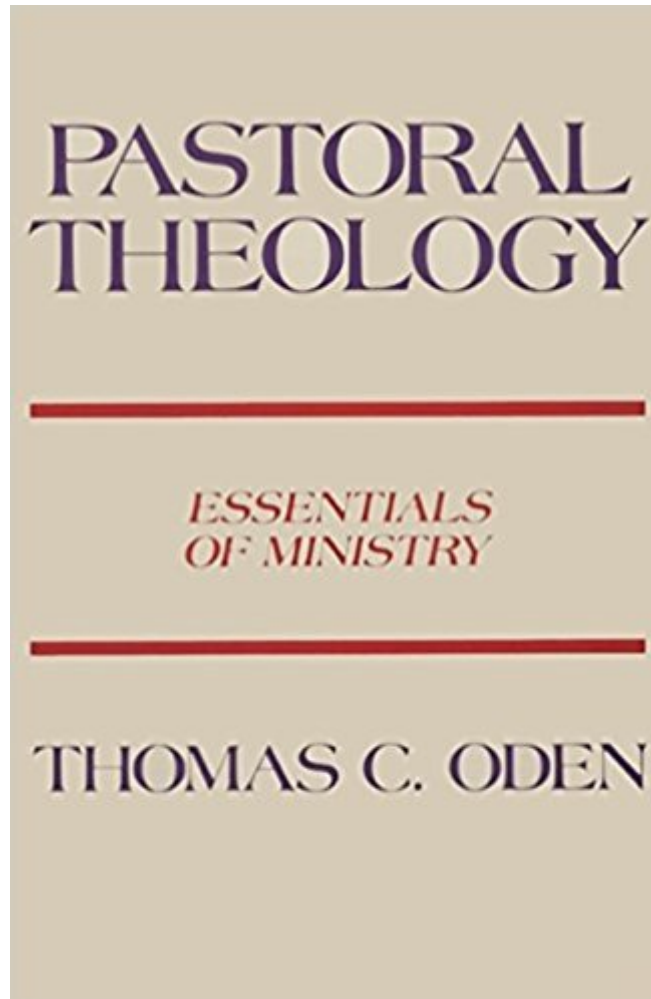


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Pastoral Theology: Essentials Of Ministry



Synopsis

This much-needed book fully integrates principles of pastoral care, leadership, and theology to restore to ministers a clearly defined pastoral identity. Moving from a critique of inadequate models for ministry -- from community organizer to T. V. evangelist -- Oden develops a more classical model, rich in its references to the past and compatible both with Christian faith and theology through the ages and with current needs. Reconciling classical tradition with practice, *Pastoral Theology* will be a standard resource and reference in the field. Oden distills the best ideas of the two millennia of ecumenical Christian thinking concerning what pastors are and do. *Pastoral Theology* provides the foundational knowledge of the pastoral office requisite to the practice of ministry. It will be of interest to persons preparing for ordination in its review of key issues; at the same time, *Pastoral Theology* will appeal to all those who have considered entering the ministry, those who want to know more about what clergy do and why, and those ministers who want to review their ongoing work in the light of a systematic reflection on the pastoral gifts and tasks.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although Oden has extensive background in the modern methods of ministry, he has largely eschewed them in favor of ancient beliefs and practices grounded in scripture and tradition. Almost every paragraph bears witness with extensive references to ancient sources. *Pastoral Theology* has five major sections: (1) Becoming a Minister, (2) The Pastoral Office, (3) What Clergy Do and Why, (4) Pastoral Counsel, and (5) Crisis Ministry. The introduction addresses the question, "Why

Pastoral Theology."In chapter one, Oden cites or implies five reasons for producing his book: (1) promote inclusion of women in ordained ministry, (2) reaffirm the roots of pastoral theology in tradition, (3) oppose the "lawlessness" of contemporary theology, (4) reinvigorate the study of pastoral theology, and (5) foster an ecumenical understanding of pastoral theology. Although he does an admirable job, the results are not entirely coherent. For example, his preoccupation with the ordination of women interchangeable with that of men is problematic if the goal is to strengthen the roots of pastoral theology in the NT and tradition. Oden nevertheless makes the attempt. In trying to reconcile those competing goals however, he responds more to modern concerns than ancient ones. In doing that, he necessarily distorts the meaning of some well-known passages. For example, Oden absolutizes Gal 3:28 to argue for radical equality even though the verse is clearly limited to the idea of inheritance. He understands submission in Eph 5:21-33 as mutual despite the presence of three hierarchical examples (husbands/wives, parents/children in 6:1-4, and masters/slave in 6:5-9).

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