

philosophy with a return to Israelite wisdom only in the end, I understand that Qohelet's epistemology throughout the book is based on the wisdom tradition of Israel. This explains why Ecclesiastes is permeated with connections to the early chapters of Genesis. As such, Qohelet, as a godly sage, recognized that he lived in a world that had been supernaturally cursed by the Fall, but that God was still working to preserve his creation. By using polarized motifs, Qohelet designed his masterpiece to explore how to live wisely as God's people in a fallen world.

I found Bartholomew's *Ecclesiastes* to be a beneficial resource when I taught Hebrew Exegesis of Ecclesiastes and I can positively recommend it with only a few reservations.

Robert V. McCabe

The Shepherd Leader, by Timothy Z. Witmer. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2010. xi + 268 pp. \$17.99.

The Shepherd Leader is a welcome addition to the field of pastoral theology. Witmer is Professor of Pastoral Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary (PA). He also serves as the Preaching Minister at Crossroads Community Church (PCA) in Upper Darby, PA. He brings a teacher's organization and a pastor's heart to the subject of the pastor being a shepherd-leader in the local church.

This work is divided into three main parts, each comprised of several chapters. The first part lays the biblical and historical foundation for the role of the shepherd, surveying the Old Testament and New Testament pictures of the shepherd with a brief historical survey and discussion of a shepherd's authority. The second part outlines the duties of the shepherd: to know, feed, lead, and protect the sheep. And the final part proposes a ministry model and ideas for implementing an effective shepherding ministry.

The book has several weaknesses. The author tends to overemphasize "shepherding" to the exclusion of other images of pastoral ministry in the New Testament such as elder, overseer, and pastor-teacher. He brings in OT pictures of the Shepherds of Israel and applies them directly to the obligation to shepherd the NT church. Though there is a hermeneutical issue here, I still find the discussion very helpful overall, as his discussion and description of the "shepherd" theme is tied in to the coming Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and pastors today as undershepherds of Christ serving the church (1 Pet 5:1-4; Eph 4:11; Acts 20:21).

Another critique is Witmer's assumptive arguments about the plurality and parity of eldership. For instance, he quotes John Murray saying "Paul called to Miletus the elders of the church and charged them, as a plurality, to shepherd the flock of God" (p. 40). While not necessarily opposed to either plurality or parity, the Scriptures are general enough

to allow for more variety in leadership structure (hierarchy and singularity, for instance) than Witmer allows for. The argument he makes for elders that are not gifted to teach is particularly weak when he makes the contradictory statement “not all elders have the gift of teaching, though they should be apt to teach” (p. 43). He also puts an unnecessary wedge between the role of a teaching elder and a shepherding elder, asking, “How is the teaching elder supposed to have the time to give careful attention to the preaching and teaching ministry of the Word if he is charged with shepherding the *entire* flock as well?” (p. 43). A discussion of the role of deacons in aiding the elders would have been helpful here, though it is briefly included later in the book (pp. 208–12).

Even with the criticisms mentioned, I would highly recommend the model that Witmer lays out in the remainder of the book. He presents the obligation of a NT church pastor given in Acts 20:21 to “shepherd the church of God” and provides a clear outline and description of how to go about doing this on both a philosophical level (including both public and personal ministry) and on a practical level. His teaching ability is clearly seen, as he lays out his chapters with an accompanying chart that is filled in as each area is described. Many pastoral theology books focus on “feeding” and “leading” the flock. Witmer’s book meets a need in the field as it brings in the additional aspects of “knowing” and “protecting” the flock to fill out more exhaustively the elder’s biblical responsibility.

The third part, “Putting it All Together,” will aid pastors as Witmer moves from discussing responsibilities to giving practical ways to fulfill those responsibilities in a local church. Particularly helpful are the emphases on making our shepherding systematic and comprehensive in scope, for we are accountable for all of the sheep on our roles, and all aspects of those sheep’s lives. His rule of thumb—that the ideal for each elder is to shepherd ten to fifteen family units (p. 208)—seems somewhat arbitrary given the history of pastoral ministry. If the elders are given freedom to focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer, then this number should be able to increase significantly. His model will definitely help shepherds who feel the bulk of their personal ministry is in the context of “crisis” events. A more comprehensive ministry is at the same time good for all the flock and encouraging to the shepherd.

I would highly recommend this book, particularly if you find yourself either uncertain about how to fulfill your call as a shepherd in all its aspects or if you find yourself knowing your responsibility but frustrated in your ability to carry it out effectively in your local church.

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