

Paul W. Goodliff, *Shaped for Service: Ministerial Formation and Virtue Ethics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 313 pages. ISBN: 9781498291231.

Reviewed by Henk Bakker

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Paul Goodliff has written a notable book on spiritual formation of pastors, which topic is altogether imperative, urgent, and also quite complicated. Goodliff, himself a Baptist minister and Associate Research Fellow at Spurgeon's College, has been Head of Ministry and General Superintendent of the Baptist Union's Central Area (England), and knows about the ups and downs in ministry, in particular the proficiency regarding psycho-hygiene (emotional self-regulation) with which ministers have to be equipped.

Goodliff signals the necessity for pastors to generate more realistic expectations and gratification in their hard labours, as he noted earlier in his book on *Ministry, Sacrament and Representation: Ministry and Ordination in Contemporary Baptist Theology, and the Rise of Sacramentalism* (2010). Ministers perceive their mission as a vocation, as something holy, and precisely for this reason he opts for a sacramental approach to the practice of ordination. On that account *Shaped for Service* more or less explores the ministerial consequences of a high estimation of the ministerial office. What kind of spiritual training should pastors acquire and elaborate in subsequent years?

Here Goodliff takes sides with Alasdair MacIntyre — and for that matter also with Stanley Hauerwas, Tom Wright, Glen Stassen, David Gushee, and others who rekindle interest in Aristotelian virtue ethics for civic purposes — and convincingly proposes not to settle for general spiritual comprehension, but to specifically train sustainable formative habits. The book aims at coaching pastors to the 'habits of facing Christ in daily prayer, corporate worship and fellowship' (p. 69). Here pastors should 'exercise' themselves in order to develop mental and emotional susceptibility to wisdom (*phronesis*) and sound work ethic.

Hence the book opens with a sort of 'state of the art' (Part 1: Formation and Virtue Ethics), consequently discusses models of

ministerial formation (Part 2) and the qualities of a virtuous life (Part 3: intellectual, spiritual, and character formation), and closes with the formation of the practices of ministry (Part 4: the practitioner: liturgist, pastor, guide, missionary, administrator, leader). The main strength of this virtue-ethical perspective is the natural way it fits into human life and, above all, the individual life as enveloped in communal life. On top of that, it also fits the mindset of the apostle Paul and other New Testament authors. However, Goodliff's effort to balance 'virtue ethics (...) primarily derived from Aristotle' with the beginning and ending of salvation history (creation, eschaton) is rather weak, and unnecessary, I think (pp. 42–43, 56–69). But, by all means, I advise pastors to delve into this fine book on the art of ministry (Aristotelian *technè*).

David W. Gill (ed.), *Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 262 pages. ISBN: 978172526549313.

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This provocatively titled collection of essays addresses the reality that, during the twentieth century, theological and religious perspectives 'have been marginalised, if not utterly excluded' (p. 2) in the sphere of higher education. In this short volume the thesis is promoted that theology and religion ought to occupy a central and not peripheral place in the university and college. Stand-out chapters address the following:

A fascinating discussion on the nature of professorship, which espouses the concept of professorial 'enabling' through which students may arrive at open-minded and carefully reasoned positions of their own.

The presentation of an holistic vision, in keeping with Christian identity, for the notion of academic excellence, which sits in contrast to the view that associates such excellence with attendance at, or placement in, prestigious institutions.