

Ethics In Titus Conference

Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany

12-14 September 2019

Abstracts Following the Order of the Conference

INTRODUCTION and KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

1. Ruben Zimmermann

The ‚implicit Ethics‘ in the Letter to Titus

No one will deny that the letter to Titus is about ethics and morality. However, the perspective of the letter has been classified as highly problematic, whether concerning the position of women, the hierarchical view of the church, the attitude of the Christian to the state, and so on. In addition, there are, at least in German scholarship, still premises of the old Lutheran exegesis of Paul that govern interpretations. Terms like *ergon kalon* (Titus 2,7.14 etc.) are undermined by subordination to justification.

We realize that an ethical reading of the letter is closely linked with preliminary decisions and preconceptions, with norms and values that a reader brings in in a specific context of interpretation. How then, can we approach “ethics” in the letter to Titus? Or even more elementary: What does the term “ethics” mean? What are we looking for? To answer these questions it is necessary to locate this conference within a wider framework, that is the research of the Mainz “Research Center of Ethics in Antiquity and Christianity” (*e/ac*). Following our definition ethics has to do with a meta-perspective on behavior and life, with the development of and justification for behavioral norms and conduct of living and not simply the formulation of imperatives. Though letter to Titus is an occasional writing and the genre differs widely from an ethical theory, I remain convinced that, some kind of ethical system, illuminated in the text itself, can be postulated. The individual act of communication reveals underlying norms, values and coherent forms of reflection. The author reflects upon values, puts them in a hierarchical order, utilizes diverse linguistic forms like arguments, metaphors, or rhetorical questions. For this reason, I would contend that it is appropriate to speak of an „implicit ethics.“ The *description of the implicit ethics* of a biblical text requires an analysis on eight levels, which I have developed as the *organon* of implicit ethics in my book “The Logic of Love”. The paper gives a brief introduction in these dimensions (1. Linguistic Form; 2. Identification of Norms; 3. History of Traditions of Individual Norms or Moral Instances. 4. Values and the Priority of Values; 5. Ethical Reflection / Generating Moral Significance; 6. The moral agent; 7. The Reflected Ethos; 8. Range of Influence – Application) with reference to the letter to Titus.

2. Philip H. Towner (Keynote 1)

The Ethical Agenda of Titus

This paper explores the author's creative intersection of "time" and "space" through which there unfolds a global- or macro-ethics of human existence in the present age. Bakhtin's evaluative device, the chronotope, provides a minimum tool by which to observe the author's management of the sweep and direction of God's time in relation to the contested space of human life, discourse, and consciousness. This may be called "the chronotope of eschatological change." The eschatological intersection of time and space produces a manner of ethics unique to the Christ event. The outcome of this exploration can be called "the ethical agenda of Titus."

3. Luke Timothy Johnson (Keynote 2, absent)

The Pedagogy of Grace: The Experiential Basis for Character Ethics in Titus

Analysis of the rhetorical situation depicted by Titus --- the characterization of the local population, the minimal expectations of leaders, the banal nature of instructions for the household --- suggest a chaotic and even desperate moment for a young church (in clear contrast to the well-established and predictable issues found in 1 Timothy, for example), in which agitators for a heteronomous ethic are upsetting households in a context without even the rudiments of good behavior. Paul daringly proposes that the experience of grace can itself "educate humans in civilization," and there are moments when such experience is indeed the necessary premise for a change in character.

SECTION 1: TEXT, CO-TEXTS & CONTEXTS

1. Jens Herzer

Ethics and the Individuality of the Pastoral Epistles

One of the leading questions of this conference is whether ethics is a suitable category in order to understand the Pastoral Epistles as individual letters rather than as a so-called Corpus Pastorale. The Corpus theory was always disputed, and in recent years it has been seriously and fundamentally challenged. However, the Corpus Pastorale Theory still represents an established heuristic paradigm leading to interpretations that elaborate specific topics on the basis of evidence from all three letters despite their individual character. Countering this perspective, the question arises: Could ethics be a category in order to explore the individuality of the Pastorals more precisely? Ethics always comprises a theory of living and thus implies a certain *ethos*, i.e., a basic attitude formed by certain convictions. Therefore, we can assume that the question of an appropriate understanding of the Pastoral Epistles as individual letters gains significant impulses by a differentiated perspective on the relationship between *ethics* and *ethos*.

In my paper I will explore this relationship with regard to the key term »truth« (ἀλήθεια) as a test case – with particular focus on the letter to Titus. Since this term plays a decisive role in all three letters, it seems suitable to demonstrate the individual character of each of the Pastoral Epistles.

Eine der Leitfragen dieser Konferenz lautet, ob die Ethik eine Kategorie sein kann für eine Betrachtung der drei Pastoralbriefe als Einzelschreiben, unabhängig von der Theorie eines Corpus Pastorale. Diese Theorie war stets in verschiedener Hinsicht umstritten und ist in den letzten Jahren zunehmend infrage gestellt worden. Gleichwohl stellt sie nach wie vor ein in der Forschung etabliertes heuristisches Paradigma dar, das dazu führt, Sachthemen stets aus allen drei Briefen heraus zu entfalten. Insofern Ethik stets eine Theorie der Lebensführung impliziert und als solche ein Ethos, d.h. eine durch bestimmte Prinzipien repräsentierte Grundhaltung, voraussetzt, legt sich die Vermutung nahe, dass durch einen differenzierten Blick auf das Verhältnis von Ethik und Ethos die Beantwortung der Frage nach einer angemessenen Betrachtungsweise der Pastoralbriefe wichtige Impulse erhält.

In dem Vortrag soll das Verhältnis von Ethik und Ethos exemplarisch anhand des konkreten Leitbegriffes der »Wahrheit« (ἀλήθεια) dargestellt werden – mit einem besonderen Fokus auf dem Titusbrief. Da dieser Begriff alle drei Briefe maßgeblich prägt, scheint er im Blick auf das mir gestellte Thema geeignet, die Individualität der Pastoralbriefe unter dem Vorzeichen der Ethik anschaulich zu machen.

2. Jerro van Nes

Moral Language and Ethical Argument in Titus: A Reassessment of the Pseudonymity Hypothesis

New Testament scholars continue to argue for the pseudonymity of Titus on the basis of, *inter alia*, its peculiar moral language and construction of ethical argument. After pointing out some of the fallacies in this argument, this paper in four stages reassesses the evidence for a second century date of Titus. First, all moral vocabulary in the letter is clustered according to Louw-Nida's lexicon of the Greek New Testament based on semantic domains. Second, all collected data for Paul's undisputed letters and Titus are compared by means of simple linear regression analysis in order to see whether Titus' moral vocabulary is significantly different from Paul's. Third, all of Titus' moral vocabulary types that are not used in Paul's undisputed letters are analyzed for their frequency in first- and/or second-century authors in order to see whether Titus' moral vocabulary better fits a first- or second-century date. Finally, the number of enthymemes – sometimes said to be a sign of pseudonymity in the construction of ethical argument in Titus – is compared to Paul's undisputed letters by means of simple linear regression analysis in order to see whether the difference is (in)significant. The overall conclusion is that Titus upon comparison to Paul does not use significantly more (or less) moral vocabulary types and enthymemes, and that there is no compelling evidence to date Titus' moral language to the second century AD.

3. Annette Bourland Huizenga

Moral Education in Titus: Antitheses for Ethical Living

I regard the Letter to Titus as an example of a theologically customized curriculum for moral education. By "curriculum," I mean a sort of integrated course of study about living the ethical life. Using the form of a paraenetic letter, the author positions his material as a sort of protrepsis (and apotrepsis) for a community of believers. His underlying presumption is that the audience will first recognize the distinction between right and wrong ways of living and then be able to make progress toward moral excellence. He structures the teachings by means of antithetical

rhetorical elements: virtues and vices, moral and immoral examples, and promises and warnings that serve to build up his proofs. The proofs of such antitheses rely upon appeals to *ēthos*, *pathos*, or *logos*, or, more often, a combination of all three, depending on the antithesis being considered. Ancient orators and authors believed that such antitheses were effective for the larger goal of instructional texts that seek to educate persons to live a virtuous life. The contents of the Letter to Titus show how an early Christian author adopted and adapted this common pedagogical (and rhetorical) strategy to promote the ethical training of a group of believers.

4. Harry O. Maier

Ethics, Empire and the Urban Imperial Situation of the Letter to Titus

The essay (which assumes pseudonymity and either a Trajanic or Hadrianic date) analyses theological and ethical language and ideals as they relate to the Roman Empire under three aspects: the imperial cult; civic ideals of concord and vices of factionalism; and urban association language. Its chief thesis is that consideration of the letter under these three aspects shows evidence of a Christ group integrated in the life and ideals of western Asia Minor cities. In the case of the imperial cult, it argues against readings that interpret long-recognized parallels between the cult of the emperor and Titus' representations of Jesus as God and Saviour as either polemic against worship of the emperor or an attempt to satisfy Roman officials of the assembly's support of imperial values. Rather it argues that any parallels that exist should be understood as symptomatic of a cultural location in which recognizable political language is used as a tool of persuasion to promote inner group social cohesion. The letter's representations of virtue and vice belong to a repertoire of terms at home in rhetorical presentations of civic concord and faction. It uses commonplace ethical language rhetorically to craft its audience as belonging to an "imperial situation" which pillories enemies (non – Christ-believing Judaeans and non believing Cretans) either as hostiles or barbarians in need of subjugation or civilization. With reference to urban associations, it points to the virtue language used to celebrate patrons and promoted in charters, both of which can be seen in epigraphy. Parallels indicate a high level of urban integration.

SECTION 2a: TEXT & INTRA-TEXT

5. Michael Theobald

Binnenethos oder Ethos vor dem Forum der Öffentlichkeit?: Der Titusbrief und sein Konstrukt der Gegner

I would like to set forth the following thesis for discussion:

The Titus Letter, from which we proceed as the original first letter of the group of three, pursues - like the other two letters - the option of promoting the ethos of the communities and the law and order derived from it in the context of recognized social-ethical standards, i.e. to understand and practice ethos before the public forum. The theological basis of this option is the conviction of God's universal will to salvation in Jesus Christ. If God "wants all people to be saved" (1Tim 2,4; cf. 1Tim 4,10; Tit 2,11: "bringing salvation to all people"), it is necessary to be open to all and to live in such a way that also all in the polis are addressed by the way of life of the believers and some individuals possibly join them. The fact that the author of the pastoral epistles repeatedly emphasizes this option in its various facets indicates that he represents it in contrast to and in distinction from the opponents' internal ethical options. These rely on rigorism and asceticism and profess a lifestyle that cannot be "identical" to an "existence under the conditions of this world". From the point of view of the author of the pastoral epistles, they only cultivate a group ethos whose specific profile consists in the fact that it relies on demarcation and does not appeal to ordinary people.

6. Hans-Ulrich Weidemann

Neither male nor female? – not in Crete!: Gender-differentiated ethics in the letter to Titus

Taking Daniel Boyarin's reading of Paul as a starting point, the epistolary fiction in the prescript of the letter to Titus is considered: "Paul" is writing to "Titus", who was with him at the Jerusalem conference representing the gentile mission. This obvious man-to-man-conversation is culminating in the appointment of male officials as the essential amendment of Paul's ministry (Tit 1,5). This command proves to be crucial for the intention of the document, which is designed as a kind of sidekick for the letter to the Galatians, especially in ethical issues. This guiding thesis will be tested as an example with regard to the gender-specific household code in Tit 2, the contents of the good works in Tit 3 and the establishment of a gender-differentiated *sophrosyne* as the key virtue in Titus.

7. Marianne B. Kartzow

"Speak evil of no one!" (Tit 3:2): Rethinking stereotypes and rhetorical gossip, towards an intersectional ethics of justice in the Letter to Titus

To speak evil or bad of others is unethical. Moral codes, also in the ancient world, warn against backbiting, evil talk, slander, and gossip, for a variety of good reasons. The letter to Titus partakes in this discourse, for example when warning against evil speech, "Speak evil of no one!" or "blaspheme or defame no one" (μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, Tit 3:2), in a context where instructions are given on how to be subject and obedient to rulers and authorities and peaceful and gentle to all people (Tit 3:2-3). To talk about others, however, evil or not, can create identity and strong social ties. It strengthens connections between people and works as the

social glue in a given community. It defines us against them. In Titus a variety of people are talked bad about or they are given characteristics build on stereotypes or prejudices, for example Jews, Cretans, old women or slaves. With this intersectional tension as framework, this paper suggests an intersectional ethics of justice.

8. Ray Van Neste

Ethics and Identity in Titus

The letter to Titus argues that the people of God can be identified by a specific ethic or way of life, because that manner of life is generated by saving grace. This is sometimes obscured by assertions that the ethics in the letter are mere accommodation to culture and not rooted in theological indicatives. This paper aims to demonstrate that a consistent ethical concern flows through the letter, and that the ethical vision called for is explicitly rooted in the divine work of salvation. The ethical vision in the letter then is not merely decent citizenship but is deeply Christian (contra e.g., Hays, Schrage, Sanders).

SECTION 2b: TEXT AND INTRA-TEXT

9. Dogara Ishaya Manomi

The Language of Virtue: Discovering Implicit Virtue-Ethical Linguistic Elements in Titus

Like any ethical milieu, Biblical ethics does not exist in a vacuum but is embedded and expressed in language. In search for virtue-ethical features in biblical texts generally and in the PE particularly, scholarship has, however, commonly focused on the catalogue of virtues and vices, the occurrence of individual virtues, or even the occurrence of the Greek word for virtue (ἀρετή) itself. This paper, however, goes a step further to explore and discover implicit virtue-ethical properties (re)presented in verbal, adjectival, adverbial, prepositional, and metaphorical linguistic elements in Titus, and how they are weaved together with theological notions and ethical norms to place more emphasis on the morality of persons than the morality of actions, or on the “being” more than the “doing” of moral agents, which is the central feature of virtue ethics theory.

10. Rick Brannan

The Language of Ethical Instruction in the Letter to Titus: A View Informed by Discourse Grammar and Speech Act Theory

This paper uses an application of speech act theory to identify ethical instruction (commands) in the letter to Titus. A further structural analysis of the letter according to the principles of Discourse Grammar segments the letter, grouping the ethical instruction into larger units. Each ethical instruction is examined individually to determine the nature and purpose of the instruction.

SECTION 3: TEXT AND HERMENEUTICS

11. Musa W. Dube

An African Feminist- Ethical Reading of Household Codes in Titus

In her debuting novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, world famous African Feminist, Chimamanda Adichie, constructs a narrative revolving around two Catholic households—one led by a rich and fundamentalist believer, who turns up to be a violent oppressor over his wife and children, dictating how they must believe and live out their faith. They are mostly silenced. The second household is led by a widowed middle-class mother of four children. She is an intellectual, whose faith has room for various hues of Catholicism and other ways of seeking God that are not necessarily uniform with her Christian faith. Adichie complicates her presentation of these two households by infusing the social categories of gender, age, class, race and postcoloniality. This paper will draw from Adichie's narrative; the African philosophy of *ubuntu* as well as African women theologians' ethic of reading for liberation to interrogate Titus' presentation of the church through the model of ancient household codes.

12. Korinna Zamfir

Women's Ministries in Titus (?) Ethical Issues and their Contemporary Relevance

Women's ministry as a formal, officially recognized role, like that of the *episkopos/presbyteros* or of (female) *diakonoi*, is not addressed. Titus 2,4-5 assigns older women a semi-formal task to instruct their younger peers in virtue. Older women are urged to be *καλοδιδάσκαλοι*, reasoning young women to be *φίλανδροι*, *φιλότεκνοι* and submissive, to display the virtues and attitudes typically demanded from women in antiquity. The moral instruction delivered by older women presupposes a hierarchical relationship based on seniority, in the household and in the community. It involves a shared experience and an internal perspective on the life and roles of women.

Demanding experienced women to instruct their younger fellows in traditional morality is a strategy closely resembling that of the pseudonymous Neopythagorean writings purportedly penned by eminent, philosophically-minded women. The virtues and behaviour expected from young women are common in ancient sources belonging to a wide range of genres. They reflect the topos of the "good woman" (Annette Huizenga), encompassing gender-specific virtues and the devoted performance of female roles.

Lessons for today include believers' concern with an exemplary lifestyle and their sensitivity to the welfare of others, the role of women's communities in supporting their peers, and the need to learn from the experience of older women *and* men. Engaging believers in pastoral work boosts their commitment to the community of faith. Yet, a process of reflection is indispensable, as ethical exhortations like those in Titus cannot be applied without distinction.

13. Claire Smith

Ethics of Teaching and Learning in Christianity Today: Insights from Titus

Teaching and learning in Titus begin with God. God is the ultimate teacher, and in a letter where all other 'characters' are teachers and learners of sorts, God is the only one who does not learn. The ethics of teaching and learning for Christianity today arise from God's own

educative intention, content, manner, and goal. The paper examines the three theological sections of the letter for the contours of God's educational activities. While each section makes a distinctive contribution, there are common elements, including that God desires and intends people to know his message, and is the source of the content, and determines the timing, medium, and means by which it is made known. His educational activity also creates a decisive time schema. Other features include the alignment of the content with God's character, and that divine educational activities are directed towards relationships (both vertical and horizontal), lead to transformation of the whole person in belief and conduct, and are eschatologically-orientated. This presentation of God as teacher in Titus provides the foundation for the ethics of human learning and teaching within the letter, and in Christianity today.

