pass a test.⁴¹ The implication here is that while the false teachers cannot pass the test, those who desire to be pastors must. Testing is not something which should be done hastily without deep insight, and therefore must be something which probes the depths of a person to see if they are indeed mature enough to fulfill the obligations of the office. The candidate, therefore, cannot be an immature person, but must be one who is able to pass the test.

After walking through the differences between the two lists, it is apparent that the list in Titus does not permit a new convert to serve in the pastoral office. In the first instance, both lists essentially require the same quality to be found in the candidates—that they must be blameless. Even if

³⁹Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, Monograph Series/Society for New Testament Studies, vol. 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 213.

⁴⁰Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 169.

⁴¹Grundmann, “*Δόκιμος, Ἀδόκιμος, Δοκιμή, Δοκίμιον, Δοκιμάζω, Ἀποδοκιμάζω, Δοκιμασία*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 255. See also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 403.

this is not accepted, however, the list of characteristics of a pastor in Titus contains a conceptual parallel to the ban on new converts serving as pastors in 1 Timothy. Lastly, both books, although not overtly, contain references to a test before someone is elevated to leadership within the church, which would exclude new converts. Exegetically, then, those who would seek to place a new convert in the office of pastor can find no ground for their actions in Scripture.

Conclusion

Some missiologists posit that it is permissible to appoint new converts to the office of pastor. They say that because of the historical situation in Crete, new converts must have served in that capacity there. They also point out that Paul does not specifically say in Titus that new converts cannot be pastors. Above, it has been shown that the most plausible situation in Crete was that Christians were there for quite a while before Paul wrote Titus. Mature believers would have been available to serve as leaders in the church. Also, Titus contains sufficient conceptual parallels to the injunction against new converts serving as pastors to rule out the possibility of their appointment. Pastoral candidates must also be tested, which implies a certain length of tenure in the faith. It is clear, then, that the idea that new converts may serve as pastors in a setting where missionaries are surrounded by only neophytes, finds no historical or exegetical support in the Pastoral Epistles.