Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Vol.11, No.2, pp.42-64, 2023
Print ISSN: 2052-6350(Print)
Online ISSN: 2052-6369(Online)
Website: https://www.eajournals.org/
Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

Praying for Civil Authorities (1 Tim 2:1-7): A Contextual Study

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol11n24264 Published: February 25, 2023

Citation: Jatau P. D. (2023) Praying for Civil Authorities (1 Tim 2:1-7): A Contextual Study, *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.11, No.2, pp.42-64

ABSTRACT: *1 Timothy 2:1-7 is regarded by most exegetes as a general command for Christians to; pray for all people and kings or rulers. This paper will show how, in the text under consideration, Paul exhorts the church in Ephesus to pray for all people, including kings, in order to fulfill God's mission of bringing salvation to all humanity. In the same vein, Christians in Nigeria must equally pray for themselves and civil leaders in order to exercise their mission in a country riddled with ills that dehumanize the image of God in the human person. The grammatical structure of the text will be examined to expound on the meaning of this passage. This article argues that if 1Tim. 2:1-7 is read and understood, Christians in Nigeria would know that authority comes from God to humans, therefore they would appreciate and pray for civil authorities. Hence, the work uses contextual exegetical approach. This method combines rhetorical and literary analysis in the quest for theological meaning. Furthermore, it is a synchronic approach, this is because, it seeks to co-ordinate the different levels of meaning, the literary and theological, the historical and the hermeneutical with a view to drawing out the meaning and message of biblical text at the level of its composition and for today.*

KEYWORDS: prayer, civil, authority, Christian, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

1 Timothy 2:1-7 is regarded by most exegetes as a general command for Christians to pray for all people and government leaders.[1] Some argue that the author of the Pastoral Epistles exhorts his readers to pray in order to have a Christian bourgeois ideal that confirms the Greco-Roman values of good citizenship. Regarding this matter, Martin Dibelius, and Hans Conzelmann assert, "The

[1]Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 162.

ideal of Christian citizenship is depicted in this passage. This ideal of a peaceful life contrasts sharply with Paul's understanding of existence, which reflects his life's many conflicts."[2] Other commentators contend that the command of prayer is just a digression from the flow of thought of the letter.[3] Nevertheless, this paper upholds that in this passage, Paul exhorts the Christians in Ephesus to pray for all people, including kings, so that God's mission to bring salvation to all humankind may take place.[4]

Just like Ephesus during the time of St. Paul, Nigeria as a nation has produced eminent men and women at various levels of leadership. Even though these leaders have at various times led the citizens through brief moments of peace and prosperity, they have also seen incessant ethno-religious crises, kidnappings, herdsmen/terrorists attacks, political confusion, fuel scarcity, power shortage, infrastructure decay etc. These have created a tendency in Nigerians to blame civil leaders for the degeneration of the country into a nation where "poverty has overtaken our wealth and affluence… where policy formulations have no focus… where the general deteriorating social and economic conditions have led to the breeding of children that are physically weak, intellectually stunted and morally debased.[5] While it could be argued that both the citizens and the leaders have contributed to these mistakes, many Nigerians would nonetheless argue that in most cases the citizens are powerless, when from one political era to the other, the socio-political system is hijacked and frustrated by men and women, according to Cletus Gotan "who are lacking in vision, insensitive and unaccountable, greedy and corrupt, bereft of a sense of responsibility,

[2]Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, "The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles," *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 2004). Benjamin Fiore, "The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus," *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2009); Margaret M. Mitchell, "Corrective Co mposition, Corrective Exegesis: The Teaching on Prayer in 1 Tim. 2,1-15," in *1 Timothy Reconsidered*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2008), 41–62.

[3] Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Understanding the Bible Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 62.

[4] Terry L. Wilder, "Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles,* ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 28–51. Luke T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 55-98.

[5] Sylvanus I. Udoidem, "The Philosopher in the Market Place: Reflection on the Future of Nigeria," *Inaugural Lecture Series No. 49* (Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press, 2006), 22-23.

arrogant and dictatorial, and unable to exercise discipline and maturity in management of people and resources."[6]

In the context of such leadership conditions, how does the Nigerian Christian respond to the injunction of 1Timothy 2:2 to "pray for kings and all in authority"? It is common knowledge that different Christian groups have different attitudes towards civil authority in response to this dilemma. On the one hand, some Christian groups have taken a position against every political leadership in Nigeria, and have even gone as far as constituting prayer movements to combat the evil men and women in civil authority. Some Christian leaders have directly confronted, castigated and periodically prophesied the overthrow of the bad leaders in Nigeria. On the other hand, there are some Christian leaders and groups who are always willing to join forces with any political leader irrespective of his/her moral stance and orientation. Such groups are always at hand to praise and bless the activities of any political office holder in as much as those praises and blessing translate at the end of the day into concrete material benefits and rewards.

The above situates Nigerian Christians within the long and complex history of Christianity. Within the New Testament itself, Christian relationship with civil authority is not uniform. The author of the book of Revelation, living in a politically oppressive context differs greatly from the author of l Timothy or Titus (3:1). Paul's instruction on Christian relationship with the civil authority in his Letter to the Romans (13: I -7) could he slightly differentiated from that given by the author of 1 Peter (2:13-17). Whereas the book of Revelation does not see any moral justification for supporting an oppressive government, 1Timothy recommends prayer on behalf of the civil authority of his time. This recommendation becomes particularly interesting because it offers us an insight into the complex situation of the Christian church within the context of distorted world order, with all its imperfections, not least the imperfect and perhaps an abusive political leadership. Thus even in this context, the Christian community is urged to live out its responsibility of praying for its Leaders. This is brought out by exegetically analyzing 1 Tim. 2:1-7 within its historical, literary and theological contexts. This is feasible using the contextual exegetical approach. This method combines rhetorical and literary analysis in the quest for theological meaning."[7] Furthermore, it is a synchronic approach, this is because, it seeks to co-ordinate the different levels of meaning, the

[6] Cletus Gotan, "Leadership and Ethnicity: The Samaritan as a Model" in *Ethnicity and Christian Leadership in West African Sub-Region,* eds. Ferdinand Nwaigbo, et. al (Port Harcourt: CIWA Publications, 2004), 22-41.

[7] Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42* WUNT Series 31/2 Tübingen: JCB Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1988), 50.

literary and theological, the historical and the hermeneutical with a view to drawing out the meaning and message of biblical text at the level of its composition and for today.[8]

1 Tim 2:1-7 and its Translation (NRS)

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. **3** This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, **4** who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, **6** who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time. **7** For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle, I am telling the truth; I am not lying, a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

Delimitation

1 Tim 2:1-7 is marked off from what precedes and what follows.[9] The *oun* (then) in 2:1 guarantees that the hearer knows that it is because of all that Paul has said up to now, that he is now commanding prayers to be said. There is a single theme followed by a related digression. The theme is prayer in the Church. In vv. 1-7, the need for prayer is inculcated and stress is laid on its universal scope, embracing all kinds of people. After giving the theological backing for prayer for all people on the basis of the universal character of the gospel (vv.3-7), the author returns to the theme announced in 2:1ff;and then begins a fresh unit with a statement of the moral requirements for prayer, first in respect of men in verse 8 thus, *boulomai oun proseuchesthai tous andras en panti topō epairontas hosious cheiras chōris orgēs kai dialogismou* (I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument) and then in respect of women in verse 9, *hōsautōs kai gunaikas en katastolē kosmō meta aidous kai sōphrosunēs* (also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently)…; the two are treated as separate categories, which must reflect something about the relationships within the church.[10]

In terms of grammar, the soteriological point of 1Timothy 2:1-7, is the repeated use of the term *pas* (all).Its occurrence in the pericope is thematic, thereby establishing a universal emphasis which

[8] Okure, 50.
[9] Howard I. Marshall, "The Pastoral Epistles" in *The International Critical Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, eds. J.A. Emerton, F. B.A *et. al*,(London: T&T Clark, 2007), 415.

[10] Marshall, 416-417.

is probably polemical. In vv. 1-2 "all people" and "all who are in authority" are to be prayed for; and the outcome of prayer for government, is to be a life, lived in "all godliness and holiness." In v. 4, God's will is that "all people be saved," which resonates with the declaration in vv. 5b-6a, that "the human being, Christ Jesus, gave himself for all."[11] With some of these evidences, this article holds that 1 Tim. 2:1-7 forms a compact and self contained unit.

Immediate Context

The function of the conjunction *oun* in this pericope can be viewed as both inferential and transitional.[12]As an inferential conjunction, *oun* (then) refers to the preceding section where Paul urged (*parekalesa*) Timothy to stay in Ephesus, "to instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine." Furthermore, both 1:3-20 and 2:1-7, have themes in common: salvation (1:15; see.2:3), Paul's call (1:12, 27; see. 2:7), *didaska-* word group (*heterodidaskaleō*, 1:3; *nomodidaskalos*, 1:7; *didaskalia*, 1:10; see *didaskalos*, 2:7), ungodliness (*asebēs*, 1:9), and godliness (*eusebeia*, 2:2), king (*basilei tōn aiōnōn*, 1:17 see *basileōn*, 2:2), only/one God (*monōtheō*, 1:17 see. *eistheos*, 2:5), and knowledge (*noeō*, 1:7; *oida*, 1:9; see *epignōsis*, 2:4). This post-positive *oun* can be translated as "therefore" in this context (e.g., ASV, Geneva, KJV). Furthermore, in this verse, *oun* can function as a transitional conjunction, signaling a shift in the letter's theme from the topic of Paul's calling to the instruction of prayer. As a result, one should translate *oun* as "then," or "now," as the majority of English translations do. This transition indicates that 2:1-7 is still connected to the preceding passage, while Paul also moves on to another point of discussion (vv. 11-15),[13] where he instructs women at the church in Ephesus to dress in respectable apparel, submit to men, and perform their domestic roles in order to live in godliness and dignity, as written in 2:2.

Literary Structure of 1 Tim 2:1-7

A. The Instruction: Prayer for All Humanity (vv. 1-2a)

B. The Purpose: The Ideal of good Christian citizenship (v. 2b)

[11]Philip H. Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus" in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, eds.Ned B. Stonehouse et al. (Grand Rapids: William E. Eerdmans, 2006), 165.

[12]See. "οὖν," BDAG 736-37.

[13]Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 416.

B'. Divine Reason: God's Desire to Save All Humankind (vv. 3-4)

C. The Basis: One God and One Mediator (vv. 5-6)

D. The Model: Paul's Mission (v. 7)[14]

The above structure of 1 Tim 2:1-7, brings out four important points. First, Paul instructs that prayer be given for all people and for those in authority. What seems puzzling is that the purpose of the prayer for all people is left implicit. However, the purpose clause in verse 2b, explains the subsequent prayer focus on those in authority. Second, Paul sets out God's will concerning salvation, and this in fact determines the thrust of the prayer and of the whole unit. The concern is for salvation. But, third, this statement of God's will is surprising or important enough, to call for its own justification. For this, Paul draws on traditional theological concepts and Christological materials that demonstrate God's universal salvific will. Fourth and finally, Paul relates the prayer for the salvation of all to himself and his mission to the Gentiles.[15]

Exegetical Analysis of 1 Tim 2:1-7

The exegesis of the text would be done based on the structure discussed above.

Verses 1-2a: The Instruction: Prayer for All Humanity

The tone of the instruction is personal and somewhat urgent in verses 1-2a. The verb, *parakalō* expresses a command within the context of a mutual relationship and can mark the beginning of the instructional part of a letter. Although the instruction is addressed to the churches, it is conveyed via Timothy, who is responsible for leadership.

The superlative *prōton* stresses either priority or importance of the instruction. Here, it might simply indicate that, this is the first instruction given in the letter. Or the meaning might be "above all" implying that this is the most important instruction and therefore the first that should happen in the church. Since this is the first command in the letter intended for the Church, the priority given to it probably also implies its importance for church life.[16]

[14]Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 164.

[15]Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 164.

[16]Marshall, 418-419.

The complementary infinitive, *poieisthai* expresses the content of the message. It may be understood as a passive with its four accusative subjects which are to be "done" by the unnamed actor (the Church), or as a middle with unexpressed accusative *tous anthrōpous,* as "subject."

There are four terms used in describing prayer, and characterize it in its totality, and emphasize the scope of the responsibility which has "all people" in view.

i. *Deēsis*: This is a general term for a petition; placed at the head of the list, it implies actively petitioning God to act on behalf of the people.
ii. *Proseuchē*: This refers to a more general term for any kind of prayer (see Rom. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:2; Eph. 1:16; Philm. 4); intercession for various things is often in view, as it is here (see Rom. 15:30; Philm. 22).
iii. *Enteuzis*: it is a petition or request addressed to a superior, hence in this context, a prayer.
iv. *Eucharistia*: Thanksgiving or the expression of thanks. It is a normal part of prayer; the assumption is that, when praying, the congregation remembers with gratitude how former prayers have been answered, and therefore prays with all the more confidence; in fact, "in their request, they can already express their gratitude for the expected answer" (see Eph. 5:4; Phil. 4:6; Col. 2:7; 4:2).[17]

Other than emphasizing the importance of prayer in Christian life, Paul's use of the above terms is to demonstrate the universal scope of prayer: *huper pantōn anthrōpōn* (on behalf of and for the salvation of all human beings).

Verse 2b: The Purpose: The Ideal of Good Christian Citizenship

Verse 2 seems to be a digression. It is concerned with prayer for a specific group of people, and the purpose is that Christians may live a peaceful life.

Paul exhorts the Christians in Ephesus in verse 2b, *huper basileōn kai pantōn tōn en huperochē ontōn* (to pray on behalf of kings and all who are in ruling power).[18] Despite the fact that in the Hellenistic world, *basileus* could refer to any ruler, including Roman client kings (see, Mark 6:14; Acts 12:1; 25:13), the term most likely refers to the Roman emperor in this context. Some have interpreted this passage to be an exhortation to Christians to pray for the government, as part of

[17]Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 419.

[18]See. Gerhard Delling, "ὑπερέχω, ὑπεροχή" *TDNT* 8:523-24.

their civic duty. To lend credence to the aforementioned, Marshall points out the exhortation to pray for kings so that we live a peaceful and quiet life which is a traditional principle that all Christians should keep:

> Its inclusion here, however, is not surprising given the traditional emphasis in the NT household codes on the church's responsibility to the State. The customary verb (*hupotassesthai*; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Tit. 3:1) is used elsewhere to describe this responsibility, and the duties and motives associated with 'submission' vary (e.g., paying taxes in Rom. 13:7; 'honouring' in 1 Pet. 2:17; and 'obeying' in Tit. 3:1 those in authority). Prayer for those in positions of authority may be seen as an application of the traditional principle here.[19]

Anthony T. Hanson equally observes that, "people are driven to conclude that the author was trying to counter imperial cult and make it seem very probable that the author of the Pastorals was consciously attempting to present Christ as the true savior of the human race over against the false savior Caesar."[20] As a result, Paul exhorts the Ephesian Christians to pray to God on behalf of the emperor rather than to the emperor.

The word *Basileus* (king) occurs three times in 1Timothy. Among them, only one instance refers to a humanly king (1 Tim. 2:2); the remaining occurrences indicate God (1:17), and Christ Jesus (6:15). Interestingly, Paul gives some majestic attributes to God and Jesus the King, but none to earthly kings. To Paul, God the King who has honor and glory is the King of ages (*tō basilei tōn aiōnōn*), the immortal (*aphthartō*), invisible (*aoratō*), and only (*monō*) King. Paul believes in God and Jesus as the ultimate King who surpasses all of the earthly kings. God, not an emperor, only One who can provide a peaceful and quiet life.

Paul urges the Christians, *hina ēremon kai hesuchion bion diagōmen* (to pray to God so that they may live a peaceful and quiet life). The *hina* (so that) may express the purpose of the prayer; probably the intended result that should come from prayer for the authorities is in view. He characterizes a "life" that is observable, lived among people in society in a way that registers.[21] The two terms "quiet and peaceful" that initially describe this life express the Hellenistic ideal of

[19]Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 420.

[20]Anthony T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters: Commentary on the First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus, Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 187-88.

[21]Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 422.

a tranquil life free from the hassles of a turbulent society. It is obvious enough that Paul envisions the state, with God's help, as being capable of ensuring the conditions that would make such a life possible.[22]

The prepositional phrase which closes the sentence, *en pasē eusebeia kai semnotēti* (in all godliness and dignity), uses current ethical language to describe the life of faith and the manner (*en* + *dat.*) in which the Christian is to pursue life. *Eusebeia* describes spiritual life from the interrelated perspectives of knowledge of God and the life which that knowledge produces.[23] As Paul understands it, the potential to live this life characterized by the integration of knowledge and behaviour (faith and deeds), is linked to the appearance of Christ in human history (see Titus 2:11-12). What should not be confused here are the ideal circumstances for life, sought in prayer for the state ("the quiet and peaceful life"). *Eusebeia* (Godliness) as authentic Christian existence is expected in all situations, tranquil or turbulent (2 Tim. 3:12). Prayer for the tranquil setting is prayer for an ideal set of social circumstances in which Christians might give unfettered expression to their faith in observable living. Hence, the Church is to pray for the salvation of "all," and it participates in that mission by making God present in society its genuine expression of the new life for all to see.[24]

Semnotēs adds the idea of serious and worthy behaviour to the picture of genuine Christian existence. This is a quality especially expected in Church leaders, but here required of the congregation generally. Although it has an inward dimension, there is also an outward orientation. The behaviour of believers should be such as to win respect from other people because they take life seriously, and devoutly, and do not riffle. Hence, *eusebeia* and *semnotēs* together describe a life that is completely acceptable both to God and people,[25] and aim of this living is salvific.

Verses 3-4: Divine Reason: God's Desire to Save All Humanity

In these verses, Paul proceeds directly to show that prayer for the salvation of all accords God's will. He does this in two stages, first (v. 3), he places the Church's prayer into an OT cultic frame work whereby prayer becomes the latter-day acceptable sacrifice. Second, in (v. 4), he goes on to

[22]Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 169.

[23]Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 423.

[24] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 170.

[25] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 423.

spell out God's salvific will.[26] *Touto* (this) in v. 3, must refer back to the universal prayer in (v. 1), and not just to prayer for rulers, for the description of God as *sōtēr* (saviour), corresponds to the more general prayer for salvation of all.

The phrase, *touto kalon kai apodekton* (This is right and is acceptable) is patterned after the formula, *to kalon kai to areston enanton kuriou tou theou sou* (because you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God--Deut. 12:25, 28; 13:19; 21:9:), which describes various kinds of behaviour as in keeping with the law and therefore as meeting God's standard. Its usage here connects the church with the OT people of God to whom God gave instructions that their behaviour might be unique, unlike the nations around them. The phraseology here may reflect the cultic use of *dektos* to refer to sacrifices which are acceptable to God (see Lev. 1:3ff); in the NT, the *dektos* word-group functions similarly (see Rom. 15:16; Phil. 4:18; 1 Pet. 2:5). In this context it is the community's prayer which is evaluated as being *kalon* (see 1:8; for the phrase, see. 1 Cor. 7:26), and *apodektos* (acceptable: see 5:4; 1:15), in the NT community of God, prayer in the Church replaces sacrifice. Furthermore, the phrase, *enōpion tou sōtēros hēmōn theou* (in the sight of God our Savior), establishes that the behaviour is judged to be good and acceptable by God. In both the OT use and here, the phrase may express the ideas of God's presence, or God's assessment, and the thought of accountability may be in view.[27] Each nuance would fit the worship setting of this instruction; but in any case, it describes behaviour which typifies the life of God's people.

The description of God in his character as Saviour, corresponds to the theme of salvation in verse 4. He is presented as the source of salvation, the architect of the plan of salvation. As Saviour, he calls for the involvement of his people in and through their prayer for all.

Salvation is meant for everyone. The verb, *thelō* can have a strong sense of "to will" and the weaker sense "to wish, desire." It should be understood as indicating God's universal intention, as opposed to some form of exclusivism that is mainly in mind. *Pantas anthrōpous* (everyone/all men), in verse 4, continues the theme of universality which at times is misconstrued, but reference is made mainly with the Pauline mission to the Gentiles in mind (v.7). But the reason behind Paul's justification of his universal mission is almost certainly the false teaching, with its Torah-centred

[26] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 175.

[27] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 425.

approach to life that included either an exclusivist bent, or a downplaying of the Gentile mission.[28] From the human side, the process of salvation, of coming to faith, can be described in various ways. Paul explains the process by means of the phrase, *kai eis epignōsin alētheias elthein* (and come to the knowledge of the truth).

The conjunction, *kai* (and) connects the verb*s sōthēnai* (to save) to the clause *eis epignōsin alētheias elthein.* If copulative, it would permit the ideas of being saved and coming to knowledge of the truth to be distinguished. Simpson tentatively suggests two levels of saving, general preservation (first element) and spiritual salvation (second element).[29] There is, however, no hint of two classes of beneficiaries or of the possibility of receiving one element without the other. It gives better sense to read the *kai* epexegetically ("to be saved, that is to come to a knowledge of the truth") or take the two infinitives as a hendiadys ("to be saved through coming to a knowledge of the truth").[30] Whichever of these overlapping interpretations is adopted, "to come to a knowledge of truth" explicates the idea of being saved. In the Pastoral Epistles, *alētheia* (see. Tit. 1:1) refers to the authentic revelation of God bringing salvation.

The phrase, *eis epignōsin alētheias elthein w*ith *alētheia* as its object, this conversion is envisaged through acceptance of the truth taught by Paul (v. 7). Since 1Timothy also associates salvation with coming to believe in Christ (see. 1:15-16; see. 4:10), it seems that believing in Christ and recognizing the truth are contiguous if not equivalent concepts. Nonetheless, while recognition of truth must include a noetic component, more is implied than "the intellectual acceptance of Christianity."[31] The concept embraces a decisive "moment of recognition, that is, of appropriation and practical realization" which shows itself in a life conformed to the truth of the gospel.

Verses 5-6: The Basis: One God and One Mediator

At the beginning of this section, Paul inserts a supportive *gar* (for) theological piece crafted from traditional theological and Christological statements. Three emphases will emerge. First, the theme of universality and open access to salvation continues to direct the thought. But, secondly, this is juxtaposed to exclusive theological and Christological claims that locate the means of salvation

[28] J. Sell, *The Knowledge of the Truth* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1982), 11-16.

[29] See. Marshall, 427-28 and n. 44.

[30] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 427-28 and n. 44.

[31] Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters,* 68.

for all in a single person. Third, as theology turns to Christology, Paul again places the heaviest accent on humanity of Christ.[32]

Paul begins with theology to ground God's universal will to save. The *eis theos* formula provides evidence that God's salvific will is indeed universal, the movement of thought within the sentence gets quickly to Christ's role as a sole mediator of salvation. Beyond this, the implication is that the one gospel that proclaims the Christ-event is that which he preaches.[33]

From here, Christology takes over, and the universal claim is attached to a very particular person. "One Mediator" accomplishes the universal plan of the one God (v. 5a). The term "mediator" derived from the Hellenistic commercial and legal world to describe a negotiator who helps two parties to make some kind of transaction.[34] The Pauline use of it is more directly influenced by religious applications and it is because of the task of mediation that Jesus is not placed directly alongside the father but rather between him and humankind (see. 1 Cor. 8:6).

The intention of the phrase, *anthrōpos Christos Iēsous* is best seen here in its reference both backwards and forwards. First, it is as a human being that he "mediates" between God and humanity. Second, it is in his humanity that he carries out his redemptive mission which culminated in his self-giving.[35] The placement of *anthrōpos* designation between "mediator" and the tradition cited in v. 6a, is intended to locate the mediating activity of Christ Jesus specifically in his humanity. What Jesus did to execute God's universal will to save, he did as a human being, in complete solidarity with the human condition.[36]

In v. 6a, Paul's argument concludes with a Christological explanation of Christ's act of mediation: "*ho dous heauton antilutron huper pantōn*" (who gave himself a ransom for all). The phrase is based on the saying of Jesus and expresses a doctrine of redemption which was still alive for the Pastoral Epistles (see Titus 2:14). The formulation is a version of the saying in Mark 10:45 (*dounai tēn psuchēn autou lutron anti pollōn*) in better Greek.[37] Some of the alterations may have been made to fit the new context. Thus, the change to the aorist participle, *dous* is required because the

[32] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus," 179-180.
[33] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 428-429.

[34] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 429-430.

[35] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 430.

[36] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus,"183.
[37] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus,"183.

statement in this context does not function to express purpose (as *dounai* does in Mark 10:45), but rather to describe an event which has happened in the past, and also because the participle forms the relative connection necessary in this context with the preceding *anthrōpos Christos Iēsous* (man Christ Jesus).[38]

The key elements of the phrase, *ho dous heauton antilutron huper pantōn,* in each application are a verb denoting "giving," the reflexive pronoun "himself" that lays emphasis on the voluntary self-offering, a preposition that conveys the effects of his offering to others, a recipient, and an indication of purpose (variously expressed). Paul's usual preference to apply the work of Christ to "us" (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:2; Titus 2:14) is shifted to "all." While this shift might be regarded as a clarification of the Marcan tradition's "many" (*anti pollōn*), we should rather think that Paul's widening of the scope from his more typical "us," to "all," is determined by the universal thrust of the passage. His choice of the preposition *huper* (for) instead of Mark's *anti* (for) is normal, and his consistent use of the reflexive pronoun *heauton* (himself) in place of the semitic "his life" is an improvement in the Greek.[39] Where the saying most resembles the Son of Man logion is in the interpretation of the giving as *antilutron* (a ransom). For this, Paul replaces Mark's *lutron* with the rare compound *antilutron.* This shift may intensify the sense of substitution, or render the idea into more suitable Greek; but it expresses the same sense of a ransom payment that secures release (of someone or something).[40]

The portrayal of the act of mediation contains several elements. First, the saying interprets Jesus' death as a voluntary act of self-sacrifice. The verb *didōmi* (to give) in some contexts expressed the idea of a martyr's death, and came to be used to describe Jesus' death as an act of sacrifice he intentionally undertook. As the statement is constructed here (active substantival participle referring to Jesus; see the divine passive in Rom. 4:25), it portrays Jesus as the responsible actor. The reflexive pronoun *heauton* (himself) makes Jesus the object of his own action, reinforcing the idea of selflessness.[41]

Second, the prepositional phrase *pantōn* perhaps strengthened by the rare form of "ransom," underlines two interrelated elements in the theology of Jesus' self-offering: he died as both a

[38] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 431.

[39] Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus,"183.

[40] F. Buchsel, *TDNT* 4:340-56.

[41]Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus,"184.

representative and a substitute. In doing so, the sense of his solidarity with the intended recipient ("all of us") is implicit here; here, following the phrase, *anthrōpos Christos Iēsous* (man Christ Jesus), the emphasis is on his solidarity with the human race.[42]

The phrase, *to marturion kairois idios* is enigmatic. It either concludes or was appended to the traditional material to make the transition to the personal statement which follows *marturion* (see 2 Tim. 1:8) is "witness," either the act of bearing witness or the content, a piece of evidence, thus "the Christian Message." "Testimony…is…not only a means of persuasion …but it adds the seal of conviction."[43] *Kairois idios,* functions here in precisely the same way as it does in Titus 1:3, to underline the fact that the time in view is the time appropriate in God's plans for "testimony" (Gal. 4:4).[44] The term corresponds to the apostolic proclamation in Acts 4:33; 2 Thessalonians 1:10 and 2 Timothy 1:8. On the analogy of Titus 1:1-3, where Paul's apostolic calling is identified with the salvation-historical (*Kairois idios*) manifestation of God's word, it would seem that this phrase intends similarly to identify the message of the self-offering of Christ with the apostolic ministry to which (v. 7) Paul is called.

Verse 7: Paul as a Model of Christian Mission

In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul demonstrates to his audience what it means to carry out God's mission in one's life: "For which I myself was appointed a *kēruz* (herald), and *apostolos* (an apostle), I am telling you the truth, I am not lying, *didaskalos* (a teacher), of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (v. 7). Paul describes his roles as a herald, apostle, and teacher in this verse. Among these three titles, herald and teacher merit discussion because Paul is commonly referred to as an apostle not as a herald or a teacher of the Gentile.

The word *kruz* appears only three times in the New Testament (see 1 Tim. 2:7, 2 Tim. 1:1; 2 Pet. 2:5). According to Towner, in the Hellenistic world, this term refers to the task of proclaiming the message and is associated with diplomatic duties.

> The term *kēruz* referred to a variety of messengers whose job it was to proclaim a message in the Greek world. Heralds carried out diplomatic missions for the royal court while under the protection of the country he represented and the deity. Political

[42]Towner, "The Letters to Timothy and Titus,"185-186.

[43]H. Strathmann, *TDNT IV*, 504: see. Acts 4:33; 1 Cor. 1:6; 2:1; 2 Thess. 1:10.

[44]Marshall,*The Pastoral Epistles,* 430.

> and religious functions merged; he spoke during sacrifices and other cultic activities. A loud voice and fidelity to the message to be communicated were qualities required of the herald. Philosophers could be called god-heralds.[45]

As a result, the use of the word *kruz* in this passage is not by chance; rather, Paul carefully chooses that word to convey a specific message to his reader. He wishes to demonstrate that he is the true messenger from God. This is why the phrase *enpistei kai alētheia* (in faith and truth), should be read as referring to the content of Paul's proclamation rather than his attitude toward the message (a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles). The true message is not found in false teachers, nor is it found in imperial priests, who were also city leaders and patrons, leading worship of and sponsoring the imperial cult in Ephesus and other cities throughout the Roman world. Paul also refers to himself as "a teacher of the Gentiles."

Paul is well-known as the Gentile Apostle (see Rom. 11:13). Also, based on multiple accounts of his encounter with Jesus in Damascus in the books of Acts and Galatians (Acts 13:47; Gal. 2:7-8), one can conclude that God called Paul to be an apostle of the Gentiles. In this text, however, he refers to himself as "a teacher of the Gentiles." This title refers to the heretical teachings that pervaded the church of Ephesus, as Towner explains:

> Paul was generally known as the apostle to the Gentles (Rom. 11:13; Gal. 2:7-8; Acts 13:47), and in this context, where "the teaching" was in dispute and being compromised by the activity of false teachers, and where the openness of the gospel to the Gentile world was in some sense threatened, the description "teacher of the Gentiles" reminds readers that Paul is the one who has received authority to preach and teach in the Gentile churches.[46]

Paul confirms his calling as a Gentile teacher by including an oath formula: *alētheian legō ou pseudomai* (I am telling you the truth, I am not lying). This formula can also be found in Rom. 9:1: "I am speaking the truth in Christ—am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit," as well as in a condensed version in a few other passages (2 Cor. 12:6; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20). The placement of this formula before the final title is significant because it is likely that Paul's apostleship has been attacked by false teachers, requiring him to defend his calling. Furthermore,

[45]Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus.* 187 n. 76.

[46]Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 188.

it is likely that Paul intends to contrast himself with the heretical teachers. Whereas false teachers are not telling Christians the truth because they are lying, Paul encourages them to believe in the authenticity and accuracy of his message. As a result, believers should follow his teachings and live his life in order to participate in God's mission of saving the sinful world.

Summary

This article demonstrated that Paul emphasizes the importance of prayer to God on behalf of all humans, including kings, in 1Timothy 2:1-7. This command exhorts Christians to live godly and dignified lives as part of their missionary task, so that God's mission to save all people can be accomplished. To carry out this mission, the Church must be willing to confront world values that differ from Christian values.

Some Theological Themes

There is little consensus among commentators regarding the overarching theme of 1 Timothy 2:1-7. While some argue for prayer as the central theme,[47]others hold that the topic of the gospel is prominent in this discussion.[48] Still, others point out that the central idea of this pericope is salvation, since the discussion of prayer occurs only in one verse, while the issue of salvation can be found in three verses (2:4, 5, 6).[49] To my understanding, two themes stand out in this section: prayer and salvation. The issue of prayer should not be undermined in this passage, given that Paul employs the phrase *protōn pantōn* before he exhorts his readers to pray. Though one may understand the term *prōtos* as "being first in a sequence,"[50] it is more plausible to read this adverb as "priority of importance," since, according to Towner, "often the first item mentioned is of

[47] John L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus,* in *TPI New Testament Commentaries* (London, England: SCM, 1989), 65.

[48] R. St. John Parry, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 11; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 416.

[49] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles, Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 76; cf. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 79-84.

[50] See. πρῶτος BDAG 892.

greatest importance or urgency."[51] Additionally, because the topic of prayer continues into vv. 8-11, it is valid to maintain that prayer is central in 2:1- 7.

Paul emphasizes the significance of prayer by using four different expressions: *deēsis* (request), *proseuchē* (prayer), *enteuxis* (intercession), and *eucharistia* (thanksgiving). Other than emphasizing the importance of prayer in Christian life, Paul's use of those terms demonstrates the universal scope of prayer: on behalf of all humanity and for the salvation of all human beings.

The Character of Christian Prayer

Apart from praying for all peoples, 1Timothy specifically singles out the king and those in civil authority, as direct beneficiaries of the Christian prayer. Within the socio-cultural milieu of the Pastoral Letters, one is surprised that the author of 1Timothy would urge his audience to pray for the king and those in high political positions. Within this worldview, prayer offered for kings and emperors were tinted with idolatry since such leaders especially the emperors were sometimes acknowledged as gods and were often so regarded from the time of Augustus. Perhaps this would explain why Paul in his celebrated text of Romans 13, does not mention prayer among the things to be accorded the emperor.

However, from the text, certain elements stand out in the Christian prayer for the king and those in civil authority. In the first place, the author includes the king and those in civil authority. In the first place, the author includes the king and political office holders in the designation of *panta anthrōpōn*-all human beings (2:1). In the NT *anthrōpos* being a generic term for the human being, is always used explicitly or implicitly to contrast the human being from God in his creatureliness, transitoriness, and sinfulness.[52] From its very nature therefore, *anthrōpos*, whether king or peasant is not divine and cannot claim divine powers that belong to God alone. On the contrary, he stands always in need of God's favour. Evaluating the king and other political office holders as *anthrōpos*, immediately shows a deliberate refusal by the Christians in l Timothy, to accord the king and state power, the divine dignity which they would have demanded.

[51] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus.* 162 n. 6.

[52]J. Stafford Wright, *Anthrōpos* in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*,vol.2ed. Collin Brown (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 564-569.

In their prayer for the civil authority as for others, the Christians first of all, proclaim and affirm the supremacy and divinity of God above all creatures, and by so doing de-sacralize[53] the powers of the king, and the uncontrolled authority of those in civil authority. As all other created non-divine beings, the king and holders of political offices too are not divine in spite of, pretences to the contrary. For the early Christians, it was important for political office holders to realize the distinction between them and God, since in most cases mistaking themselves for God, and overstepping their limits in decisions, and actions, always became the cause of unease, and chaos in the civil society. By praying for the king and those in civil authority, Christians subtly remind them to know, and accept their position as creatures of God rather than God himself, in the exercise of their political functions. In this way, Christian prayer becomes a protest against the general propensity of political leaders of all ages, the tendency to self-deification and the sacralization of state power. Whenever those in civil authority live under this illusion of omnipotence, the consequence is always the wanton abuse of power, and undue distraction from their legitimate duty of ensuring the well-being of the citizens, and guaranteeing a life of tranquility, and peace in the civil society.

Another significant outcome of the Christian prayer is that it evokes two important virtues in the citizenry, which in turn dispose the citizens to be governable. They are described in the text as *eusebeia* and *semnotes. Eusebeia* could mean devoutness, piety, fear of God or even religion. This word group is relatively rare in the New Testament, but very frequent in the Hellenistic world. The words deriving from the stem *seb-* convey the idea of devoutness and religiousness. This devoutness consists mainly in a holy trepidation, wonder, or admiration called forth by the majesty in things, human beings, or deities.[54] It connotes a religious homage one has for very different objects like one's country, the environment, parents, and heroes. Not excluding respect for oneself. Thus, *eusebeia* is the virtue of a person who is righteous in his dealings with others and acceptable to God. Its opposite *asebeia* brings out its meaning more clearly; it denotes one who is outrageous, who breaks established laws and ordinances. Although Early Christianity identified *eusebeia* with non-Christian piety, but with the Pastoral Letters, it has also received a Christian content.

[53]W. Gunther, "*Sebomai*" in *New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, Vol. 2,ed. Collin Brown(Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), 91-95.

[54]Klaus Berger dates both 1 Timothy and 1 Clement to the Corinthians at 75 AD. See. K. Berger and Christiane Nord, *Das Neueu Testament and Fruhchristliche, Schriften*, (Frankfurt am Main: InselVerlag, 1999), 685, 743.

On its part, *semnotes,* denotes that which is sublime, majestic, holy, evoking reverence, in other words, what is worthy of God. When applied to life in general, it indicates its esthetic outlook resulting in a life of decency and orderliness. The combination of these two expressions in 1Timothy describes the Christian attitude of life in a non-Christian environment. It also provides a model attitude of behaviour for the citizens as an outcome of a properly governed society. Thus when Christians pray for the civil authority, they carry out their functions in the proper order. The result would be the guarantee, not only of tranquility and peace in the society, but above all the creation of a governable society where the citizens are guided by the virtues of godliness, decency, and orderliness.

It is possible to argue that I Timothy was motivated by apologetic interest in the recommendation to pray for the civil authority. While one may not completely dismiss such apologetic interest, especially in the circumstances that the Christians found themselves, one must none the less observe that praying for the civil authority by the Christian communities has a long history which I Timothy is only a reflection. It is likely also that the early Christians were influenced by early Jewish practice. There is evidence that prayers for political leaders were recommended and often carried out by Jews both in the homeland and in the Diaspora (see. 1 Macc. 7:33; 1 Esra 6:31; Pilo, Gaius 280).

Divine Origin of State Power in a Changing Situation.

Christian responsibility to pray for their civil leaders and the state seems to arise ultimately from an endorsement of the biblical tradition that authority, including civil authority, has a divine origin. Consequently those who exercise state power carry out a divine mandate and operate under divine endorsement for which reason they have to he supported by the Christian community.

Even when Christian history reveals various instances or frictions, confrontations and outright persecution of Christians by holders of state power at different times and places, Christians have always maintained their conviction that they have a duty to pray for their leaders. In some Pauline churches as indicated by Rom. 13, this was seen to include almost an absolute obedience, and respect to the civil authority, as well as payment of dues. On the other hand, changing circumstances in the Pastoral letters must have necessitated the reinterpretation of such tradition. While still retaining the divine origin of state power, the Pastoral letters rejected the near divinization of holders of state power. Even though they could lay claims to the divine origin of their power, they themselves are not divine. They are human beings who in the midst of their fellow human beings exercise the divine mandate for the common good of God's creation. Thus,

they are responsible for maintaining peace, order and tranquility in the society. This is the very purpose of God constituting state power. On failing in this duty, political officeholders or state power are to be held responsible, not God.

The divine origin of state authority does not translate into deification of holders of political offices nor of the state power itself. The divine origin of the state authority is preserved as long as the holders of state power carry out their divine mandate. Christians recognize the divine origin of the authority by assisting the holders of state power not to abuse the divine mandate, and thereby frustrate the divine plan which is an orderly society. Thus, to preserve the divine intention for instituting state authority, Christians assist the holders of political office to carry out their God-given assignments through a level of relationship. From a relationship characterized by merely obedience, respect, and paying dues advocated by Paul (Rom. 13), Christian relationship with the state developed into a genuine demand for good governance expressed in a non-violent liturgical act: prayer (1 Tim. 2). This new relationship calls for responsibility rather than negative criticism of political office holders. Even when they felt that there were deviations and abuses in the exercise of state power, Christians genuinely assisted holders of political office through prayer to fulfill their divine mandate. It was for the common good and important for the holders of political office to be conscious of this divine mandate by being responsible and accountable to God and responsive to the society. It is likely that just as the changing situation in the internal organization of the Pauline churches led to the structural reorganization of the churches of the Pastoral letters; the reinterpretation of the traditional political relation must have been necessitated by new developments in interaction with their socio-political environment. This change in attitude could have become necessary on account of the propensity of contemporary civil rulers to self-deification and sacralization of their power.

Application of 1 Tim. 2:1-7 in Nigerian Context

From the analysis of the text under study, and in line with prevailing theology of the Pastoral Letters in general, it becomes clear that Christians have a responsibility to help build an orderly human community where peace, tranquility, and the worship of God prevail. One of the areas which they could do this is by assisting those in civil authority to become conscious of their responsibility, in accomplishing their divine mandate for the human society. This Christian responsibility remains always valid, irrespective of the quality of leadership exhibited by those in civil authority or their disposition towards the Christian community. Christian history shows that Christians have been assuming this responsibility even in times of bitter persecution, and political mismanagement of the state.

It is from this perspective that this essay proposes a reevaluation of the predominant negative reaction of majority of Nigerians to the civil authority on the one hand, and criminal complicity on the other. In saying this, the Christian is not ignorant of the deficiencies of the Nigerian politician, neither is the Christian action equivalent to the exoneration of their crime, it is rather a way of making real the Christian gospel of extending God's love to even those who hate us through their action.

In the first place, it would be immoral for anyone to justify the wantonness, and callousness of the Nigerian political class. The propensity to self-deification and the sacralization of state power have given the average Nigerian politician the impression that he is superhuman, who is beyond good and evil. He lives above everything and everybody; with powers to do anything and everything whenever he wants and however he wants them done. Thus, the Nigerian politician can kill fellow citizens, instigate riots, sponsor robberies and kidnappings; destroy peoples' homes and whole villages; train and own gangs of armed bandits, while at the same time also owning and running religious organization. There are some who have unlimited access to the public treasury, from where they enrich themselves, their families, and friends, and all who are ready to sing their praises and do their bidding. All these are well known facts about the Nigerian political ruling class.

It is also a known fact that the Nigerian politician is a product of a long and complicated political history. The older ones were born in the colonial era, lived through military dictatorship, some are in addition traditional dictators in their villages while others have feudal lords as political mentors and sponsors. The younger politicians are mainly young people who were born into the military dictatorship of the late 60s and early 70s. Many of the lawmakers are themselves former military dictators or people who grew up in a non-democratic tradition. In effect, most of the politicians have never experienced any other form of government except the ones they are experimenting with themselves.

Fully aware of this real problem facing the Nigerian politician, its consequences on the Nigerian citizen, and the integrity of the Nigerian nation; the Nigerian Christian should opt for a new mode of relationship with the political class. This involves sincere prayers for Nigerian civil authority, instead of castigation and condemnation, which for all these years have failed to have effect on this group of persons. It is true that some prayers have been offered on behalf of the ruling class in the past, such prayers in the past failed to produce results because most of those who are involved in the composition and offering of such prayers are often collaborators, and accomplices of the same politicians in their oppressive dealings with the citizens. Many Christian leaders pray

for politicians and in return demand for favours, ranging from political appointments for themselves, their family members and friends, disproportionate stipends, and other monetary gratifications at the end of the prayer sessions. Some actually apply for invitations to pray at government circles and offer to bless non-existing government programmes and projects. As an Atyap proverb says, "*kã anhu ka ya shita, ka seén dyiát katuk bá*" (when the mouth has eaten pepper, it utters no evil). One hardly wonders why Christian prayers in most cases do not produce the desired results.

For the Christian prayer therefore to be effective, Christian Churches and their leaders, individually and collectively, should first of all, distance themselves from every form of complicity with incompetent, and corrupt politicians, especially by rejecting or soliciting for all forms of gratifications. This will give the Christian community the needed courage, and prophetic spirit to pray against the self-deification of such politicians, and the sacralization of state power, which in fact is the major source of the Nigerian political problem. Whenever state power is divinized or sacralized, it is automatically de-humanized, and this is what we see in all forms of absolutist perception, and wielding of political power.[55] Thus, such Christian prayer should be radical enough to demand for the desacralization of the powers of those in civil authority, and the humanization of their persons, it should affirm the supremacy of God, and the divine origin of every human authority, and the consequences of these realities; accountability, orderliness in the society, and the peace, and tranquility that naturally flow into the true worship of God.

Christian prayer is further strengthened when Christian persons take up responsibility to claim the divine mandate to direct the affairs of the state in line with the content, and demand of the Christian prayer itself. But since experience shows that some Christian people who take up political office often get belittled on account of inexperience. It is important that proper political formation should form part of the Christian prayer for the realization of the divine mandate. Christian political formation should be able to introduce into the Nigerian political system, the Christian understanding of leadership, as service carried out by humans, in the midst of other humans, for the welfare of the human society. Political leadership should be seen properly within the context where it belongs, as one of the many gifts of the spirit meant for the building up of the community (l Cor. 12:28).

[55]Martin O. Egbuogu, *Christianity and the De-Sacralization of State Power: An Insight into the Theological Basis of Democracy* (Enugu: SNAAP, 2006), 285.

It is properly the responsibility of the Christian community to see that this divine mandate is carried out by those who are competent to understand political leadership as such. It belongs therefore to Christian action to take active part in the process of selecting such competent persons that will ensure that the divine mandate is done. Christians cannot under any pretext abandon this divine responsibility. Christian prayer is, therefore all embracive, but with only one goal, the realization of the divine will for the human society as orderly, peaceful, and tranquil, as envisaged by 1Timothy.

CONCLUSION

The changing circumstances in the later periods of the Pauline Churches necessitated the redefinition, and reinterpretation of the Pauline traditions. Just as the events in the church itself led to the structural reorganization of the inner life of the Church, external relations with the Greco-Roman environment also resulted in the reevaluation of the relationship with the political power structure of the state. Paul had recommended almost an unqualified obedience, respect, and the prompt payment of taxes, and dues, in as much as authority of the state has divine origin. This recommendation was interpreted in this later period, to mean radical prayer for those in power, not to overstep the boundaries of their powers. We have in the foregoing, read this text within the Nigerian political system. The Nigerian Christians should be constructive in their criticisms. They should not negatively castigate their civil authorities in spite of their deficiencies; rather they have to assist them also through prayers, to realize the limits of their powers as human beings, recognizing the divine origin of their authority and its consequences. Within this context, Christian prayer is embracive. It takes into account, the complex nature of the political history of the politician itself; it also involves a just demand for the defense of the divine mandate for the politician to keep God's created order peace and tranquility. Since the Christian principle of leadership emphasizes the indispensability of service for the good of the community, Christian prayer should involve the assumption of political roles, as aspects of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by competent Christians who would be in place to bring this Christian principle to bear.