Excerpts from Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Mind in Another Place: My Life as a Scholar* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022). Footnotes are not Johnson’s.

(from “Doctoral Studies (1971-1976)”; age: ~29)

“Two classes were especially fruitful for my later work as a scholar. In my first year, as I have mentioned, I took two semesters of ‘Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament’ with [Abraham] Malherbe.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the first semester, I chose to pursue the topic of how sophists and philosophers used polemic against each other. I read and annotated all of Lucian of Samosata, Plutarch, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom, as well as parts of Aelius Aristides and Seneca; I compiled a huge body of notes on this rhetoric, and my typed class presentation ran to some thirty pages. In the second semester, under Malherbe’s direction, I applied all this analysis to a major paper (some forty pages long) on the polemic of the Pastoral Letters.[[2]](#footnote-2) I argued that the recent judgment on this topic by Robert Karris of Harvard was wrong,[[3]](#footnote-3) and that the polemic served, not to establish Paul’s authority (as Karris argued), but as a foil for Paul’s positive *protrepsis* (exhortation) of his delegates, Timothy and Titus. This immersion in the rhetoric of Greco-Roman philosophers has paid many dividends over the years. Malherbe persuaded a student who had come to the program convinced that the Jewish context of nascent Christianity was all-important, that the Greco-Roman world was at least as significant, even if he carried this to a humorous extreme: in an advising session, he asked why in the world I was spending so much time on Hebrew: ‘All you need to do is read the Septuagint’ (the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible).” (81)

(From “Emory University (1992-2001)”; age: ~52)

“Almost simultaneously, I also published commentaries on Paul’s letters to his delegates Timothy and Titus and on his Letter to the Romans.[[4]](#footnote-4) These appeared in series that were more popular, but they nevertheless enabled me to develop further my perspectives on Paul. In the Romans commentary, for example, I extrapolated from my early work on the ‘faith of Jesus’ in Romans to read the letter as having a fundamentally narrative character—an approach that has been usefully appropriated and extended by later works. My popular commentary on the Pastorals coincided with a scholarly debate with Margaret Mitchell initiated by a paper on 1 Timothy that I had given at the SBL convention.[[5]](#footnote-5) Mitchell is a first-rate scholar—in fact, Carl [Holladay] and I had seriously tried to convince her to leave the University of Chicago Divinity School and come teach at Emory—but I was convinced that her objections to my position were erroneous. The debate, however inconclusive for the moment, sharpened my appetite for further work on these letters, an appetite that found some satisfaction in a major commentary on First and Second Timothy in the next decade.” (146)

(From “Emory University (2001-2016)”; age: ~57)

“The research I had begun already at Yale in the three letters of Paul to his delegates (the so-called Pastoral Epistles) was completed with my second entry in the Anchor Bible commentary series, *The First and Second Letter to Timothy*.[[6]](#footnote-6) I did not treat the letter to Titus explicitly, because a volume on that short letter had appeared already in the Anchor Bible series, written by Jerome Quinn,[[7]](#footnote-7) whose untimely death prevented his working through all three letters. With the majority of scholars, Quinn regarded them as pseudonymous but made the innovative suggestion that Luke wrote them as the third volume of Luke-Acts.[[8]](#footnote-8)

“My approach was entirely different, arguing for the authenticity of all three letters, first, by challenging the conventional criteria for determining authenticity, second, by proposing a new model for understanding Pauline authorship—he ‘authorized but did not necessarily write’ all thirteen letters ascribed to him during his ministry—and third, by showing that not the passage of time but the rhetorical purpose of each delegate letter best accounts for their distinctiveness within the Pauline corpus. As in my James volume, I provided a complete history of interpretation—more extensive even than that concerning James—from the patristic period to the present. Of particular importance was my demonstrating how the ‘consensus’ view of scholarship was based not on the power of argument but on the weight of custom. My employment of the ‘sociology of knowledge’ with respect to academic convention was never more pertinent.” (165)

Luke Timothy Johnson on the Pastorals

Johnson, Luke Timothy. “II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination.” *Journal of Religious Studies* 6–7 (1978): 1–26. Repr., pages 331–62 in Luke Timothy Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays*. NovTSup 146. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. Knox Preaching Guides. John Knox, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *Letters to Paul’s Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. The New Testament in Context. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “Response to Margaret Mitchell.” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21.2 (1999): 140–44.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “*Oikonomia Theou*: The Theological Voice of 1 Timothy from the Persective of Pauline Authorship.” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21.2 (1999): 87–104. Repr., Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament*, 383‒403.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*. Anchor Bible 35A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation.* 3rd edition. London: SCM, 2010. [“Pastoral Letters: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus,” pp. 375–401]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “1 Timothy 1,1–20: The Shape of the Struggle.” Pages 19–39 in *1 Timothy Reconsidered.* Edited by Karl Paul Donfried. Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum 18. Leuven: Peeters, 2008. Repr., Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament*, 363‒82.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *The Canonical Paul*, vol. 1: *Constructing Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. [note “Letters to Paul’s Delegates Cluster,” pp. 85­–88; opponents in the “Letters to Delegates,” pp. 115–17; “The Texture of Experience” in 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus, pp. 219–21]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *The Canonical Paul*, vol. 2: *Interpreting Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. [Note chaps. 20–23: “Oikonomia Theou” (409–27), “The Shape of the Struggle” (428–48), “Second Timothy and the Polemic Against False Teachers” (449–80), “The Pedagogy of Grace” (481–97)]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “The Pedagogy of Grace: The Experiential Basis of Morality in Titus.” Pages 37–52 in *“Ready for Every Good Work” (Titus 3:1): Implicit Ethics in the Letter to Titus.* Edited by Ruben Zimmermann and Dogara Ishaya Manomi. WUNT 484. Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics 13. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

1. The Pastorals were an academic focus of Abraham Malherbe’s as well. He has to his credit at least ten articles on the letters—most of which are gathered in the first volume of *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity. Collected Essays, 1959‒2012*, ed. R. Holladay, John T. Fitzgerald, Gregory E. Sterling, and James W. Thompson, NovTSup 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2014)—and was working on the Hermeneia volume on the Pastorals at the time of his death. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Luke Timothy Johnson, “II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Reexamination,” *JRelS* 6–7 (1978): 1–26; repr., Luke Timothy Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays*, NovTSup 146 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 331–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert J. Karris, “The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles,” *JBL* 92.4 (1973): 549–64. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul’s Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New Testament in Context (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, “*Oikonomia Theou*: The Theological Voice of 1 Timothy from the Persective of Pauline Authorship,” *HBT* 21.2 (1999): 87–104; repr., Johnson, *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament*, 383‒403; Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘Speaking of God as He Was Able’: A Response to Luke Timothy Johnson and Jerry L. Sumney,” *HBT* 21.2 (1999): 124–50; Johnson, “Response to Margaret Mitchell,” *HBT* 21.2 (1999): 140–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB 35A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus**: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary, and an Introduction to Titus, I and II Timothy, the Pastoral Epistles*, AB 35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. Jerome D. Quinn, “The Last Volume of Luke: The Relation of Luke-Acts to the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles H. Talbert, Perspectives in Religious Studies, Special Studies Series 5 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1978), 62–75. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)