



## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17: AN EVALUATION OF PASTORAL MINISTRY IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *God's calling of humankind for the work of the ministry is as old as the beginning of the world, but God does not call a man without a period of training known today as theological education. Unfortunately, these days, there is an emergence of anti-intellectualism in the pastoral ministry, where many pastors go into ministry without a basic token of theological training. Also, many seminarians attend the seminary for formality purposes, just to acquire a certificate for their licensing and ordination; they jettison theological and divinity courses like Greek, Hebrew as well as Dogmatics, insisting that success in pastoral ministry does not lie on theological education. However, this research aims at evaluating the necessities of theological education in the 21st century Nigeria pastoral ministry on one hand and the ephemerality of anti-intellectualists and impostors in ministry on the other hand, drawing inference from 2 Timothy 3:10-17. The research adopts a lexico-grammatical exegetical method of data analysis in order to achieve its aim, using primary and secondary sources of data collections. The research claims that the reason there is a multiplicity of pastors in Nigeria presently, who are not successful in the ministry is because many churches and individuals take theological education for granted. Thus, it recommends that churches should take theological education seriously and those who disdain and undermine theological education should refrain from that, so as to have successful pastoral ministry in Nigeria.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Theological Education, Impostors, Anti-intellectualism, Pastoral Ministry, Heresy.*



## INTRODUCTION

Theological education is the process of educating persons in the theological discipline, which is carried out in a professional context through seminaries or divinity schools, as well as various settings in the local churches with laity.<sup>1</sup> This special calling of humankind for the work of the ministry is as old as the beginning of the world. But one thing that has been pertinent with this special act of grace and dealing with God is that God does not call a man without a period of training which is conventionally known today as theological education. There must be an education established for the purpose of training men for the high function of moral and spiritual teaching.<sup>2</sup> This means the called must undergo a study to enable him/her to do proper investigation of the objective data of the divine revelation which s/he has, and which has its full expression in the Bible and its Christ-centered message.<sup>3</sup>

Scripturally, the likes of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elisha, and many others of the Old Testament had both vertical and horizontal training which made them, not only to be relevant to their own generation, but also to leave behind a theology that is still a *sine qua non* if one must do well in the 21st century ministry.<sup>4</sup> The story was just the same in the New Testament as the word “μαθητής” (disciple) is used to denote not just a learner, student or pupil but an adherent of a teacher of religious/philosophical school, who not only lives out what the teacher does but also transmits them to others.<sup>5</sup> Timothy who is the focal point of this research is a topical example and representation of the value of theological education. As is the view of many scholars, Timothy was a sort of seminarian under the tutelage of Apostle Paul.<sup>6</sup> Apostle Paul was a renowned scholar who, at the inception of his ministry, had a three year theological training in Arabia (Galatians 1:17).

Furthermore, the early church fathers never joked with theological training. In order to strengthen the church and combat the false teaching of the Gnostics, a catechetical school of Alexandria was established in about A.D. 180 by Pantaenus, who was succeeded by a renowned church father, Clement of Alexandria.<sup>7</sup> However, what we have as theological education, in its modern form today, emerged in the early nineteenth century. But before then, ministerial trainees who acquired a formal education usually studied in one of the Eastern undergraduate colleges or with a practicing minister in one of the Western theological academies or “log colleges.”<sup>8</sup>

Today in Nigeria, God is still calling humankind for the propagation of the gospel of his kingdom. As Uka asserts, “Most of the Christian churches in Nigeria have theological colleges where they train ministers, evangelists, and church workers.”<sup>9</sup> However, as Orji observes,

<sup>1</sup> McKim, Donald K. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. P. 316.

<sup>2</sup> McClintock and Strong. *Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Cairns, Alan. *Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, NDP.(p.483)

<sup>4</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. Abakaliki: Abakaliki Diocesan Printing Press, 2019. P.68

<sup>5</sup> Sloan, Robert B. “Disciple.” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Brand, Chard (ed). Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015. P. 424.

<sup>6</sup> Pierson, Lance. *In the Steps of Timothy*. P. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Falk, Peter. *The Growth of the Church in Africa*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 2015. P.29

<sup>8</sup> Reid, Daniel G et al (ed). *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

<sup>9</sup> Uka, E.M. *Equipping the Saints for the Challenges of Our Time*. Calabar: Presby Press and Executive Press Limited, 2002. P. 190



“There is an emergence of anti-intellectualism in the 21st century pastoral ministry, where pastors interpret the Bible without recourse to any scholarly assistance, insisting that the Holy Ghost can help all who seek to understand the Bible without priory attending theological seminary.”<sup>10</sup> Worse still, for those who attended theological colleges, it is mostly for formality purposes as many theological students normally jettison divinity courses like Greek, Hebrew as well as Dogmatics, insisting that the success of pastoral ministry does not lie on theological education. Again, seeing visions does not require a university degree. Hence, Uka observes with dismay that people often undermine the idea of theological education in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> This is why we see today numerous self-acclaimed/made pastors who hardly read the scripture fluently, as well as others who quit their jobs and became overnight “Sandwiched pastors.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, we see rampantly half-baked pastors as well as impostors who comfortably live with the dangers of emotionalism and subjectivity,<sup>13</sup> and influence the adherents of their churches with the same. Orji regards these anti-intellectual exercises of pastors and the impending doom on the side of the adherent as the greatest poverty of the 21st century.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, this research aimed at exposing the inevitable necessities of theological education to all pastors and would-be pastors in Nigeria churches – mainline and Pentecostal churches – if they must have a successful ministry, using lexico-grammatical hermeneutical method of close reading of 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Again, the research exposes the ephemerality of impostors on one hand and claims on the other hand that all the wounds, intellectual poverty, heresy, misconceptions and many other errors injected in the pastoral ministry by the anti-intellectualists are rectified herein.

## EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

Prior to 2 Timothy 3:10-17, Paul had to use verse 1-9 to let Timothy know that men will appear on the last days who opposed the truth and follow evil things. Such men may appear religious, including teaching in the church, using Christian clichés and following a community of Christians which would make them look good, but inasmuch as they can never come to the knowledge of the true gospel, *Life Application Study Bible* asserts that “such outer appearance is meaningless.”<sup>15</sup> Paul mentions the “last days” in verse 1 as the time those evil men will manifest and in verse 5 he instructs Timothy to turn away from people like that. And in turning away from them, the knowledge of the the *ἱερὰ γράμματα* (sacred writings), which Timothy had studied from Paul becomes a *sine qua non*.

<sup>10</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. Abakaliki: Abakaliki Diocesan Printing Press, 2019. P. 52-53.

<sup>11</sup> Uka, E.M. *Equipping the Saints for the Challenges of Our Time*. Calabar: Presby Press and Executive Press Limited, 2002. P. 192.

<sup>12</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. Abakaliki: Abakaliki Diocesan Printing Press, 2019. P. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Palmer, Timothy P. *The Reformed and Presbyterian Faith*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 2014. P. 121.

<sup>14</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. Abakaliki: Abakaliki Diocesan Printing Press, 2019. P. 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Life Application Study Bible – New Living Translation*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. P. 1942.



The text under investigation opens with **Σὺ δὲ παρηκολούθησάς μου τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ (But you have closely followed my teaching – verse 10)**. “Σὺ δὲ” (but you) is an indication that the verse is a continuation but a contrast of the preceding passage (3:1-9). Knight asserts that Paul used the statement to place Timothy in contrast or opposite of the false teachers.<sup>16</sup> And the keyword used by Paul to differentiate Timothy from the impostors and anti-intellectualists who were doing their uttermost to wreck the Church of his days was **παρηκολούθησας**. This word is the singular 2<sup>nd</sup> person aorist of the Greek verb **παρακολουθέω**. According to Barclay, the word’s meaning is beyond translation in a single English word, adding that its meaning transverses physically, mentally and spiritually.<sup>17</sup> In the researcher’s translation, the word means “**closely studied.**” It also means to follow close, to follow hard upon one or to attend studiously.<sup>18</sup> To “attend studiously” as rendered here presupposes that Timothy was a sort of Paul’s theological student. This implies that what would differentiate Timothy from the impostors, heretics and anti-intellectualists of his time was that which he had attended studiously from Paul.

Also, the phrase “**closely followed**” has a sense of a true and trained disciple. **Παρακολουθημα**, the noun form of it, is indeed the word for the disciple. Hence, Inworogu states that the expression described a disciple’s relationship to his master.<sup>19</sup> Here, one might be moved to ask why Paul preferred **παρηκολούθησας** to **ἐμαθήτευσας**, which Jesus constantly used for his disciples. But this word was not peculiar to Paul since Luke, who is believed by tradition to be the author of Luke’s Gospel, also used the word when he asserts that he had followed all things closely (Luke 1:3). Possibly, Paul uses this word to describe Timothy because Barclay states that the word includes the unwavering of the true comrade, the full understanding of the true scholar and the complete obedience of the dedicated servant. Thus, he further elucidated **παρηκολούθησας** with the following expressions:

Literally it means to follow alongside but it is used with a magnificent breath of meaning. It means to follow one physically, to stick by that person through thick and thin. It means to follow one mentally, to attend diligently to the person’s teaching and fully to understand the meaning of what is being said. It means to follow one spiritually, not only to understand what is being said, but also to carry out that person’s idea and become everything that that person would want one to be.<sup>20</sup>

From Barclay’s assertion above, it is clear that Timothy had a better advantage over the heretics and anti-intellectualists of his time, because he was fully equipped in studies which curriculum covered physical, mental and spiritual cadres. Physically, Timothy followed Paul for sixteen good years.<sup>21</sup> Mentally, he studiously followed whatever doctrine Paul had for these years. Spiritually, Timothy did not learn those things for learning sake; he was to carry them out.

<sup>16</sup> Knight, George W. III. “1-2 Timothy/Titus.” *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books 2000 (1098-1118). P.1113.

<sup>17</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. P. 220.

<sup>18</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott’s Greek-English Lexicon*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1884. P. 523.

<sup>19</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. Aba: Onuoha & Sons Printing Works, 1991. P. 200.

<sup>20</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. P. 220.

<sup>21</sup> Capes, David B, Reeves, Rodney and Richards E. Randolph. *Rediscovering Paul – An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology*. P. 251



Considering the duration of this study, one might say that Timothy was not a sandwiched or overnight pastor, neither was he like the impostors (heretics) who were to deceive others and at the same time were being deceived.

Also, Paul is too conscious and specific to mention the doctrine that Timothy has followed closely. Paul uses the phrase “**μου τῆ διδασκαλίας**” (my teaching) for specification purposes. If Paul emphasizes his own teaching here, it is a presupposition that there were other teachings prevalent in the days of Timothy, including that of the heretics, which Timothy might have heard. Probably, Paul does not want Timothy to conjoin his teaching to that of the Gnostics, who, according to Barclay, “were using wizardry and magical means to seduce people on one hand, and fanciful books, on the other hand, to support their claims.”<sup>22</sup> And Paul has to remind Timothy what he has learned and whom he has learned it from, as if he was telling Timothy, “not everything you learned are needed for the task ahead (successful ministry), but firstly, my teaching you have followed closely.” With this, it is evidential that Paul’s use of the phrase “**μου τῆ διδασκαλίας**” (my teaching) may signify rightful teaching while that of the heretics should be considered deceptive. Thus, “**μου τῆ διδασκαλίας**” which Timothy learned were based on the scriptures.<sup>23</sup>

It was not only Paul’s teaching that Timothy strictly studied under Paul. Timothy also learned what Paul in another place termed the mark of his Apostleship (2 Corinthians 10–11). Thus, Paul went ahead to list nine things (may be seen as a sort of nine courses in this research) in which Timothy has been his disciple<sup>24</sup> (emphasis mine). The nine courses learned by Timothy under Paul are his teaching (which had been emphasized above), mode of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, the persecutions and the sufferings. These nine qualities and experiences learned by Timothy from Paul are best summarized by Hendriksen’s and Barnes’ assertions thus:

Paul’s doctrine was supported by a godly “manner of life.” His “purpose” would refer to the goals he set for himself in the ministry, for example, preaching Christ where Christ has never been preached. Paul’s “faith” is his unflinching trust in God that helped him keep faithful despite the hardships he encountered, while “longsuffering” speaks of his putting up with people who seemed slow, foolish and ungrateful until the truth would begin to dawn on them. “Love” is the kind inspired by God and is able to forebear even those who wrong oneself and still seek their good just as God forgives and loves. “Patience” is evidenced even in the most trying situations. “Longsuffering” is with persons while “patience” is with circumstances. “Persecutions” are directly as a result of one’s faith while “sufferings” are hardships other than persecutions.<sup>25</sup>

Barclay postulates that the interest of that list was that it consists of the strands out of which the life and works of an apostle are woven, adding that, in it is found the duties, the qualities and the experiences of an apostle.<sup>26</sup> In other words, Timothy learned the duties of an apostle which are teaching and training. He also learned the qualifies (qualifications of) an apostle such

<sup>22</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 224.

<sup>23</sup> Hendriksen, William. *A Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. P. 295.

<sup>24</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. P. 200

<sup>25</sup> Hendriksen, William. *A Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. London: The Barner of Truth, 1964. P. 292 and Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament: Thessalonians to Philemon*. Grand Rapid: Baker, 1979.P. 237.

<sup>26</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 220.





as: aim in life, faith, patience and love. He as well learned the experiences of an apostle which includes longsuffering which would enable him face persecutions and sufferings.<sup>27</sup> Here, Barclay seems to agree with Barnes who asserts that longsuffering (endurance) is with persons while patience is with circumstances. He validates his claim by the use of the word **μακροθυμία** which is translated patience. He asserts that **μακροθυμία** as used by the Greeks is usually with people, with an addendum that it is the ability not to lose patience when people are foolish, not to grow irritable when they seem unteachable; it is the ability to accept folly, the perversity, the blindness and the ingratitude of others and still remain gracious, and still to labor on.<sup>28</sup> All these qualities and experiences were what would enable Timothy to perform excellently in the pastoral ministry despite the challenges peculiar to the ministry of his days. Thus, he had to study them.

Paul further illustrates the persecution and suffering experiences of Antioch (Acts 13:50), Iconium (Acts 14:5-6) and Lystra (Acts 14:19) – Timothy’s hometown. Inworogu postulates that because Timothy was from Lystra, he lived close to the scene of Paul’s sufferings.<sup>29</sup> Barclay supports that view when he asserts that because the incidents happened in Timothy’s district, he may have been an eyewitness to following them.<sup>30</sup> But Hanson confirms that all these events happened before Timothy was enlisted in the team of Paul’s Missionary.<sup>31</sup> However, whether Timothy lived close to the scene of the event or he was an eyewitness or that the incidents happened before Timothy was enlisted in the team of Paul’s mission should not be the crux of the matter or a point of much argument; Paul’s confession in verse 10 is that Timothy has fully studied them (**παρηκολούθησάς**). This means Timothy, as Paul’s theological student, among other things, learned and investigated the persecutions that befell Paul in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra and how the Lord delivered Paul from them all.

After reminding Timothy of his missionary experiences and the painful consequences of authentic Christianity amidst persecution, which Timothy had learned, Paul, in verse 13, goes further to warn Timothy against worthless people and impostors with the statement: **‘πονηροὶ ἄνθρωποι καὶ γόητες προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χειρόν, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι’** (**worthless people and impostors will advance to worse, deceiving and being deceived**). The words rendered evil men here are **πονηροὶ δὲ ἄνθρωποι**. **πονηροὶ** is the plural of the adjective **πονηρός** which does not only mean evil or wicked but also useless and worthless. They were worthless because they failed to bend down and learn the right teaching which Timothy had followed. **Γόητες**, on the other hand, is translated impostors, but has to do with wizards.<sup>32</sup> Montague puts it that Paul, in this verse, was implicitly reminding Timothy of what would become his fate and those of his converts who would hearken to the way, adding that Paul was confident that the sufferings and persecutions of those who would follow his teachings would not last long; rather, the impostors themselves would fall into the pits of destruction they dug for his followers.<sup>33</sup> The fate of the worthless people in 3:13 has parallels with Romans 1:27, where Paul argues that perverse people are destined for destruction and recompense. Also, in Psalm 7:15-16, 9:16, 57:7, Proverbs 26:27 and Ecclesiastics 10:18, there are allusions to the

<sup>27</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 222.

<sup>28</sup> Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament: Thessalonians to Philemon*. P. 221.

<sup>29</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. P.200

<sup>30</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 222

<sup>31</sup> Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell. *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. The Letters Pastoral Letters – Commentary*. P. 94.

<sup>32</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott’s Greek-English Lexicon*. P. 144

<sup>33</sup> Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. P. 184.



fate of worthless men and doers of iniquities for whom destruction awaits. It is conceivable that Paul, as a learned Jew and versed in the Torah, was aware of these Old Testament verses and might have been referring to them.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, the heretics and impostors in Timothy's day should be rightly referred to as worthless people, who, since they did not learn and have sound teachings, might have resorted to using wizardry or magical means to seduce people.<sup>35</sup> Hanson confirms this when he asserts that the Gnostic teachers actually practiced magic.<sup>36</sup> And Inworogu adds that while they seduce others, they themselves would be seduced also, because it is like a blind man leading another blind man and both of them not knowing at what they stumble.<sup>37</sup> The question should be why the worthless people and impostors (false teachers) in Timothy's time should resort to wizardry and magical means? Barclay tries to answer this by opining that it is because the impostors have seen that they have no future.<sup>38</sup> Again, it is an alternative to them since they did not avail themselves of the knowledge of sound doctrines.

In verse 14, Paul continues with the exhortation that began the passage by encouraging Timothy to hold fast to the things he had learned and become convinced of, even when the challenges – persecutions, heretical teaching and application of wizardry and magical means to seduce people – persisted. The verse states in part: **‘σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης’ (But you, remain in the things you have learned and become convinced of...)**. This verse again opens with the phrase **“σὺ δὲ”** which is translated **“but you.”** Fiore and Harrington argue that this emphatic phrase was used to contrast Timothy with the impostors against whom Paul polemicized throughout the pastoral letters.<sup>39</sup> In the same vein, Paul called Timothy's attention to **οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης** (the things you have learned and became convinced of). And the imperative here is **“μένε ἐν,”** that is, Timothy should remain, abide, continue, live with and stand on his ground<sup>40</sup> of what he has learned. Timothy did not just learn, he got conviction of what he learned. Of course, learning is not sufficient until one gains conviction of what was learned, which brings change in life.<sup>41</sup>

More so, by the use of the phrase **ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης** (you learned and were convinced of), Paul was telling Timothy that he was equal to the task ahead of him in Ephesus.<sup>42</sup> Part of what helps to give assurance to what is learned is the character of the teacher.<sup>43</sup> Hence, the completion of verse 14 adds **εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες** (having known whom you learned them). **“Whom”** in this context is plural, indicating that Timothy had more than one person who taught him. Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois respectively (2 Timothy 1:5) and, of course, Paul (Verse 10). Consequently, in verse 15, Paul reminded Timothy of his exposure to the **ἱερὰ γράμματα** (sacred writings) from childhood. This exposure of Timothy to the Holy Scriptures must be part of what Paul was implying in

<sup>34</sup> Chineke, Peter. *Scripture Exegesis on 2 Timothy 3:10-17*. P. 10

<sup>35</sup> Bernard, J. H. *The Pastoral Epistles*. P. 135.

<sup>36</sup> Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell. *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. The Letters Pastoral Letters – Commentary*. P. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*.

<sup>38</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 223.

<sup>39</sup> Fiore, Benjamin and Harrington, Daniel. *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*. P. 170.

<sup>40</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott's Greek-English Lexicon*. P. 435.

<sup>41</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. P. 201.

<sup>42</sup> Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. P. 185.

<sup>43</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. P. 201.



verse 14 as Timothy's preparedness to face the challenges in the pastoral ministry. He reminded him of how his knowledge of the sacred scriptures was capable of affording him salvific wisdom. There is an allusion of "ἱερὰ γράμματα" in 1 Maccabees 12:9 as a source of strength and wisdom for those who possess it. 1-2 Maccabees are deuterocanonical books, but this allusion would mean that Paul was already aware of these books when he wrote the pastoral letters.<sup>44</sup>

Sequel to the foregoing, it may be correct to assert that the reason why Paul enjoined Timothy to continue in what he has learned was that they were based on the scriptures.<sup>45</sup> The heretics would not be able to withstand Timothy because his knowledge of the "ἱερὰ γράμματα" started from childhood. "Childhood" here suggests a very young age, even babyhood or infancy.<sup>46</sup> This is not surprising considering that Timothy's mother was a Jew, although his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). It was the glory of the Jews that their children from their earliest days were trained in the knowledge of the Torah. Every Jew claimed that their children learned the law even from birth and drank it in with their mother's milk. Barclay asserts that the Jews claimed that the law was so imprinted on the hearts and minds of Jewish children that they would sooner forget their own name than they would forget the law.<sup>47</sup> All these may not be the only reason behind Timothy's acquaintance with the "ἱερὰ γράμματα," since his two parents were not Jews. But, the scripture says that Timothy learned it from his grandmother and mother (2 Timothy 1:5). Thus, that which he learned from them from childhood and the ones he studied closely under Paul, which gave him conviction of what is written therein, were the strength and preparedness Timothy was going to use to contain and contend against the challenges facing pastoral ministry in his time.

The sacred writing which Timothy had learned from childhood and afterward carefully studied under Paul is God-breathed. Hence, verse 16 states: *πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος* (**Every scripture is God-breathed**). Paul in this verse makes an assertive statement which would become one of the most prominent scriptural verses in the defense of Christian faith when he stated that "every scripture is God-breathed." Many scholars argue that the Greek form of the statement "every scripture is God-breathed" is too ambiguous and so difficult to translate. Kelly claims that in verse 16, Paul was referring to the Old Testament books and not the New Testament.<sup>48</sup> However, Montague disagrees with Kelly on this when he asserts that the phrase "every Scripture" may not only apply to the Hebrew Bible of the time, but surely it applies to all the canonized books of the Bible in our age.<sup>49</sup> Knight also admits that Paul has primarily, if not exclusively, the Old Testament in mind, but the statement of the principle applies to the New Testament as well.<sup>50</sup> And Barclay strengthens Montague and Knight's views on this statement when he argues that if what Paul claims for the scripture is true of the Old Testament, how much truer it is of the even more precious words of the New.<sup>51</sup> Wall and Steele nail it here by stating that while the communicative intent of verse 16 does not include the New Testament,

<sup>44</sup> Chineke, Peter. *Scripture Exegesis on 2 Timothy 3:10-17*.

<sup>45</sup> Hendriksen, William. *A Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. P. 295.

<sup>46</sup> Kent, Homer A. Jr. *The Pastoral Epistles*. P. 280.

<sup>47</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 224.

<sup>48</sup> Kelly, Joseph F. *An Introduction to the New Testament for Catholics*. P. 217.

<sup>49</sup> Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. P. 185.

<sup>50</sup> Knight, George W. III. "1-2 Timothy/Titus." *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books 2000. 1098-1118. (1113).

<sup>51</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 224.





its canonical intent does,<sup>52</sup> while Johnson asserts that as a functional statement, ‘the claim is binding to all scriptures.’<sup>53</sup> This research admits that the claim of verse 16 is binding to all scriptures (both the Old Testament and even the very letter that Paul wrote to Timothy).

**πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος** suggests that God breathed into the writers of the Bible the information he wanted them to write and they breathed out this thought in their writings.<sup>54</sup> It has to do with certain effects worked by the Spirit of God in the souls of the prophets and first witnesses of Christ through which they were enabled to understand revelation – its facts and words – and make it intelligible.<sup>55</sup> This God-breathed Bible was what Timothy learned from childhood from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5); the same God-breathed Gospel was what Timothy studied and got convinced of under Paul (2 Timothy 3:10). If Paul brings in “God-breathed scripture” here, there is a presupposition that the Gnostics of Timothy’s days, who were using wizardry and magical means to seduce people, had also fanciful books, which they used to support their claim.<sup>56</sup>

That the scripture is God-breathed means that the Holy Spirit supervised and superintended the writers of the Bible; yet, they wrote using their own languages, vocabularies and styles.<sup>57</sup> Brunner suggests that God breathing on the scripture (inspiration) does not rule out human search, human weaknesses, and the possibilities of mistakes in actions and behaviour.<sup>58</sup> Barth, as quoted by Leith, therefore adds that inspiration does not mean the infallibility of the biblical word in its linguistic, historical and theological character as a biblical word. It does mean that the fallible and faulty human word is used by God and has to be received and heard in spite of its human fallibility.<sup>59</sup> However, the fallibility of the biblical word in its linguistic, historical and theological character does not affect the infallibility of the scripture as God’s inerrant and divinely inspired word.<sup>60</sup> Thus, while the heretics centered on the fallible biblical word and use same to deceive others, Timothy having studied the God-breathed word that is infallible and got conviction of it (he was thoroughly equipped), was charged by Paul to use it and teach, refute errors, turning one’s life from disobedience, and training in righteousness.<sup>61</sup> The same God breathed word, which Timothy had attended studiously, would make him, the man of God, to be complete (perfect) for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

From the fruit of the exegesis so far, fact has been discovered that: it was Timothy’s knowledge of the sacred writings from childhood, and more especially how he studied and got conviction of them under Paul as a seminarian, that gave him the qualifications and experiences through which he would be successful in the pastoral ministry despite the challenges prevalent in his days. These sacred writings are the sources of wisdom, strength and preparedness that Timothy was to use to combat the false teachers of his days and become successful in the ministry. In fact, it was this sacred writing that made him different from the impostors who were described

<sup>52</sup> Wall, Robert W., and Steele, Richard B. *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: The Two Horizons of New Testament Commentary*. P. 269.

<sup>53</sup> Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Letters to Paul’s Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. P. 88.

<sup>54</sup> McCain, Danny. *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*. P. 258.

<sup>55</sup> Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. P. 274.

<sup>56</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 224.

<sup>57</sup> McCain, Danny. *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*. P. 258.

<sup>58</sup> Brunner, Emil. *Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge*. P. 118.

<sup>59</sup> Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. P. 275.

<sup>60</sup> Harmless, William. *Augustine in His Words*. P.188.

<sup>61</sup> Knight, George W. III. “1-2 Timothy/Titus.” *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2000. 1098-1118. (1113).



to be worthless men. Between Timothy and the impostors of his days lies the pitfalls of lack of theological education. It was because the false teachers were worthless men who lacked appropriate training (anti-intellectualism), unlike Timothy, that they resorted to wizardry and magical means of seducing people. It made them advance worse, deceiving and being deceived. They were blind people leading other blind people and as such gave Paul the conviction that they were not going to last in their ministry but would rather fall into the pits of destruction they dug for his followers. That the Bible is God-breathed and infallible does not remove human errors and lexical mistakes. Thus, it should even be the more reason one should undergo qualitative educational training that would enable one to study it carefully (just as Timothy did) so as to get the conviction that would enable one to differentiate human linguistic errors from God's inerrant word which can be used to refute errors, turning one's life from disobedience, and training in righteousness. These were the things Timothy studied under Paul as a seminarian upon which Paul urges him to remain in and live with.

## IMPLICATIONS TO PASTORAL MINISTRY IN NIGERIA

According to Orji, "The greatest poverty of pastoral ministry in the 21st century is anti-intellectualism."<sup>62</sup> Just as the renowned classical Nigerian novelist of blessed memory, Achebe, laments, "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink," there is a multiplicity of pastors and churches who ironically lack the tokens of theological education.<sup>63</sup> Many of them have not seen the four walls of theological seminary, rather insisting that the Holy Ghost could help all who sought to understand the Bible without prior theological scholarship.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, Nigeria's socio-religious setting is just a replica of impostors just as it was prevalent in the days of Timothy (2 Timothy 3:13). People go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived because of the heretic teaching of the half-baked pastors, who have contributed little or no effort to addressing the burning issues of nation building and social transformation in the 21st century pastoral ministry. What Timothy had carefully studied might seem insignificant not until some factors arose which necessitated Paul to charge him to get back to that which he has strictly followed. Such factors, as they were in the days of Timothy, if not greater today, are still militating against the pastoral ministry, thereby making it a necessity that a would-be pastor must, first thing in first, avail himself the opportunity of theological education so as to overcome them. Those factors are treated below:

### Abundance of Heresy

Heresy is one of the basic factors that made theological education a *sine qua non*. Just as it was prevalent in the days of Timothy, there is abundance of heretic teachings ravaging the pastoral ministry in Nigeria today. These erroneous teachings are not only among those who did not attend theological colleges, but also those who attended it but were not serious about learning. It is on this premise that Uka laments that even "some students of theology in the seminary also disdain and undermine theological education."<sup>65</sup> If it were what Timothy learned from

<sup>62</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. P. 52, 56.

<sup>63</sup> Ndukwe, Olo. *An Unpublished Note on Theological Indoctrination: A Bane to Theological/Religious Education and Wintess in Nigeria Today*. HGLTTI, Arochukwu, 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. P. 52-53

<sup>65</sup> Uka, E.M. *Equipping the Saints for the Challenges of Our Time*. Calabar: Presby Press and Executive Press Limited, 2002. P. 192.



childhood, without carefully studying under Paul, the confidence reposed on him by Paul would have been doubtful. It therefore means that we have bountiful heretics in the pastoral ministry today because many, even when they claimed to have the knowledge of the Bible, have not carefully studied it as Timothy did under Paul. Just as Barclay posited that the impostors used the Bible as a fanciful book in the days of Timothy to deceive others and get deceived,<sup>66</sup> many pastors in Nigeria today have resorted to ‘another gospel’ due to lack of theological education. Sound teaching has gone into oblivion, while what we have in the name of pastors are those (reoccurrence) who have resorted to magic and wizardry, as Bernard posits.<sup>67</sup>

Also, those deployed in the pastoral ministry without theological education center their doctrine mostly only on prosperity messages.<sup>68</sup> This is heretic because emphasis on one gospel truth to the detriment of another gospel truth is nothing other than heresy. Again, if one preaches prosperity without labor, it looks like ignorant of the fact that every genuine grace manifests itself in hard work. Again, due to lack of theological education, heresy is made manifest by pastors in the form of desperation in mammon, greed, fake prophecy and promiscuousness.<sup>69</sup> Just as the heretics in the days of Timothy deceived not only others but themselves, many people in the churches today have been deceived. People are deceived because their teachers (pastors) are deceived as well due to lack of theological knowledge of the sacred writings. Hence, most members hardly remain or uphold sound doctrines because they received none from their pastor. This is why many denominations today are clustered with members in their thousands whose faiths are not stable because they missed the sound doctrine they would have built their faith on. Thus, members wander from one denomination to another day after day in search of the right doctrine which is seldom seen.

### **Impostors and Anti-intellectualists in the Ministry**

Impostors were regarded in the days of Timothy as worthless and useless men.<sup>70</sup> Today, those useless and worthless men have replicated themselves in the pastoral ministry. They are characterized by an anti-intellectualism mentality that the ministry does not need scholarship assistance. Thus, they ignore the sound doctrine that would create impact in the lives of the church members. For them to make an impact today, the impostors in our time resort to wizardry and magical means to seduce people, thereby making pastoral ministry another thing altogether. Why? The answer given by Barclay earlier on is that these impostors have no future.<sup>71</sup> With this, impostors make the aim of ministry to be rooted in how much they gain from the people; they deceive so that they can earn their living. The impact of what they teach on the lives of the members is none of their business. Of course, they have no sound message and are not bothered about delivering ysame, but must by all means sustain themselves as ministry then is seen as mere employment opportunity. But even if it should be seen as an employment opportunity, as erroneous as this view is, no gainful employment in this century is entered without education. For instance, in what is conventionally called noble professions today, such as medicine, engineering, pharmacy and a host of others, people never enter them unchecked; at least anyone who must answer a title that belongs to any of them must be a

<sup>66</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 224.

<sup>67</sup> Bernard, J. H. *The Pastoral Epistles*. P. 135.

<sup>68</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. P. 60.

<sup>69</sup> Igberu Obinna. *Interview at The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Benin*. On 2/2/2023.

<sup>70</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott's Greek-English Lexicon*. P. 577.

<sup>71</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. (223)



graduate of first degree in the university.<sup>72</sup> But in ministry, some people deceive themselves by entering it without theological training.

Apart from the impostors resorting to wizardry and magical means to seduce people, Montague asserts that impostors would fall into the pits of destruction they dug for their followers.<sup>73</sup> Worthy of note is that impostors sometimes do not dig the pit because they want to dig it for their followers to fall into, but majorly because they lack the requisite knowledge of sound doctrine. However, the interest of this research is not to defend them but to establish the pitfalls associated with any act of impostors and anti-intellectualism in the Nigeria 21st century pastoral ministry. Some of those pitfalls include that impostors do not last in the ministry. Oftentimes, we see pastors who open one ministry today, and tomorrow such ministry is closed. The ministry got folded up because even though impostors can deceive members sometimes, it is not all the time. There is always a time that the truth may be heard, especially now that members are striving to be theologically sound via the internet. On a regular basis, it has been discovered that church members who are internet literate normally weigh or even compare and contrast their pastors' messages with the ones they hear/download online. As soon as those members discover that the pastor has deceived them with wrong doctrine, they may decide to relocate to other churches where sound doctrines are upheld, if any. It therefore means that for pastors in this century to avert the dangers associated with impostors, one must be theologically sound.

## Persecutions

Persecution is a challenge to the pastoral ministry in all ages. Christians face persecution from members of other religions and sometimes among different denominations. Today in Nigeria, Christians are persecuted, especially those in the north. There have been emergencies of different terrorist/insurgent groups and agitation groups in this country such as: Boko Haram, Niger-Delta militants, Fulani herdsmen and most recently, the unknown-gunmen, whose activities have meted severe persecutions on Christians. Because of such persecutions, doing ministry in the country is now a delicate one.<sup>74</sup> It demands skills, salvific wisdom and experiences for one to be successful. All these Paul did not only have, he also made his seminarian Timothy to acquire them.<sup>75</sup> Just as it was in the days of Timothy, Paul brought in the persecutions he underwent in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, as part of the curriculum that Timothy had closely studied. Having studied it made Timothy probably know the right approaches to tackling persecutions or other diplomatic ways to be proactive other than reactive during persecutions. Today, such knowledge is still very important if the number of pastors that lose their lives on a daily basis in the name of doing ministry should reduce drastically. Inasmuch as persecution is inevitable in the pastoral ministry, managing and regulating it has a better prospect for a successful ministry. And all the needed knowledge to withstand persecutions is gotten through theological knowledge.

In theological studies, would-be pastors are made to face squarely in studies the strand out of which the life and works of a pastor are woven.<sup>76</sup> Such a person is made to learn the duties of an apostle which are teaching and training. He also learns what qualifies (qualifications of) an

<sup>72</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. P.65.

<sup>73</sup> Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. P. 184.

<sup>74</sup> Unata, Israel. Interview at The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Idembia Parish. Conducted on 2/2/2023.

<sup>75</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 222.

<sup>76</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 220.





apostle such as: aim in life, faith, patience and love. He as well learns the experiences of an apostle, which includes longsuffering, which would enable him face persecutions and sufferings just as Barclay and Barnes posit that Timothy learned under Paul.<sup>77</sup> Hence, theological education is still a *sine qua non* today, just as it was the base for Timothy's success in ministry, if pastors in Nigeria must have or even witness good success in their ministerial duties.

### **The Nature of the Bible Itself**

Interpreting the Bible is the biggest challenge that faces all ages in terms of pastoral work. Even during the Medieval and Reformation era, most priests were declared heretic due to wrong hermeneutical explications of Christology and other forms of dogmatics. Today in Nigeria, heresy is seldom checked. People take the Bible and begin to teach anything they like in the name of sound doctrine. Most teachings in our churches are done without recourse to scholarship. There is a notion that since the Holy Spirit inspired people who wrote the Bible, the Bible is perfect and should be preached without recourse to scholarship. This view has affected the pastoral ministry so much because it is the genesis of heretic teaching. Brunner's view now becomes 'a must': "The Bible is God-breathed and that makes it more complicated in interpretation because the Bible still contains human lexical errors and possibilities of mistakes in actions and behaviour of the writers."<sup>78</sup>

Timothy studying under Paul made him differentiate human linguistic errors and possibilities of mistakes in actions and behaviors of the writers, as contained in the Bible from the infallible and inerrant divinely inspired word.<sup>79</sup> It will also be an issue today if theological education is lacking among pastors as it may lead to not differentiating and dictating the human errors contained in the Bible. It may be noteworthy that it was the same Bible that Timothy learned strictly under Paul that most of the Gnostics of his days were using as well. Possibly today, all preachers of the gospel can carry the same Bible, preach the same passage of the scripture, but with different messages. What differentiates the two preachers possibly will be what each one knows about the passage. The one who acquired the basic token of theological education will have a better prospect of exegeting the passage much better than the one who did not (the impostors and anti-intellectualists).

### **THE RESPONSES OF 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17 TO THE CHALLENGES OF PASTORAL MINISTRY**

It is worthy of note that Timothy also had challenges facing pastoral ministry in his own days. Those challenges as discussed above had to do with abundance of heretic teaching, persecutions, evils of impostors and the nature of the Bible itself. These challenges and other ones still hamper successes in pastoral ministry in the Nigerian context today. However, the

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<sup>77</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 222. And Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament: Thessalonians to Philemon*. P. 237

<sup>78</sup> Brunner, Emil. *Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge*. P. 118.

<sup>79</sup> Knight, George W. III. "1-2 Timothy/Titus." *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books 2000. 1098-1118.



responses of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 proffer solutions to them all then and can still proffer solutions that would enhance successes in the pastoral ministry today.

**First, the Knowledge of the ἱερὰ γράμματα (Sacred Writings):** The greatest emphasis of Paul's charge to Timothy was that his (Timothy's) ministry should be different from that of the impostors because Timothy had the knowledge of the "ἱερὰ γράμματα" (2 Timothy 3:15). Sacred writings provide pastors with strength and salvific wisdom to withstand all the challenges facing the pastoral ministry just as the allusion in 1 Maccabees 12:9 states. Timothy acquired the knowledge of the sacred writings and got convictions over them as a theological student of Paul. It is the "ἱερὰ γράμματα" that would make him to have a sound doctrine which would lead to a sound pastoral ministry. A pastoral ministry is said to have sound doctrines if it is based on the scripture<sup>80</sup> and that is when the doctrine can lead to success. Today, it is evident that most pastors and their ministries live ephemerally, most probably, due to lack of knowledge of the "ἱερὰ γράμματα." This research therefore calls on all pastors in Nigeria, just as Paul called on Timothy, to be exposed to the knowledge of the "ἱερὰ γράμματα" so as to witness a successful pastoral ministry.

Also, Timothy was to have a successful ministry if he was able to combat the heretic teaching of his time. And there is no way Timothy can combat heresy without the knowledge of the "ἱερὰ γράμματα," because the sacred writings not only afford salvific wisdom but at the same time the source of wisdom and strength.<sup>81</sup> This salvific wisdom and strength was what the Gnostics of his days did not have. Little wonder the Gnostics were called worthless and useless men.<sup>82</sup> Today, heretic teaching is seen here and there in the pastoral ministry. And the only solution that can combat it is to acquire the salvific wisdom and strength which Timothy acquired in his own time. This wisdom is capable of making one know the right interpretation due to a particular portion of the scripture and that of another.

### The Ephemerality of Impostors and Their Evil Works

Another way 2 Timothy 3:10-17 addresses the challenges facing the pastoral ministry in Timothy's day was to show Timothy that while those who have sound doctrines would make an impact in the ministry, impostors and their evil works would never last. As Montague asserts, "Paul was confident that the sufferings and persecution of those who would follow Timothy's teaching would not last long, but the impostors would fall into a pit of destruction."<sup>83</sup> Pastors in Nigeria should therefore be on the know that impostors and anti-intellectualists who propagate heretic teachings today will hardly last in the ministry, because, one can deceive others for a time but not all the time. As soon as those who were deceived earlier on hear sound teachings, many of them will run to it so as to avert the destruction that awaits the evil works of the heretics. Hence, to last in the ministry, a basic token of theological education becomes an imperative.

Again, impostors and their works never last because the nature of their ministry and teaching portrays that they have no future.<sup>84</sup> And for Timothy to conquer this, Paul made it open for him to see the impending danger that awaited the impostors. This would make Timothy never to

<sup>80</sup> Hendriksen, William. *A Commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. P. 295.

<sup>81</sup> Chineke, Peter. *Scripture Exegesis on 2 Timothy 3:10-17*.

<sup>82</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott's Greek-English Lexicon*. P. 577.

<sup>83</sup> Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. P. 184.

<sup>84</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 223.



shift ground from what he had strictly studied because shifting ground from that would cut short his ministry. This is also applicable to pastors today; they should note that those who lack basic training for ministry would definitely end shamefully. Pastors without theological education are definitely faced with the pitfalls associated with heresy and deceptive messages. Thus, pastors should delve into theological studies just as Timothy did under Paul. Pastors should strive to learn and become convinced of the scripture as did Timothy, because for Paul, that is the basis of all successes in the pastoral ministry (2 Timothy 3:14).

**Second, Remain in the *ἱερὰ γράμματα* (Sacred Writings):** Another evil ravaging the pastoral ministry today is people who devalue what they have hitherto learned and join the bandwagon of preachers who have no sound doctrine. Timothy had studied under Paul for a number of years. He had learned both Paul's teachings, manner of life, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions and sufferings. And Paul admonished Timothy that if he must conquer the challenges facing the ministry of his days, he must remain, continue, live with and stand his ground in what he had learned.<sup>85</sup> Today, this imperative is still necessary, especially to those theological graduates who have almost forgotten what they have learned in theological colleges, and also to others who have shifted ground into a new doctrine. They forget that it is by remaining in what one had strictly studied that will help to polemicize impostors.<sup>86</sup> But when what is learned is abandoned and the victim joins impostors, heresy and other pitfalls of impostors will be maximized.

Another aspect of this is to teach that same *ἱερὰ γράμματα* which one has remained in. It was the same doctrine that Timothy learned that Paul expected him to teach throughout his ministry. This is because Timothy did not only learn them but was also convinced of them. And according to Inworogu, "It is that which one is convinced of that brings change in life."<sup>87</sup> This therefore refutes stoutly the ideology of those pastors in Nigeria who feel that theological education is a waste of time. For it is in it that conviction is gotten; also, it is from it that one can teach what that will bring change of life. This change of life in its totality is what is known as success in the pastoral ministry.

## PROSPECTS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL PASTORAL MINISTRY

So far so good, it can be said that theological education has better prospects than anti-intellectualism in ministry. It is the prospects of theological education that makes it a necessity for a successful pastoral ministry. Through 2 Timothy 3:10-17, the following are the prospects of theological education against anti-intellectualism:

**Theological Education Brings Sound Teaching:** Timothy was asked to remain and live with sound doctrine by Paul because Timothy had strictly followed sound doctrine.<sup>88</sup> This is true because one cannot offer what one does not have. Most people that are exponents of heresy in Nigeria today are not doing it intentionally but it is on the basis of lack of hermeneutical prowess that would give them conviction of what to teach. They lack this all important

<sup>85</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott's Greek-English Lexicon*. P. 435.

<sup>86</sup> Fiore, Benjamin and Harrington, Daniel. *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus*. P. 170.

<sup>87</sup> Inworogu, Okpara E. M. A. *The Pastoral Epistles – I & II Timothy and Titus*. P. 201.

<sup>88</sup> Whiton, James M. *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell & Stott's Greek-English Lexicon*. P.435.



hermeneutical prowess because they refuse to attend theological institutions where such knowledge is acquired.

Another aspect of sound doctrine that theological education would address is as it concerns raising other **Παρακολουθημα** (learned disciples). Timothy as a learned disciple of Paul was charged to remain in teaching sound doctrine simply because he learned under a man who had sound doctrine – Paul. It therefore means that if those who are called into the pastoral ministry in Nigeria would attend theological education, it would enable them to teach sound doctrine to their disciples. Hence, there would be a trustworthy posterity who would take sound doctrine to other generations yet unborn. This is a truism knowing fully well that Timothy received the charge to remain and teach the sound doctrine he had learned from Paul, when Paul was about to die.<sup>89</sup> Supposing that Paul did not teach sound doctrine to Timothy, Paul's death would have been the end of sound doctrine in that era where Gnostics were on rampage. Thus, if this century must have future teachers of the gospel who would uphold right doctrine, it should not joke with theological education which is the place where pastors are equipped on how to deliver sound doctrine.

**Moreover, Theological Education Enhances One's Knowledge of the Scripture:** Timothy had the knowledge of the **“ἱερὰ γράμματα”** (sacred writings) from childhood which he learned from his grandmother and mother (2 Timothy 1:5). But what enhanced his knowledge of the scripture was after he had strictly studied under Paul and got conviction of what the scripture is saying (2 Timothy 3:10). Today, the likes of Timothy are scarcely seen in the pastoral ministry. What fills the pastoral ministry are mostly men who have shallow knowledge of the scripture. They have shallow knowledge of the scripture because most of them uphold that what they learned from their parents and churches are enough to make them enter the pastoral ministry. The lesson to learn here is that Timothy did not stop at what he learned from his parents; he went further to strictly study under Paul. It was under Paul he learned the manner of life, patience, as well as Paul's persecution experiences which Paul taught him probably for him to learn how to face and handle persecutions and sufferings in his own time.<sup>90</sup> If not for Paul, Timothy would have been limited in his knowledge of the scripture. In the same vein, pastors of this century who remain in what is learned at home and churches without availing themselves the opportunity of theological education are limited in their knowledge of the scripture. These are the ones that are seen today using all gimmicks to extort money from their members just as the impostors in the days of Timothy were using wizardry and magical means to seduce the people.<sup>91</sup> Why? It is because they lack an enhanced knowledge of the scripture.

Knowledge of the scripture as discussed here is beyond reading the scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The truth about the scripture is that there are necessary pieces of information needed for the explications of most parts of the Bible that are not contained in the Bible. Those pieces of information can be allocated through extra biblical literature books, which theologians have more access to than non-theologians. In theological institutions, people learn, among other things, the background of Old and New Testament writings; they also study the original languages of the Bible. All these give them a background information of what is written in each passage of the Bible and the intending mind of the writer. These pieces of

<sup>89</sup> McCain, Danny. *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*. P. 258.

<sup>90</sup> Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible – The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. P. 222.

<sup>91</sup> Hanson, Anthony Tyrrell. *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. The Letters Pastoral Letters – Commentary*. P. 95.





information put together enhance one's knowledge of the scripture as they make one know why a particular statement was made in a particular context of the scripture.

### **Lastly, Theological Education Makes Pastors to be Fully Equipped for Good Work:**

Pastoral ministry is like the computer terminology, "garbage in, garbage out." It is what a pastor learns that he can teach to others. It was what Paul learned that he taught Timothy and it was the same thing that he charged Timothy to remain in and teach to others. No congregation grows beyond what is heard from the teacher. Timothy spent time under Paul to study the scripture that is God-breathed. This, according to Knight, was what made Timothy to be thoroughly (fully) equipped.<sup>92</sup> To this end, it is pertinent to establish that no pastor would be able to be fully equipped in this century if the pastor fails to avail him/herself the opportunity of theological education. Not being fully equipped is disastrous for the pastoral ministry because the said pastor would not be able to teach, refute errors, turn lives from disobedience and train in righteousness.<sup>93</sup> To be fully equipped, pastors who entered the ministry without theological education need to get back to the drawing board, while those who are called presently should do well to get admission to theological institutions where they will be fully equipped. They should never try to see spending four years or more in the theological institutions as a waste of time. Pastors should stop seeing the demand for formal education (theological education) as being high handed, as seeing visions and accurate interpretation of the Bible need university education.<sup>94</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Theological education has a biblical backup having evaluated Paul's charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:10-17. The likes of Paul, Timothy and others in the scriptures did well in the pastoral ministry because they availed themselves the opportunity of theological education. It was this theological education that qualified and equipped them for sound doctrine on one hand and helped them to combat heretic teachings on the other hand. This is because theological education gives a salvific knowledge and strength to teach and at the same time understand that worthless men (impostors and anti-intellectualists) in the ministry are bound to fail. Thus, the ideology that seeing visions and interpretation of the Bible does not need university education should be discarded. The scripture being God-breathed is the more reason why those in the pastoral ministry should attend theological institutions. This is because God breathing in the word does not remove human weaknesses, linguistic errors, possibilities of mistakes in actions and behaviour of the writers. The human word is always faulty and these faulty human words are used by the evangelists to write the inerrant and infallible word of God. An attempt to understand where the human errors fall in the scripture and decipher the real message God wants to communicate in each passage makes theological education a *sine qua non*.

<sup>92</sup> Knight, George W. III. "1-2 Timothy/Titus." *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books2000. 1098-1118.

<sup>93</sup> Knight, George W. III. "1-2 Timothy/Titus." *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on NIV*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Baker Books2000. 1098-1118.

<sup>94</sup> Orji, Joseph Monday. *Mainline and Pentecostal Churches: How Far*. P. 65.



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