

BULLETIN

UNION UNIVERSITY

Equipping Today's Church Leaders

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

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Hometown: Greenfield, TN

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The Union University *Bulletin* is a bi-monthly publication designed to equip church leaders.

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PREACHING



A Biblical Portrait of the Pastor I Peter 5:1 – 4

Todd E. Brady, M. Div.
Minister to the University and
Instructor of Christian Studies

The roles of a pastor are ever changing. Because our world is constantly evolving, the expectations and opportunities before the pastor are complex and often demanding. Preacher, comforter, administrator, planner, encourager, vision-caster – these are just a few of the roles that many expect today's pastor to fill. Often the focus of criticism from well-meaning parishioners, those who seek to pastor God's people frequently feel frustrated by the stresses of multiplying ministries, increasing expectations, and never-ending needs. These frustrations are usually exacerbated by the church's wrong-headed and sometimes unbiblical ideas about who a pastor is and exactly what his role should be in the life of today's church.

Certainly when it comes to any kind of profession, new days call for new ways. Today's church probably will not communicate the gospel most effectively through flannel graphs or 16 millimeter films. Some things definitely need to change! However, when thinking about the foundational and biblical roles of the pastor, some things indeed should never change.

As Peter writes to individuals in churches throughout Asia Minor, he takes the opportunity in chapter five to speak generally about church elders and their roles. His readers have experienced persecution firsthand. They hold their Christian convictions with deepest resolve. Those serving as pastors in these churches desire to minister the truth of the gospel to those in their care. Peter writes exhorting these men to be faithful in their ministerial work and true to their God-given callings as pastors. Through his encouragement, we are able to see clearly several characteristics that together paint a biblical portrait of the pastor. Whether a church is large or small, rural or urban,

See **PREACHING ON PAGE 5**

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Michael Peasley
Warwick, RI
Senior
Major: Physical
Education

Union has been an incredible experience for me, deeply impacting who I am and who I strive to be.

From the moment I stepped foot on campus, I knew God was here working in the lives of students and faculty, and immediately using those around me in my life. Through my life at Union, I've learned what it means to strive for excellence for the cause of Christ. I have learned that I must give my all to be challenged to grow, in academics and even greater in my walk with Christ.



Crystal DeSha Skelton
Greenfield, TN
Junior
Major: Business
Management
Minor: Marketing

The past three years at Union have been a refreshing experience. Friendships have been formed over the years that will last throughout eternity.

While attending Union, I have had the opportunity to serve in leadership positions. Skills gained from these experiences will help in many capacities of my future career. Business professors have given one-on-one encouragement to my Christian walk.

God has blessed my life by allowing me to attend such a great university.



WORSHIPPING



The Pastor's Role in Worship

Charles A. Fowler, Ph. D.
Vice President for Development and Church
Relations and Director of The R.G. Lee Center for
Christian Ministry

Current trends in worship leadership sometimes offer a convoluted picture of the pastor's role in worship. Many churches have a staff member who holds the title, Minister of Worship. Others place responsibilities for worship planning on various associate pastor positions while pastors are involved in the planning process at differing levels. This can leave the church with an unclear picture of who is their primary worship leader. Thankfully, God used Malachi to offer some insights that can help answer this question. The clear message from Malachi 1:2 – 2:17 is that the pastor is the worship leader. In this passage, God rebuked the Levitical priests for their sinful ways and reminded them of His desire for their faithful, obedient service. Because of the priests' ministerial role, I am making application of God's instruction to them to the role of pastor. The message from Malachi is straightforward. If he could have said "you da man," to the priests, he would have.

God graciously begins the book with a reminder of His love (1:2). His love initiative deserves a worthy response and the Levites were not responding faithfully. They were chastised for the following unworthy responses.

1. Unworthy Offerings (1:7) – They offered less than their best – sick animals.
2. Unworthy Focus (1:8) – They were more interested in men than God.
3. Unworthy Worship (1:10) – Their services were meaningless to God.
4. Unworthy Leadership (2:8) – Their people followed in their wicked ways.

Thankfully, God does not rebuke without making clear his expectations. In dealing with the Levites, He showed them the error of their ways in worship leadership. Following His rebuke, He lovingly reminded them to what they had been called. Worthy responses to His love initiative are as follows:

1. Fear God (2:5)
2. Worship God (2:5)
3. Walk with God (2:6)
4. Live Uprightly (2:6)
5. Confront Sin (2:6)
6. Know the Word (2:7)
7. Preach the Word (2:7)

Recommended Books for 2003

by David S. Dockery,
President, Union University

Basic Christian Leadership,
by John Stott. InterVarsity,
2002.

*Is the Father of Jesus the God of
Muhammad?*
by Timothy George.
Zondervan, 2002.

*Christianity at the Religious
Roundtable*,
by Timothy C. Tennent.
Baker, 2002.

*Hero for Humanity: A
Biography of William
Wilberforce*,
by Kevin Belmonte. NavPress,
2002.

Paul and Jesus: The True Story,
by David Wenham. Eerdmans,
2002.

*First Theology: God, Scripture
and Hermeneutics*, by Kevin
Vanhoozer. InterVarsity, 2002.

*Finding the Will of God: A
Pagan Notion*,
by Bruce K. Waltke.
Eerdmans, 2002.

*Worldview, the History of a
Concept*,
by David K. Naugle.
Eerdmans, 2002.

Engaging God's World,
by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.
Eerdmans, 2002.

*America's God: From Jonathan
Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*,
by Mark Noll. Oxford, 2002.

*The Bible and Homosexual
Practice: Texts and
Hermeneutics*,
by Robert A.J. Gagnon.
Abingdon, 2002.

Jesus According to Scripture,
by Darrell L. Bock. Baker,
2002

*Scribbling in the Sand: Christ
and Creativity*,
by Michael Card. InterVarsity,
2002.

How to Win the Culture War,
by Peter Kreeft. InterVarsity,
2002.

*The Most Reluctant Convert:
C. S. Lewis' Journey to Faith*,
by David C. Downing,
InterVarsity, 2002.

Islam at the Crossroads,
by Paul Marshall, Roberta
Green, and Lela Gilbert.
Eerdmans, 2002.

*Aliens in America: The Strange
Truth of Our Souls*,
by Peter Augustine Lawler. ISI,
2002.

*Designer Universe: Intelligent
Design and the Existence of God*,
by Jimmy H. Davis and Harry
L. Poe. Broadman and
Holman, 2002.

*The Right Questions: Truth,
Meaning, and Public Debate*,
by Philip Johnson.
InterVarsity, 2002.

*The Next Christendom: The
Coming of Global Christianity*,
by Philip Jenkins. Oxford,
2002.

Plowshares and Pruninghooks,
by D. Brent Sandy.
InterVarsity, 2002.

Purpose-Directed Theology,
by Darrell L. Bock,
InterVarsity, 2002.

Handbook on the Prophets,
by Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.
Baker, 2002.

Biblical Theology,
by Scott Haefmann.
InterVarsity, 2002.

*Ephesians: An Exegetical
Commentary*,
by Harold Hoehner. Baker,
2002.

REVIEWING



Classic Readings in Pastoral Ministry

Ray VanNeste, Ph.D.

Instructor of Christian Studies and
Director of the R.C. Ryan Center
for Biblical Studies

Our topic this issue is the changing role of the pastor. One of the most important things to do in an age of rapid change (like ours) is to gain some historical perspective by looking to the wisdom of ages past. When we fail to do this we often repackage old mistakes as fresh wisdom and fail to avail ourselves of the shoulders of giants on which we can stand. There is a store of collected wisdom from the past which can only enrich us and can help us to evaluate whether current changes are helpful and biblical or not. Therefore, in this issue I will recommend some older works on pastoral ministry and one more recent book which draws on the wisdom of the past.

Several books from the past could be mentioned, but I will list five key ones, each considered to be classics:

The Reformed Pastor, Richard Baxter
The Christian Ministry, Charles Bridges
An Earnest Ministry, John Angell James
Lectures to My Students, Charles Spurgeon
An All-Round Ministry, Charles Spurgeon

Baxter wrote his book in 1656. The other four books come from various points in the 19th century. The Spurgeon books are collections of addresses to pastors and ministerial students. Each of the books in one way or another arises from an awareness of a need to revitalize pastoral ministry. This can be seen in the titles and subtitles as Baxter's "reformed" means "renewed", James' subtitle is *The Want of the Times* and Bridges subtitle is *With an Enquiry into the Causes of its Inefficiency*. These are not casual discussions of pastoral techniques, but deep and searching contemplations of how fallen men can accomplish the high calling of overseeing the "church of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). We have in these men faithful guides in this topic as they are both serious students of Scripture (indeed their

The Pastor's Public Duty



Gregory Alan Thornbury, Ph.D.
Director of the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Christian
Leadership
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies

Once upon a time, a community's pastor served simultaneously as shepherd and shaper of culture. The idea that the church could produce a "city on a hill," as John Winthrop once put it, characterized the mold into which the pastor once saw himself cast. The notion that the church could produce a powerful witness to the world produced generations of outstanding pastors who made lasting contributions to the culture around them. This is true when one considers, for example, Jonathan Edwards' philosophical contributions and literary output of Charles Haddon Spurgeon with his pastor's college and relief ministries for the poor. This tradition maintained well into the twentieth century as men going into pastoral ministry often continued to be men of letters, skilled in the original languages, steeped in the classics, who often held advanced degrees. R. G. Lee was himself both a gentleman and scholar who turned down the chair of the Latin department at Furman University to pursue God's call in the local church. But as the popular culture began to drift further and further away from its Christian moorings, churches began to make peace with secular trends. Pastors increasingly had to focus on administering programs while the balance of cultural power shifted from the church to other forms of media and entertainment.

Today, a return to the importance of the public duty of the Pastor is needed, for he has something to say to the larger world of concern. His parishioners should hear about greed from the pulpit before the Enron and Worldcom scandals break, and be taught a biblical view of sexuality prior to the latest tawdry headline. Congregants will be able to remember when their pastor raised such issues in his morning message or Bible study. Even as the pastor emerges as a man engaged in a wide variety of thought and debate, applying the Bible to real economic and ethical

problems, his people will be encouraged to do the same in their lives as public officials, teachers, doctors, journalists, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters.

This attitude toward ministry is surely implied in what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote in Ephesians 3:10, "[God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." The wisdom of which Paul speaks here is not simply the basic outline of the gospel; rather, it is the gospel *applied* to every area of life in the world: thus, "the *manifold* wisdom of God", a phrase which scholars Louw and Nida render as "the wisdom of God in its many different forms." This diversity of wisdom must surely include all of the disciplines of intellectual inquiry, disciplines which God himself ordained and governs. Business, personal finance, science, government, and family all come to be seen in light of the gospel. Perhaps most importantly, God intends the publication of his cosmic administrations to "the authorities and the powers in the heavenly places." The phrase "heavenly places" may on a surface reading cause one to conclude that the audience for the manifold wisdom of God includes spiritual beings alone. Although "heavenly places" certainly means such supernatural persons, those forces direct and give guidance to the flesh and blood pawns who do their bidding. Paul does not intend to tell his readers that they do not have fleshly enemies; rather, he informs them to be mindful of the true power and authority behind these adversaries who rule this present age.

Paul's point in Ephesians 3:10 therefore can be stated thus: God's wisdom in all its forms must be made publicly available to the world *through the ministry of the local church*. The church bears the weight of the

contemporary or traditional, Peter's words about the men of I Peter 5:1-4 should be descriptive of today's pastor.

1. The Pastor is a Shepherd

The command is to shepherd God's people (verse 2). In a day when many measure the work of the church by mega-church models and secular business strategies, thinking of the pastor in terms like CEO, *Rancher*, or *Leader* may seem more appropriate. However, the image which Peter uses and the word that best describes the pastor, regardless of the time in which he serves, *is shepherd*.

Shepherd is often the word in the Scripture that portrays the relationship God has with his people. "The LORD is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). "He tends the flock like a shepherd: He gathers his lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isaiah 40:11). In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus looks upon the crowds of people with compassion "...because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (9:36). The writer of Hebrews calls Christ the "...Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20). Peter also states, "For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls" (I Peter 2:25).

Peter's mind must have been resonating with the words of Jesus Himself who had commanded Peter earlier to be a shepherd to His sheep. Peter had responded affirmatively when Jesus asked, "Do you love Me?" Jesus said, "Feed my lambs," and "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:15-16). The imagery is striking.

Just as a shepherd leads his sheep guiding them to places where they can safely find food, today's pastor has as his primary responsibility the feeding and leading of Christian souls. The pastor is responsible for the care and oversight of the flock. He cares for each member of the flock, watching over them and providing the nourishment of God's Word. The portrayal of the shepherd with a dual function of feeding and leading means that the pastor is not someone who shows compassion without conviction or encouragement without instruction. Rather he is the one who guides the church providing both – pastoral care and biblical instruction, spiritual discipline and Christian doctrine.

2. The Pastor is a Servant

With so much emphasis on leadership in our society, Peter's mandate for pastors (elders) to "...serve as overseers," and be "...eager to serve" (verse 2) almost sounds less than desirable. Indeed the pastor must have leadership skills to carry out the calling of God in the life of the church. However, his entire role is one of service. He is a servant of God. He is a servant of the Word of God. He is a servant of the people of God. Instead of exerting authority or selfishly manipulating those in this congregation, the pastor willingly and eagerly serves those in the congregation, faithfully administering the Word of God through proclamation and action.

Hundreds of Union University students studying to become businessmen, businesswomen, and teachers daily pass by a plaque that hangs on the wall of the Blasingame Academic Complex. The sign reminds our students what true leadership means. It reads, "Remember that the world's greatest leader washed the feet of His associates." It was Jesus who showed the full extent of his love and modeled service when he took up the towel and washed his disciples' feet. (John 13:1-17)

3. The Pastor is a Steward

While Peter does not use the word *steward*, he does imply that pastors are stewards, for they are shepherds not of their own flock, but "...of God's flock that is under your care" (verse 2). A steward is one who manages that which has been entrusted to him. That which he cares for does not belong to him. Rather he provides oversight for another. Peter communicates this when he describes the flock as "...those entrusted to you" (verse 3). The pastor is most effective when he sees the congregation not as *his church* or the staff as *his staff*. He is most effective when he realizes he is not the dictator or executive of the church; rather he is the undershepherd who has been given the stewardship of feeding and leading the flock. One day each pastor will answer to God concerning his stewardship of the congregation God has placed under his care.

Depending on who the owner is, a person usually takes better or lesser care of that for which he is responsible. When the pastor understands his stewardship as God-given, the tremendous privilege and responsibility of such a work is staggering. Human

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authority and accountability structures exist everywhere. However, the pastor's work is more significant because the people whom he serves are not just his people. Ultimately, they are God's people.

4. The Pastor is a Standard

Preaching and teaching are essential components of the biblical pastor's role, but these responsibilities are not to be undertaken with an approach that is divorced from a lifestyle of Christian commitment. Paul does not say the pastor is simply to be a leader or one who feeds the sheep, but he is also to be "...an example to the flock" (verse 3). He is to live a life before the congregation that is worthy of imitation.

Certainly, no one can expect the pastor to be perfect in every thought, word, or action, but a church should be able to expect the one who provides primary biblical oversight and instruction to be striving toward a life which models the Christian faith. The apostle Paul was not perfect, but he did seek to live in such a way that

he could call others to model his own lifestyle, thereby calling them to be imitators of Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). In I Timothy 4:12, Paul reminded young Timothy of the importance of this lifestyle when he said, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity."

No one can deny that today's culture makes the pastor's role more difficult than ever. A postmodern society means that the words of the preacher and the work of the church are often less heard, less valued, and even less influential than in the past. However, the motivation of our work lies not with the people of our congregations, but with the God of our calling. For it is He who will reward our work with the "...crown of glory that will never fade away" (verse 4). As we pastor God's people, may we remain faithful in our calling to be biblical shepherds, biblical servants, biblical stewards, and biblical standards. 

WORSHIPPING . . . continued from page 2

These should not be interpreted as a set of rules for pastors; rather it is a description of your life and ministry when the Holy Spirit has His way with you.

This passage has detailed elements of both worthy and unworthy responses to God's love initiative. From them, a few principles can be gleaned. First, it is important to note that God spoke through Malachi to the Levites. He held them responsible for the condition of their worship. The fact that God held them accountable indicates that He looked to them for worship leadership. Therefore, it is clear from our current context, that God expects the pastor to lead worship which is God-centered and biblical.

Secondly, notice that the pastor's private devotion influences his public role as worship leader (2:5-7). The first six elements of a worthy response are private and find primary expression outside the church. Only the last element, preach the Word, is inherently public and finds its primary expression in corporate worship. This observation should serve as a reminder to us all that authentic leadership in corporate worship should grow out of a personal and passionate devotion to God. God is concerned first and foremost with WHO

you are before He is concerned with HOW you lead. It is being before doing.


Third, the pastor must ensure that only the best is offered to God in worship. If it is not your best, it is not worthy. Too often our corporate encounters with God are thrown together with little thought and preparation. All of the elements of the service may be covered, but not be characterized with excellence. The Levites were offering sick cows to God Almighty. Their careless and thoughtless approach to worship found expression in the attitudes of their people (2:8). God deserves our best. He will only receive our best.

Fourth, the pastor, in his role as messenger, should bring a message from God. Notice a sad comparison made by Malachi. In 2:7, the Levites were referred to as a "messenger of the Lord Almighty." This is clear. As messenger, the responsibility is to deliver a message from the Sender. Unfortunately, the Levites did not take heed to their calling. Malachi 2:17 reads, "you have wearied the Lord with your thoughts." When asked to speak words given by God, they chose to speak their own. I pray we never "weary the Lord" in this way. The One sending is greater than the one

WORSHIPPING . . . continued from page 6

being sent. The Words of the Sender contain the greatest message in the world. As we plan and lead worship, let's make certain our worship provides an opportunity for God's people to hear a Word from Him.

Planning and leading worship is a high privilege and a heavy responsibility. As pastor, you cannot abdicate

your role as worship leader. Knowing that God will deal directly with you about the authenticity of your corporate worship should motivate you to provide leadership that results in biblical worship characterized by Christ-centered excellence. 


REVIEWING . . . continued from page 3

biblical fluency alone is convicting!) and devoted, wise pastors. These books are not then light reading, but they will repay the required effort. Indeed, Richard Halverson, former Chaplain to the U. S. Senate, has stated, "Reflecting on *The Reformed Pastor*, one has the sense of actually completing a seminary course on pastoral ministerial practice- in the most meticulous, specific, and explicit detail." Similar things could be said of the other books.

These books have been reprinted many times and can be easily ordered on the web or in a bookstore. Multnomah has published a helpful abridged and edited edition of *The Reformed Pastor*.


Lastly, I will mention one recent book which stands in the tradition of these older works. John Piper's recent *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals* (Broadman & Holman, 2002) is a collection of essays directed to fellow pastors. Again the subtitle is instructive: *A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*. This book is not intended as a survey of pastoral ministry but a collection of short passionate essays on key issues facing pastors (and others). The title essay alone is

worth the price of the book. I highly recommend this book.

I hope these books may be helpful to you as you engage yourself in the "noble task" (1 Tim 3:1) of the oversight of souls, for which we must give account to God (Heb 13:17). I close with an encouraging quote from a British pastor of a past generation: "Yours is a task the most significant and the most satisfying of any offered to man, the task of ministering to men, women, and children who are surrounded by a great mystery, who are restless until they rest in God, who are all in the grip of powers too great for them until they know the power of God. To them you are to hold forth the word of Life, to offer the light of faith, to tell the story of redeeming love, to welcome to the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. No profession has so wide, so deep, and so moving a range of interests and occupations. Neither you nor I are fit for so exalted a work, yet God has called us to it and we must give to it and to Him the best we have to give" (E. D. Jarvis, *If Any Man Minister*). 

ENGAGING . . . continued from page 4

display of the glory of God to the culture in which they live and witness. This being so, the pastor, by logical inference, carries the standard of witness to the culture. The pastor's preaching, therefore, must contain evidence of the *manifold* nature of the wisdom of the

divine administration of the universe. This determined sort of preaching results in biblical teaching that places the forces of Satan on notice that God is in control and His kingdom is being advanced through the work of the body of Christ. 



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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Greetings from Union University! I trust all is well with you and your ministry. It is such a blessing that you and I enjoy to be called by God to serve His Church. It is even a greater blessing to know that He equips and empowers us to lead others by following Him. He assumes full responsibility for the life totally yielded to Him. The challenge for us is to remain faithful and obedient through His strength and not our own.

In today's context, pastors probably experience as much or more job-related stress than anyone. I am convinced this is not God's desire. Unfortunately, we often find ourselves trying to manage too many expectations. Our congregations have very clear, and sometimes unwritten, expectations of their pastor. Pastors typically place more stress on themselves by personal expectations. Our personal expectations are too many times based upon the condition and growth of the church rather than on our own faithful service under the Lordship of Christ. The expectations of the church and the

expectations of the pastor do not always have many similarities. This can produce sleepless nights and frustrations. This issue of the *Bulletin* is dedicated to the office of pastor. When expectations reach a point beyond our ability to manage, it is helpful to be reminded of some biblical insights into God's expectations of our ministry. I hope this issue is an encouragement by helping identify areas of ministry that unnecessarily stress us out because we are aspiring to do things that may be outside of God's plan. Your personal plans for ministry and the plans of your congregation are important. However, they only hold Kingdom significance when they are aligned with God's design for purposeful ministry.

God is so gracious to allow you and me to serve as His instruments to build and equip His Church. I pray He uses this publication to be a blessing to your ministry.

For His Glory,

Charles A. Fowler