

Paul's Later Letters

Fully Establishing the Churches According to Christ's Design

Paul's Later Letters

Issue: Setting in Order What Remains

Timothy
Titus

Setting in order vs. the Spirit shaping networks.

Denominations ignore design of family and block the Spirit's shaping of networks

Ponraj

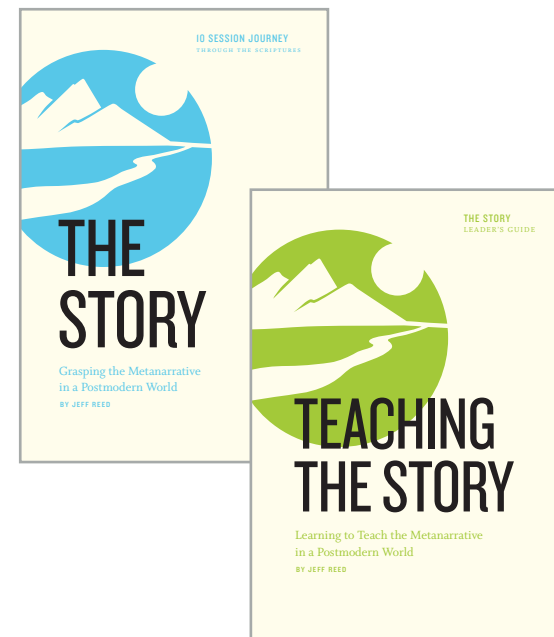
Paul's Later Letters

Issue: Setting in Order What Remains

Questions:

1. Why did Paul write such a similar letter to Titus as he did to Timothy? Why do you think the Spirit included both in the final collection of Paul's letters in the New Testament canon?
2. In what way is the letter to Titus similar to his letter to Timothy? In what way is it different? In what sense does it build on his first letter to Timothy?
3. How was Titus to carry out Paul's network wide functions in this new small network emerging on the island of Crete? What does this say about the complexity of Paul's network as he is about to complete his ministry?
4. Why was Paul so concerned about setting the churches in order? Was this concept of *order* just revealed in the later letters, or was it part of establishing his churches in the early and middle letters? How does his concept of order in the churches mesh with the spontaneous work of the Spirit in the churches?

New Perspective on Paul



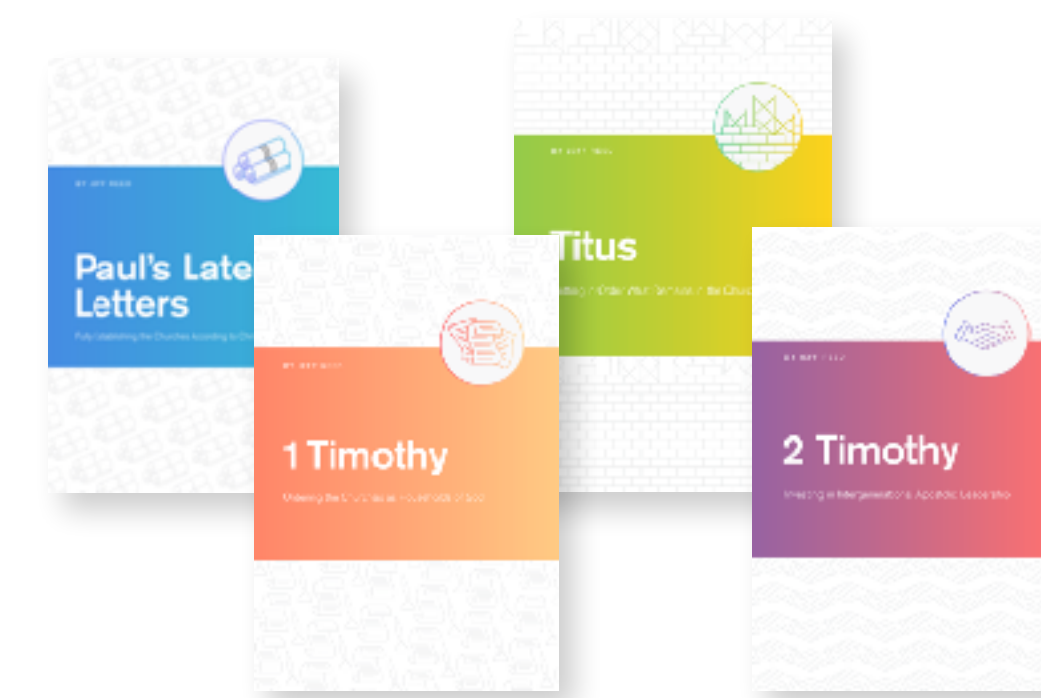
Kerygma
Early Acts
Apostles' Teaching
6 months
Paul: 3 years "night and day"



Didache
Body of Acts
Theology of Paul
1½ years

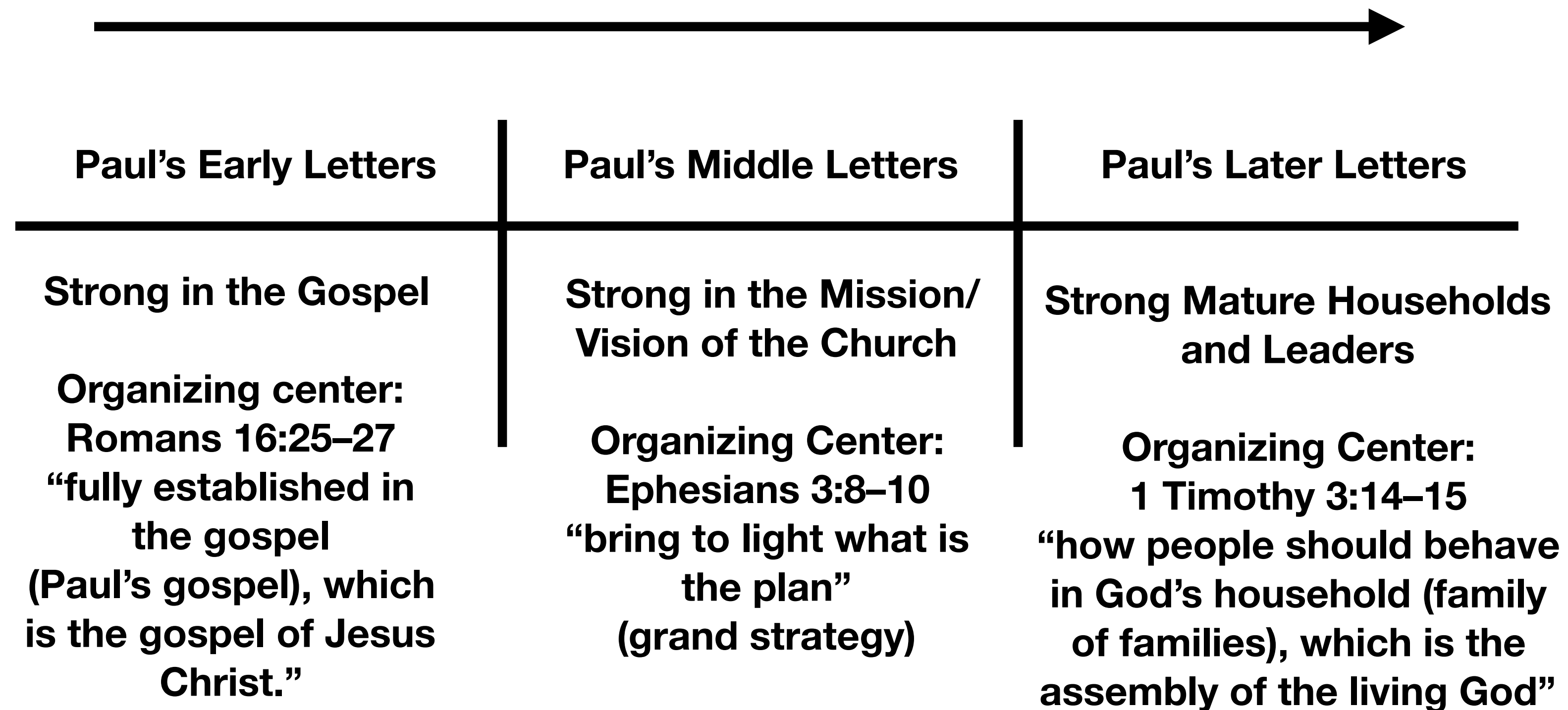


Full Kerygma
After Acts
Apostles' Gospels
1 year



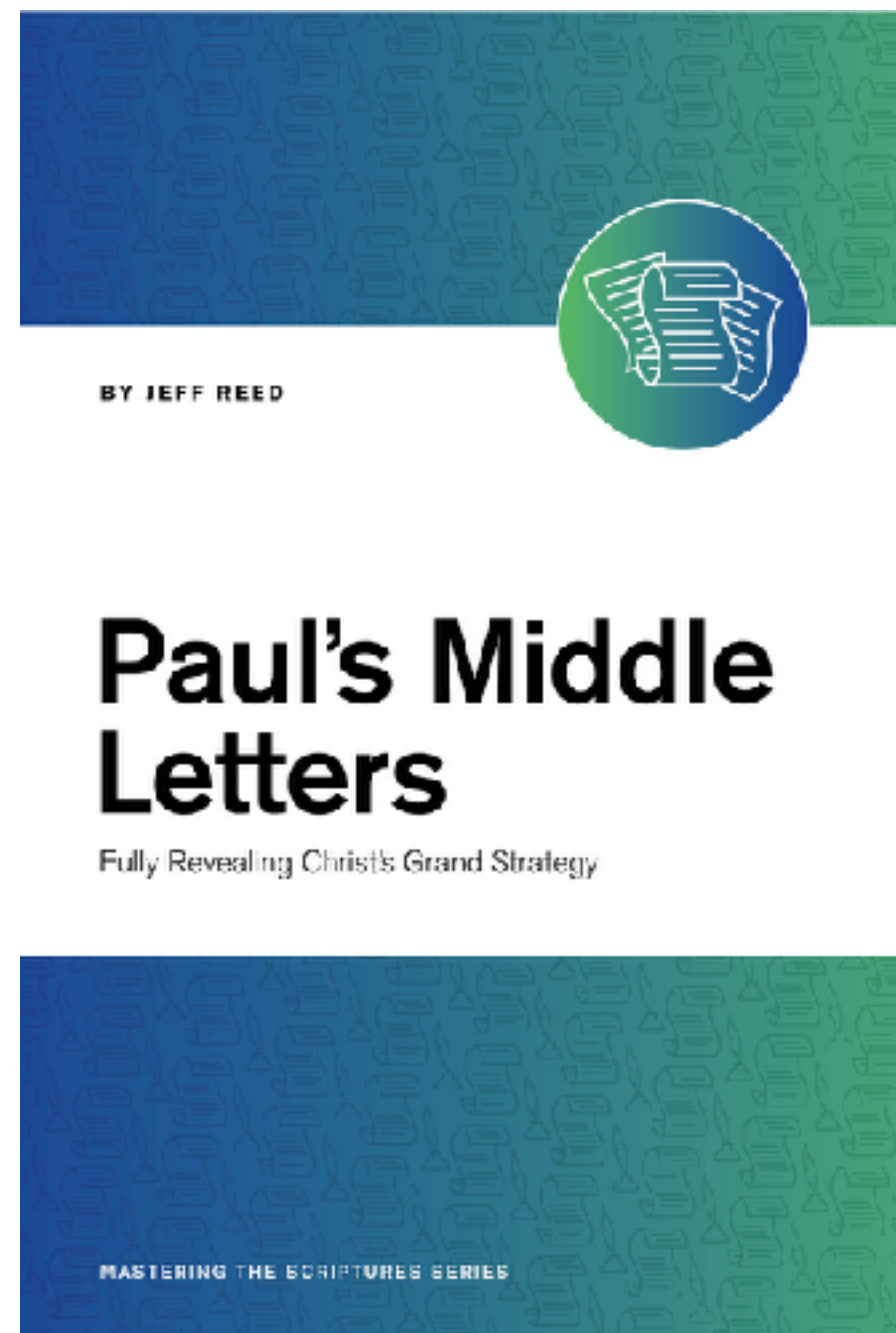
Paul's Early, Middle, and Later Letters

The Process of Building Strong Churches



Paul's Early Letters	Paul's Middle Letters	Paul's Later Letters
Strong in the Gospel Organizing center: Romans 16:25–27 “fully established in the gospel (Paul's gospel), which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.”	Strong in the Mission/ Vision of the Church Organizing Center: Ephesians 3:8–10 “bring to light what is the plan” (grand strategy)	Strong Mature Households and Leaders Organizing Center: 1 Timothy 3:14–15 “how people should behave in God's household (family of families), which is the assembly of the living God”

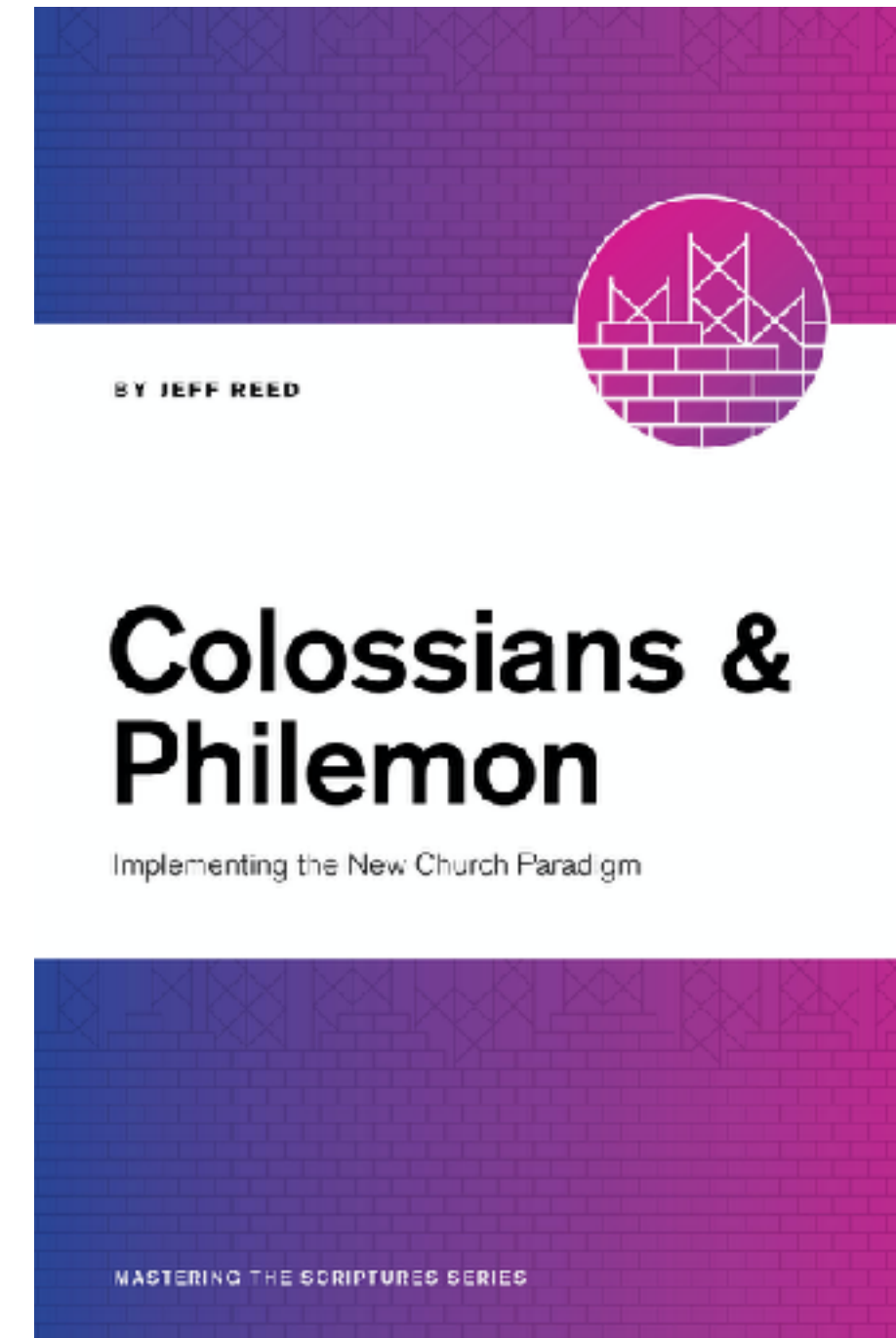
Paul's Middle Letters



Feb. 60 to March 62



Autumn 60



Autumn 61



Spring 62

Paul's Later Letters

Paul's later letters bring us to the third and final phase of Paul's process of establishing strong, mature, multiplying churches, with solid leadership and high community impact with the gospel.

1 Timothy—written to Timothy at Ephesus, Autumn of AD 62

Titus—written to Titus who was in Crete, Summer of 66

2 Timothy—written to Timothy, Spring of 67 (shortly before Paul's death)

Middle and Later Letters

1 Timothy and Titus are similar in relationship to Ephesians and Colossians.

Ephesians — framework

Colossians — put into action in a cluster of churches

1 Timothy — framework

Titus — put into action in a small network

Ephesians is sort of the framework for Christ's grand strategy. And Colossians, written in a very similar manner and content, is an example of establishing a cluster of churches in the grand strategy revealed in Ephesians.

1 Timothy is sort of the framework for fully setting in order the churches according to Christ's design as a household of God: a "family of families." (Timothy was at Ephesus fully establishing them.) And Titus is an example of establishing a small network of churches.

Paul's Later Letters



Book 1: Paul's Later Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches
According to Christ's Design

Book 2: 1 Timothy: Ordering the Churches as Households of God

Book 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Book 4: 2 Timothy: Investing in Intergenerational Apostolic
Leadership

New Perspective on Paul

Old Perspective on Paul

Paul's letters contain miscellaneous, often unrelated topics that would be useful for future believers, especially in dealing with sin, salvation, and living the Christian life. These topics are a significant part of today's ever growing systematic theologies.

New Perspective on Paul

Paul's letters form a coherent, interlocking shape, foundational for churches in any generation to fully understand Christ's grand strategy of the Church being central to His unfolding kingdom and to living in full alignment of that grand strategy.

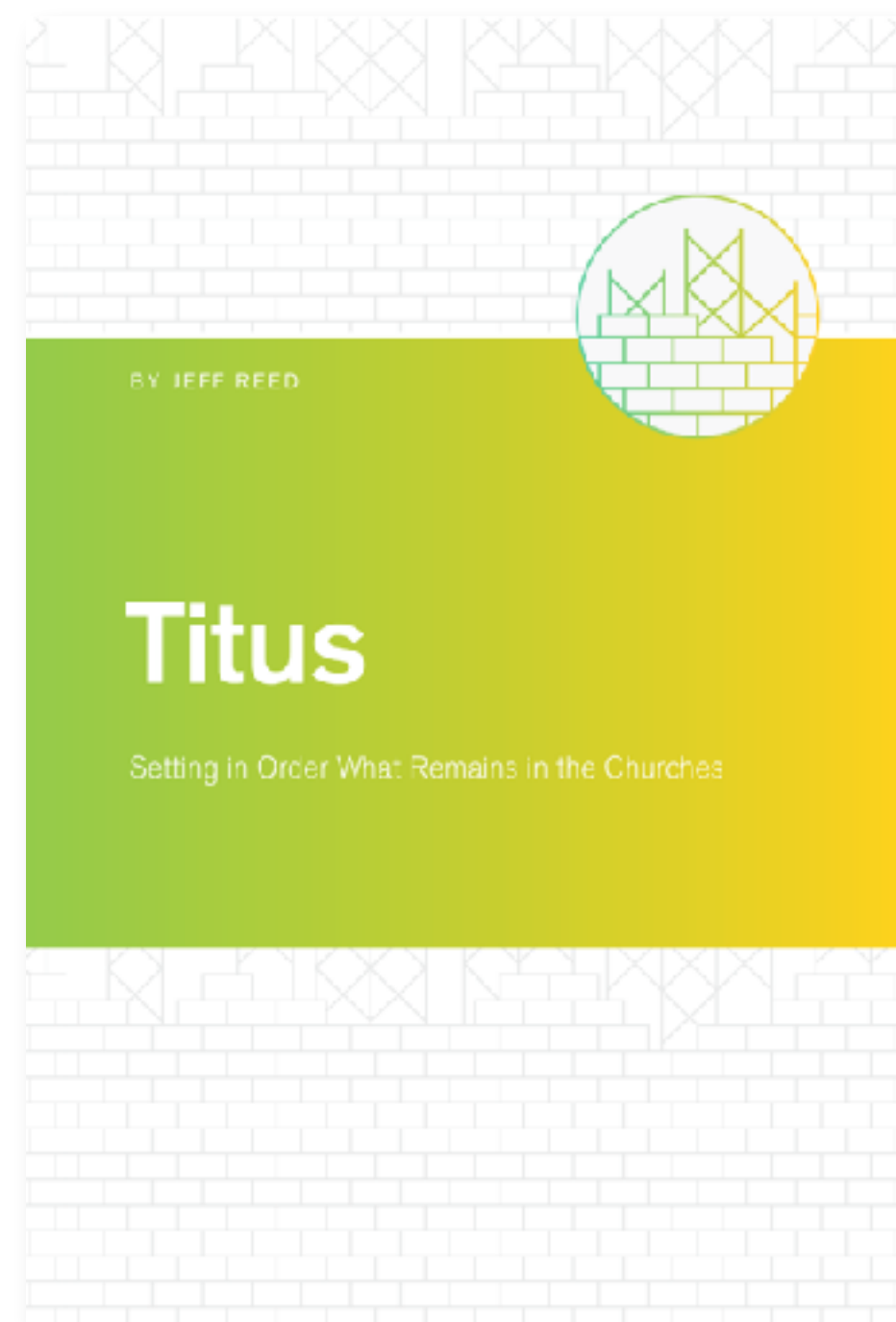
Paul's Later Letters

Topos (common topics in one place) is a very important form of Greek rhetoric that enables you to structure an argument, including several topics, around one memorable schematic, or rubric, or literally in one place.

The organizing center (topos) of Paul's later letters is 1 Timothy 3:14–15

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you may 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 Timothy



Book 3: Titus: Setting in order What Remains in the Churches

Session 1: Setting in Order What Remains

Session 2: Top Priority of Senior Elders

Session 3: Ordering the Churches as Families of Families: Adorning the Gospel

Session 4: Engaging in Good Occupations and Meeting Pressing Needs

Session 5: Phases in the Process of Establishing Churches

Order in Paul's Churches

Paul's Concept of a Church Set in Order (In Ephesians)

A church is set in order when ...

1. At the heart of its culture, it has a respect for governmental authority, with a view of believers living quiet and peaceful lives, setting the context for adorning the gospel through the quality of their community life.
2. In the context of living life in the difficulty of cultural conflicts and societal stratifications, men avoid becoming politically enraged in the controversies of the world, and women respect men's responsibility to teach the churches in ways that keep them out of these controversies and focused on the sound teaching Paul told Timothy and Titus to completely order the churches around.

Order in Paul's Churches

Paul's Concept of a Church Set in Order

A church is set in order when ...

3. It is solidly rooted in the sound teaching Paul delivered to the churches and has recognized and trained highly qualified leaders to keep the order in the churches once established. This is the backbone of maintaining order in the churches.
4. Men and women have complimentary roles in keeping the churches solidly established in that sound teaching. Elders are well qualified in life situations and character and fully competent to teach this sound teaching, with qualified men and women assisting them.

Order in Paul's Churches

Paul's Concept of a Church Set in Order

A church is set in order when ...

5. Qualified women are taking key roles in assisting the elders in this important task of maintaining solid order around this teaching: empowering the ministry of widows in their older age, assisting younger women in building strong intergenerational households within the family of families, and helping younger widows rebuild their lives.
6. It is carefully following all of these guidelines so it is stable in the sound teaching; it is fending off different teachings (the church is the pillar of the truth); and therefore, it is remaining focused on the progress of the gospel. That's what all of these guidelines are primarily designed for.

Keeping Order—Family Style

Timothy is not to put himself above others in any relationship. He is to set a family culture:

Treat older men as fathers.

Treat younger men as brothers.

Treat older women as mothers.

Treat younger women as sisters.

Paul will expand this in a formal way in his instructions to Titus (Titus 2)

Older men 2:2

Older women 2:3

Younger women 2:4

Younger men 2:5

Slaves 2:9

Keeping Order—Family Style

Two important points are illustrated by this list and framework for the church being a family of families.

1. A topos is in action here: the topos is a “family of families.” The list and framework work with the same organizing center, which Paul revisits in Titus.
2. Both styles are used: first in 1 Timothy 5 in the context of solving problems, second in Titus as a formal use of the Greek household codes.

This is very helpful as a hermeneutical principle.

Paul is working with a topos: a topic of topics (a family of families). He teaches the topos in 2 ways:

Household code: older men, older women, younger men, younger women, slaves (same as household texts: Ephesians 5:22–6:9)

Household code in action: 1 Timothy 5:1–2, dealing with widows, elders, and slaves.

From any topos topic, like women, we can develop a complex topos-based topic paragraph, for example: older women, younger women, and widows. Paul visits this several times in the 3 letters.

Setting in Order What Remains

Now, in Titus, we continue Paul's line of reasoning in what it takes his emerging young, apostolic leaders to start assuming his functions more directly.

Titus is more situational than 1 Timothy: I left you in Crete to "set in order what remains" in the churches.

Timothy was written in autumn AD 62, whereas Titus was written in the summer of AD 66, four years later.

While Paul was in Crete in the fall of AD 59, on his way to Rome, he was put under house arrest. There is no indication he had an emerging network of churches there. The network is seen after his release from prison.

Paul was in prison from February, AD 60 to March AD 62.

Setting in Order What Remains

Situation of Titus

Paul was in prison from February AD 60 to March AD 62.

When he was released, he traveled continually for 6 years until his death, in Spring of 68:

- from Rome to Ephesus and Colossae (Spring to Autumn 62)
- back to Rome (62?)
- to Macedonia (Summer to Winter 62);
- then to Asia Minor (Spring 63 to Spring 64)
- and to Spain (Spring of 64 to Spring 66).

It appears Paul was with Titus briefly on the island of Crete (early summer 66) and several churches were planted in the small cities on the island. Paul left Titus there to set these churches in order and gave him specific instructions in exactly what to do.

(Based on Chronological Background Charts of the New Testament, by Wayne House (1981, Zondervan))

Setting in Order What Remains

Situation of Titus

The implications are significant

Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy from Macedonia, having sent him to Ephesus. Ephesus was a mature church with elders trained by Paul earlier. So Paul gives Timothy a more complete picture of establishing the churches of Ephesus in the household of God (household codes).

With Titus, he evidently left a completely new network of churches, probably one house church in several cities, probably planted in a couple of months (not time to multiply yet). Thus we have a snapshot of how to plant and establish a small network in a few months. This is possible now because the whole picture is complete.

(e.g. North India saturation church-planting: planted 35,000 house churches in one decade in one network)

Setting in Order What Remains

Situation of Titus

The implications are significant.

This means I have been wrong in viewing Titus 1:5 as senior elders over several churches.

Rather, the Cretans were so pagan, Timothy would be lucky to find one key leader, to begin with, to train in each of these small cities or towns. But it gives us a pattern for quickly stabilizing new churches in totally pagan places.

While I'm sure that Paul did not mean for this person to become the bishop of the city, as churches multiplied in each city in the future, this is what began to happen over the next generation as the churches of Paul's network began to slowly institutionalize. (See Rome in the gathering encyclical.)

Setting in Order What Remains

Situation of Titus

So a long-term key question is: How can churches be set in order, as Paul instructed, without institutionalizing—remaining a network of churches that continue to spontaneously expand?

Evidently, Ephesus had the right order, but by the time of John's letter at around AD 100, it had lost a lot of its life.

And evidence itself shows that Titus eventually became one of the bishops of a city on the island of Crete.

(An example in India again: Ponraj)

I will deal with this question below.

Setting in Order What Remains

Now let's look at the letter to Titus:

¹ Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began— ³ in due time he revealed his word through the proclamation with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior,

⁴ To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus 1:1–4 NRSV

Setting in Order What Remains

Paul, servant of God and apostle of Christ Jesus—according to the faith (which those possess who are) chosen by God, and according to the recognition of truth, as it corresponds to our religion, 2/ on the basis of the hope of eternal life; God, who cannot lie, has promised this to us before time began, 3/ but in his own time he has revealed his word in the proclamation with which I have been entrusted, according to the commission of God our savior—4/ to Titus, his true child in the common faith: grace and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our savior.

Titus 1:1–4 Hermeneia

Dibelius, M., & Conzelmann, H. (1972). *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Pastoral epistles* (p. 131). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Setting in Order What Remains

I love this second translation from the Hermeneia commentary.

Who was Paul?

Paul was an apostle “according to the faith” which begins with a reverence toward God and matures to a body of teaching called the faith.

The classical root of this idea is described in this quote:

Homeric Usage. In tune with the sense of the stem (“to fall back before”), Homer first uses this term for “to shrink from.” The idea of shrinking from the gods leads to the sense of awe or reverence, first in the general form of respect, then in the more specifically religious form of veneration. TDNT (also see LN)

Setting in Order What Remains

⁴ To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. Titus 1:4 NRSV

4/ to Titus, his true child in the common faith: grace and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our savior. Titus 1:4 Hermeneia

Who was Timothy? He was Paul's child, which means he trained him himself.

He was his true child "in the common faith." This *common faith* is used in the Pastorals for the teaching, the faith, the deposit, the sound doctrine. But here, Paul also puts it all under the proclamation; it is used here as his stewardship he described in Ephesians 3:6–10.

Common faith (China) 2nd missionary journey (Abraham, Job, Renton)

Setting in Order What Remains

⁵ I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done.

Titus 1:5a NRSV

Let's go back to my earlier question: How can churches be set in order, as Paul instructed without institutionalizing—remaining a networker of churches that continues to spontaneously expand?

We have to understand Paul's concept of “setting churches in order.”

set in order: to cause matters to be ordered in the correct manner—“to set right, to correct, to put into order (LN);

set right or correct in addition (to what has already been corrected) (BGD);

correct afterwards, to have deficiencies set right also, complete unfinished reforms (LSJ)

Setting in Order What Remains

Paul's concept of order

Is Paul's concept of setting in order in Paul's early, middle, and later letters? Yes.

Order in early letters: 1 Corinthians topos: the Gathering—order in the church meeting, amidst the spontaneous Spirit. Paul wanted order in the meetings that would allow the Spirit to freely work through everyone. He also saw the need for order in apostolic leadership—First apostles, then... 1 Corinthians 12

Order in middle letters: Remember the household texts (codes); husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, slaves; Ephesians 5:22–6:9, Colossians 3:18–4:1.

Order in later letters: Finish the process: 1 Timothy and Titus; churches as households of God; ordered according to community household codes; churches as “families of families.”

Setting in Order What Remains

The essence of “setting in order” in the Pastorals

1. It is a critical concept that establishes churches and church networks according to Christ’s design as delivered by Paul to the churches, which all future apostolic leaders were to follow.
2. The order includes: a balance of apostolic leaders and well established elders around the kerygma and didache, as delivered to the churches; the social structure of the “household codes” (a “family of families”); engaging in good occupations and meeting needs; and being part of a network of churches committed to the spontaneous expansion of the gospel.
3. This design—that is to be “set in order” by all apostolic leaders in every culture and in every century—is to be done in such a way that it allows the Spirit to work freely. Thus, the teaching, what Paul calls “a set of first principles,” is to be carried out in the context of apostolic teaching that empowers the Spirit to work freely in every culture and in every time in history.

Setting in Order What Remains

The essence of “setting in order” in the Pastorals

4. We have seen this in *the gathering topos*. It gives a set of principles that frame all gatherings according to Christ’s design, but in that topos schema is the freedom for the Spirit to work. In fact, it is designed to protect that freedom, which is essential to accommodating future cultures.
5. The same is true for *the household topos*. It sets churches in order according to God’s design, yet allows us to think through solutions and guidelines for our churches, while preserving the apostolic teaching delivered to the churches, e.g. Paul’s instructions in caring for widows.
6. This assumes a common faith delivered by the Apostles, especially Paul, to the churches. This common faith was Jesus’ teaching brought to the Apostles by the Spirit, which became the New Testament.

Setting in Order What Remains

Implications for Today

1. Apostolic leaders must take seriously the need to develop emerging apostolic leaders in every generation, like they are their sons. They must be prepared to assume the role of apostolic leaders to build strong apostolic teams in church networks for every generation.
2. As quickly as possible, we must establish at least one strong elder in all key cities of the network. Elders must continue to shape the churches under Christ's design for His household gatherings and master the apostolic teaching in order to lead properly and deal with those who bring another teaching.
3. We must establish churches, again as quickly as possible, in both the first principles of the faith (common faith) and Christ's design for His household. It must be consistent with Christ's grand strategy of the centrality of the Church as His main plan for progressing the gospel, as we move towards His kingdom.

Setting in Order What Remains

Implications for Today

Western churches: Western churches need to go through a very difficult process of returning to “the way of Christ and His Apostles; they must take care to establish all new church plants according to this common faith.

Churches and church networks in the Global South, what we call Global Pentecostalism: As quickly as possible, these churches need to build a solid eldership and establish churches according to Christ’s design as household gatherings.

Setting in Order What Remains

Issue: Setting in order what remains in our churches today

Questions:

1. How do these two letters, one to Timothy and the next to Titus, guide us in the process of establishing churches today? Why do we need both letters today?
2. What does Titus tell us about the process of setting churches in order that both builds on and adds to the process we see Paul unfold to Timothy?
3. What is the role of “Titus type leaders” in our church networks today? As a network expands to a network of networks, why is it necessary that existing apostolic leaders are constantly looking for and developing key young apostolic leaders? (There are few of these leaders who truly emerge.)
4. Why is it so important that churches, especially in new, young networks of churches, be set in order as quickly as possible? How can setting churches in order be done in a way that lays a foundation for the Spirit to continue to spontaneously work amongst them?