

# Introduction

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PASTORAL CARE is that branch of Christian theology that deals with care of persons by pastors. It is pastoral because it pertains to the offices, tasks, and duties of the pastor. It is care because it has charge of, and is deliberately attentive to the spiritual growth and destiny of persons. Pastoral care is analogous to a physician's care of the body. Since that particular sphere over which one exercises care is the psyche (soul, anima, the animating, enlivening, energizing, motivating spring of human existence without which a body is a corpse), pastoral care is also appropriately called the care of souls.

Classical pastoral care is pastoral care as understood, practiced and set forth by key writers of the Christian tradition. That is classical which is versed in the classics. Classics are the works of highest rank and quality in a field of study, whose worth has been recognized over a long period of time.

The Classical Pastoral Care series presents especially those rare texts that have a gem-like quality, that one often hopes to find easily but for which much reading is often necessary. The search has often required extensive digging in a given period or series before coming across just that text that best embodies the pastoral tradition, that brightly illuminates its subject, or profoundly grasps the point, or states it more subtly than before. This has been the joy and vexation of this editorial effort, similar to panning for gold in a deserted stream, only rarely coming across the bright nugget.

In presenting these kernels, what one winnows out is precisely the less pertinent material, while saving the golden grain. That is precisely the nature of an anthology, structurally limited as a series of texts to which there may be added comment or exposition. A different way of doing this would have been to select a dozen key texts, write a sturdy introduction for each, provide intensive biographical and historical background on the author, and present a new translation of the text in a scholarly, critical edition with a fully annotated set of interpretive notes and extensive commentary on the allusions of the texts. That would have been less useful to pastors, yet more desirable from the view-point of historical critical analysis. While we hope that approach will be taken in due time by others, we have tried to respond to a more urgently felt need in the practice of ministry: accessible texts that convey the heart of the classical pastoral tradition.

The advantages of ordering this material in a logical sequence of topics rather than chronologically may be so self-evident as not to require detailed apology. The central advantage is that it makes it possible to bring together the views of many different pastoral writers on the same topic, to compare and contrast their views, to learn pastoral care through its classic models, and to provide preliminary indications of how these ideas have developed through centuries of pastoral experience. The reader will

find in the juxtaposition of various texts much food for thought on how they illuminate and penetrate each other. This organization of texts invites the reader to bring a creative associative memory to bear on how texts relate to each other and to the larger spectrum of Christian wisdom.

There is more here than a collection of quotable sentences or dusty maxims. There are stories of human crises, vignettes of significant encounters, case studies of pastoral dilemmas, recollections of exemplary persons who engaged in soul care with extraordinary effectiveness, as well as selections from pastoral letters, teaching materials, prayers, homilies, exegetical studies, and poetry.

The texts of the pastoral tradition are composed of sentences intended to be read by others as meaningful, and as containers of meaning not strictly or absolutely tied to a particular historical context. Much of the spirit of Augustine, Raymond Lull, or Teresa of Avila can come directly through their own powerful sentences without the need of commentator or historical interpreter. The editor's task has been largely that of trying to stay out of the way so as to invite the texts to speak for themselves. It is not our intent to load the demands of historicist perfectionism on the backs of pastoral readers. We have preferred texts that are to a larger degree understandable apart from details of their immediate environment, and which are written with the intent of being read and applied in social, cultural, historical settings other than their own.

Some Protestants have the deeply reinforced habit of jumping directly from the first century to the twentieth, overleaping, as with seven league boots, all nineteen centuries of pastoral wisdom in between. Others are more likely to leap from the early fourth century to the sixteenth or nineteenth century over more than a thousand years of "dark ages," more dark in our own memories than anywhere else. This study wishes to reach out to evangelical Protestants to show how much biblically grounded pastoral wisdom is found in the soul care of those ages, and to appeal to Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions to reclaim their historic pastoral traditions. Some may feel that they can proceed very well in ministry without classical models. It indeed is possible to do so, but the question remains whether ministry can better be done with them. It is often out of ignorance of ancient wisdoms that we say we do not need them. In any event, we do not know what we are missing if we have never had an opportunity to examine them.

Pastoral care has often been practiced in our time with narrow unhistorical, or even anti-historical assumptions and prejudices. The primary values of much modern pastoral care have come directly and unapologetically from psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers, Eric Berne, et al. These psychologists have at times tended to demean and undercut potential dialogue with classical sources, and foreclosed any recognition of any need for awareness of them. Strict Rogerians would tend to view these classical texts largely as "introjected values," Freudians as "super-ego intrusions," Berne as inordinate "over-parenting," and Skinner as heteronomous reinforcement. Although modern pastors do well to read these psychologists, their views are not normative for pastoral care. Even if one is unpersuaded that the classical tradition contains therapeutic wisdom, at least one has a right to examine it critically.

After five decades of numerous waves of various psychological hegemonies in pastoral care, it is time to give classical views a new hearing.

The reader is invited to enter into the language of these texts with an open spirit, willing to listen. The intent is not to provide a definitive set of normative texts for pastoral practice but, rather, to provide an exemplary group of texts that represent recurrent themes and useful modes of therapeutic wisdom in the classical pastoral tradition. The implication is not that this collection is a definitive compendium, or the only legitimate form of classical pastoral understanding. This study does not assume that all pastors ought to practice ministry directly or woodenly out of the classical tradition. It does assume that the classical tradition deserves a fair hearing.

Pastoral themes have been systematically neglected in the past century of historical theology. Readers who have deliberately sought to identify these texts in current editions are often baffled by the obstacles. This is most evident in the way pastoral themes have been ignored in indices. Go to the indices of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, for example, and you will find meager choices when you look under such fundamental topics as care of souls, call to ministry, shepherd, pastor, ordination, counsel, empathy, admonition, self-examination, deception, anxiety, habit, and care for the dying. Yet patristic writers were quite concerned with these very themes that often do not appear in the index. It appears that the ecclesiastical literature has been edited by those who largely have had a curious disinterest in pastoral care. The whole apparatus of commentary and scholarship has shown a bias in the direction of philosophical, exegetical, and doctrinal questions to the neglect of the practical care of souls to which much of this literature has been passionately devoted.

It is easier to acquire some knowledge of soul care and psychotherapeutic work after 1700. But textual resources on soul care prior to the eighteenth century are not readily available. Most standard histories of psychology begin with British empiricism; some begin with the naturalistic psychologists in Germany such as Wundt or Helmholtz; many begin with Freud, as if nothing much happened before, assuming that everything after Freud is normative for everything before. This is why the cut-off period for our collection is 1700. This enables us to include in our collection many important classical Protestant writers, like George Herbert, Richard Baxter, and Philipp Jacob Spener. Regrettably, it does not allow us to continue the story through important pastoral writers like Wesley, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Sailer and many others. Though worthy of being done at some future date, the greater need is to establish textually the fact that there is a pre-modern classical pastoral therapeutic tradition. We are not suggesting, however, by setting the cut-off date for this collection at 1700, that subsequent writings are less valuable, but only more accessible.

While these texts point toward a centrist, ecumenical pastoral tradition, they do not imply that every pastoral writer would agree on every point of that consensus or that it is an absolutely defined consensus. Rather we point to a long tradition of pastoral practice that has remarkable dimensions of variety as well as continuity, of both consensus and dissent. This collection gives evidence that there has been a community of persons

doing pastoral care who have been writing about it, sharing common ways of looking at the task, trying to understand it, and who constantly return to a series of questions that have recurrently emerged in the practice of pastoral care. These are the questions that are explored in these pages.