

The
Master's Perspective
on
**PASTORAL
MINISTRY**

RICHARD L. MAYHUE
ROBERT L. THOMAS
general editors

The Master's

Perspective

Series

Volume 3

Foreword by
John F. MacArthur Jr.

The Master's Perspective Series
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The Master's Perspective on Pastoral Ministry

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Foreword

The Bible reveals not only the full truth of the gospel but also the means for its proclamation through the church.

The New Testament is the manual for ministry. It contains the design of God for the people of God to fulfill the Great Commission. A biblical ecclesiology is no less the mandate of God than is a biblical Christology or soteriology. One of the strange features of contemporary evangelicalism is that it often seeks to frame the ministry of the church along cultural rather than biblical paths and then congratulates itself for that unbiblical achievement, offering its superficial success as proof that it has discerned the model that all churches should follow.

In this volume, the reader will find some clear, biblical insight bearing on the most initial element of a biblical ministry—the divinely designed role of the pastor. If the church is to be obedient to Scripture in the full range of its ministry, it must begin with obedience to the biblical pattern for the men who lead the church.

—John F. MacArthur Jr.

Introduction

Pastoring God's flock (i.e., shepherding the people of God on earth) is a noble, time-honored labor. The ultimate Shepherd is God Himself; one psalmist declared, "The LORD is my shepherd . . ." (Ps. 23:1) while another recognized God as the Shepherd of Israel (80:1).

The NT speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). As the Great Shepherd, Christ died the atoning death and arose on the third day (Heb. 13:20). And lest there be any mistake about the matter of rank, Peter refers to Christ as the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

God has delegated this worthy but difficult task of pastoring to human shepherds, who will in the end be accountable to Him for their efforts (Heb. 13:17). Charles Jefferson offers the following realistic perspective on pastoring, which all of us who are in ministry would do well to remember:

The shepherd's work is a humble work; such it has been from the beginning and such it must be to the end. A man must come down to do it. A shepherd cannot shine. He cannot cut a figure. His work must be done in obscurity. The things which he does do not make interesting copy. His work calls for continuous self-effacement. It is a form of service which eats up a man's life. It makes a man old before his time. Every good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. If a man is dependent on the applause of the crowd, he ought never to enter the ministry. The

finest things a minister does are done out of sight, and never get reported. They are known to himself and one or two others, and to God. His joy is not that his success is being talked about on earth, but that his name is written in heaven. The shepherd in the East had no crowd to admire him. He lived alone with the sheep and the stars. His satisfactions were from within. The messengers of Christ must not expect bands of music to attend them on their way. Theirs is a humble, unpretentious, and oftentime unnoticed labor, but if it builds souls in righteousness it is more lasting than the stars.*

The following articles on various features of pastoring are offered with the prayer that Christ's under-shepherds will distinguish themselves before the flock and God as men who took seriously their spiritual assignment on earth, who did not lord it over the flock but proved to be examples, and who went about their shepherdly duties, not under compulsion, but according to the will of God. May God's flock flourish under the spiritual leadership of godly pastors, and may God's received glory be great as the outcome.

The analysis of each area of discussion is the position of the contributor and does not necessarily represent the opinion of The Master's Seminary, its administration, or its faculty. Each analysis, however, is a proposal that is recommended for consideration by readers of this volume.

English translations used in this volume are those of the individual contributors unless otherwise indicated.

We want to express our thanks to Mr. Mark Axelson for his help in compiling the indexes for this volume.

—Richard L. Mayhue and
Robert L. Thomas, general editors

*Charles Jefferson, *The Minister As Shepherd* (1913; reprint, Hong Kong: Living Books for All, 1973), 32–33.

About *The Master's Seminary Journal*

For readers who are unfamiliar with *The Master's Seminary Journal*, a word of introduction is in order. *TMSJ* began publication in 1990 with the following statement of purpose:

With this issue, *The Master's Seminary Journal* launches its career as a medium for the publication of scholarly articles dealing with the biblical text, Christian theology, and pastoral concerns. As you have noted, or will note, it also contains reviews of current and significant books and occasionally, of articles, relating to these issues. With these emphases in mind, technical articles dealing with such issues as the philosophy of religion, linguistics, or archaeology, will not be included unless they clearly, directly, and significantly contribute to the understanding or application of God's written revelation—the Holy Bible. The editors desire that all articles be understandable, not only by seminary professors and other professional scholars, but also by pastors, and, indeed, by any serious students of Scripture.

While most of the articles will be contributed by the faculty members of The Master's Seminary, the editors will solicit articles and reviews from recognized evangelical scholars, will evaluate voluntary contributions for possible inclusion, and will

occasionally include outstanding historical selections from the public domain.

It is our fervent prayer that our Lord Jesus Christ will be honored and exalted, either directly or indirectly, on every page of this publication, and that every article and review will contribute to the understanding or application of the Holy Scriptures as we await His return. (Excerpted from "Editorial," *TMSJ* 1, no. 1 [1990]: 1–2).

The *Journal* has continued without interruption since that time, endeavoring to fulfill the purpose established at its beginning. Readers interested in a subscription to *TMSJ* may contact Professor James F. Stitzinger, *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 13248 Roscoe Blvd., Sun Valley, CA 91352, or by e-mail <jstitzinger@tms.edu>.

As a matter of policy, in its fall issue each year, *TMSJ* publishes the annual Faculty Lecture Series delivered to The Master's Seminary student body in January and February of that year. The fall 1999 issue covered the subject of the biblical covenants, the fall 2000 issue dealt with Christian ethics, and the fall 2001 issue dealt with the "openness of God" position. Besides these topics, of course, other issues have treated a wide variety of biblical, theological, and practical subjects. Articles from past issues are available on The Master's Seminary Web site at <www.tms.edu>.

The following issues of *TMSJ* are the sources of *The Master's Perspective on Pastoral Ministry*:

- volume 1 (1990)—one chapter (chap. 7),
- volume 2 (1991)—one chapter (chap. 8),
- volume 3 (1992)—one chapter (chap. 11),
- volume 4 (1993)—one chapter (chap. 12),
- volume 5 (1994)—one chapter (chap. 10),
- volume 6 (1995)—three chapters (chaps. 1, 2, 4),
- volume 7 (1996)—two chapters (chaps. 5, 6),
- volume 8 (1997)—one chapter (chap. 3), and
- volume 9 (1998)—one chapter (chap. 9).

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The Religious Life of Theological Students

Benjamin B. Warfield

A minister must be both learned and religious. It is not a matter of choosing between the two. He must study, but he must study as in the presence of God and not in a secular spirit. He must recognize the privilege of pursuing his studies in the environment where God and salvation from sin are the air he breathes. He must also take advantage of every opportunity for corporate worship, particularly while he trains in the theological seminary. Christ Himself leads in exemplifying the importance of participating in the religious life of the community. Ministerial work without taking time to pray is a tragic mistake. The two must be combined if the servant of God is to give a pure, clear, and strong message.

This message was first delivered by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1921) at the Autumn Conference of Princeton Theological Seminary on October 4, 1911. It later appeared in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 1:411–25; and in booklet form under the same title as this chapter (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970). Warfield stands as one of America's most notable Reformed theologians. He taught theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1887 until his death in 1921. See *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 10 vols. (1927–1932; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), for his major writings.

* * * * *

I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology. I approach the subject with some trepidation. I think it the most important subject which can engage our thought. You will not suspect me, in saying this, to be depreciating the importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry. The importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry is the reason of the existence of our theological seminaries. Say what you will, do what you will, the ministry is a "learned profession"; and the man without learning, no matter with what other gifts he may be endowed, is unfit for its duties. But learning, though indispensable, is not the most indispensable thing for a minister. "Apt to teach"—yes, the minister must be "apt to teach"; and observe that what I say—or rather what Paul says—is "apt to *teach*." Not apt merely to exhort, to beseech, to appeal, to entreat; nor even merely to testify, to bear witness; but to *teach*. And teaching implies knowledge: He who teaches must know. Paul, in other words, requires of you, as we are perhaps learning not very felicitously to phrase it, "instructional," not merely "inspirational," service. But aptness to teach alone does not make a minister; nor is it his primary qualification. It is only one of a long list of requirements which Paul lays down as necessary to meet in him who aspires to this high office. And all the rest concern, not his intellectual, but his spiritual fitness. A minister must be learned, on pain of being utterly incompetent for his work. But before and above being learned, a minister must be godly.

Nothing could be more fatal, however, than to set these two things over against one another. Recruiting officers do not dispute whether it is better for soldiers to have a right leg or a left leg: Soldiers should have both legs. Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books. "What!" is the appropriate response. "Than ten hours over your books, on your knees?" Why should you turn from God when you turn to your books, or feel that you must turn from your books in order to turn to God? If learning and devotion are as antagonistic as that, then the intellectual life is in itself accursed, and there can be no question of a religious life for a student, even of theology. The mere fact that

he is a student inhibits religion for him. That I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology proceeds on the recognition of the absurdity of such antitheses. You are students of theology; and, just because you are students of theology, it is understood that you are religious men—especially religious men, to whom the cultivation of your religious life is a matter of the profoundest concern—of such concern that you will wish above all things to be warned of the dangers that may assail your religious life, and be pointed to the means by which you may strengthen and enlarge it. In your case there can be no “either-or” here—either a student or a man of God. You must be both.

Perhaps the intimacy of the relation between the work of a theological student and his religious life will nevertheless bear some emphasizing. Of course you do not think religion and study incompatible. But it is barely possible that there may be some among you who think of them too much apart—who are inclined to set their studies off to one side, and their religious life off to the other side, and to fancy that what is given to the one is taken from the other. No mistake could be more gross. Religion does not take a man away from his work; it sends him to his work with an added quality of devotion. We sing—do we not?—

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see—
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

If done t' obey Thy laws,
E'en servile labors shine,
Hallowed is toil, if this the cause,
The meanest work divine.

It is not just the way George Herbert wrote it. He put, perhaps, a sharper point on it. He reminds us that a man may look at his work as he looks at a pane of glass—either seeing nothing but the glass, or looking straight through the glass to the wide heavens beyond. And he tells us plainly that there is nothing so mean but that the great words “for thy sake” can glorify it:

Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry

Richard L. Mayhue

Current unbiblical changes that are beginning to overtake the church could negatively mark the twenty-first-century church if they continue unchecked. A growing number of respected evangelicals believe that the contemporary redirection of the church toward being less biblical and more acceptable to society ultimately will lead to a Christ-condemned church. However, by using Scripture to answer the questions “What is a pastor to be and do?” and “How can contemporary ministry be shaped by biblical mandates?” the church can be revived and obediently realign herself with God’s revealed purposes for the bride of Christ. Thus, it is possible to achieve a biblically balanced, complementary relationship for understanding God’s will for the church, engaging in relevant pastoral ministry, and preparing a new generation of pastors for ministry as outlined by God’s Word.

This essay, in a slightly different form, appears in John F. MacArthur Jr., *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry* (Dallas: Word, 1995), 3–18. It is used by permission. Quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* unless otherwise noted.

* * * * *

Crossroads. Transition. Crisis. Uncertainty. Restlessness.

These unsettling words express the pessimistic perception voiced by many evangelicals regarding the immediate state of the church and pastoral ministry. Few would disagree that a call for redirection is necessary for the evangelical church as the twenty-first century has begun. However, no current consensus exists on which route the church should take to get back on track.

Consider, for example, John Seel's 1992 survey of twenty-five prominent evangelical leaders.¹ The leaders expressed their less-than-optimistic views on the general state of American evangelicalism at the end of the twentieth century. Eight dominant themes emerged from their responses:

1. Uncertain identity—A widespread confusion over what defines an evangelical.
2. Institutional disenchantment—A perceived ministry ineffectiveness and irrelevance.
3. Lack of leadership—A lament over the paucity of leadership in the church.
4. Pessimism about the future—A belief that the future of evangelicalism hangs in the balance.
5. Growth up, impact down—A confusing paradox without immediate clear explanations.
6. Cultural isolation—A complete arrival of the post-Christian era.
7. Belief that political and methodological responses provide the solution—A drift toward unbiblical approaches to ministry.
8. Shift from truth-orientation to market-response ministry—A redirection away from the eternal and toward the temporal to be viewed as relevant.

David F. Wells has reached essentially the same conclusion:

I have written this book because, like the students who participated in our survey, I believe the vision of the evangelical church is now clouded, its internal life greatly weakened, its

future very uncertain, and I want something better for it. I want the evangelical church to be *the church*. I want it to embody a vibrant spirituality. I want the church to be an alternative to post-modern culture, not a mere echo of it. I want a church that is bold to be different and unafraid to be faithful, a church that is interested in something better than using slick marketing techniques to swell the numbers of warm bodies occupying sanctuaries, a church that reflects an integral and undiminished confidence in the power of God's Word, a church that can find in the midst of our present cultural breakdown the opportunity to be God's people in a world that has abandoned God.

To be the church in this way, it is also going to have to find in the coming generation leaders who exemplify this hope for its future and who will devote themselves to seeing it realized. To lead the church in the way that it needs to be led, they will have to rise above the internal politics of the evangelical world and refuse to accept the status quo where that no longer serves the vital interests of the kingdom of God. They will have to decline to spend themselves in the building of their own private kingdoms and refuse to be intimidated into giving the church less and other than what it needs. Instead, they will have to begin to build afresh, in cogently biblical ways, among the decaying structures that now clutter the evangelical landscape. To succeed, they will have to be people of large vision, people of courage, people who have learned again what it means to live by the Word of God, and, most importantly, what it means to live before the holy God of that Word.²

The Master's Seminary acknowledges these alarming trends, believing that decisions made now and in the near future will reshape the American evangelical church for much of the present century. Thus, the future direction of the contemporary church is a legitimate, preeminent consideration. Unquestionably, the twenty-first-century church faces a defining moment.³ The real contrast in competing ministry models, however, is not the "traditional" versus the "contemporary" but rather the *scriptural* in contrast to the *unscriptural*.

The Master's Perspective on **PASTORAL MINISTRY**

Shepherding the people of God is a biblically-honored and noble labor, patterned after the life of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. God has delegated this difficult task to human shepherds who will be accountable to Him for their efforts. The contributors to this work, all leading Bible scholars, offer exhortation and encouragement for those who faithfully lead the flock of God.

Chapters by such notable scholars as Benjamin B. Warfield, John F. MacArthur Jr., Wayne A. Mack, and George J. Zemek include:

"The Religious Life of Theological Students"

"In Defense of Integrity"

"The Priority of Prayer in Preaching"

"The Sufficiency of Scripture in Counseling"

"The Dynamics of Small Church Ministry"

"In this volume, the reader will find some clear, biblical insight that bears on the most initial element of a biblical ministry—the divinely designed role of the pastor. If the church is to be obedient to Scripture in the full range of its ministry, it must begin with being obedient to the biblical pattern for those men who lead the church."

—John F. MacArthur Jr.
from the Foreword

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