ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON PASTORAL FORMATION


The latest entry in the Pulpit and Pew Series, this book urges excellence in ministry on account of that which ministers are to serve, the Gospel.


Bayer proposes a catechetical systematics grounded in Luther’s “right way to study theology” reflected in *oratio, meditatio*, and *tentatio*.


Stimulated by the closing of the preacher’s seminary in Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer writes of the nature of a common life in prayer and Christian community.


A rich collection of essays on Luther’s “marks” of the church by several prominent theologians from a variety of backgrounds. Especially insightful for thinking regarding pastoral formation are the essays by Forde on preaching, Yeago on discipline, Braaten on the ministry and Jenson on catechesis. Jenson teases his readers by asserting that the church will not have better pastors until her seminarians are better catechized.


This collection of essays challenges the church to theological authenticity for the sake of the one mission.


ATS sponsored study of the importance of residential theological education.


Farley has become something of a classical study as he diagnoses the compartmentalization of the theological disciplines.

This comprehensive study is a must read for anyone interested in trends and pitfalls in theological education today.


Huetter attacks the academic isolation of theology as a science apart from the life of the church. This does not render the academic dimension of theological education irrelevant for sets it in the context of churchly life.


A veteran seminary professor from the Lutheran Church in Australia speaks to Luther’s classic rules for the study of theology in light of current challenges.


Suggested that a generic usage of “minister/ministry” has contributed to the confusion of biblical and confessional categories and weakened the church’s mission in the world.

Mattes, Mark C. “Technology, Truth, and Ministry: David Wells on Their Relationship” in *Lutheran Forum* 34 (Summer 2000), 34-38

While offering some criticisms of Wells inability to work with the Lutheran category of the two kingdoms, Mattes offers an appreciative assessment of Wells’ diagnosis of pluralism and marginalization of theology in American churches.

Oden, Thomas. *Becoming a Minister* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

An anthology of readings from classical sources demonstrating how the church as shaped pastors and prepared them to bear the authority of the ministerial office.


Olson was pastor of a large ELCA congregation in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and founder of the Center for Congregational Leadership until his untimely death two years ago. Drawing on his work as a parish pastor and former mission executive, Olson presents a proposal that calls for the “character development” of congregations as communities of faith shaped by the biblical story seen through the lens of the theology of the cross. He
believes that the Church growth Movement has resulted in low morale and burn out among clergy and dissension within congregations. Immense implications for pastoral formation.


The cross is an ever present reality in the Christian life. Pfeiffer explores how God uses temptation and affliction to form servants of the church who live with confidence in Christ’s promises. Life in community is the crucible for such cruciform formation.

Pless, John T. “A Curriculum From and For the Church” in Lutheran Theological Journal 40 (May 2006), 14-19

Describes the process leading to the development of the new curriculum at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne and shows the integrative and practical focus of this curriculum for the formation of pastors for the 21st century.


The author, a Presbyterian theologian, argues that contemporary pastoral practice suffers a disconnection from the Scriptures and Christian doctrine. Ministerial formation must provide greater theological conviction.


This 1968 essay explores the nature of the “perpetual crisis” that characterizes the office of the ministry in every age with the specific crises occasioned by modernity.

Sauter, Gerhard. Gateways to Dogmatics: Reasoning Theologically for the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003)

Theological reflection is an art that the church cannot afford to be without. Pastors are formed to think theologically for the sake of the church’s life and mission. “No religion can survive unless it is passed on to succeeding generations, who have learn it, understand it, and to live it out” (148).


Argues that “evaluating pastoral suitability is a process that should precede admission to seminary, continue throughout a seminarian’s period of studies, and follow his placement in office.
Wells, David F. *Above All Earthly Pow’rs: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

Wells, a professor of systematic theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary provides a piercing analysis of the postmodern transformation of American churches. As Timothy George writes on the dustcover this is “An important book for everyone who cares about the integrity of the gospel and the missional future of the church.”

Wells, David F. *No Place for the Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

In this earlier work, Wells looks at the way theology has been suppressed by social, psychological and managerial sciences in the training of American pastors and the negative effect this has had on the clarity of preaching and genuinely evangelical missionary outreach in a secularized world.


A look at pastoral life and practice from the standpoint of the biblical narrative with applications to the way future pastors are prepared to serve God’s people.


Wheeler, a leading commentator of theological education from Auburn Seminary, promotes models of theological education that foster critical, theological thinking rather than merely functional ability.


Willimon authored this book while Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University. He is now a bishop in the United Methodist Church. Drawing on the character ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre and Richard Hays, Willimon asserts that character is shaped in community. The virtues of the ministerial candidates should be shaped by the communal character of the church. Seminaries are places for such shaping.


A winsome and crisp appeal for a theologically literate clergy.

Yeago, an ELCA theologian at Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, asserts that practical theology is the hands and feet of dogmatics. Thus it is insufficient for ministerial candidates to have pastoral hearts; they must also have pastoral heads. Formed to think theologically pastors will discern the spirits that that threaten to mute the Gospel in our culture.

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