

Restoring and Maintaining Orthodoxy in the Pastoral Epistles

Studies in Pastoral Epistles
Dr Annang Asumang

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Topics to be covered

1. Theory of religious deviance and implications for Studying Pastoral Epistles
2. Characterization of heterodoxy in the Pastoral Epistles
3. Definition of Orthodoxy in the Pastoral Epistles
4. Ecclesial Disciplinary Procedures for maintaining orthodoxy in the Pastoral Epistles
5. Safeguarding of Vulnerable and Maintaining Orthodoxy

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Learning Outcomes

1. Employ exegetical analyses of 1 Tim 4:1-3 and 2 Tim 2:23-26 to explain some of the mechanisms through which heterodoxy develops
2. Employ exegetical analyses of 2 Tim 2:24-26, Tit 3:9-11, 1 Tim 5:19-25 and 1 Tim 1:20 to draft a policy paper on discipline of an errant believer in your Church
3. Evaluate how the social welfare measures in 1 Tim 5:1-16 may be used for improving your church's systems for social welfare of help for less well-off
4. Use exegetical analyses of 2 Tim 3:5-9 and 1 Tim 4:2-4, to draft a proposal for systems for the Safeguarding of vulnerable members of your church

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Concern to deal with false teaching

- All 3 letters indicate Paul's acute concerns to correct false teaching
- **1 Tim 1:3-4:**
 - "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work – which is by faith."
- **1 Tim 1:6-7:**
 - "Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm."
- **1 Tim 6:20-21:**
 - "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith."

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Passages expressing Paul's concerns on False Teachings

- **1 Timothy**
 - 1 Tim 1:1-7; 19-20
 - 1 Tim 3:14-15
 - 1 Tim 4:1-8; 16
 - 1 Tim 5:11-13
 - 1 Tim 6:3-5; 6-10; 20
- **2 Timothy**
 - 2 Tim 1:13-15
 - 2 Tim 2:14-18; 2:23-26
 - 2 Tim 3:1-9
 - 2 Tim 4:1-4; 14-15
- **Titus**
 - Titus 1:10-16
 - Titus 3:9-11

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Preliminary Observation

The Pastoral Epistles not only address deviance in Ephesus and Crete. They also characterize the nature and dynamics of such deviance and so provide us with insight into how the Apostle Paul corrected them. In so doing they set for us a divine template for our task of discerning and correcting contemporary **false teachings**, as well as maintaining biblical **sound teaching**

Heterodoxy

Orthodoxy

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Methodological Question

How do the Pastoral Epistles enable us to clarify the definitions, developments and dynamics of variance and deviance in Christian belief and praxes in such a way as to inform how contemporary Ghanaian church may maintain orthodoxy and correct heterodoxy?

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Classical Definitions

- **Orthodoxy:**
 - “right belief, as contrasted with heresy”. [*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 2005, p. 1,206].
 - Broadly conceived, orthodoxy refers to the boundaries of correct doctrine, and orthopraxy relates to the limits of correct behaviour based on this correct doctrine [Asumang 2011].
- **Heresy:**
 - “opinion or doctrine at variance with the orthodox or accepted doctrine, especially of a church or religious system or, the maintaining of such an opinion or doctrine” [*Collins English Dictionary*]
 - “Wrong behaviour is often a result of inaccurate knowledge. In its universal sense therefore, heresy may be defined as deviations from orthodoxy and / or orthopraxy. So heresy can only be identified by first recognizing orthodoxy and orthopraxy” [Asumang 2011]

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Terms employed for Heterodoxy in Pastorals

Term	References
[teach any other doctrine]	1 Tim 1:3; 6:3
[swerving from these have turned aside to]	1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 2:18
[have caused a shipwreck]	1 Tim 1:19
[depart from]	1 Tim 4:1a
[devote themselves to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons]	1 Tim 4:1b
[the faith he has denied and he is worse than unbeliever]	1 Tim 5:8
[they have set aside the first faith]	1 Tim 5:12
[have strayed after Satan]	1 Tim 5:15; 6:21
[destitute of the truth]	1 Tim 6:5
[have been seduced away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many sorrows]	1 Tim 6:10
[being led astray by various passions]	2 Tim 3:6
[disqualified regarding the faith]	2 Tim 3:8
[they will turn away and turn aside to myths]	2 Tim 4:4

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Characterization of Heterodoxy in Pastoral Epistles

- **Wide Idioms:** Varied expressions some but not all synonyms
- **Wide Spectrum:** Some are to be avoided because of their harm, others are described as demonic and have led people already to Satan
- **Varied Responses:** Some to be warned, others silenced or rebuked, and others excommunicated
- **Varied Expectations:** Hope for some deviants to be restored and others considered as “handed over to Satan”
- **Varied forces:** Many forces driving the heterodoxy
 - Demonic
 - Financial monetary factor
 - Intellectual and speculative arguments and debates
 - Ostentation and showing off
 - Idleness [cf. 1 Tim 5]
 - Social and spiritual decadence in society [2 Tim 3:1-5]

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Terms employed for Orthodoxy	
Term	References
[sound teaching]	1 Tim 1:10-11; 2 Tim 4:3, Tit 1:9, 2:1
[the truth]	1 Tim 2:4; 3:15; 4:3; 2 Tim 2:5, 18, 25; 3:7-8; Tit 1:1, 14
[the testimony]	1 Tim 2:6; Tit 1:13
[the testimony about our Lord]	2 Tim 1:8
[the mystery of the faith]	1 Tim 3:9
[nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed]	1 Tim 4:6
[trustworthy is the saying]	1 Tim 1:15; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Tit 1:9; 3:8
[Scripture]	1 Tim 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16
[the teaching]	1 Tim 6:1
[of the faith]	1 Tim 6:12
[for the Gospel]	2 Tim 1:8, 10
[the healthy words you have heard from me]	2 Tim 1:13
[the good deposit]	2 Tim 1:14
[what you have heard from me before many witnesses]	2 Tim 2:2
[my gospel]	2 Tim 2:8
[the word of God]	2 Tim 2:9; 2 Tim 4:2; Tit 1:3; 2:5
[but as for you continue in what you have firmly believed]	2 Tim 3:14
[sacred writings]	2 Tim 3:15
[the books especially the parchments]	2 Tim 4:13
[our message]	2 Tim 4:15, 17
[our common faith]	Tit 1:4
[hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught]	Tit 1:9
[the doctrine of God our Saviour]	Tit 2:10

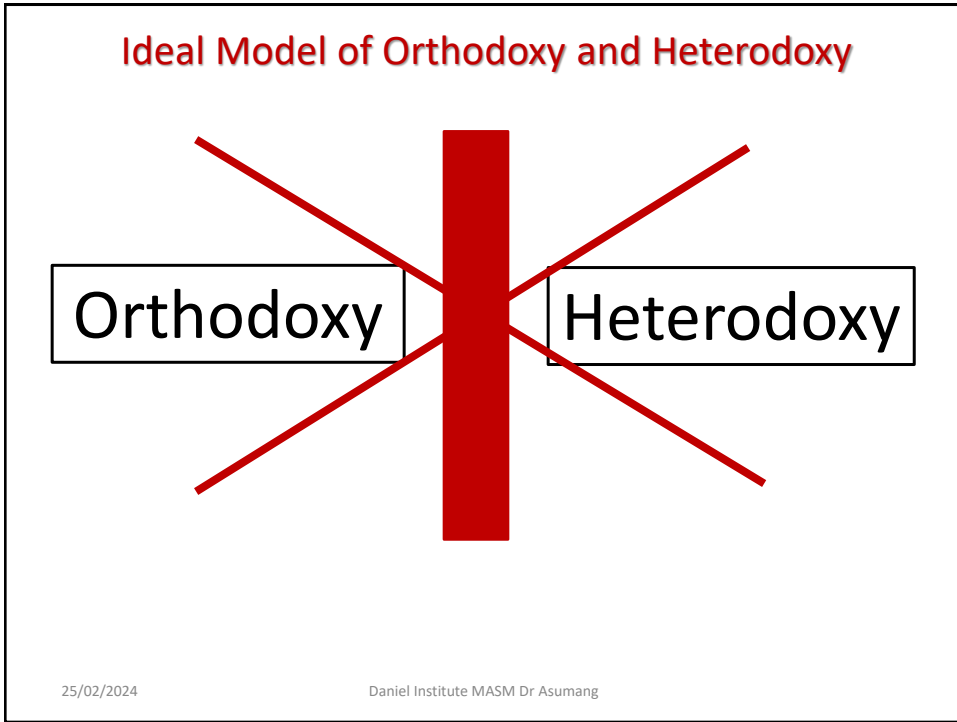
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Characterization of Orthodoxy in the Pastoral Epistles

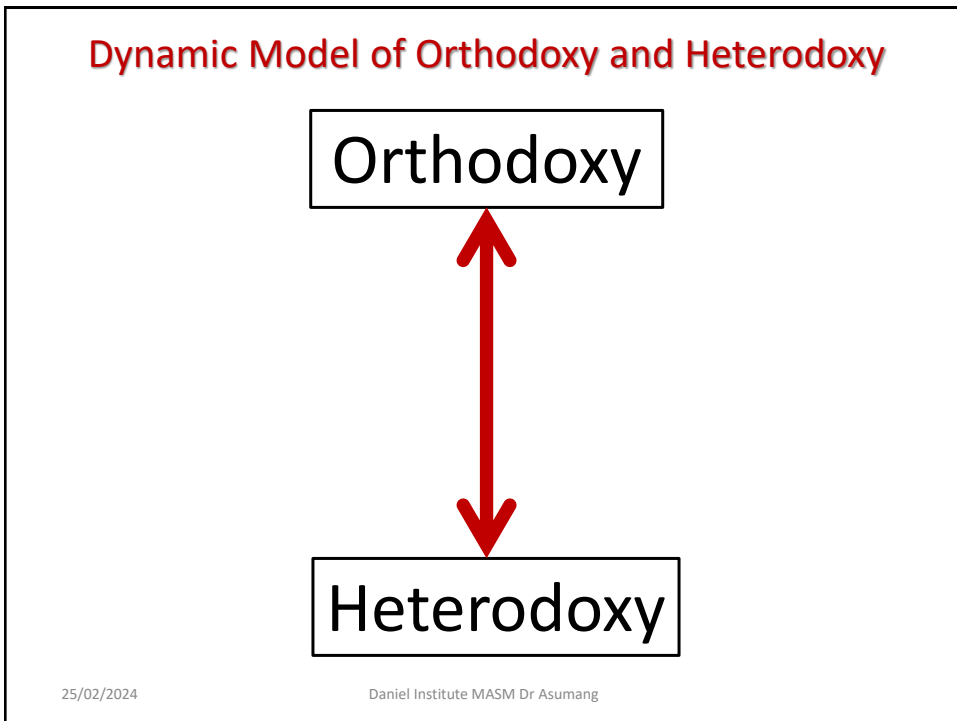
- Varied Idioms: Complex different expressions
- Varied Components
 - Scripture - OT
 - Jesus' words
 - The Gospel
 - Creeds, hymns & trustworthy sayings
- Exemplification in Apostle Paul
 - Paul's Apostolic Teaching
 - His Gospel
 - His Teachings
 - His Life
- Exemplification in its Impact on Paul's Co-Workers
 - Impact of Scripture on Timothy
 - Impact of Apostolic teaching on Timothy
- Quadrangular dimensions of Orthodoxy
 - The Doctrine
 - Their Interpretations (and by whom)
 - Their Praxes
 - Their Ethical fruits
- Orthodoxy is a complex phenomenon

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Gradations of Heterodoxy in Pastoral Epistles

1. **Orthodoxy**
 2. **Intra-orthodox disagreements**
 - Over articulation of doctrine, and / or its interpretations and /or its praxes
 3. **Error**
 - Correctable variance from orthodoxy
 - Often related to articulation, interpretation or praxes
 - Not deeply or “stubbornly” held conviction
 - E.g., 2 Tim 2:23-26; Tit 3:10-11 [?1 Tim 2:8-10]
 4. **Heresy**
 - Concretized “stubbornly held” error and deviance
 - Usually singularly held but may involve a number of people
 - Remains within the community of believers
 - Potential to infect and pollute the fellowship
 - Pronounced influence of socio-cultural and political factors
 - E.g., 1 Tim 4:1-3
 5. **Apostasy**
 - Abandonment of fundamental elements of orthodoxy
 - Often characterized by articulated denials
 - Some involve verbal variance and modifications of doctrine
 - Determined efforts to legitimate position, and teach and recruit others to follow their course
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Five Gradations of Error in 2 Tim 2:23-26

- **2 Tim 2:23-26:**
 - Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.
- **Gradations of Error in 2 Tim 2:23-26**
 - Arguments: Verbal speculations; often personal
 - Quarrels: Emotive, sinful and interpersonal divisiveness
 - Opponents: – Wilful defiance and contradiction of teaching with influence
 - Snare: Often prideful systemic sinning causing scandal undermining Gospel
 - Captured – Apostatized under Satan's bondage & effort to recruit followers

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Five Grades of Deviance in 2 Tim 2:23-26

1. Speculative and harmful to Personal Faith
2. Quarrelsome and harmful to Inter-personal life
3. Unrepentant and harmful to Church life
4. Sinning and harmful to the Gospel's Witness
5. Apostasy and harmful to Believers

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Dynamics of Error in 1 Tim 4:1-3

- **1 Tim 4:1-3**
 - “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.”
- **From Demons to Celibacy and Fasting**
 - Two different Spirits
 - Two different teachings
 - Propagators of Heterodoxy:
 - Teach lies (doctrines opposed to orthodoxy)
 - Lifestyles inconsistent with truth
 - Branded conscience unable to discern their error
 - Coercive methods of teaching
 - Syncretistic Jewish and Artemisian Asceticism

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Socio-cultural drivers of Heterodoxy in Pastorals

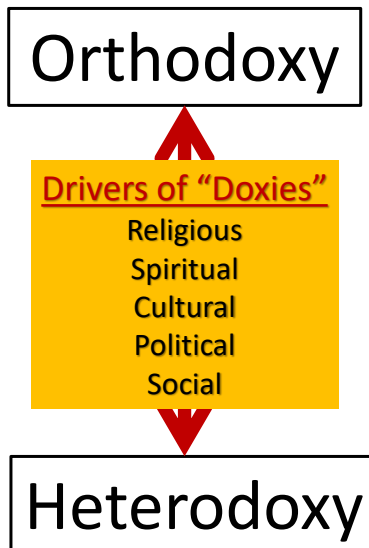
- Gender issues and 1 Tim 2:5-15
- Philosophical speculations and 2 Tim 2:23-26
- Artemisian Asceticism and 1 Tim 4:1-3
- Money and 1 Tim 6:4-5
- Societal Culture and Ethics and Tit 1:12-15
- Zeitgeist [the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time] and 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1

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Real Model of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy



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Mechanisms by which some Socio-cultural factors drive error

- **Coercion**
 - Adoption of heterodox doctrines, interpretations and / or praxes due to external non-biblical pressures, often social but sometimes political or persecution
- **Accommodation**
 - Revising Christian doctrine, interpretations and praxes to fit into the larger contexts, often without clearly defined goal
- **Syncretism**
 - Adaptation or assimilation of ideas, doctrines and or practices of other religions into Christian doctrine and praxes
- **De-conversion/Apostasy**
 - Programmatic adoption of significantly altering philosophical and cultural ideas which transform the core values of orthodoxy

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Contextualization

Framing of articulations, interpretation(s) and praxes of doctrines to meet missional and apologetic demands of new contexts

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Contextualization is good and sometimes necessary.
 Syncretism is evil and destructive to the faith.
 Yet the two are so closely linked that
 where one draws the line between them requires
 Spirit led vigilance and discernment.
 Many in Christian history have failed that test.

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Orthodoxy in Paul's self-introduction in Titus 1:1-3

- **Titus 1:1-3**
 - Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness – in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour
- **Orthodoxy and Apostolic Commission**
 - Apostolic commission to propagate orthodox truth
 - Orthodox truth is treasured deposit from God
 - God is source, standard and authority of orthodoxy
 - Missionary Telos of Orthodoxy

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Tests of Orthodoxy in 1 Tim 6:2b-4

- 1 Tim 6:2b-4
 - These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions

- Orthodoxy
 - Analeptic or Proleptic?: Apostolic teachings as Orthodoxy
 - Plumb line rule of orthodoxy
 - Gospel & Jesus' teachings (Matt 6:19–24; Luke 12:16–21)
 - Authority of the NT was being established in its writing
 - Orthopraxy is inextricably linked with orthodoxy

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Examples of Quadrangular dimensions of orthodoxy in Pastorals

Dimension	Examples in Pastoral Epistles
Scriptural (OT) text or doctrine	1 Tim 5:18
The Gospel & Jesus' teaching	1 Tim 6:3
Apostolic teaching & creeds	2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:8; 3:10; 1 Tim 3:16
Jesus' / Apostolic Praxes	1 Tim 6:1-3; 2 Tim 3:10
Ethical Fruits of teaching	1 Tim 6:3; Tit 1:1

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Five Ecclesial Strategies for Guarding the Faith

1. Efficient Leadership Structures
2. Rigorous Disciplinary Systems
3. Effective Social Welfare Procedures
4. Vigilant Pastoral Safeguarding Measures
5. Gospel focused God honouring Worship Practices

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Procedures largely correct and prevent Heterodoxy
&
Practices largely maintain Orthodoxy

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Procedures for Dealing with Deviance in Pastorals		
Grade	Procedure	Comment
Personal	lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling (1 Tim 2:8)	Instruction
	women should adorn...in respectable apparel (1 Tim 2:9)	Instruction
	If you put these things before the brothers (1 Tim 4:6a)	Instruction
	Avoid the irreverent babble (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 2:16, 23; 3:5; Tit 3:2, 9)	Avoid contagion
	Preach the word (2 Tim 4:2; Tit 2:1, 15, 3:8)	Preaching the truth
	Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works (Tit 2:7)	Pastoral Example
Inter-Personal	Do not rebuke an older man (1 Tim 5:1-2; 2 Tim 2:25)	Personal Correction
	stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice (Tit 3:9-11)	Warn twice then ostracize
	Do not admit a charge against an elder...rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-20; Tit 1:13)	Personal & Public Rebuke
	Charge...not to be haughty (1 Tim 6:17; cf. 1 Tim 4:11; 5:7; 2 Tim 2:14)	Repeated Public Charge
Church	Charge...not to teach any different doctrine (1 Tim 1:3; Tit 1:11)	Refuse them opportunity
	Beware of him yourself (2 Tim 4:15)	Pastoral Vigilance
	Instruction in sound doctrine...rebuke those who contradict it (Tit 1:9)	Instruction & Rebuke
Witness	refuse to enrol...I would have younger widows marry (1 Tim 5:11-14)	Public Discipline
Recruit followers	I have handed over to Satan (1 Tim 1:20)	Hand to Satan

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Disciplinary Procedures for Grades of Deviance	
1.	Speculative and harmful to Personal Faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct Instruction - Avoidance: Refuse to entertain - Gentle correction as in 2 Tim 2:25-26 - Preach correct doctrine: education undermines speculations - Pastoral example: in teaching and life
2.	Quarrelsome and harmful to Inter-personal life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Stern Correction as in 1 Tim 4:11; 5:7 - Repeated Warnings - Personal and Public Rebuke - Public charge
3.	Unrepentant and harmful to Church life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Silence them - Refuse them opportunity to teach - Public instruction and rebuke
4.	Sinning and harmful to the Gospel's Witness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Discipline
5.	Apostasy and harmful to Believers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excommunication
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Evaluative Discernment Titus 3:9-11

But ~~avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.~~
~~Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time.~~
 After that, ~~have nothing to do with them.~~ You may be sure that such people are ~~warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.~~

Αἰρετικὸν: Pollutes fellowship

- **Avoid:** περιῖτασο – keep away from, shun and turn aside to become a bystander (cf., 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 2:16, 3:5; Tit 3:2). With implication of private correction
- **Warn:** νοουθεσίαν – admonish; firm reprimand to stop with expectation of repentance. This could therefore include public rebuke
- **Second Warning:** δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν – remedial firmer reprimand perhaps with warning of consequences
- **Reject:** παραιτοῦ - shun their fellowship. May or may not mean permanent excommunication

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Disciplinary Measures in Tit 3:9-11

1. **Avoid:** To shun the error and correct the errorist
 – With implication of private correction
2. **Warn:** To speak as to persuade the will and disposition
 – May include public rebuke (cf., 1 Cor 11:9;
3. **Second Warning:** To more strongly persuade change of course
 – With warning of consequences for not repenting (cf., Matt 18:15-17)
4. **Reject:** Decline their company
 – cf., 1 Tim 5:11 uses παραιτοῦ for rejecting disruptive younger widows from being enrolled in welfare list.
 – May or may not mean permanent excommunication (cf., 1 Cor 5:11-13)

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Are there Grades of Excommunications?

Excommunication: Official removal of a believer from sphere of Christian communion

1. 2 Tim 2:17-18:
 - Self-Excluded, but also named and shamed
2. 1 Tim 1:19-20:
 - Handed over or consigned to Satan's sphere
 - Παιδευθῶσιν – may mean “disciplined” by Satan
 - Excommunication neutralizes the offender's blasphemy
 - Is Satan's discipline suggestive of time bound excommunication?
3. 1 Cor 5:4-5:
 - “for the destruction of the flesh (σαρκός) so that the (τὸ) spirit may be saved (Πνεῦμα σωθῆῖ)”
 - Is this a higher form of excommunication? Answer depends on whether
 - σαρκός means (a) physical body or (b) sphere of the flesh
 - Πνεῦμα σωθῆῖ refers to salvation of the (a) spirit of the offender and/or (b) the spirit of the fellowship
 - If σαρκός is “physical body” then this excommunication is more severe; but if it is “sphere of flesh” then it is same level as 1 Tim 1:20

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Does Tit 3:11 refer to Permanent Excommunication?

- **Supporting Permanent Excommunication**
 - Deviation mirrors false teachers' deviation
 - ἐξέστραπται (warped or corrupt; 2 Tim 3:8)
 - ἀμαρτάνει (sinning incorrigibly; 1 Tim 4:2)
 - Αὐτοκατάκριτος (self-condemned; 1 Tim 3:6)
 - Seems to parallel Matt 18:15-17 & 1 Cor 5:5
- **Against Permanent Exclusion**
 - Does not cite Satan or demonic forces
 - Self-condemnation suggests openness to repentance and restoration
 - Matt 18:15-17 third step is not permanent excommunication. It is the whole fellowship's confrontation or rebuke

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What factors hinder effective Church discipline in Churches in Ghana?

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Τίμα: Honour: Christian welfare
is an act of honour not condescension

1 Timothy 5:3-8

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the

Mark 7:9-13:

Jesus condemns not caring for relatives

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Heterodoxy from the point of view of its Victims

Coercion Psychologically Vulnerable Abuse of hospitality

2 Tim 3:6-7: They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Guilty past Hopeless future

Decadent present

1 Tim 4:2-3: Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

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Victims of False Teaching in Pastoral Epistles

1. Hospitality of Victim is abused

- Socially vulnerable: Unsuspecting welcome of false teachers who ἐνδύοντες (creep or worm their entry) into lives of the victims
- Suggests seeking out and presenting themselves as solutions to their problems

1. Abuse of Power

- Coercive control: controlling behaviours that create an unequal power dynamic in a relationship.
- Rule-based legalistic coercion
- Predatory and secretive conduct of the teachers
- Probably refusing assess to other teachers

2. Vulnerable Victims

- Γυνακάρια – gullible, weak-willed women; easy prey to predatory heretics. Psychologically vulnerable. Perhaps single, unmarried or widowed unprotected, and wishing to be protected women
- Σεσωρευμένα ἁμαρτίαις – burdened with guilty past. Spiritually Vulnerable: and their guilt makes them continually dependent
- ἀγόμενα ἐπιθυμίαις – controlled by present ongoing lusts
- Πάντοτε μανθάνοντα – always wanting to learn. To be rescued from the bondage They Continue to desire change
- Δυνάμενα – not able; hopeless future

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The Pastoral Epistles recognize the vulnerabilities of victims of false teaching and the disciplinary procedures aim to prevent the abuse and remove the influence of the teachers.

Contemporary systems for correcting heterodoxies must intentionally do the same.

Safeguarding the Vulnerable Christian

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Safeguarding the Vulnerable Christian

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Spiritual Abuse: A Real problem but a Contentious Issue to Analyse

Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include: - manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context"

[Oakley, Lisa, Kathryn Kinmond, and Lisa Oakley. *What Is Spiritual Abuse?* Palgrave Macmillan 2013]

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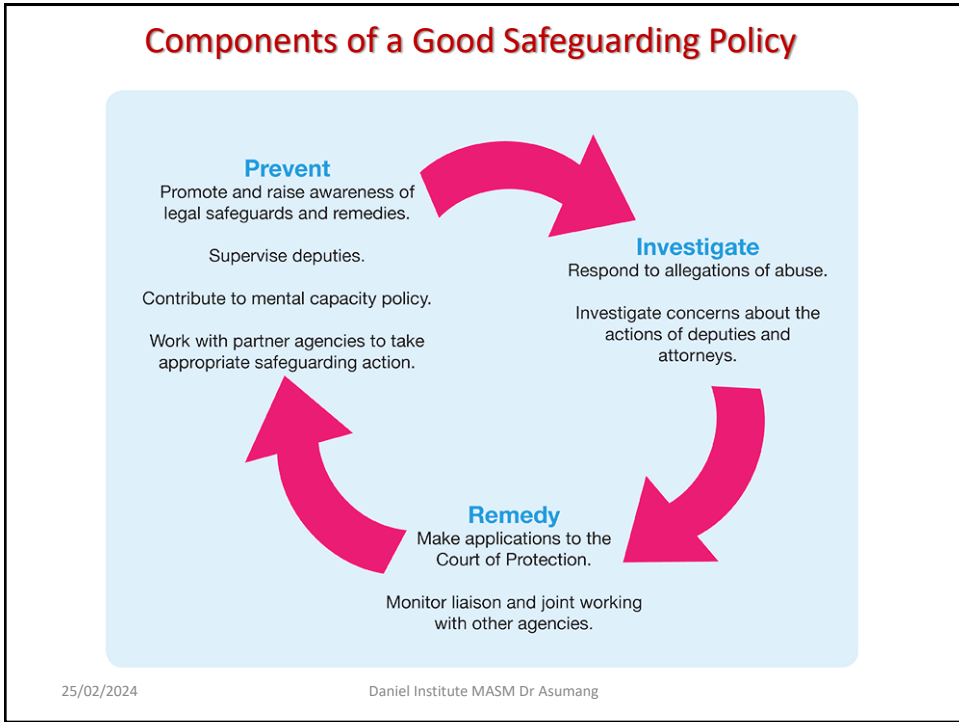
Safeguarding Policy

Sets of principles and activities which prevent spiritual, emotional, or physical harm from occurring in the first place to vulnerable believers in pastoral situations. It also involves protecting those at risk where harm has occurred or is likely to occur without intervention

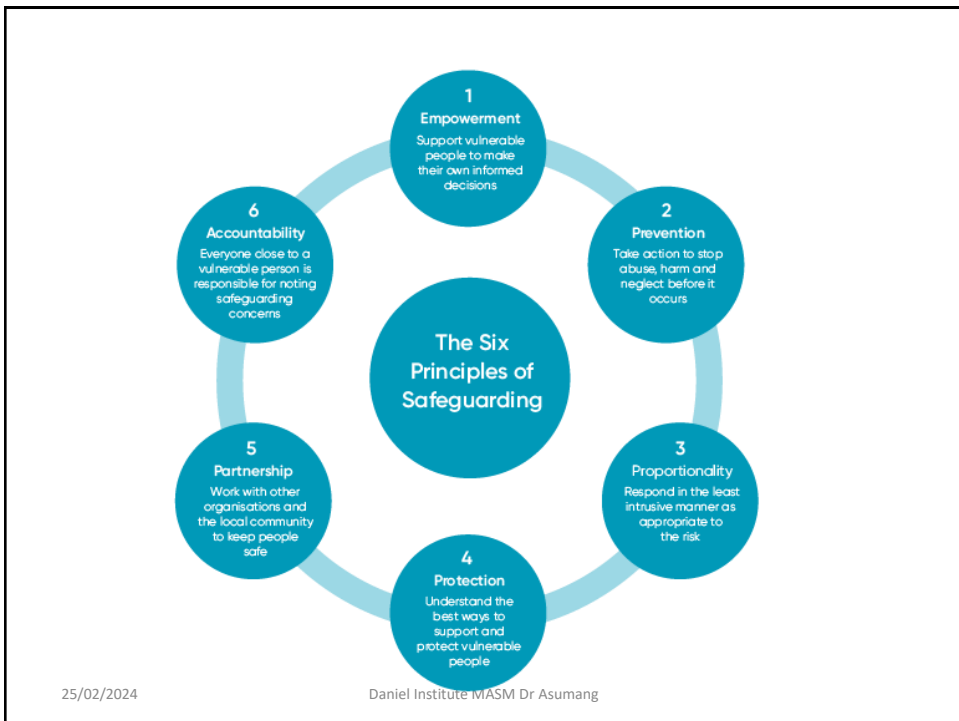
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Summary 1

1. Using appropriate examples demonstrate how the Pastoral Epistles characterize the nature of religious deviance
 - Gradations in error
 - Multiple dimensions of orthodoxy
 - Multiple factors drive generation and propagation of deviance

2. Employ exegetical analyses of 1 Tim 4:1-3 and 2 Tim 2:23-26 to explain some of the mechanisms through which heterodoxy develops
 - Demonic spirits and / or speculations generate errors
 - Teachers propagate error
 - Accommodation, syncretism and coercion as factors
 - Apostate in bondage of Satan

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Summary 2

4. Evaluate how the social welfare measures in 1 Tim 5:1-16 may be used for improving your church's systems for social welfare of help for less well-off

5. Use exegetical analyses of 2 Tim 3:5-9 and 1 Tim 4:2-4, to draft a proposal for systems for the Safeguarding of vulnerable members of your church
 - Employ six principles of safeguarding

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Questions?

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