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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

There can be little doubt that 1 Timothy—along with 2 Timothy and Titus—has been viewed by many as an important New Testament writing for Christian ministry. Some believe the language of this letter is essentially a training manual for church leaders. Timothy is guided by Paul in this portrayal to be such a leader, Paul's emissary, in the face of false teaching (1 Tim 1:3-20, 3:14-4:10, 6:3-5). Even though we do not know much about the false teachers (they are not carefully described or debated), it seems clear that their teaching contained Jewish (1 Tim 1:6-11), Gnostic (1 Tim 1:4; 6:20), and ascetic elements (1 Tim 4:3), as well as a spiritualized view of the resurrection as having already occurred (2 Tim 2:18). Bottom line: their influence threatened the theological and social fabric of the church.

The purpose of the letter then is quite clear: Timothy is to know "how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Accordingly, prayer and worship instructions are given to both men and women (1 Tim 2:1-15), church structures are to be established to offset the false teaching (1 Tim 3:1-13, 5:3-22a), and community relations and belief are to be measured by the keeping of the faith (1 Tim 2:1-15, 4:11-5:2, 5:22b-6:2, 6:6-19).

However, a number of teaching difficulties have emerged for your editors over time in using 1 Timothy as a foundation for Christian ministry. First, the church portrayed appears to be quite institutionally grounded, a seeming departure from Paul's letters such as Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon or the gospels. Second, emphasis seems to be given to male teachers who are measured largely by their orthopraxy rather than by their "fruits" as set forth by Jesus in the gospels. And third, emphasis on the pervasive social-structural setting of the ancient household code seems to indicate how much 1 Timothy is shaped by the social institutions of the time (See Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* [New York: et al.: 1997], 66.)

Deacons apparently are not coworkers as in Paul's mission but helpers of the presbyters. Age and gender are stressed. Older men teach the younger men. Older women teach younger women domestic responsibilities. And, since the false teachers advocate celibacy, a call for marriage and procreation is stressed, seemingly quite different to the praise of the single life given by Paul at Corinth (1 Corinthians 7).

However, some of our concerns have been ameliorated considerably by the writers and articles in this issue of *Leaven*. **James Thompson** with considerable understanding and skill introduces 1 Timothy and demonstrates its continuing value for the life of the church. Four of the articles were presented at the Leaven Symposium of the Pepperdine Lectures, 2004. **Lee Magness** explores the Christological motivation of Christian ministry and sets forth an "inherent connection between Christian theology and Christian ministry." **Pat Magness**, trained in literature, demonstrates how not only 1 Timothy but other scripture has been used by Christian writers to enslave people rather than empower them. Even though sacred writings are inspired by God and are useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:15-16), they have been used too often to condemn, restrict, and limit people in life and in ministry. **Mary Ellen Pereira** raises the question as to why Paul would include comments about women's hairstyles in a letter that instructs Timothy to confront heretical teachings in Ephesus. When the cultural-historical background of this

perplexing question is better understood, an answer is provided. **James Freie**, a seasoned minister, helps us to reread 1 Timothy from the perspective of ministry and in so doing to revision ministry for our minds.

Two articles directly address gender issues in 1 Timothy, chapter 2. **Ken Cukrowski** shows the interconnection between women and wealth. His careful analysis helps us better understand just how contemporary this writing is for our time. **Ira J. Jolivet** affirms that we have great problems with the women's issue today in the church (as well as other doctrinal matters) "because our guiding hermeneutical principle has been centered in the letter of the law rather than in the intent or spirit of Scripture—"the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). Beyond these major articles, **Lee Magness** performs a double service in writing "A Pastoral Litany: Readings from 1-2 Timothy."

Future issues of *Leaven*, to mention only a few, include Isaiah, guest edited by John T. Willis; Nationalism and the American Church, guest edited by Lee Camp; Ephesians, guest edited by David Holmes; and Favorite Texts for Ministry, guest edited by Lynn Anderson and one of our general editors, D'Esta Love.

Keep *Leaven* in your prayers.

