



Faith Pulpit

Understanding Pastoral Theology

Many years ago I read some words that came from Clarence E. Macartney which have been indelibly impressed on my mind. These words are, “The pastorate is the front-line trench of the ministry.” His little book entitled, *Preaching Without Notes*, is an inspiring and practical discussion of preaching. His love for pastoral preaching shows itself repeatedly throughout the book, and on page 175 he writes, “The minister’s occupation is appointed of God, not of man. The current tendency is to secularize the ministry, both its message and its office, as if the work of the minister were just the same as that of a teacher, a physician, a scientist, or an artist, only with a slightly different accent. This has done the church no good. It has not honored the Gospel, nor strengthened the church, nor brought men into the ministry. The minister’s occupation is a divine occupation.”

After several years of pastoral ministry and several more years of teaching pastoral courses at Faith Baptist Bible College, I daily think about the pastorate. I have been ministering almost 25 years and I have found it to be most rewarding and fulfilling. I love the ministry and thank the Lord daily for the privilege to serve Him in it.

If we are to understand what is involved in preparing men adequately to serve our local churches as pastors, then several terms must be explained.

1. Ministry

Ministry is a broad and all-encompassing term, which in a general sense means service. Pastors are in ministry. Missionaries are in ministry. College presidents and mission agency presidents are in ministry. Evangelists are in ministry. In all avenues of ministry we deal with people, and we experience pressure. The ministry, as seen in the Scriptures, is people business. Let us remember that. In Matthew 9:35–39, Jesus saw the harvest in terms of people. In 1 Peter 5:2 Peter spoke of “tending

the flock of God.” The flock consists of people.

2. Pastoral Theology

Pastoral Theology is an expression that also needs to be explained. A pastor is often likened to an eastern shepherd tending sheep. He is given a responsibility. Sheep need direction, protection and care. Pastoral theology is more of an art than a science. A science could be any department of systematized knowledge. An art refers more to the performance or to the external use of principles for some desired purpose.

Pastoral Theology includes all practical efforts of benefiting people. It refers more to the personal relations of pastor and people. It could be termed a function-centered branch of theology more than a logic-centered one.

A pastor today is a people server, a problem-solver, and a purpose setter. In pastoral ministry, we must never see people as our enemy. Our very mission is to serve people. Preaching, praying, caring, directing, organizing, counseling, evangelizing all have to do with people.

Can you imagine a machinist who hates machines? Can you imagine a builder who hates tools? Can you imagine a farmer who hates to be outdoors? A pastor, then, must never view people as his enemies. If he does see people in this light, he will not be effective in pastoral ministry. Pastoral ministry is people business.

In pastoral ministry men must be able to solve problems. This is done by going to the Scriptures to deal with personal problems, marital problems or church problems. We must find in the Scriptures God’s answers to man’s questions and problems.

In pastoral ministry men must be disciplined and able to plan ahead. Pastors must understand the purpose and mission of the local church and be able to set in motion various energies and efforts that will fulfill that mission.

Pastoral Care is also part of Pastoral Theology. This is the conscious cultivation of the pastor-people relationship.

3. Preaching

The March 1986 issue of Faith Pulpit carried an excellent article entitled, “We Believe in Preaching,” written by Dr. George Houghton. Regarding the importance of preaching, he said, “It is that area of ministry where the preacher has his most regular and systematic contact with his people, and it may be the initial or only contact the preacher has with certain members of the congregation. This contact may be the basis on which people in the congregation decide whether or not to ask the pastor for further

help.”

This is an article that carefully delineates our emphasis on preaching. I want to build on that article now and relate preaching to the total work of pastoral ministry.

It is my conviction that the truth we preach must be aligned with the are we demonstrate. Pastor care is personal involvement with people. It becomes a reality through positive, interpersonal relationships, through understanding and mutual love and trust. To accomplish this, a pastor must be visible because a pastor cannot function effectively in isolation.

Therefore, we are not merely custodians and proclaimers of a message, even though that proclamation is so very important. To preach well but not really care about people simply shows one’s ability to earn a living. People will listen to a preacher who loves them. People will love a preacher who feeds them.

Fourteen years ago when a seminary committee was first formed here on our campus, it was with a view to build a graduate, theological seminary in the Midwest that would prepare people-conscious men for ministry in our local churches. Faith Baptist Bible College & Seminary is committed to the task of preparing pastors who understand their responsibilities.

Dr. Robert Domokos

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Dr. Robert Domokos (D.Min.) is a seasoned pastor, educator, and leader with a heart for ministry and the local church. Referred to as "Dr. Bob" by students and peers, Domokos has served in various pastoral roles and is known for his teaching, mentoring, and discipleship efforts within the church.

Throughout his ministry, Dr. Bob has been passionate about equipping believers for service and fostering a deep, personal relationship with Christ. With a wealth of practical experience and theological education, Dr. Domokos continues to make a lasting impact in the lives of individuals and congregations alike.