LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES:
A BIBLICAL VIEW VERSES A PREVAILING VIEW

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By
Wilford A. Stone

Lynchburg, Virginia
April, 2006
ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES:
A BIBLICAL VIEW VERSES A PREVAILING VIEW

Wilford A. Stone
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006
Mentor: Dr. James Freerksen

This project will address the role of the pastor by looking at the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in the Southern Baptist Church. Biblical research will be conducted and will be presented in the Biblical view of the role of the pastor. Based on surveys sent to Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and laity in Southern Baptist Churches, perspectives on the prevailing view of the role of the pastor will be presented. Then, the two views will be compared.

Abstract length: 94 words
DEDICATION

To my wife Paulette who is a blessing and the love of my life, and to my sons Noah and Micah, two boys whom I pray God will shape into Godly men. You are all blessings from God and the joy of my life
CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.................................................................1
   Statement of the Problem
   Background Information
   Objective
   Theoretical Basis For The Project
   Statement Of Methodology
   Statement of Limitations

2. THE PROBLEM OF ROLE CONFUSION.................................19
   Confusion over the Role of the Pastor
   The Problem of Defining the Role of the Pastor
   The Complexity of the Role of the Pastor
   The Complexity of the Church
   The Complexity of the Changing Culture
   Dissatisfaction due to Confusion over the Pastor’s Role

3. THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR..............41
   Biblical Word Study of Presbyteros
   Biblical Word Study of Episkopos
   Biblical Word Study of Poimēn
   The Biblical View of the Primary Role of the Pastor

vii

   Overall Survey Response

   Profile of Pastors Surveyed

   Profile of Laity Surveyed

   Profile of Seminary Students Surveyed

   Determining the Prevailing View of the Role of the Pastor

   Evaluation of the Prevailing Views of the Priorities of the Pastor

   Evaluation of the Prevailing View of the Role of the Pastor

   Evaluation of the Prevailing View of the Image of the Role of the Pastor

   Evaluation of Experiences Shaping the Understanding of the Role of the Pastor

   Conclusion


   The Biblical View

   The Prevailing View

   Comparison of the Views of the Role of the Pastor

6. CONCLUSION.........................................................................100

   Objective

   The Goals

   The Research Instrument

   The Selection of the Test Groups
The Value of the Research

The Impact of the Research on the Author

Appendix

A. SAMPLE LETTER.................................................................107
B. SAMPLE SURVEY: PASTORS...........................................108
C. SAMPLE SURVEY: CHURCH LAITY.................................111
D. SAMPLE SURVEY: SEMINARY STUDENTS.....................113
E. SAMPLE SURVEY: THE PASTOR’S PRIORITIES...............116

BIBLIOGRAPHY........................................................................120
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The office of pastor in the Church is a role that has been accepted for the past four hundred plus years. Even so, there has been controversy over what that role should be. And though this author cannot establish the first evidence of conflict involving the role of the pastor, the one thing that is sure is that throughout the years, there has been a conflict over the role of the pastor. This can be seen in a testimony written in the 1800’s by Charles Haddon Spurgeon as he describes what pastors should expect. Spurgeon writes:

In all generations useful preachers of the gospel have been objected to by a portion of the community. . . . He who hopes to preach so as to please everybody must be newly come to the ministry; and he who aims at such an object would do well speedily to leave its ranks. Men must and will cavil and object; it is their nature to do so. John {the Baptist} came neither eating or drinking; . . . nothing could be alleged against his habits . . . but his excellence was made his fault, and they said, “He has a devil.”

Jesus Christ came eating and drinking, living as a man among men; and . . . they libeled him as “a drunken man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.”

Neither the herald nor his Master suited the wayward taste of their contemporaries. Like children playing in the marketplace, {they} would not agree about what the game should be . . . They rejected the messengers because they loved not the God who sent them, and they only pretended to object to the men because they dared not avow their enmity to their Master. Hence the objections were often inconsistent and contradictory, and always frivolous and vexations.

Filled with the same spirit of contrariety, the men of this world still depreciate the ministers whom God sends them and profess that they would gladly listen if different preachers could be found. Nothing can please them, their cavils are dealt out with heedless universality. Cephas is too blunt, Apollos is too flowery, Paul is too argumentative, Timothy is too young, James is too severe, John is too gentle. Nevertheless, wisdom is justified of all her children . . . If his honesty may not be
suspected, nor his zeal questioned, not his power denied, sneer at him and call him eccentric, and it may be the arrow will wound.¹

And today, that conflict seems to be growing.

Due to the confusion over the role of the pastor, many pastors have left the ministry. Todd Rhoads writes the number one reason pastors are leaving the ministry is, “The discontinuity between what they imagined ministry to be and what it actually is is too great.”² Still, other pastors suffer spiritual attacks, joyless ministries, family problems, constant moves from church to church looking for the perfect setting, and eventually, burnout. Other pastors suffer physical violence, such as the case of a Wisconsin pastor who was shot and killed by a person who was dissatisfied with the pastor’s ministry.³ Marshall Shelly writes, “The problem of battered pastors, is not always caused by specific individuals as much as by the changing expectations of the pastor’s role – expectations that in the last fifteen years have become increasingly demanding and unforgiving.”⁴ Richard John Neuhaus has written about the growing tension in the church over the role of the pastor: “For many pastors, the art of preaching was being pushed aside and job descriptions became laden with other ministerial and management activities.”⁵


⁴Ibid.

The rational for this project stems from this author’s eight years in the pastoral ministry. During the author’s time as a pastor in two Southern Baptist Churches as well as dealing with pastor search committees, talking with individual pastors, spending time with seminary students, and listening to the desires of laity in Southern Baptist Churches, the author has learned that people have varying opinions and expectations of the role of the pastor.

This project will address the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The confusion over the role of the pastor has become a great concern of this author, because with confusion comes conflict. This confusion and conflict stems from opposing terms used to define the pastor’s role in the church. Robert Anderson writes:

Of course, expectations of the pastor’s ministry differ markedly depending upon the person with whom one talks. It seems that everyone is adamant in his observations as to what constitutes the proper duties of a pastor, even though few have training and experience in pastoring. And last but not least are the different expectations among the pastors themselves.6

This project will look at two views of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. These two positions are the “Prevailing View” and the “Biblical View.” For the purpose of this project these terms will be defined as follows:

- Prevailing View - The overall perspective from which Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist laity, and Southern Baptist seminary students interpret the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches.

- Biblical View - The role of the pastor as interpreted from the Bible. The way in which people interpret the Bible is varied. Therefore, this project will follow the view of the Bible as defined in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message:

---

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.\footnote{The Baptist Faith and Message (Nashville: LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2000), 7.}

**The Statement of the Problem**

The problem this project is focusing on is the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches based on the prevailing view of the role of the pastor verses the Biblical view of the role of the pastor. While Southern Baptist Churches have always held a high view of the autonomy of the local church and therefore have had much diversity when it comes to the role of the pastor in the church, there is a growing conflict between pastors and churches, as a whole, over the role of the pastor. The statistics are alarming. Over 100 Southern Baptist ministers are terminated each month. The numbers who leave under pressure swell that total exponentially.\footnote{Michael Foust, “Pastors’ Conference Taking ‘Bold Steps’ Offer Free Counseling Sessions” Baptist Press 14 May 2003: [article on line]; available from \url{http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=15906html}; Internet accessed 17 March 2005.} The author questions whether too many seminary students, pastors, and members of local congregations have an erroneous perception of the role of the pastor in the church.

This author grew up in a Southern Baptist Church and can remember as a little boy hearing conversations between adults talking about the performance of the pastor. As an adult, this author served as a deacon in a Southern Baptist Church and was a part of
conversations concerning the role and performance of the pastor. In both of these settings, this author can remember that most of the conversations were between persons who were dissatisfied with the pastor and his performance of his duties. Now, as a pastor reflecting on conversations from my past and dealing today with the laity of the church and in talking with other Southern Baptist pastors, it seems that there is much confusion and many opinions over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. In all of the instances where this author has personally been involved with pastors, they were being judged on the basis of someone's understanding of the role of the pastor from the prevailing view. For the pastor, the prevailing view is the toughest view from which to be judged. The prevailing view is a matter of opinion based on someone's likes and dislikes. There is no benchmark or guidelines for the pastor to operate from, because it is all based on opinions that are ever changing. There are many expectations of a pastor, and the problem, according William Hobgood, is that, "Pastors may or may not be aware of others' expectations." Hobgood adds that church members have expectations about a myriad of issues when it comes to the pastor ranging from whether the pastor visits enough to if the pastor is trying to manage matters in the church best left to the laity.

John Gilmore shares a poem concerning critics of the pastor.

If he is young, he lacks experience. If he is gray headed, he is too old. If he has four or more children, he is setting a bad example. If he is overly attentive to the poor, he is playing to the grandstands. If he mixes well with the wealthy, he is snubbing the middle class. If he suggests change in the church, he is a dictator. If he makes no suggestions, he is a figurehead. If he uses to many illustrations, his sermons lack depth. If he rarely illustrates, he is unclear. If he condemns wrong, he is cranky. If he doesn't criticize ideas, he is a compromiser. If he fails to please the majority, he is hurting the

---


10 Ibid., 27.
church. If he caters to the majority, he lacks convictions. If he preaches too many times on stewardship, he is obsessed with money. If he doesn’t mention tithing, he fails to support church funding. If he receives a large salary, he is a mercenary. If he is content with a meager salary, it shows he is not worth much. If he is reserved, he is cold. If he likes to laugh, he is not serious enough. If he likes chatter, he is gossipy. If he knows a lot about what’s going on, he is neglecting study. If he preaches all the time, he is afraid to vacate the pulpit. If he has too many guest speakers, he is shirking his duty. If his preaching is biblical, it is not relevant. If his sermons are relevant, they are not thought provoking. If his messages are thought provoking, they are over everyone’s head.11

Church laity has long searched for a pastor who can meet the needs of the members of their congregation. However, when the church does not understand the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and focuses on the prevailing view, the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches tends to cover a wide spectrum of duties, which can include all or a mixture of the following roles: The pastor is seen as being the one with the role of meeting the needs of the members through visitation, counseling, and crisis care. He should have the role of being the one who is a visionary as well as a business administrator, fundraiser, and manager. He should be involved in all church committee work. He should be one who has the spiritual disciplines needed to preach, teach, and evangelize. Finally, he should be the one with the role of directing programs within the church and ministering to the surrounding community as well as be actively involved in civic and denominational work.

Ambrose Moody Bailey wrote in 1939:

They expect me to have no faults whatsoever, and keep on searching for them. When they discover any--Oh, boy!

When I haven’t prepared my talk, and my mind is cloudy and my ideas chaotic, they say I’m too deep; when I labor with zeal, and have my thoughts properly presented, they say I’m superficial.

11Gilmore, Pastoral Politics, 171-172.
If I shake the hands of some dear old lady too long, I'm sentimental. If I don't shake hands at all, I'm devoid of human feeling, and I'm lacking sentiment.

They want me to be more of a layman and to represent them in civil and public activities, but they are forever praising another because he is so quiet and retiring and is such a holy man.

If I use forceful and catchy phrases in my talks, I'm trying to be sensational. If I don't catch their attention, their heads may nod, and they may fall asleep.

Some wonder what I do with all my time, others pity me because I have so much to do.\textsuperscript{12}

Derek Prime and Alistair Begg wrote in 2004:

In one week we may counsel a couple who are about to get married, and then spend hours trying to keep another couple together whose marriage is breaking up. We may visit a couple rejoicing in the gift of a child, and moments afterwards go to a family where tragic bereavement has taken place. That same day we may have to speak at a school assembly or Christian union, and then chair an elders' or deacons' meeting. As soon as we get home, we may find someone waiting for us in the depths of despair because of a failure or depression. The mail will have brought letters to reply to and urgent testimonials to be written.

Many other permutations could be suggested, and, in addition, there is our all important task of preparing for teaching and preaching and fulfilling these functions efficiently and profitably.\textsuperscript{13}

The pastor is not without blame in the confusion over his role in the church. With all the models for pastoral ministry available today, many of which are from the corporate world, many pastors have taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the church or have become professional ministers. John Piper writes, “We pastors are being killed by the professionalising of the pastoral ministry. The mentality of the


\textsuperscript{13}Derek Prime, Alistair Begg, \textit{On Being A Pastor; Understanding Our Calling and Work} (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 290.
professional is not the mentality of the prophet."¹⁴ Many pastors have been typecast for ministry by the prevailing view of the role of the pastor, and many pastors have accepted this role and have failed to look at the Biblical expectation of the role of the pastor in the local church.

To understand the role of the pastor in the local church, one must first understand how the Bible defines the pastor and his role. The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. However, in Ephesians 4:11 Paul recognizes people who have been given to the church for special leadership roles.¹⁵ In this listing of spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul lists one of those gifts as being that of the pastor:

Ephesians 4:11:
And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;¹⁶

The Greek word for pastor is poimēn. The literal translation of the word poimēn is “shepherd.” English translations of the Bible only translate poimēn as “pastor” once, and it is in this passage in Ephesians 4:11.

Ephesians 4:12 indicates the purpose of these gifts:

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

If one looks to the King James Version to define the role of the pastor and if the King James Version is correct in placing the comma in verse 12 after “saints,” then it

¹⁴John Piper, Brothers We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2002), 1.


¹⁶All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise stated.
would be possible to interpret the text to indicate that one of the jobs of the pastor is the work of ministry. However, many, including this author, see more modern versions of this text translated far more accurately by eliminating the comma, which makes the text read, “for perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry.” According to Russell Burrill, if this translation is to be believed, Ephesians 4:12 is not describing the pastor as the performer of ministry, but instead as the trainer of ministers.¹⁷

This view of Ephesians 4:12 has been debated throughout the years, and this debate over interpretation continues today. John R.W. Stott writes concerning Ephesians 4:12:

It will be noted that according to this translation, Christ had three distinct purposes in mind. I think Armitage Robinson was the first commentator to insist that this was a mistake. ‘The second of these clauses’, he wrote, ‘must be taken as dependent on the first, and not . . . as coordinate with it. In other words, the first comma (‘the fatal comma’) – which is ‘without linguistic authority but with undoubted ecclesiological bias’ – must be erased. If it is allowed to stand, we are faced with a ‘saddening result’, for ‘the verse then means that only the special ministers, not all the saints, are called to do “the work of ministry” and to cooperate in the “building of the body.”’ This interpretation ‘has an aristocratic, that is, a clerical and ecclesiastical flavour, it distinguishes the (mass of the) “saints” from the (superior class of the) officers of the church.

If the comma is erased, however, we are left with two purposes – one immediate and the other ultimate – for which Christ gave gifts to his church. His immediate purpose was ‘to equip the saints for the work of the ministry’ (RSV second edition 1971) or better ‘to equip God’s people for the work in his service’ (NEB), and his ultimate purpose ‘for building up the body of Christ’.¹⁸

In his study on Ephesians 4:12 James R. Janke writes:

The meaning of this phrase was obscured for many years by the misplaced comma of the KJV which reads here “He gave some . . . pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, etc. The comma between “saints and “for”


makes it seem as if the pastor’s call is to perfect (equip) the saints and to do the work of the ministry. This translation failed to take into account that the Greek prepositions in the three phrases of this verse are not the same in all three instances. The first is pros, the other two are eis. The KJV makes the three prepositions coordinate, when, in fact, they are subordinate. Prof. Meyer says, “the first expresses direction and aim: ‘toward’; the second and third, relation: ‘with respect to.’ In this manner each succeeding phrase modifies the foregoing.” The NIV translation: “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up,” correctly combines the first two phrases so that “works of service” refers to God’s people and not to the public ministers. Although one commentator exults that this change removes “the aristocratic-clerical and the triumphalistic-ecclesiastical exposition” of the text, it is not really a new insight. Luther’s translation is similar to the NIV, as was the Vulgate.  

Francis Foulkes comments on Ephesians 4:12.

Three phrases are now used in this verse to describe the purpose of the spiritual gifts just named. As different translations indicate, the three have been connected in various ways. The AV took them separately. The difference of the prepositions in the Greek is against this, and at least implies that the later two are dependent on the first. It is probably correct to understand the second to depend closely on the first, and the third on the two that precede: to [Gk. pros] equip the saints for [Gk. eis] the work of ministry, for [Gk. eis] building up the body of Christ.  

Harold W. Hoehner writes:

The main problem in this verse is to determine its structure in view of the three prepositions: pros, eis, and eis.  

Hoehner writes concerning one of four views of this text:

The first preposition pros gives the purpose to the main verb in verse 11, the second preposition eis depends on the first preposition, and the third preposition eis depends on the second preposition. It is suggested that the comma between the prepositional phrases be omitted. Further, it is recommended that one must not overdraw the distinction between the two different prepositions in this context. The same two are


used in Romans 3:25-26 and seem to be synonymous. In this case, however, it seems that the first preposition pros expresses the immediate purpose while the other two prepositions eis denote direction or goal. The progression indicates, therefore, that he gave gifted people for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints with the goal of preparing them for the work of the ministry, which in turn has the final goal of building up the body of Christ.  

There are two other words used in the Scriptures, elder and bishop or overseer that must be studied when defining the pastor and his role from a Biblical perspective. First, is the Greek word for elder, which is presbyteros. The literal meaning of this word refers to an older man or an elder. Presbyteros is mentioned for the first time in Acts 11:30, in relation to the collection at Antioch:

Acts 11:30: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

The second word is the Greek word for bishop or overseer, which is episkopos. This word is found in Acts 20:28:

Acts 20:28: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

This word refers to one who would supervise or direct workmen in the performance of their duties. This indicates an administrative function, and is where we get our English word bishop.  

From the author’s study of the words “pastor” poimēn, “elder” presbyteros, and “bishop” episkopos, the author sees these titles as referring to the same office and are combined to form the role of the pastor in the local church. Zimmerman writes,

22Ibid., 548-549.


24See Chapter 3, pages 41-60.
"According to Acts 20:17, 28, then, a pastor is a shepherd or protector of and provider for the church. He is an overseer or bishop who supervises the ministry of the members of the church. And he is an elder to be recognized for his wisdom and standing in the community."\textsuperscript{25}

It is through the author’s research, word studies, exegetical study of Ephesians 4:11-13 as well as the Pastoral Epistles and New Testament passages that the conclusion has been reached that the office of pastor is reserved for a man in the local church who is led by God to equip the saints for ministry, until the second coming of Christ.\textsuperscript{26} For this project, the term “pastor” will be based upon these findings and convictions.

**Background Information**

Baptists arrived in the southern United States near the end of the 17\textsuperscript{th} Century. The first Baptist church in the South was formed in Charleston, South Carolina, under the leadership of William Screven, a Baptist preacher and shipbuilder who arrived there from Maine in 1696. But, the zealous evangelism of the Separate Baptists was the chief instrument of spreading the Baptist denomination throughout the southern United States. The first associations formed in the South were the Charleston Association (org. 1751) and the Sandy Creek Association (org. 1758).

Southern Baptists are the largest Baptist and protestant group in the United States, claiming 16 million members in 42,000 churches in the United States. It has 1,200 local


\textsuperscript{26} See Chapter 3, pages 54-59.
associations, 41 state conventions and fellowships, and supports thousands of missionaries worldwide.²⁷

The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention reports:

Most Southern Baptist Churches are small and located in small towns and rural areas. Over a third are located in rural or open country. Slightly less than a third are located in small towns and villages of less than 10,000 population. The remaining third are located in and around cities of more than 10,000 population. Specifically, only 1 in 10 congregations is located around cities of 250,000 or more population.

Southern Baptist congregations are typically not large. The median number of participants associated in any way with the life of the congregation is 381. When participation is limited to those who regularly attend, the typical congregation has 90 participants.

Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations have the services of an ongoing pastor, either regular or interim. The typical pastor is 48 years old. The majority of Southern Baptist pastors have college degrees and seminary degrees. Only 1 in 10 Southern Baptist pastors has no formal ministerial education. The typical tenure for pastors is 4 years.²⁸

Southern Baptist Churches are autonomous local congregations of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Jesus Christ through a democratic process.²⁹

Each local church owns its own property, makes its own decisions, ordains pastors and deacons, and calls its own pastor.³⁰


²⁹The Baptist Faith and Message, 13.

Objective

This author desires to study the role of the pastor for his own professional growth in ministry skills and for Biblical clarification of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches in order to better prepare pastors, laity, and future pastors of Southern Baptist Churches. The findings of this project will be used to help pastors, seminary students, and church laity better understand the Biblical role of the pastor in the local church. The author’s prayer is that the result of the project would equip, enlighten, and encourage all pastors, laity, and seminary students of Southern Baptist Churches so that all would be able to serve and understand the role of the pastor that is given to him in the Word of God.

Theoretical Basis for the Project and Statement of Methodology

The role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches will be examined in detail. First, the problem of conflict in the understanding of the role of the pastor will be addressed. Secondly, the role of the pastor will be defined from a Biblical view. Thirdly, to ascertain a prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, a selected test group will be asked to give information in the form of surveys as to their understanding of the role of the pastor. The first part of this project will look at the problem many pastors and churches are facing when it comes to the confusion over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. Ben Patterson wrote, “The pastorate is
one of the most difficult vocations today." This author maintains that problems arise in
the church due to the misunderstanding of the role of the pastor. The laity, and
sometimes the pastor, sees pastors as business professionals. Piper writes, “The world
sets the agenda for the professional man; God sets the agenda for the spiritual man.”
God has created and called the pastor to serve a unique role in the church as Paul writes
in Ephesians 4:12:

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the
body of Christ:

But, pastors, laity, and seminary students of Southern Baptist Churches have created a job
description for the pastor based on felt needs or a desire to have a pastor who is as
brilliant and shrewd as a Fortune 500 CEO. Marva Dawn and Eugene Paterson write:
“Various forces both subtle and obvious can domesticate pastors, too, and pressure them
towards fulfilling false expectations for charisma and success, numbers and power.”

The second part of the project will look at the role of the pastor from a Biblical
perspective. If this project is to form a clear understanding of the role of the pastor in
Southern Baptist Churches, one cannot turn to public opinion but must look to the Word
of God. The purpose of this section is to define the role based upon scripture. An
exegesis and interpretation of Old and New Testament texts will be conducted. The
exegetical study of Biblical texts on the role of the pastor will be limited to those texts
with the greatest relevance to this study.

31 Kent Hughes, Ben Patterson, Paul Cedar, Mastering the Pastoral Role (Portland, OR:

32 Piper, Brothers We Are Not Professionals. 3.

33 Marva Dawn, Eugene Peterson, The Unnecessary Pastor; Rediscovering the Call (Grand Rapids:
The third section of this project will seek to understand the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. To ascertain the prevailing view, a select group of pastors, seminary students, and laity from Southern Baptist Churches were sent surveys. The survey instrument includes two sections: 1. Personal Information. 2. The Pastor's Priorities. The personal information section and the pastor's priorities section of the survey were taken from Byron Fenwick's work, "The Perception of the Role of the Pastor in the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces of Canada."34

The first section of the survey allows the individuals surveyed to tell about themselves. This includes questions that allow all participants to share their age, educational background, the number of years that they have been in the ministry in a Southern Baptist Church if that applies, and how many years they have been members of a Southern Baptist Church. The second section in the survey addresses the pastor's priorities as viewed by the participants. The individuals surveyed were given a list of activities that are often associated with the role of the pastor and asked for their opinion of how high or low of a priority should each of the tasks be for a pastor.

These surveys were sent to Southern Baptist pastors by mail. The seminary student surveys were passed out by the author at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and mailed to the other five respective Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries. The surveys for the laity of Southern Baptist Churches

were mailed to churches that are currently looking for a new pastor or have just recently hired a new pastor in the past twelve months.

The fourth part of this project defines the Biblical view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. This section also defines the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The results have assisted the author in drawing conclusions as to the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches from the perspective of the scriptures (Biblical view) as it compares to the role of pastor in Southern Baptist Churches from the perspective of the world (test group). It is the author’s hopes that this information might offer a greater understanding of the role of the pastor and prove helpful to pastors, seminary students, and the laity of Southern Baptist Churches as they seek to understand the true Biblical role of the Southern Baptist pastor.

**Statement of Limitations**

The author desires to study the role of the pastor by looking at the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. Therefore, the first limitation of this project is that it looks at the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches only. For this project, any findings describing the role of the pastor within the local church solely comes from Southern Baptist Churches that are members of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The second limitation involves the test group. This project is limited to selected test groups within the Southern Baptist Churches that belong to the Southern Baptist Convention. To ascertain the understanding of the role of the pastor in the church, surveys were sent to Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and to various sized Southern Baptist Churches that are currently seeking or have recently called
a pastor. For this project, all surveys apply to Southern Baptist pastors, students, and churches.

The third limitation of this project involves the number of surveys that were returned to the author to be evaluated. There were a total of six hundred surveys that were sent out consisting of two hundred to each test group. Of the two hundred surveys sent to Southern Baptist pastors, 144 (72%) were returned. Of the two hundred surveys sent to Southern Baptist seminary students, 122 (61%) were returned. Of the two hundred surveys sent to the laity of Southern Baptist Churches, 118 (59%) were returned.
CHAPTER 2
THE PROBLEM OF ROLE CONFUSION

A man who was serving in his first pastorate volunteered at a local grade school to
supervise children during their lunch period, so that their teachers could take a much
-deserved break. A curious third grader walked up to the pastor and asked, “Hey
mister, what do you do?” As a man new to his first pastorate, he proudly answered,
I’m the pastor of First Baptist Church.” “Oh,” said the boy, with a puzzled and
somewhat irritated look on his face, he repeated the question, “But, mister, what do
you do?”

The boy knew his father was a carpenter and built houses, his teacher graded
papers, and the man at the gas station sold gas. But the little boy wondered, “What do
pastors do?”

The little boy in this story stumbled upon a question that has for many years been
a source of confusion among pastors and congregations alike. This question has caused
many pastors great distress, joyless ministries, and even caused many to quit the ministry
all together. The question has also caused churches to be full of members who are like
the little boy, somewhat puzzled and irritated with their pastor’s performance. The
question that is causing confusion in the church today is, “What is the role of the pastor?”

---

ISSN: 15479129. [article online]; available from http://www.commongroundjournal.org; Internet; accessed
23 March 2005.
Confusion over the Role of the Pastor

The problem of role confusion over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches stems from the fact that there are differing opinions concerning the role of the pastor based on who is defining the role of the pastor. The prevailing view definition of the role of the pastor gives numerous descriptions of the pastor’s role in the local church, whereas the Biblical view gives yet another definition of the role of the pastor. This chapter will show the wide range of definitions and views of what the role of the pastor is in the church today. It will also show, with the plethora of understandings over the role of the pastor, that there has been much confusion with both pastors and church members alike.

There is no end to the work that a pastor can accomplish, but there is colossal uncertainty about what the role of the pastor should be. The confusion over the role of the pastor can create great difficulties. Pastors struggle to determine their role in the church. It is difficult today to find a job description that communicates all the congregation’s expectations of the man they call pastor. The role of the pastor is complex, and it has been said that the pastorate is one of today’s most difficult vocations.²

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. writes:

The Christian pastor holds the greatest office of human responsibility in all creation. He is called to preach the Word, to teach the truth to God’s people, to lead God’s people in worship, to tend the flock as a caring shepherd, and to mobilize the church for Christian witness and service. The pastor’s role also includes an entire complex of administrative and leadership tasks. Souls are entrusted to his care, the truth is

---

²Paul Cedar, Kent Hughes, Ben Patterson, Mastering the Pastoral Role (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1973), 14.
entrusted to his stewardship, and eternal realities hang in the balance. Who can fulfill this job description?³

Before a person enters into a new job or profession, it is fair to ask what is expected of him. "Law or medical students can answer the question easily, but a potential pastor finds it more difficult."⁴ For many pastors, their role in the local church is becoming more and more complex and more difficult to understand. "In the past two decades, no profession has seen greater diversification of expectations than the professional ministry."⁵ One pastor said, "The rules have changed and no one bothered to tell us about the changes."⁶

To add to the problem of role confusion, it seems that expectations of the pastor are constantly expanding. James Berkley writes:

The wish list of what people want in a pastor is expanding in North America to include an impressive list of standard options. Pastors need a warm, affirming style, managerial competence, counseling expertise, excellent public-relations skills, the ability to raise funds, personal charisma, and platform presence. Not all churches are looking for these extras, but enough are, to the extent that the profile of the modern pastor is changing.⁷


⁵Ibid., xi.


Richard John Neuhaus wrote:

The position of pastor generally included either formal or informal job roles of Chief of Staff, Pastor to the Pastors, Chief of the Search Committee, church visionary, business executive, fund raiser and governing board member. 8

Ernie Perkins writes about the pastor’s role:

He knows more of the personal problems of more people than does any gossip columnist, yet he tells no one but his Father.

He must generate group enthusiasm as does a cheerleader at a disappointingly slow ball game.

He feels the pressure to produce a winning team as does the ball coach.

He is given the responsibility of leading but always from the servant position.

He must give three or more speeches each week to the same general group. He must not be repetitious or boring. He must have fresh, up-to-date materials and data. He must do it without a speechwriter or research team.

He must be approachable at all times regardless of his own personal desire to be left alone.

He must teach from a book studied and read by his students, yet he must be fresh and informative.

He must continually sell himself, his company, his product, and most importantly, his Boss with the realization ever before him that to fail produces death. He must never get behind in paying his bills; he must dress well; he must drive a clean car; he must have tools to do his job; he must be a leader in his gifts to charitable causes; he must entertain and he must do it all on a salary which is, most of the time, inadequate.

He must be willing to listen to people by the hour, to not know how to enjoy an uninterrupted meal with his family, yet handle his own frustrations over the lack of time for his wife and children.

His work is so much a part of him that he cannot separate the two.

He is a walking, talking, loving man of God, man of men, man of a family, one who is called “Pastor.”

He is trained to preach, to pastor, to administrate, but somewhere someone failed to give him the magic word, which changes him into Captain Marvel. He is a man, a good man, but a man. Without the grace of God his load would be too great and he would break. Some do anyway.\(^9\)

However, the problem of role confusion and the pastor is not a new problem.

In 1934, Mark May wrote:

What is the function of the minister in the modern community? The answer is that it is undefined. There is no agreement among denominational authorities . . . and seminaries as to what it should be.\(^{10}\)

The work of the pastor has been described as “the perplexed profession.” In dealing with the topic of role confusion George Barna wrote: “I became keenly aware of the anguish, confusion and frustration that characterize much of the daily experience of pastors.”\(^{11}\)

Karl Menninger is the author of a book entitled, *Whatever Became of Sin?* In the preface, he told why he wrote the book. In 1967, Menninger gave the Stone Lecture Series at Princeton Theological Seminary. While conducting these lectures, he found intelligent, idealistic, sensitive young men who had serious questions about the ministry, especially preaching. They were not sure of their role.\(^{12}\)

Eugene Peterson writes:

The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper’s concerns--how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package their goods so that the customer will lay out more money.\(^{13}\)

---


\(^{12}\)Chevis F. Horne, “Pastor, Your Role Is Important” Baptist Program (January 1985), 9.

This author, while attending seminary, was involved in a classroom discussion one day about what to expect as a graduating seminary student taking on the role of pastor in a local church. The professor wanted to hear what some of the young men who were not already pastoring thought their role would be. I can remember very vividly some responses. One young man said, as a pastor he would, “spend his time in sermon preparation.” Another young man responded, that he “would be a great administrator.” Another man said, he would “spend the majority of his time as a counselor.” Still another said, he was “a people person and would spend his time visiting his members.” The professor listened very patiently, with a slight grin on his face at all the responses. The professor then looked to a row where this author and a few men sat that had been in pastoral ministry for a few years and said, “They have no idea, what they are getting into.”

A landmark survey conducted by the Alban Institute concluded, “A key finding in our interviews was that most of the major Christian and Jewish denominations are experiencing or will experience a shortage of clergy to meet current congregational demands.”14 The same Alban Institute survey cited that 20% of pastors were in the advanced stages of burnout because of the high demands of the office.15


15Ibid.
The Problem of Defining the Role of the Pastor

As a result of the problem in defining the role of the pastor, many churches are unhappy with their pastor’s performance because he is not living up to their expectations of what he is supposed to do. As a result, churches are terminating their pastors. On the other hand, many pastors are becoming frustrated in the attempts to meet the many changing expectations and demands of their congregations and are abandoning the ministry. The Fuller Institute also reported that 50% of pastors felt incapable of meeting the demands of the role of pastor, and 90% felt inadequately trained to fulfill the role of the pastor.16

Pastors suffer much confusion in trying to determine their role in the local church. However, congregations also have a problem in defining the role of a pastor for their churches. They wonder if a pastor should visit members, preach, counsel, be an evangelist, a Bible teacher, or be a strong leader with all the traits of a fortune 500 CEO, or worse, all of the above. Too often, the pastor is seen as a premarital or marital counselor, the sole visiting member to prospects, evangelist, preacher, administrator, emotional therapist, and ex officio committee member with an endless list of responsibilities, which he cannot get done.

A few years ago, the Educational Testing Service conducted a survey on ministerial identity. One thousand lay leaders in various denominations were asked to give adjectives and profile statements of what they considered to be an “outstanding minister.” The information was given to a group of psychological testers. The testers

were not told who was being described. When asked to identify the person being described, they said, “a junior vice-president of Sears-Roebuck.”

George Barna asked the question, “Are we setting pastors and churches up for failure?” Barna writes of his findings from a nationwide survey conducted among 1,005 adults, in which people identified those things in which they feel are very important for a leader (pastor) to do.

- 87% expect leaders to motivate people to get involved in meaningful causes and activities.
- 78% believe leaders should negotiate compromises and resolve conflicts when they arise.
- 77% look to leaders to determine and convey the course of action that people should take in order to produce desirable conditions and outcomes.
- 76% rely on leaders to identify and implement courses of action that are in the best interests of society, even if some of those choices are unpopular.
- 75% expect leaders to invest their time and energy in training more leaders who will bring the vision to reality.
- 63% want leaders to communicate vision so that they know where things are headed and what it will take to get there.
- 61% say leaders are responsible for the direction and production of employees associated with the leader’s organization or cause.
- 61% think leaders should analyze situations and create the strategies and plans that direct the resources of those who follow them.
- 56% hold leaders responsible for managing the day-to-day details of the operation.

---


19 Ibid., 2-3.
This survey clearly shows that most people in our churches have developed an unreasonable notion of the role of the leader (pastor). One can look at the wide range of tasks and abilities demanded by the expectations of church members reflected in this survey and realize, that most people hold additional expectations beyond those listed.

We expect the leader (pastor) not only to provide corporate vision, but also:

- direct activity
- encourage participants
- supply resources
- evaluate plans and progress
- motivate participants
- negotiate agreements
- strategize
- manage people
- reinforce commitments
- recruit necessary colleagues
- communicate conditions, plans, and assignments
- train new leaders
- resolve conflicts
- and so on

Who could possibly meet such a wide range of disparate expectations.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 3-4
Robert C. Anderson writes:

It is not that no one can say what a clergyman should do; almost anyone can and does. Contrast with the other professions—medical or law, for instance—where almost everyone is intimidated by solemn pronouncements of those in the field, and few would question their judgment. Not many people would pretend that they knew those professions better than the practitioner. Yet almost everyone claims that he knows the ministry better than the pastor. Certainly the seminary professor thinks he does: after all, he is the one preparing men for the ministry. . . . Most assuredly, members of the congregation do: they are the ones paying the pastor. 21

The Complexity of the Role of the Pastor

But, why is there so much confusion over the role of the pastor. As stated earlier, the role of the pastor is very complex. The confusion over the role of the pastor is caused in part by the complexity of the pastoral ministry. One reason for the problem of role confusion today is the surfeit of job titles for the pastor. These titles include pastor, minister, clergy, reverend, and preacher. Each one stresses one aspect of the work. But, the prevailing view of the role of the pastor with its wide array of expectations has caused many pastors to become confused. Busby writes:

In reality, we demand ministers to do it all: counsel, teach, evangelize, cast vision, lead in worship and administrate the daily affairs of the church. In the community, ministers still sometimes bless football games, houses, babies, fire trucks and the occasional water treatment plant. Within the church they serve as hospital chaplains, building committee chairpersons and ecclesiastical cheerleaders for those who have lost their direction. They do it all from A to Z, from “Administration to Zeal Builder.” Pastors resemble the chameleon that prided himself in the ability to change colors for any situation, but died trying to walk across a plaid shirt.” Few pastors have the innate ability to serve as “chameleon clergy,” able to change color and style with the ever-changing need of the moment. 22


The pastor is called by many names and viewed under widely varied analogies, and the list of titles reveals expectations that the members of the local church have toward their pastor:

- **Parson** - emphasizes the notion of the minister as embodying the person or soul of the community before God in prayer.

- **Elder** - points to the dimension of maturity and experience in the guidance of the church, often carrying the connotation of "teaching elder" or "ruling elder.

- **Preacher** - is a characteristically American usage that stresses the publicly declared Word and evangelical witness as a central function of the pastoral office.

- **Minister** - suggests that service is crucial to all other aspects of the work of the clergy.

- **Evangelist** - stresses the itinerant ministry of proclamation of the Word of God.

- **Clergy** - (root word: clerk) emphasizes the clerkly skills and learning that were and are still expected of ministers. A cleric, in medieval times, was one educated in church law and prepared to officiate in pastoral services. In medieval usage, to have "benefit of the clerical office" meant to have benefit of education.

- **Reverend** - (from reverendus, "worthy of being revered") is an epithet of respect applied to clergy since the fifteenth century, preferably used with the definite article-"the Reverend"-and often prefixed to the name in correspondence.

- **Chaplin** - (from chapel) is a minister who conducts services in a chapel of a public institution, and is often used to refer to military, hospital, or various institutional ministries.\(^{23}\)

All of the above titles for the pastor add to the confusion, because they express common expectations of the pastor.

\(^{23}\)Ibid.
The Complexity of the Church

There is also confusion over the role of the pastor because of the complexity of the local church. Prime and Begg write, “Changes in the life of the contemporary Church have produced a crisis of identity for many pastors and teachers.” The local Southern Baptist Church is complex because of the autonomy of each church and add to that, churches vary in size and are at different stages in the life of the church. In both of these cases, churches are looking for a pastor to fulfill a certain role. David Oden writes, “The primary work of a pastor is affected by the number of people who are active in the congregation.” Arlin Rothauge has developed the following typology based on average worship attendance. Rothauge’s typology is the most commonly used base line to describe church size:

- Average worship attendance of less than 50; Family Church.
- Average worship attendance of 50-150; Pastoral Church.
- Average worship attendance of 150-350; Program Church.
- Average worship attendance of 350; Corporate Church.

Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute applied Rothauge’s typology to differences in pastoral leadership:

- Family Church-The Pastor is a chaplain to provide pastoral care, worship leadership and moral example. The pastor is not “in charge” of the church. The leadership responsibility falls to the mother and/or the father of the church, who is a long time member that is generally trusted by the congregation.

24 Prime & Begg, On Being A Pastor; Understanding the Calling and the Work. 13.
26 Ibid.
Pastoral Church-The pastor functions as the central figure in the congregation. Most of the activity of the church centers on the pastor. The pastor leads all the small and large group teaching and worship times in which the whole congregation is invited. Spiritual care is often provided one-on-one by the pastor to members and people in the community.

Program Church-The pastor provides leadership to the church through preaching and teaching to large groups and through nurturing and encouraging the paid and volunteer leaders of small groups. The pastor provides crisis care to members of the congregation. This size church may have a small staff, but the leadership team is both staff and lay.

Corporate Church-The pastor is the leader of a staff of ministers. The pastor is the chief preacher and teacher. Times of public presentation in the church and community are very significant and must be accomplished with excellence. The pastor guides the staff to accomplish the mission and goals of the church. In many ways the pastor leads the leaders and is often held accountable for the performance of others. The caring and nurturing relationship often identified in the other types of churches as between persons and the pastor are now developed with any one of several members of the staff. Many members of the church feel a much closer relationship to one or more of the staff than to the pastor.27

Regardless of size, all churches are at different stages in the life of their church. Some churches are looking to grow and reach a community with the gospel. They are looking for a pastor who is an evangelist who can draw people and increase attendance. Churches that are looking to the future are looking for a pastor who is a visionary who can lead and empower the people to move forward and give the church a new energy and excitement, while churches with older congregations are looking for a nurturing pastor, who is inwardly focused, and who is a good teacher and administrator. But in every case, all potential success of the church is placed on the shoulders of the pastor. Whether it is a small or large church, to some extent, all pastors are forced to perform many tasks, and this causes conflict as the pastor struggles to understand his role in the church.

27 Ibid., 24.
The Complexity of the Changing Culture

There is another factor attributing to the problem of role confusion, and that is the complexity of a changing culture. A complex culture affects both the pastor and the congregation alike. Those who have been called to be a pastor today have the extremely difficult task of reaching the world for Christ while at the same time, fulfilling an extensive list of duties and job descriptions and at the same time, everything he does needs to be culturally relevant. Frank Minirth writes:

To fill the job description of today's pastor sounds like a job for Superman. A pastor is expected to make house calls as willingly as yesterday's country doctor, to shake hands and smile like a politician on the campaign trail, to entertain like a stand-up comedian, to teach the scriptures like a theology professor, and to counsel like a psychologist with the wisdom of Solomon. He should run the church like a top-level business executive, handle finances like a career accountant, and deal with the public like an expert diplomat at the United Nations. No wonder so many pastors are confused about just what is expected of them and how they will ever manage to live up to all those expectations. 28

Dissatisfaction due to Confusion over the Pastor's Role

In an article entitled, "Your Pastor Is Under Attack," David Cannistraci wrote:

I wasn't feeling especially spiritual. I was just trying to decide which carpet color I liked best, but God had other plans for me that afternoon. Jerry, a stout 60-year old flooring salesman, had come into my office to show me some carpet for our church. We had never met before, so we chatted briefly about his business. After a quick orientation on material and pricing options, I dove in to the bulky sample books he had plunked down on my desk. I think I was considering the virtues of a soft geometric pattern when I looked up and was caught completely by surprise: Jerry's broad shoulders were shuddering. He was red in the face, trying hard to hold back his tears. "Are you okay?" I asked, feeling awkward. "I'm sorry... it's just that this is hard for me. I used to be a pastor like you. Coming back to a church setting like this for the first time is difficult." "What happened?" I inquired, trying to imagine what drove his pain. "The constant pressure in our church on top of the painful physical attacks my wife was having almost ate me up emotionally. I became a

nervous wreck. I got to the place that I knew if that phone rang just one more time, I'd lose it. So my wife and I packed up and walked away after thirty years of ministry. It tore us up. We still love God, but the constant battles...

In this age of high expectation congregations, the problem of role confusion of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches is creating many Jerry’s. The problem of role confusion is causing many pastors to have joyless ministries or to abandon their posts. While, many churches who are unhappy with the job performance of their pastor are terminating pastors.

SBC Life reported:

Pastors are the single most occupationally frustrated group in America, says Southern California psychologist Richard Blackmon as quoted in the Los Angeles Times story on the demands upon today’s spiritual leaders:

Roughly 30 to 40 percent of religious leaders eventually drop out of the ministry, according to Blackmon. About 75 percent go through a period of stress so great that they consider quitting. The incidents of mental breakdown are so high that insurance companies charge about 4 percent extra to cover church staff members when compared to employees in other businesses.  

In the same SBC Life article Pastor John Huffman of Ventura, California said:

He could empathize with Ron Dybvig, a 55-year-old pastor who ran away from his congregation and spent three nights wandering the snow-covered mountains in San Diego County. When found, Dybvig told authorities he was overwhelmed by life and just needed to get away.

The demand to be on-call for a congregation twenty-four hours a day – as a personal confidant, marriage counselor, crisis interventionist – puts church leaders in a constant whirlwind of stressful events, says the article. And when the phone rings, a pastor is expected to answer the call no matter how tired or strained he may feel.

---


The profession is often characterized as more stress-ridden than a doctor dealing with a terminal illness, since the doctor can walk away from the situation when he leaves the room. The pastor, however, unlike other professionals, normally has emotional links and personal ties to those being helped and suffers with them.\textsuperscript{31}

BaptistBoard.com posted a forum entitled, “Why Pastor’s Are Quitting The Ministry.” Pastors responded in the following ways:

The pastor is on call 24 hours a day and has to be available for weddings, funerals, hospital calls, shut-ins, visitation, all services. . . . This is the problem. 24 hours a day! Show me that in the Bible. Show me where it says “Thou shalt be available to the people 24 hours a day.” Chapter and verse please. That is a tradition of lazy and selfish laity who wouldn’t lift a finger to help another if their life depended on it. They expect the pastor to do it. I will be available 24/7 for the people when they are available 24/7 for me. People need to quit looking so much to the shepherd (little “s”) and more to The Shepherd! God help us.

I have seen some pastors who go into their roll as pastor, and have to manage the Church like it was a corporation. To me, that has to be a major toll in itself on any pastor.

I have seen my friend who is a pastor experience this, and everyone from all angles come and complain about everything to him. He tries to visit the sick, conduct funerals and church business meetings, be the go between, husband, father, overseer, vision setter, and counselor, and the list goes on, and sometimes you can just see the burn-out on his face. He is 49 years old. He is a pastor. But sometimes the way things go, you would think he was President of McDonald-Douglas/Kindergarten Teacher.

Have seen some men leave (many sell insurance) and it is almost always from two causes:
Abuse in the church - mistreated, underpaid problems, pulpit ability questioned.
Introspection - evaluation of ministry, recognition of failures, imperfections, sense of unworthiness and personally not living up to the standards\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}ibid.

An article in Insight Monday Morning contained an article that asked, “Why are pastors leaving the Ministry.” Scott Williams, a pastor who is no longer pastoring, wrote on his blog an essay on leaving the ministry:

Many people have asked me why I am stepping out of pastoring, at least for a while. There has been a great deal of conjecture on my behalf. Some think it has a subversive twist to it. Others imagine that I am absolutely distraught with life and cannot cope anymore. Neither extreme really addresses the central issues I have faced. Here are a few of the reasons why some of us tend to fade away:

We are tired of pretending that we cannot be hurt. People assume ministers are available for their criticism 24/7. People say things to clergy they would not say to their worst enemies. For some reason they feel at liberty to delve into every aspect of clergy life. They have an opinion about everything we do. They believe it is their god-given right to critique your personal life, your professional life, your emotional state, the way you dress, your use of colloquialisms, your kids, your personality, how much you spend on a car, your friendships, how you drive, the list goes on and on. Pastors live their life in the limelight. They, therefore, constantly disappoint people. It is hard to disappoint people all the time. As a pastor, and maybe it is just me, I seem to let people down all the time. Recently I was at a small group where several complained that I was not their close friend. Besides the obvious fact that I do not have enough hours in the day nor the emotional energy to be friends with everyone, let alone friendly, how can you assume I would want to be your close friend? Ministers spend their entire life pretending to like a portion of the population that they really cannot stand.

Pastors tend to build up that insecurity the longer they work. They feel the pressure to put numbers on the role. They also realize that people leave the church because of them. That is a heady responsibility to bear. They understand that people don’t like them, but it still hurts when they have people they have invested in leave the church because of them. This life can be an exercise in guilt and humility. Everything that happens which is good is “to God be the glory” . . . they know who is to blame if things go bad. Add to this that for some reason many churches rise and fall on the health and exuberance of their pastor. After a while pastors tend to jump from one quick fix solution to another in a desperate bid to patch holes that are systemic and often metaphysical. They attend conferences and clinics designed to point out their flaws and obvious solutions. They quickly conclude that they are the problem, the issue, and the solution. They develop a messiah complex. They develop an insecurity complex.

Ministers are normal people who struggle with laziness and workaholism at the same time. No one knows what they do during the week so they tend to strive too hard to be noticed or duck out when they can get away with it. They realize that some volunteers do more than they do and it drives them crazy. They vassalate between the drive to do
everything and the need to let others do the work of the church. They are control freaks, often out of necessity, sometimes out of ego need.

Oh ya, and we love to be compared. Compared to huge churches with massive budgets and incredible bands. Compared to television evangelists who spend more on dog food than we will see in a year. Compared to amazing speakers, incredible entrepreneurs, and holy monkish nerds who can pray more than we can. That kind of stuff makes us very content.

Ya this is a whine but it’s my blog and you don’t have to read it. Perhaps, though, there may be a grain of truth in what you have read. Take a look at your pastor if you have one. Listen to his or her brokenness strewn amongst the exterior confidence. Let them know you don’t need anything from them. Shut up about them when others encourage you to spill. Tell someone else to shut up occasionally. Don’t phone them on Mondays. Don’t critique the way they dress when they go to the bank on their day off. Don’t act amazed when they stumble. We all stumble. But for God’s sake, don’t feel sorry for them. They chose this life and it has incredible rewards. Just pay them more.

And oh ya, they won’t believe you when you praise them but they will obsess when you criticize them. Sounds like quite a great life huh? Makes you want to join right up I bet.

As for me, I’m just taking a break to get out of the fishbowl for a while. It’s a calling – a blessing and a curse. Of course now I have to get a real job where people have to get up every morning and put in 8 hours and pretend to care about stuff I never imagined caring about before.” 33

Another pastor added: “I’m tired of carrying the weight of the church on my shoulders. Confusion over my role in the church has caused me much hurt and pain. I’m done with it.” 34

Added to the fact that many pastors quit, many others are affected by forced termination because of unhappy congregations. One example of forced termination affected a man recognized as the premier Colonial American theologian and a vital


instrument used by God in the Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards. Edwards wrote nine
days after his dismissal:

It often happens, that those who seem most united, in a little time are most disunited,
and at the greatest distance. Thus ministers and people, between whom there has been
the greatest mutual regard and strictest union, may not only differ in their judgments,
and be alienated in affection, but one may rend from the other and all relation between
them is dissolved. 35

Richard Murphy writes:

Pastors today are faced with more stress, more problems and more confusion over their
role in the church than ever. More and more pastors are leaving the ministry. Because
they are human, and can’t be everything that everyone expects them to be.

The church is expecting pastors to be many things that they aren’t called to be. Instead
of allowing God to define their ministry, we’ve created our own definition. This
definition takes him from being our spiritual leader and protector, and made the pastor
into our babysitter and servant. 36

John Pierce writes:

Some of my brightest seminary classmates are now former pastors. Several others
secretly wish they were, but just haven’t found a good way out.

A crisis in pastoral leadership is coming into Baptist life if not here already. It is time
we started doing something about it.

Lilly Foundation, concerned about this crisis across denominational lines, is pouring
millions of dollars into nurturing young Christians who sense a ministerial call and to
encouraging experienced ministers to stay in congregational ministry.

Church members who assume the self-appointed role of “running off the preacher”
through constant criticism are nothing new. However, the factors pushing many good
ministers out of local churches today are greater than a few disgruntled members.

Expectations are often unreasonably high. Pastors are expected to supervise staff,
oversee the smooth operation of multiple programs, provide constant pastoral care and

35 John Gilmore, Pastoral Politics; Why Ministers Resign (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2002),
xv.

ISSN: 15479129. [article online]; available from http://www.commongroundjournal.org; Internet; accessed
18 June 2005.
then preach on Sunday with all the skill and flair of the prima donna who appeared on television earlier that morning.

Pastors are told to be bold and prophetic in their preaching. Yet the message is only tolerated by some as long as the pastor’s perspective aligns with theirs. The danger zone can be hard to determine.

Therefore, some pastors become “chaplains to the culture” — as one minister described it — avoiding controversial topics in order to keep members appeased. Then they realize the prophetic role that was vital to their calling has been diminished.

A fear of being turned on or turned out is not unfounded. Pastors know the sting of seeing someone they helped through a crisis later conspire to undermine their leadership over a minor disagreement.

Baptist politics also make pastoral leadership more difficult. Some ignore the vast changes in Baptist life. Others speak their convictions only to find resistance to any possibility other than what the church has done for the last half century.

Rather than lament over these serious and numerous challenges, it is important for churches — yes, us — to do something about improving the situation.

First, we must acknowledge the high expectations placed on ministers. Tell them we understand and appreciate the challenges they face. And publicly defend them when their work is misrepresented or undermined by the bitter few.

Second, we can urge our brightest young people to consider the call of God upon their lives. Whether they see the church as a place where authentic ministry occurs or as a restrictive, outdated institution will largely determine their response. And we determine the kind of church they experience.

Third, don’t forget to pastor the pastor. Everyone needs support, encouragement and permission to pass through the valleys of disappointment and uncertainty.

Many ministers emotionally pen their resignations every Monday. Let them know that it’s okay to do so. Then thank them for being at the hospital early Tuesday morning for your mother’s heart surgery; for including your co-worker on the Wednesday prayer list; for speaking such uplifting words at your neighbor’s funeral on Thursday; and for officiating your daughter’s wedding last weekend.

There are times in our lives when we all need a called, competent and committed minister. If we do our part, the minister will be there for us. Otherwise, we may lose
that person to secular vocations where he or she is treated with more respect and
dignity.\textsuperscript{37}

The bad news is that pastors and congregations are experiencing much confusion
over the role of the pastor in the church. This confusion is caused by different
understandings and definitions of the role of the pastor in the local church. The pastor is
expected to do so much, be so much, and give so much that many times there is nothing
left for him to do but to walk away in frustration.

Due to the varying definitions of the role of the pastor, Southern Baptist Churches
are seeing confused, burned out pastors leaving or contemplating leaving their positions
and churches that are dissatisfied with their pastors who are terminating their pastors. As
a result, Phillip B. Jones writes: “The average tenure reported for Southern Baptist
pastors is four years.”\textsuperscript{38} Add to that, every month, 100 Southern Baptist pastors are
terminated while many more quit and leave the ministry.\textsuperscript{39}

Even though there are complexities involving churches that influence their
understanding (prevailing view) of the role of the pastor in the church, the main problem
that causes role confusion is that pastors, laity, and seminary students alike are not
following the Biblical example of the role of the pastor as laid out in the Bible. Because
of the lack of Biblical understanding of the role of the pastor, pastors and laity alike
struggle to understand the true role of the pastor. Due to this misunderstanding, pastors

\textsuperscript{37}John Pierce, “On Quitting the Ministry” \textit{Baptist Today} 2003 [article online]; available from
http://www.baptiststoday.org/news2003/pierce_quitting0403.htm; Internet; accessed 25 May 2005

\textsuperscript{38}Phillip B. Jones, “Executive Summary of Southern Baptist Congregations Today” 2001 [research
report online]; available from http://www.namb.net/atf/c£. {CDA250E88856-4256-

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
continue to perform many tasks, and the laity of the church continues to add to the list of things they expect the pastor to do.

Eugene Peterson writes:

American pastors are abandoning their posts, left and right, and at an alarming rate. They are not leaving their churches and getting other jobs. Congregations still pay their salaries. Their names remain on church stationary, and they continue to appear in pulpits on Sundays. But they are abandoning their posts, their calling. They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn’t the remotest connection with what the church’s pastors have done for most of twenty centuries.¹⁰

¹⁰Peterson, Working the Angles. 1.
CHAPTER 3
THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE ROLE OF PASTOR

With all the confusion over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, this author seeks to define the role of the pastor from the Biblical view. Believing that the Bible is the benchmark in all matters of faith and practice, it is necessary to investigate the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches by looking at the Biblical origin of the pastor’s role in the New Testament Church. In order to define the role of the pastor from the Biblical view, one’s interpretation of the Bible must be defined. As stated previously, due to the variances in the ways in which people interpret the Bible, the author will define the “Bible” as defined in the The Baptist Faith and Message.¹

There are three words in the New Testament that must be investigated to understand the Biblical role of the pastor. The words are “elder” presbyteros, “bishop” episkopos, and “pastor” poimēn. A study of these three words will help in the understanding of how the Bible defines the role of the pastor.

Biblical Word Study of Presbyteros

First, is the Greek word for elder, which is presbyteros.

Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament presbuteros, 1. pert. to be relatively advanced in age, older, old – a. of an individual person older of two, b. a period of time (reference is to astrologers in more recent times). 2. an official (cp. Lat. Senator), elder, presbyter – a. among the Jews (the congregation of a synagogue in

¹See Chapter 1, pages 3-4.
Jerusalem used *presbyteroi* to denote its officers before 70 A.D. a. for members of local councils in individual cities (cp. Josh 20:4; Ruth 4:2) Lk 7:3. b. for members of a group in the Sanhedrin Ac 4:5; Mt 16:21; 26:3 v.l.; 27:41; Mk 8:31; 11:27; 14:43, 53; 15:1; Lk 9:22; 20:1. b. among the Christians (for their use of the word as a title one must bear in mind not only the Jewish custom, but also the connection w. associations of the ‘old ones’ and to designate civic as well as religious officials. The Engl. word ‘priest’ comes fr. *presbuteros* via Lat. presbyter; later Christian usage is largely, if not entirely, responsible for this development.\(^2\)

Strong’s #4245 *presbuteros* (pres-boo’-ter-os); comparative of *presbus* (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specifically, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter": KJV-- elder (-est), old.\(^3\)

Goodrick/Kohlenberger #4565 *prebyteros*, a. [66] [4561, 4562, 4563, 4564, 4566, 4567, 5236]. older; ancestral; (n.) in the Gospels and Acts "elder," usually as an official leader of the Jewish community, in the epistles, “older man” and “older woman,” who may or may not be official leaders of the church, depending on the context: - elders (56), elder (3), older (3), ancients (1), old (1), older man (1), those who are older (1).\(^4\)

Liddell and Scott, *presbuteros*, elder: superior by birth, and so generally, greater, higher, more important.\(^5\)

Mounce, *presbuteros*, elder, senior; older, more advanced in years, Luke 15:25; John 8:9; Acts 2:17; an elder in respect of age, person advanced in years, 1 Timothy 5:1, 2: pl. spc. ancients, ancestors, fathers, Matthew 15:2; Hebrews 11:2, as an appellation of dignity, an elder, local dignitary, Luke 7:3; an elder, member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Matthew 16:21; 21:23; 26:3;47, 57, 59; an elder or presbyter of the Christian church, Acts 11:30, 14:23, et al.freq.\(^6\)

The Greek word *presbyteros*, or “elder” was a term referring to the Jewish elders of the synagogue, usually associated with the scribes and Pharisees. According to M.H.


Shepherd, the presbyteries had a general administrative oversight of the Jewish communities and represented the Jews in relations with the Roman authorities. Their primary duty was judicial, interpreting the law and determining punishment for offenders.\(^7\)

In Acts 15:4, 6, 22-23; 16:4, apostoloi and presbyteros clearly function as a supreme court and normative teaching office for the whole Church. In the book of James, James mentions presbyteros in 5:14 that in case of sickness one is to summon “the elders of the church” that they may cure the sick with prayer and anointing “in the name of the Lord.” Gunther states, “These are office bearers of the congregation and not just charismatically endowed older men.”\(^8\)

According to Benjamin Merkle:

Presbyteros can refer to an old person (man or woman; e.g., John 8:9; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim 5:1-2) or it can be used in the comparative sense of one who is older than another (Luke 15:25). More commonly, presbyteros denotes officials in both Judaism (members of the Sanhedrin or synagogue) and the church. In a few places presbyteros has the meaning of ‘forefathers’ (Matt 15:2; Mark 7:3,5; Heb 11:2). Similar to the Old Testament usage, we find various designations associated with elders: elders of the people (Matt 21:23; 26:3, 47; 27:1; Luke 22:66), elders of the Jews (Luke 7:3; Acts 15:15), elders of Israel (Acts 4:8), and elders of the church (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim 5:17, 19), Crete (Titus 1:5, Asia Minor (1 Pet 5:1), and other Jewish Christian assemblies (James 5:14).\(^9\)

Günther Bornkamm writes concerning the word presbyteros:

The peculiar problem of the use of presbyteros in Judaism and Christianity arises out of the two-fold meaning of the word, which can be employed as a designation of age and also as a title of office. The two-fold meaning cannot always be distinguished with

---


\(^8\)Ibid., 664.

clarity, though age is plainly the only sense in Gn. 18:11 f.; 19:4, 31, 34; 24:1; 35:29. The word can still be used for this in Christian writings, Jn 8:9; Ac 2:17; 1 Tm. 5:1, 2; 1 Pt. 5:5. On the other hand, passages like Mt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3, 5 show that prebyteroi can be bearers of the normative doctrinal tradition, and 1 Pt. 5:5; 1 Cl., 1, 3 are evidence that the term can denote a place of dignity in the community. The titular significance is no less clear when presbyteroi are members of a local authority, eg., the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, other governing bodies, or the synagogues, or when they are the leaders of the Christian churches duly appointed as such and charged with specific functions.¹⁰

Kevin Schooley comments:

The word presbyteros appears sixty-seven times in the New Testament of which there are nineteen that refer to "elders" as an office in the early church. Most of these references simply assume the existence of elders and describe dealings with them as representatives of the church (Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18; 1 Tim 5:1, 17, 19; Lam 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1, 5). Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 are the only places in which the ordination of elders is mentioned. In 2 Jn. 1 and 3 Jn. 1, John identifies himself as "the elder"; Peter similarly identifies himself as an elder when writing to elders (1 Pet. 5:1). In the gospels, as well as in the early and late portions of Acts, presbyteros most often refers to Jewish leaders, usually in the expression, "the chief priests and elders." There are also adjectival references, e.g., to the prodigal son's "older" brother, and to the elder in general. Hebrews contains a reference to the "ancients" using this word, and Revelation has twelve references to the "twenty-four elders" seated around the throne of God in John's vision.¹¹

According to the book of Acts, there were elders in the church at Jerusalem.

Elders are mentioned for the first time in reference to a Christian group in Acts 11:30 where the word is used in relation to a collection taken in Antioch, which Paul and Barnabas brought to the presbyteroi in Jerusalem. They are mentioned in the account of the apostolic council and the foundation of the apostolic decree, Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22 ff.;


16:4. They appear again in the account of Paul coming to Jerusalem and in his discussion with James in 21:18.12

In Acts 14:23, the church ordained elders in every church. In Titus 1:5-6, we get the understanding that there were elders in each town. But, what did these elders do? According to Thomas Oden, “There is considerable evidence that they exercised general pastoral guidance of a congregation: preaching, teaching, breaking bread and witnessing to the resurrection (cf. Clement of Rome ANF, vol. 1, p.17; Polycarp, ANF, vol. 1, p.34; Ignatius, ANF, p.172).13

Günter writes on the use of prebyteros in the book of Acts:

Acts. The oldest passages which refer to presbyters as the leaders of Gentile Christian congregations are Acts 14:23; 20:17-38. These passages shed light on the significance and duties of presbyters in the post-apostolic churches. When Paul and Barnabas left the congregations, they selected elders everywhere in the churches and commended them to the Lord with prayer and fasting 14:23. Above all, the great address of Paul to the Ephesian elders (20:18-35, esp. vv.28 ff.) shows what significance attached to them. The Holy Spirit has appointed them to be overseers (bishops) and shepherds over the congregation and the apostle has made known to them the whole counsel of God. They have to administer the legacy of the apostle, to follow his example, and to protect the church against the danger of error which threatens from without (v.29) and from within (v.30). Here for the first time, then, they appear as guardians of the tradition of the apostles, who appointed them and entrusted the guidance of the community to them.14

Concerning the pastoral charge left with the elder in Acts, Paul writes:

“Guard yourselves and all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos). Be shepherds (pōimēn) of the Church of God.” (Acts 20:28 NIV)

---


Thomas Oden writes, “This Lukan recollection of Paul demonstrates the intricate integration of these several images of ministry: *presbyteros* is *poimen* is *episkopos*.”\(^{15}\)

In 1 Peter, elders are seen as an institution entrusted with the guidance of the church. In 1 Peter 5:2 just as in Acts 20:28, the office is summed up as that of a shepherd. Both of these passages suggest a close tie between eldership and pastoral care.

Gunther writes of *presbyteros* in the Pastorals:

In the four passages in which *presbyteros* occurs here the usage is not quite consistent. In 1 Tm. 5:1 (cf. also v.2) *presbyteros* is clearly a designation of age. Nevertheless, this should not be taken as a guide to the meaning in the other references. Elsewhere in the Past. *presbyteros* is plainly a tt. for the bearers of an office of leadership in the churches. The elders are a college 1 Tm.4:14, which took part in the ordination of Timothy by the laying on of hands. Titus was to appoint *presbyteroi* in the local congregations for the sake of order, Tt. 1:5.

A surprising point to the Pastorals is that the bishop plays an important part here as well as the presbyters and that his functions are the same. It is natural to suppose that the offices are one in the same in the Pastorals.\(^{16}\)

In 1 Timothy 5:17, the word *presbyteros* is clearly used not in its literal sense of “older man,” but in the technical sense of “elder.” “Elder” points to the dimension of maturity and experience in the guidance of the church, often carrying the connotation of ‘teaching elder’ or ‘ruling elder.’\(^{17}\)

By looking at the Bible, the term *presbyteros* or elder is not necessarily referring to an older man, but to his qualifications, that for his office, must reflect his maturity and understanding of God’s Word. So one can see, that the role of elder should be for a spiritually mature man known for his experience and wisdom. According to John Piper,

\(^{15}\)Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. 69.


\(^{17}\)Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. 49.
the New Testament elders are responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of a

church.  

Robert D. Dale writes:

Elders are to be shepherds and guardians of the flock. Their function covers a broad
range from leading/ruling to ministering to the sick. Leading/Ruling: Elders judged in
matters of faith and practice (Acts 15:1–6). Also “elders who rule well” were to be
recognized by the assembly (1 Tim. 5:17). The elders should guide the church through
controversy and normal growth problems by offering sound biblical judgment. The
congregation is to obey those who rule them, because the rulers must give account for
their souls (Heb. 13:17). Thus the elders are responsible for taking an active part in
judging matters that affect the lives of the flock. They must decide for the good of the
congregation in matters of doctrine, personal conflicts, and moral and ethical dilemmas,
as well as direct the overall plans and programs of the church. Caring. Paul told the
Ephesian elders to guard their own lives, that is, to protect their testimonies and moral
conduct, and to care for the flock among whom they were placed by the Holy Spirit
(Acts 20:28). The sick of a church were to call on the elders of that church for
ministry, both physical and spiritual (James 5:14). The purpose in summoning the
elders is to involve them as spiritual leaders in the physical needs of the flock.
They are to deal with any potential sin and pray with the sick. Peter exhorted the elders
to shepherd (feed, protect, and lead) the flock (1 Pet. 5:1–3), which also shows personal
involvement and concern. Teaching: Some elders had special responsibility for
preaching or teaching (1 Tim. 5:17). All elders are to be “able to teach”, which
probably refers to instructing individuals in doctrine, but 5:17 seems to imply a more
formal type of public exhortation not expected of all the elders. A strong statement
related to this function of the elders is found in Titus 1:9–11. Paul expected them to
“hold fast” the Word of truth, that is, defend the truth, not compromising the Scriptures.
This involves exhorting believers through sound doctrinal teaching or counseling, as
well as refuting error.

Biblical Word Study of Episkopos

The second Greek term this author is translating is episkopos, “bishop/overseer.”

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament 1. One who has the responsibility of
safeguarding or seeing to it that someth. Is done in the correct way, guardian. 2. The

---

18 John Piper, “Biblical Eldership” [article online]; available from desiringGod: 1999

19 Robert D. Dale, The Leading Edge: Leadership Strategies from the New Testament (Nashville:
term was taken over in Christian communities in ref. to one who served as an overseer or supervisor, with special interest in guarding the apostolic traditions. Ac 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Ti 3:2; Tit 1:7.20

Strong’s # 1985 episkopos (ep-is'-kop-os); from 1909 and 4649 (in the sense of 1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church or figuratively): KJV-- bishop, overseer.21

Goodrick and Kohlenberger # 2176, episkopos, n. overseer or bishop, a leader in the local church, an extension of one who guards, supervises, and helps – overseer (3), overseers (2).22

Liddell and Scott, episkopos, an overseer, watcher, guardian: -esp. a public officer sent by the Athenians as inspector or overseer of a subject state: - a bishop.23

Mounce, episkopos, pr. An inspector, overseer; a watcher, guardian, 1 Peter 2:25; in N.T. an ecclesiastical overseer, Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7.24

Bishops or overseers were probably certain elders chosen out of the body of local elders. With the early church, it was necessary to have someone to attend to outside work to win over, by persuasion and exposition of the Scriptures, those inclined to embrace Christianity. This necessitated visiting families in their own homes. Then, it became necessary to shepherd the sheep. Someone had to oversee or superintend the general work. The term episkopos was one with which the Hellenistic Jews and Gentiles were well acquainted; and it became thus a fitting term by which to designate the men called

---


21Strong’s Concordance, [CD-ROM].


23Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon. 260.

out of the body of elders to this special work of oversight. The qualification of the bishop is spelled out in (1 Timothy 3:1). However, the duties of the bishop are not clearly defined in the New Testament.

Benjamin Merkle writes:

_Episkopos_ occurs only five times in the New Testament. In Acts 20:28 Paul tells the Ephesian elders that the Holy Spirit has made them _episkopoi_ who are the shepherd of the church of God. The emphasis here is on the function and not the office. That is as elders their duty was to oversee and shepherd the flock. Yet, it is worth noting that the two terms (elder and overseer) are used somewhat interchangeably. In his opening greeting to the church at Philippi, Paul addresses all the saints, including the _episkopoi_ (Phil) 1:1. The use of the plural indicates that there was more than one episkopos at Philippi. It seems likely that this reference is more than functional designation but is titular. In both 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9 we read of the qualifications required for one to hold the office of _episkopos_. Finally 1 Peter 2:25 refers to Christ as (“the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls”).

It is apparent from 1 Clement 44.5 that the bishops’ ministry was primarily a liturgical one of presidency at the Eucharist, in which they were assisted by the deacons. It is reasonable to suppose, then, that the bishops were originally those leaders in the churches who were set apart as “overseers” of the Eucharist meal. But in the crisis of the post-apostolic age that brought about the concentration of authority in the hands of a single bishop, the bishop’s oversight of the Eucharist would place him in a favorable position for the assumption of such control.

In the Acts, the term bishop is found only twice, one in reference to Judas, “his bishopric (or overseership) let another take” (Acts 1:20). It is also found in Paul's

---


address to the elders of Ephesus, he warns them to feed the church over which they have been made overseers or bishops (Acts 20:28).\textsuperscript{28}

In writing to the Philippians, Paul speaks of “bishops” and “deacons” (Philippians 3:1). In the Gentile Christian churches, this title evidently had been adopted; and it is only in the Pastoral Epistles that we find the name “presbyters” applied. The name presbyter or “elder,” familiar to the Jews, signifies their age and place in the church; while the other term “bishop” refers rather to their office. But, both evidently have reference to the same persons.

Thomas Oden writes:

Since the effectiveness of the church’s mission hinges significantly on the Episcopal office, a great deal is expected of it, both in guaranteeing the authenticity of the contemporary witness to apostolic faith, and in overseeing the spiritual, moral, and temporal development of the churches (Justin Martyr, AFN, vol. 1 pp. 188 ff; Cyprian, AFN, vol. 5, pp. 281 ff.).\textsuperscript{29}

\textit{Episkopos} is the word that refers to one who would supervise or direct workmen in the performance of their duties. This indicates an administrative function, and is where we get our English word bishop.\textsuperscript{30} Easton’s Bible Dictionary states.\textsuperscript{31} In apostolic times, it is quite manifest that there was no difference as to order between bishops and elders or presbyters.

Acts 20:17-28:
And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.
And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{29}Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry. 72.


that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving 
the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which 
befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was 
profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from 
house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance 
toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound 
in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save 
that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide 
me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so 
that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the 
Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that 
ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face 
no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of 
all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take 
heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost 
hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with 
his own blood.

1 Peter 5:1-2:
The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the 
sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the 
flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but 
willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Philippians 1:1:
Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which 
are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

1 Timothy 3:1-7:
This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 
A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good 
behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy 
of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own 
house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how 
to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest 
being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he 
must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the 
snare of the devil.

The term bishop is never once used to denote a different office from that of elder or 
presbyter. These different names are simply titles of the same office: “bishop” 
designating the function, namely, that of oversight, and “presbyter” the dignity
appertaining to the office. Christ is figuratively called “the bishop [episcopos] of souls” (1 Peter 2:25).32

In the epistles, we find the church more clearly organized, and in these writings we find more definite allusions to bishops and their duties:

Philippians 1:1:
Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

1 Timothy 3:1-2:
This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Titus 1:7:
For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

1 Peter 2:25:
For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Paul tells Timothy, “If a man desire the office of a bishop (or overseer) he desireth a good work.” “A bishop (or overseer) must be blameless” (1 Timothy 3:1-2). He tells Titus that “he is to ordain elders in every city” and that a “bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God” (Titus 1:5, Titus 1:7).

On the other hand, there are numerous texts where elders and their duties are mentioned and where there is no reference whatsoever to bishopric or oversight. The epistles show that out of necessity, there had grown to be a more distinct organization of the ministry, and that following the custom of the synagogue, to some of the elders had been committed a bishopric or oversight. At the same time, the rank of a bishop, or

overseer, was not yet one of the highest. Paul does not enumerate it in the order of ministry, which he gives to the Ephesians—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. That Timothy had an oversight over the elders or presbyters is evident from the fact that Paul enjoins him to rebuke those that sin: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all” (1 Timothy 5:19-20). This, of course, refers to a formal trial by one in authority of persons inferior to him in rank.

**Biblical Word Study of Poimēn**

The third Greek term this author is translating is *poimēn*, "pastor."

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. One who herds sheep, *shepherd*, *sheep-herder*. In imagery or parable: Mt. 9:6; Mk. 6:34 (Num 27:17); Mt. 25:32. Of the shepherds at Jesus' birth Lk. 2:8, 15, 18, 20. 2. one who serves as guardian or leader, *shepherd*. B. of those who lead Christian communities/congregations/churches. γ. human leaders (on 'shepherds' as the founders and temporary leaders of Gk. religious guilds). Pastors – Eph. 4:11 in the context of being with other church leadership or being in a supervisory position.33

Strong’s # 4166 defines pastor as *poimēn* (poy-man’); of uncertain affinity; a shepherd (literally or figuratively): KJV—shepherd, pastor.34


Liddell and Scott, *poimēn*, a herdsman, shepherd: a shepherd of the people, chief.36

---


34 Strong’s Concordance, [CD-ROM].


36 Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, 569.
Mounce, *poimēn*, one who tends flocks, or herds, a shepherd herdsman. Am pastor, superintendent, guardian.\textsuperscript{37}

The Bible uses the word *poimēn* in the following verses:

**Matthew 9:36:**
But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

**Matthew 25:32:**
And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

**Matthew 26:31:**
Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

**Mark 6:34:**
And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

**Mark 14:27:**
And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

**Luke 2:8:**
And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

**Luke 2:15:**
And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

**Luke 2:18:**
And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

**Luke 2:20:**
And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

John 10:2:
But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John 10:11:
I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:12:
But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

John 10:14:
I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

John 10:16:
And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Hebrews 13:20:
Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

1 Peter 2:25:
For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

The only usage of poimēn in the New Testament for an office of the church is in Ephesians 4:11. However in his farewell address to the elders in the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul charges the elders to “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God.” (Acts 20:28 NIV). In this passage the reader is given the understanding that the elders to whom Paul is speaking in vv. 17-18 are also called “overseers,” and it is they who are the shepherds of the church; i.e., the pastoral office is to be identified with that of an “elder” or an “overseer.”

Ephesians 4:11:
And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.
In this text, the pastor is listed as one of the God appointed offices in the church. In Ephesians 4:11, the apostle Paul lists special people that God has given to the church. One of those that Paul lists is "pastors" poimēn, who are also teachers. While it might appear that Paul is listing two different gifts of Christ to the church, when he lists pastors and teachers, that is not the case. James Janke writes, "Greek has no separate article so Paul is describing one category. Therefore, one person performed both functions, shepherding the flock and teaching it."\(^{38}\)

J. Jeremias writes:

The absence of the article before didasklos which follows shows that the pastor and teachers form a single group, obviously because they both minister to the individual congregation.\(^{39}\)

The definite article which has been employed for "apostles," "prophets," and "evangelists," is also repeated before "pastors" but is omitted before "teachers" in each of the three categories. According to Andrew T. Lincoln, "Some have claimed that this indicates that the two groups are in fact identical (e.g., Barth, 438-439, who holds that one ministry only is being described, that of "teaching shepherds").\(^{40}\) The grouping together of pastors and teachers in this way suggests that the two roles are regarded as complementary and coordinated in the same person.

---


A. Skevington Wood writes:

"Pastors and teachers" are grouped together in such a way as to suggest that the two roles are regarded as complementary and often coordinated in the same person.⁴¹

According to Schooley:

The Greek word poimēn is translated as "shepherd" seventeen times in the New Testament. Four times it is used of literal shepherds caring for literal sheep (Lk.2:8, 15, 18, 20), one metaphorically to God (Mt. 25:32), and nine to Jesus, Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27; Jn. 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25). A synoptic reference to Zech. 13:7, and a Johannine discourse in John 10. Two (Mt. 9:36, Mk. 6:34) are parallel accounts of an observation by Jesus of the lack of a 'shepherd' for the people, and the last is Ephesians 4:11, in the list of ministry gifts.⁴²

Craig Bluemel writes, "In all contexts other than Ephesians 4:11, poimēn is used as shepherd because God's people are viewed as sheep of the flock."⁴³ The role of the pastor in the local church as stated in Ephesians 4:11 is to shepherd and teach. The shepherding activity of the pastor is applying God's Word to the members of the flock that God has given him. The teaching activity is to share the Word of God with his flock. The pastor/teacher is to be a teacher of the scriptures to his members.

The Biblical View of the Primary Role of the Pastor

There are differences of opinions and confusion over the role of the pastor. Though one will search in vain for a direct word of instruction for the role of the pastor as, e.g., for baptism, one should keep in mind that pastors, church laity, and seminary

---


⁴³Craig Bluemel, "What is the Biblical Role of the Pastor in the Church" 1 January 2005 [article online]; 4. available from http://www.bibleanswerstand.org/pastors.htm; Internet; accessed 26 June 2005.
students can find an extensive list of roles for the pastor, but none is more important than working with the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:12 indicates the purpose of the pastor:

Ephesians 4:12:
For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Paul states the purpose for which God gave his church apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/teachers. Wood writes:

The aim of the ministries mentioned in v. 11 is now disclosed. It is the equipment of all God's people for service. “To prepare” (pros ton katartismon) is “to put right.” In surgery katartismos is applied to the setting of a broken bone (BAG, p. 419). In the NT the verb katartizo is used for the mending of nets (Matthew 4:21) and the restoration of the lapsed (Galatians 6:1). It may, however, signify the realization of purpose and the completion of what is already good as far as it goes (1Corinthians 1:10; 1Thessalonians 3:10). Such preparation is in order to the work (ergon, sing.) of service (diakonia). This is what unites all the members of Christ's body from the apostles to the most apparently insignificant disciple (1Corinthians 12:22). Christ himself set the example (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27). It is by this means that the body of Christ will be consolidated (cf. Ephesians 2:21).44

As stated earlier, if the King James Version is used in defining the role of the pastor, keeping mind the placement of the comma after “saints” in verse 12, then it would be possible to interpret the text to indicate that one of the jobs of the pastor is the work of ministry. However, there are many, including this author, who see other versions such as the New International Version translation of this text far more accurate by eliminating the comma, which makes the text read, “for perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry.”45 This author is in agreement with Russell Burrill, when he states that if this

44Wood. The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11, Ephesians. 59.
45See Chapter 1, pgs. 8-11.
59

translation is to be believed, Ephesians 4:12 is not describing the pastor as the performer
of ministry, but instead as the trainer of ministers.46

If this is correct, then the key role of the pastor is to equip God’s people. It is the
role of the pastor to outfit believers for a life of Christian service and to equip God’s
people for their particular service in accordance with their spiritual gifts. The pastor is to
equip. The word equip in Ephesians 4:12 is a form of a Greek word that means “to
render fit, sound, complete.”47 The same word is used in Matthew 4:21. This passage is
talking of mending torn fishing nets, to get them ready for action. The same word is used
again in Galatians 6:1. This passage instructs us to restore such a person with a spirit of
gentleness. Joseph Thayer defines restore as “to make what it is what it ought to be.”48
That’s the role of the pastor, to shape up the saints, to get them ready for action, to equip
them to be what they ought to be.

The role of the pastor is to equip the people of God. But, how is the pastor to
equip God’s people? When he preaches and teaches the Word of God. Janke writes:

How is he [the pastor] to do this [equip the saints?]? Scripture gives no detailed
directives, except that it bids him teach, preach, feed, instruct, reprove, rebuke, warn,
etc., with the Word of God. As he carries out this primary function he is at the same
time equipping the saints for their ministry as universal priests. It is our conviction that
the more faithfully Christians attend divine services and hear good sermons that
present the whole counsel of God, and the more they read their Bibles and attend Bible
classes the better they will be equipped to function as priests in the many and varied
situations that confront them in their stations in life.49


48 Ibid., 336.

In looking at Ephesians 4:11-12, the role of the pastor/teacher was and is to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.

From the author’s study of the words “elder” *presbyteros*, “bishop” *episkopos*, and “pastor” *poimēn*, the author sees these titles as referring to the same office and are combined to form the role of the pastor in the local church. Pastors (literally, “shepherds”) probably included presbyters and bishops; they were entrusted with the nurture, protection, supervision and teaching of the flock. Zimmerman writes, “According to Acts 20:17, 28, then, a pastor is a shepherd or protector of and provider for the church. He is an overseer or bishop who supervises the ministry of the members of the church. And he is an elder to be recognized for his wisdom and standing in the community.”

Lincoln writes:

The concept of the shepherd and tending the flock is often found in association with that of the bishop or overseer and overseeing (cf. Jer 23:2; Ezek 34:11; Zech 11:16; CD 13:.7-11, where the mebagger, “guardian, overseer,” in the Qumran community is likened to a shepherd with his flock; Acts 20:28, where the appointed bishops of the church at Ephesus are to shepherd the church of God; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:2; Ign. Rom 9.1; Phil 2.1, where the bishop is also called a pastor). It is probable, then, that the pastor of Eph 4:11 fulfills the functions denoted in Paul’s writings by such terms as “to rule, manage” (1Thess 5:12, Rom 12:8), “administration” (1 Cor 12:28), “bishop, overseer” (Phil 1:1). “bishop” was a term taken from the Hellenistic world, but because of the general notion of overseeing had close associations with the shepherd in the Jewish thought, it is understandable that the term “pastor” could become interchangeable with “bishop” in the Christian movement.

---


John Piper summarizes the Biblical use of the terms, elder, overseer, and pastor:

The New Testament only refers to the office of pastor one time (Ephesians 4:11). It is a functional description of the role of “elder” stressing the care and feeding of the church as God’s flock, just as “bishop/overseer” is the functional description of the role of “elder” stressing the governing or oversight of the church. We may conclude therefore that “pastor” and “elder” and “bishop/overseer” refer in the New Testament to the same office.

In the modern church, there seems to be much confusion over the role of the pastor. The opinions of man about the pastor’s role may vary, but the Word of God addresses the role of the pastor. As stated earlier, this author believes that the Bible is the benchmark in all matters of faith and practice. This includes the role of the pastor. While the role of the pastor may change to meet the expectations of the culture, the office of pastor and the role of the pastor is a divine institution and role, established by Christ with the role of the pastor being to equip the saints of God for the purpose of building up His church. This is done by various means, which include administrative duties, pastoral care, and disciplinary duties. But, the most important role of the pastor is the preaching and teaching of the Word of GOD.
CHAPTER 4
THE PREVAILING VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES

In order to understand the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, surveys were constructed as well as a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey. Three groups were selected to take part in the survey. The first test group consisted of pastors serving in Southern Baptist Churches. The second test group consisted of laity currently belonging to and serving in Southern Baptist Churches. Also, a part of the qualifications for this group is that they were currently serving or had served in the past twelve months on a pastor search committee in a Southern Baptist Church. The third group consisted of seminary students who were currently enrolled in a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. All the pastors and churches that were mailed surveys were chosen from across the United States to give a broad representation of Southern Baptist pastors and Southern Baptist Churches.

Overall Survey Response

The first group that surveys were sent to was pastors serving in Southern Baptist Churches throughout the United States. The pastors were chosen by obtaining a list of Southern Baptist Churches from an on line source and simply mailing the survey to each respective pastor. Care was taken to make sure that the surveys were mailed to pastors serving in all areas of the country. Care was also taken in making an effort to ensure that
the pastors to whom surveys were mailed were serving in churches with memberships ranging from less than 100 members to churches that have more than 500 members.

Surveys were also sent to laity in Southern Baptist Churches throughout the United States. The surveys were mailed to churches that were searching for a senior pastor or that in the past twelve months had hired a senior pastor. The surveys were addressed to the Pastor Search Committee Chairman. There were two criteria for a layperson to take part in the survey. First, the participant must be a member of a Southern Baptist Church. Second, the participant must currently be serving on a pastor search committee or had served on a pastor search committee in the last twelve months. These churches were located by searching various state Southern Baptist newspapers with classified ads seeking a senior pastor. The churches were also located by looking at various state convention websites and the Southern Baptist Convention job site website where ministry positions that are available are listed by state. Addresses were obtained, and the surveys were mailed.

The seminary students who were sent or given surveys attended one of the six Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries. The name of a seminary student at each Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was obtained through friends and acquaintances of the author. The surveys were mailed to one individual at the respective seminaries who was asked to distribute the surveys to the students. The portion of the surveys that were conducted at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky were administered and collected by the author.
TABLE 1
RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Group</th>
<th>Surveys Distributed</th>
<th>Surveys Returned</th>
<th>Percentage Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastors</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laity</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Pastors Surveyed

The response from pastors came from across all age groups, with 65% of the respondents between the ages of 35 and 49. The majority of the pastors responding to the survey were married with children. The survey revealed the education level of the pastors who responded. Of the respondents, 35% had undergraduate degrees, 27% had a Master of Divinity degree and 6% had either a Doctor of Ministry or PhD. Of the pastors who responded to the survey, the majority had been in ministry between six and ten years. Of these men, more than half served in churches with a ministerial staff, and 72% served in churches with less than 299 members. The majority of the respondents serve in communities with a population between 10,000 and 99,999.
### TABLE 2
PROFILE OF PASTORS SURVEYED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65 over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Separated/Divorced</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>older</th>
<th>none</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Undergraduate Degree</th>
<th>M.Div.</th>
<th>D.Min./PhD</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Southern Baptist seminaries</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years In Ministry</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministerial Staff</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Education</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>1-99</th>
<th>100-299</th>
<th>300-499</th>
<th>500 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1-999</th>
<th>1000-9999</th>
<th>10,000-99,999</th>
<th>100,000 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Profile of Laity Surveyed**

The responses from the laity who were surveyed indicated that the majority of the members of the group were between the ages of 35 and 49. The majority of the respondents were male, married and have children; 21% of the respondents had some
college education, 39% had undergraduate degrees, while 11% had a Master’s degree or higher. Of the laity who responded to the survey, 72% had been in Southern Baptist Churches between six and twenty years. The members of this test group served in churches with total memberships evenly distributed across all groups.

TABLE 3
PROFILE OF LAITY SURVEYED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65 over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Separated/Divorced</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Undergraduate Degree</th>
<th>Master’s/Higher</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in SBC</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Membership</th>
<th>1-99</th>
<th>100-299</th>
<th>300-499</th>
<th>500 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Seminary Students Surveyed

The responses to the survey taken by the seminary student test group revealed that 91% of the respondents fell between the ages of 18 and 49 years old. The majority of the students are male, married and have children. All of the respondents are members of
Southern Baptist Churches. The majority of respondents to the survey, 74%, were working on a Master of Divinity degree, with the year of their program evenly distributed across all groups. Of the respondents, 4% are currently involved in ministry in a Southern Baptist Church, with 62% of those either serving as a senior pastor or associate pastor.

**TABLE 4**

**PROFILE OF SEMINARY STUDENTS SURVEYED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65 over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Separated/Divorced</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>older</th>
<th>none</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of SBC</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Seminary Program</th>
<th>M.Div.</th>
<th>M.Theology</th>
<th>D.Min./PhD</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Year In Program</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Determining the Prevailing View of the Role of the Pastor**

To determine the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, two sections of the survey were designed to gather information from pastors,
seminary students, and laity on the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. To compile the data supplied by the respondents of the surveys, the author employed a model used by Byron Wesley Fenwicks in his work titled: *The Perceptions of the Pastor's Role in the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces of Canada.* Fenwick uses two terms coined by Samuel W. Blizzard in his writing and research that will aid in this research.

Master Role – The concept of ministry as an occupation distinguishable from the occupational role of other persons.

Practitioner Role – These roles describe and clarify the means by which the pastor accomplishes his purposes. They are performed by the pastor as a means to an end.¹

The first section of the survey listed tasks, which reflect Samuel Blizzard’s practitioner roles. The test groups were asked to rank the thirteen practitioner roles as listed by Samuel Blizzard in order of importance. Those surveyed were asked to list how high or low of a priority a specific group of tasks was for a pastor. Those surveyed were asked to list these priorities on a scale of very high, high, moderate, or low. Those surveyed were asked to rank the following tasks:

- Visiting the sick, shuts-ins, or grieving persons.
- Leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.
- Comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.
- Visiting church members regularly and faithfully in their homes.
- Developing effective church programs to meet people’s needs.
- Preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision.
- Preaching relevant Bible based messages.
- Giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.
- Helping the church to develop thorough plans for the future.

• Providing extensive training for new converts.
• Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner.
• Counseling persons with problems and those who are about to be married.
• Helping church committees and organizations to function effectively.

In response to this section of the survey, the five highest ranking priorities of the pastor, according to the prevailing view in the Southern Baptist Church, were as follows: 95% of the pastors and 98% of seminary students listed preaching relevant Bible based messages as the pastor’s highest priority, while 94% of the laity recorded visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving as the number one priority of the pastor.

In looking closer at the pastors’ responses in regards to this priority, the survey revealed that of the 95% of the pastors who listed this as the number one priority, they were divided equally between all age groups as well as in the number of years in the ministry and across all congregation sizes.

Also, 98% of the seminary students listed preaching relevant Bible based messages as the pastor’s highest priority. This group was well represented, being equally disbursed among all age groups, years in seminary and years in service in a local church.

While, of the 94% of the laity who listed visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons as the number one priority of the pastor, the overwhelming majority fell between the ages of 35-49. They also had been members in a Southern Baptist Church for ten or more years.

In listing the second priority of the pastor, again pastors and seminary students agreed, with 88% of the pastors and 96% of the seminary students agreeing that a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message should be the pastor’s second priority. Of the laity surveyed, 88% listed preaching relevant Bible based messages as the pastors second priority.
Of the 88% of the pastors who gave this as the second priority of the pastor, again, all were equally disbursed between all age groups as well as in the number of years in the ministry and across all congregation sizes. Of the 96% of the seminary students who listed this as the second priority of the pastor, 62% were three or more years into their degree program. Of the 88% of the laity who listed preaching relevant Bible based messages as the second priority of the pastor, all of this group were equally disbursed among age groups, the number of years in a Southern Baptist Church and the size of a congregation to which they belong.

All three test groups differed in their opinion of the pastor’s third highest priority. Of the pastors, 86% responded that the third highest priority of the pastor is preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision. Of the seminary students, 87% saw the third highest priority of the pastor as leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God. The third highest priority of the pastor according to 81% of the laity was conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner.

Of the 86% of the pastors who listed preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision as the third highest priority, all the respondents were evenly disbursed when it came to education and years in the ministry. However, 73% of those respondents were between the ages of 35 and 64.

Of the seminary students, 87% listed the third highest priority of the pastor as leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God. However, the majority of the respondents were not involved in a ministry position or had been in ministry for less than four years.
The third highest priority of the pastor according to 81% of the laity is conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner. The survey revealed that of the respondents, the majority had been in the Southern Baptist Church for more than ten years, were over 40 years old, and served in churches with less than 299 members.

The forth highest priority of the pastors, again, was different for all three test groups. Of the pastors, 83% saw the forth highest priority of the pastor as leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God. Of the seminary students, 85% saw the fourth highest priority of the pastor as conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner. While, 79% of the laity saw the forth highest priority of the pastor is to present a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.

Of the 83% of the pastors who listed the forth highest priority of the pastor as leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God, the majority had Master of Divinity degrees. They also had been in ministry ten years or less.

Of the seminary students, 85% saw the forth highest priority of the pastor as conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner. Of the respondents, the majority were between the ages of 18-34, had completed two years or less of seminary and had served less than four years in the ministry.

Of the 79% of the laity who saw the forth highest priority of the pastor is to present a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message, the majority were equally
divided across age and education levels. They were also equally divided in years spent in Southern Baptist Churches and in the size of the congregation to which they belong.

The fifth highest priority of all three test groups also differed. Of the pastors who responded to the survey, 72% responded that helping the church to develop thorough plans for the future was the fifth highest priority. Among the seminary students, 68% listed counseling persons with problems and those who are about to be married as the fifth highest priority. Of the laity, 79% saw the fifth highest priority of the pastor as giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.

Of the 72% of the pastors who listed helping the church to develop thorough plans for the future as the fifth highest priority, the majority of the respondents had a Masters of Divinity degree and were between the ages of 18-49 years of age. This group was equally distributed when it came to the size of church they pastor and the population of the area in which they serve.

Of the 68% of the seminary students who gave counseling persons with problems and those who are about to be married as the fifth highest priority of the pastor, there was a high consensus of agreement among all age groups. This included the number of years in seminary and the number of years that the respondents had served in ministry.

Of the laity, 79% saw the fifth highest priority of the pastor as giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities. The overwhelming majority fell between the ages of 35-49 and had been members in a Southern Baptist Church for ten or more years.
Thirteen priorities were listed in the survey. When the research was evaluated of the thirteen priorities, eight priorities fell among the top five priorities among all the test groups. These eight are as follows:

- Visiting the sick, shuts-ins, or grieving persons.
- Leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.
- Comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.
- Visiting church members regularly and faithfully in their homes.
- Preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision.
- Preaching relevant Bible based messages.
- Giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.
- Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner.

### Evaluation of the Prevailing Views of the Priorities of the Pastor

**TABLE 5**

EVALUATION OF THE TOP FIVE TASK PRIORITIES BY PASTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Ranking 1-5</th>
<th>Pastors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preaching relevant Bible based messages.</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision.</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Helping the church to develop plans for the future.</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6

EVALUATION OF THE TOP FIVE TASK PRIORITIES BY SEMINARY STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Ranking 1-5</th>
<th>Seminary Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preaching relevant Bible based messages.</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comprehensive teaching of the Bible's total message.</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in a reverent manner.</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Counseling persons with problems and those who are about to be married.</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7

EVALUATION OF THE TOP FIVE TASK PRIORITIES BY LAITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Ranking 1-5</th>
<th>Laity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons.</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preaching relevant Bible based messages.</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in a reverent manner.</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comprehensive teaching of the Bible's total message.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation of the Prevailing View of the Role of the Pastor

In the second section, the three test groups were asked to rank, in order of importance, the six practitioner roles identified by Blizzard. Those roles are:

TABLE 8
PRACTITIONER ROLE AND TASKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practitioner Role</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visiting church members regularly and faithfully in their homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling persons with problems and those about to be married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Leader</td>
<td>Leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing extensive training for new converts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preacher</td>
<td>Preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preaching relevant Bible-based messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>Developing effective church programs to meet people’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping the church to develop thorough plans for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping church committees and organizations to function effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In responding to this section of the survey, all three of the test groups listed their most important role of the pastor was that of a pastor. In the survey, 88% of the pastors, 83% of the seminary students, and 87% of the laity selected the pastoral role as their first priority. Of the pastors who responded, all of the respondents came from across all age groups and years in the ministry. The seminary students also had an equal representation across all age groups and years in seminary. The laity also had a wide representation across all age groups, and years in the Southern Baptist Church.

The role of the preacher was ranked as the second most important role of the pastor by 87% of the pastors and by 79% of the seminary students responding to the survey. Of the pastors responding to the survey, the majority had been in ministry for eleven years or longer. The seminary students responding had been in seminary and in ministry for more than four years. The group that differed in its opinion of the second most important role was the laity. Of the laity, 84% listed administrator as the second most important role of the pastor. Of this 84%, the majority of this group were over fifty years old and had been a member of a Southern Baptist Church for more than eleven years or more.

In looking at the respondents' answers to the third most important role of the pastor, again, the majority of pastors, 84%, and 69% of the seminary students agreed that the role of a teacher is the third most important role of the pastor. Of the 84% of the pastors responding with the third most important role of the pastor as being a teacher, the majority of the of this group had been in ministry for less than ten years and served in a church with less than two hundred ninety-nine members. As for the seminary students, the majority have been in seminary for two years or less and are working on their
Master’s of Divinity Degree. As for the 83% of the laity responding with teacher as the third most important role of the pastor, the majority of this group were between the ages of 35-49 years old and had been in the Southern Baptist church for ten years or less.

For the fourth most important role for the pastor, all three test groups differed. Of the pastors, 68% responded that the role of the worship leader was the fourth most important role. Of the pastors who responded with the majority on this forth most important role, their ages were between 35-49 years old, had no ministerial staff, and served in congregations of less than 299 members. Of the seminary students, 61% saw the role of administration as the fourth most important role. Of this group, the majority of the participants were between 18-39 years of age and had served in ministry for less than five years. Of the laity, 78% responded that the fourth most important role was that of an organizer. Those responding with this role were evenly distributed across all age ranges, educational backgrounds and length of time in a Southern Baptist Church.

For the fifth most important role of the Southern Baptist pastor, 58% of the pastors responded with organizer. Of the pastors who responded with organizer as their fifth most important role, the majority was between 35-49 years old, had seminary degrees, and served in churches with less than 299 members. Of the seminary students, 59% listed worship leader as their fifth most important role. The respondents were distributed equally across all qualifying categories. Of the laity, 69% listed teacher as their fifth most important role. Of these respondents, the majority who listed teacher as fifth served in churches with more than 300 members.

The sixth most important role, according to 57% of the pastors, is that of an administrator. The majority of the pastors listed administration as the sixth most
important role making it the least important role among pastors. However, the seminary students rank this role as the forth most important and the laity ranked it as the second most important. Of the pastors responding, the respondents were equally distributed among all categories. As for the seminary students, 56% listed the role of an organizer as the least important. There was an equal distribution among all qualifiers. As for the laity, 63% listed the sixth most important role the pastor as the role of the worship leader. This was an evenly disbursed group.

**Evaluation of the Prevailing View of the Image of the Role of the Pastor**

**TABLE 9**

**IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING PASTORAL ROLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Pastors Rank</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seminary Students Rank</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Laity Rank</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Leader</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get an understanding of the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, the third section of the survey asked all the participants what
image or concept best explains the work of the pastor? This is the Master Role, the concept of what makes ministry distinguishable from other occupational roles of other persons.

After analyzing a total of 384 surveys from three test groups, the responses revealed that the respondents gave a total of eleven different images that explained the role of the pastor. These images were:

- shepherd
- leader
- teacher
- preacher
- overseer
- servant
- spiritual advisor
- friend
- confidant
- coach
- cheerleader

The image of shepherd was given by two of the test groups as the number one image or concept that best describes the work of the pastor. Of the pastors, 77% and of the seminary students, 27% listed the shepherd as the best image or concept that explains the work of the pastor. Of the laity, 25% listed the image or concept of a servant as best describing the role of the pastor. Of the pastors giving shepherd as the number one response, the majority of the respondents we equally distributed across all age groups, years in the ministry and the size of the congregations in which they serve. The seminary students who gave shepherd as their number one response had a majority between 35 and 49 years of age and were in their third and fourth year of seminary. As for the laity, they were well represented across all qualifiers.
The second image or concept that best explains the work of the pastor, according to all three test groups, is the image or concept of a preacher. Of the pastors, 7%, of the seminary students, 24%, and 24% of the laity all listed this as the second best image to describe the work of the pastor. Of the pastors who responded with preacher as their second best image to describe the work of the pastor, the majority were between the ages of 18-34 years of age and were generally in their first or second year of seminary. The majority of the laity, as well, fell into the 18-34 year old age bracket, and the majority had been in the Southern Baptist Church for less than ten years. As for the seminary students, they were well represented across all age groups, educational backgrounds and time in the Southern Baptist Church.

The third image or concept that best explains the work of the pastor, according to 6% of the pastors, was that of a leader, while 23% of the seminary students listed the image or concept of a teacher and 22% of the laity listed the role of the shepherd as what best explains the work of the pastor. Of the pastors responding to the survey, the majority who gave leader as the third image were serving in churches with 250 members or more. The majority of the 22% of the seminary students who listed the image or concept of teacher as the third response were primarily between the ages of 18-34 years of age and in their first or second year of seminary. As for the laity, their third response was the image or concept of a shepherd. Of the laity who listed shepherd as the third image or concept of the role of the pastor, the majority has been in the church ten or more years.

The fourth image or concept that best explains the work of the pastor, according to two of the three test groups, is that of a teacher. Of the pastors, 5% and of the laity,
10% felt that the image or concept of a teacher best described the work of the pastor. In contrast, 16% of the seminary students felt the image or concept of a leader best described the role of the pastor. Of the pastors and the laity who listed teacher as their forth response, it was interesting that in both groups, those who have the highest level of education and who were between the ages of 50-64 years old listed this most often.

The fifth image or concept that best explains the work of the pastor, according to 4% of the pastors, is the image or concept of a spiritual leader. Of the seminary students, 4% responded with the image or concept of an overseer, while 9% of the laity gave the image or concept of a leader as best describing the role of the pastor. The pastors listing spiritual leader as their fifth image or concept that best explains the work of the pastor, for the majority, were between the ages of 50-64 years old, had graduated seminary, and had been in the ministry eleven years or more. Of the seminary students, 4% listed the image or concept of overseer as the fifth image that best describes the work of the pastor. The seminary students responding with overseer as number five were between 18-34 years of age and had been in seminary for at least two years. The laity’s image that ranked number five was that of a leader. The respondents were between the ages of 35-49 years old, had an undergraduate degree, and served in churches with more than 250 members.

The pastors and seminary students were in agreement when it came to the sixth most given image or concept that describes the role of the pastor, both responding with the image or concept of a coach. Of the pastors, 2% and 3% of the seminary students gave this response. Of the laity, 5% gave the image or concept of a spiritual leader as best describing the role of the pastor. The pastors and seminary students giving the
image of a coach as their number six response were all younger men between the ages 18-34 years of age. The 5% of the laity who listed for their sixth image that of a spiritual leader were younger church members between the ages of 1-34 years of age and had been in the Southern Baptist Church five years or less.

All three test groups, pastors, seminary students, and laity listed other various images or concepts that explain the work of the pastor. These images or concepts are: confidant, spiritual advisor, friend and one respondent from the laity test group responded with the image of concept that best explains the work of the pastor was a cheerleader. However, all of these images or concepts were given by 1% or less of the respondents.

TABLE 10

IMAGE OR CONCEPT THAT BEST EXPLAINS THE WORK OF THE PASTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image/Concept</th>
<th>Pastors Rank</th>
<th>Pastors %</th>
<th>Seminary Students Rank</th>
<th>Seminary Students %</th>
<th>Laity Rank</th>
<th>Laity %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Leader</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*other images or concepts but were 1% or less.
Evaluation of Experiences Shaping the Understanding of the Role of the Pastor

After asking all three test groups to rank the priorities of the pastors in order of importance on a scale of very high, high, moderate or low, the test groups were then asked to rank what they believed are the most important of six pastoral roles. Then the test groups were asked to list an image or concept that explains the work of the pastor. Finally all, three test groups were asked the following question: “What experiences have most shaped your understanding of the pastor’s role?” There were twelve different responses given to this question. The responses were:

- Bible
- Life experience
- Being a good listener
- Being mentored in seminary
- Former pastor
- Prayer
- Work in the church
- Dealing with people
- Talking with pastors
- First pastorate
- Growing up in church
- Mistakes

Of the pastors responding, there were two very strong responses given by the majority of the group. Of them, 47% listed life experiences/pastoral experience as the number one influence on their understanding of the pastor’s role. Of these 47%, the majority had been in ministry for six years or longer. The next highest response, 43% of the pastors, was that they had formed their understanding of the role of the pastor from study of the Bible. The pastors who ranked the Bible as the second biggest influence on their understanding of the pastor’s role came equally from all age groups, education levels, number of years in the ministry, and the size of church and community where they serve.
TABLE 11

PASTORS: WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE MOST SHAPED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTOR’S ROLE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Experiences/ Pastoral Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the seminary students who responded, there were also two responses that the majority of the students listed. Of the seminary students, 43% responded that a former pastor had most shaped their understanding of the pastor’s work. The second response that was given by 38% of the respondents was that the Bible shaped their understanding of the pastor’s work. The majority of those who gave either of these two responses as number one were equally distributed across all age groups, years in the ministry and the year in which they are in their degree program.

TABLE 12

STUDENTS: WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE MOST SHAPED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTOR ROLE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the laity who responded, there were three responses that the majority of respondents listed. Of the laity, 40% responded that being on a pastor search committee had shaped their view of the pastor's role. Of the respondents, 32% listed study of the Bible as the second greatest experience that had shaped their understanding of the pastor's role, and 14% responded that being a deacon was the third greatest experience that had shaped their understanding of the pastor's role.

**TABLE 13**

**LAITY: WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE MOST SHAPED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTOR'S ROLE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being on a Pastor Search Committee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Deacon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

The three test groups that were surveyed for this research are, first, pastors serving in Southern Baptist Churches, the second test group is seminary students who are attending a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the third test group is laity who belong to a Southern Baptist Church who are currently serving or had served in the past twelve months on a pastor search committee in a Southern Baptist Church. There was an overwhelming return rate on the surveys administered to each test group. Of 200 surveys
that were sent to each test group, 72% of the pastors returned the survey, 61% of the students returned the survey, as well as 59% of the laity.

When all three test groups listed the priorities of the pastor, the highest ranking priorities were: preaching relevant Bible based messages and a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message. For the pastors and seminary students, preaching relevant Bible based messages ranked first and a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message ranked second. The laity listed visiting the sick, shuts-ins, or grieving persons as number one, but the pastors saw this as the least important of the priorities and seminary students listed it as the sixth most important priority.

In the ranking of the six pastoral roles, the research indicated that all three test groups all listed pastor as the role of most importance. But, when it came to the second and third most important roles of the pastor, the majority of pastors and seminary students agreed on preacher being number two and teacher being number three. The laity, although agreeing with the pastors and the seminary students with the number one role, disagreed when it came to number two. The laity responded with administrator and number three was preacher as the most important roles of the pastor.

When the test groups were asked their image or concept of the pastor, the majority of the pastors and seminary students listed the image or concept of a shepherd as their number one answer. The laity listed the image or concept of a servant as their number one response, and the image or concept of a shepherd was third on the laity’s list of images. All three test groups listed the image or concept of a preacher as number two.

Finally, when asked, “What experiences have most shaped your understanding of the pastor’s role?” all three test groups had different answers for their number one
response. The majority of the pastors listed life/pastoral experience as the number one experience that shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor. The seminary students listed as their number one response that a former pastor had most shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor. The laity responded that being on a pastor search committee was the number one experience that had shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor. All three test groups listed as the second most important experience that had shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor was study of the Bible. There were other responses from the pastors and seminary students, however, they were all a very small percentage. As for the laity, they had one other response that scored a high percentage. The third most important experience that had shaped the understanding of the role of the pastor, according to the laity, was serving as a deacon.
CHAPTER 5


In establishing the view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, this research has focused on the “Biblical View of the Role of the Pastor” and the “Prevailing View of the Role of the Pastor.” To understand the Biblical view of the role of the pastor, this research provided a study of the Bible, and to understand the prevailing view of the role of the pastor, this research gathered information from three test groups: Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and Southern Baptist laity. Each group was asked to give information in the form of surveys as to their understanding of the role of the pastor.

The Biblical View

In examining the Biblical view of the role of the pastor, this research discovered that the Bible uses three words, which are “elder” presbyteros, “bishop” episkopos, and “pastor” poimēn. From the research conducted in this project, the author sees these titles as referring to the same office and are combined to form the role of the pastor in the local church.

This research has caused the author to conclude that pastors (literally, “shepherds”) included elders and bishops. They were entrusted with the nurturing, protection, supervision, and teaching of the flock.
The Bible only translates *poimēn* as “pastor” once in Ephesians 4:11.

Ephesians 4:11:
And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers.

Since the Greek has no separate article before teachers, this passage describes one person who performed both functions, shepherding the flock and teaching it. Pastors and teachers are grouped in such a way to suggest that the two roles are regarded as complementary and coordinated in the same person. The Bible describes the role of the pastor in Ephesians 4:11 as that of a shepherd who is to pastor/teach the flock of God. The shepherding activity of the pastor includes protecting, nurturing, supervising, and teaching the members of the congregation God’s Word.

The Bible in Ephesians 4:12 reveals the purpose of the work of the pastor/teacher:

Ephesians 4:12:
For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Because of the placement of the comma after “saints” in verse 12 in the King James Version, it would be possible to interpret the text to indicate that one of the jobs of the pastor is the work of ministry. Again, many, including this author, see more modern versions of this text such as the New International Version and the New King James Version translated far more accurately by eliminating the comma, which makes the text read, “for perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry.”

Ephesians 4:12 is not describing the pastor as the performer of ministry, but instead as the trainer of ministers. The key role of the pastor is to equip God’s people. It is the role of the pastor to outfit believers for a life of Christian service and to equip God’s people for their particular

---

1See Chapter 1, pages 9-11.
service in accordance with their spiritual gifts. The pastor is to equip, to render fit, or make complete the people of God. In other words, the role of the pastor is to “shape up” the saints, to get them “ready for action,” to equip them to be what God desires them to be. In doing so, the Bible teaches that the pastor should equip the people of God by teaching, feeding, instructing, reproving, rebuking, and warning the people with God’s Word. By doing this, the pastor equips the people for their ministries.

The Bible also lists tasks for the pastor, which for the purpose of this paper, are called Practitioner Role Tasks. These tasks describe and clarify the means by which the pastor accomplishes his purposes. These include such tasks as preaching, administrative responsibilities, pastoral care, and disciplinary duties. However, this research has shown that the top Practitioner Role of the pastor, according to Ephesians 4:12, is that of the pastor/teacher. Based on this study of Ephesians coupled with Fenwick’s research, the Practitioner Role Tasks that fall under the heading of pastor includes visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons, visiting church members regularly and faithfully in their homes and counseling persons with problems and those about to be married. The Practitioner Role Tasks that fall under the heading of teacher includes the comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message and providing extensive training for new converts.

The Prevailing View

Southern Baptist pastors were surveyed to gain information as to the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The pastors responding stated the Master Role of the pastor, the concept of what makes ministry distinguishable
from the other occupational roles of other persons, as that of a shepherd. Of the pastors surveyed, 77% listed this as the Master Role.

When comparing the responses of the pastors as they pertain to the Practitioner Roles, 95% of the pastors saw the number one priority of the pastor as that of a preacher. The pastors’ response as to the second highest priority of the Practitioner was that of a teacher.

When given the thirteen Practitioner Role Tasks to rank in order of their priority, 95% of the pastors listed Preaching relevant Bible based messages as number one, and 88% of the pastors listed a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message and preaching evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision as a tie for the second priority of the pastor. Number three, according to 85% of the pastors, was leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God. And number four, according to 83% of the pastors, was helping the church to develop plans for the future.

Southern Baptist seminary students were surveyed to gain information as to the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The seminary students responding to the survey gave as their Master Role of the pastor, the concept of what makes ministry distinguishable from the other occupational roles of other persons as that of a shepherd. Of the seminary students surveyed, 27% listed this as the Master Role, followed closely with 24% of the seminary students listing the Master Role as that of a preacher.

When comparing the responses of the seminary students as they pertain to the Practitioner Roles, 98% of the seminary students saw the number one priority of the
pastor as that of a preacher. The number two Practitioner Role as listed by the seminary students was that of a teacher.

The seminary students were presented with the thirteen Practitioner Role Tasks to rank in order of importance and priority. The seminary students responded as follows. Their number one priority, according to 98% of the seminary students, was preaching relevant Bible based messages. The second most important priority was a tie between a comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message and leading the church in worship, which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God. These two responses were given by 96% of the seminary students responding. The number three priority given by 90% of the seminary students was conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner. The fourth highest priority for seminary students was counseling persons with problems and those about to be married, with 68% of the seminary students giving this response.

Southern Baptist laity were surveyed to gain information as to the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The laity responding gave as their number one Master Role of the pastor, the concept of what makes ministry distinguishable from the other occupational roles of other persons, as that of a servant, with 25% of the laity surveyed giving this response. This was followed closely with 24% of the laity listing preacher as their number one Master Role.

When comparing the responses of the laity as they pertain to the Practitioner Roles, 94% of the laity saw the number one priority of the pastor as that of a pastor and number two was that of a preacher.
When the laity were given the thirteen Practitioner Role Tasks to rank in order of importance and priority, 94% listed as the number one priority visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons. The second highest priority, according to 88% of the laity, was a tie between preaching relevant Bible-based messages and conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in a reverent manner. The third highest priority, according to 85% of the laity, was a comprehensive teaching of the Bible's total message, and the forth greatest priority of the pastor, according to 72% of the laity surveyed, was giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.

**Comparison of the Views of the Role of the Pastor**

In comparing the views of the role of the pastor from the Biblical view with the prevailing view, it is easy to see that there are some differences of opinion between what the Bible states and what the test groups say, as well as differences between all the three test groups.

The Bible lists as the Master Role of the pastor the image or concept of a shepherd. The pastors and the seminary students responding to the survey were in line with the Bible and listed the shepherd as the Master Role of the pastor. However, the laity who responded to the survey differed from the Bible as well as from the two test groups. The laity responding to the survey listed the Master Role of servant when it comes to representing their image or concept of the pastor.

In comparing the views of the Practitioner Roles of the pastor from the Biblical view and the prevailing view, again there was some disagreement between the Bible and all three test groups. The Bible, in Ephesians 4:11, gives the Practitioner Role of the
pastor as that of a pastor/teacher. The pastors responding to the survey listed the Practitioner Role most important for the pastor as that of a preacher. The seminary students were in disagreement with the Bible but in agreement with the pastors in giving their response to the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor as a preacher. The laity’s response to the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor differed from both the pastors and seminary students responding to the survey, but was in agreement partially with the Bible. The laity response to the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor was a pastor.

In comparing the Practitioner Role Tasks from the Biblical view and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, this research also finds disagreement between the Biblical view and the prevailing view. This research has established that the words “elder” presbyteros, “bishop” episkopos, and “pastor” poimēn, are three Biblical titles referring to the same office and are combined to form the role of the pastor in the local church. In researching these three words, it is easy to see that the Bible gives various Practitioner Role Tasks for the pastor. These tasks include: protecting, nurturing, supervising, preaching, administrative responsibilities, pastoral care, disciplinary duties, and teaching the members of the congregation God’s Word. However, the Bible only translates poimēn as “pastor” once, in Ephesians 4:11 and looking at Ephesians 4:12 the Bible reveals the purpose of the work of the pastor/teacher:

   to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.2

Based on this author’s interpretation of Ephesians 4:12, it is not describing the pastor as

---

the performer of ministry, but instead is listing the number one Practitioner Role task of the pastor as the trainer of ministers.³

In comparing the Practitioner Role Tasks from the Biblical view and the prevailing view, the pastors responding to the survey listed the number one Practitioner Role task of the pastor as preaching relevant Bible-based messages. The seminary students responding to the survey were in agreement with the pastors in listing the number one Practitioner Role Task as preaching relevant Bible-based messages. While in comparing the Practitioner Role Tasks from the Biblical view and the prevailing view, the laity responding to the survey did not agree with the pastors or seminary students and listed visiting the sick, shut-ins, or grieving persons as the number one Practitioner Role Task of the pastor. In looking at the responses of all three test groups and realizing that all three groups’ responses are valid tasks of the pastor, it is easy to see that there is disagreement as to the Practitioner Role Task of highest priority of the pastor when compared with the Biblical view and even disagreement among the three different test groups.

In looking at the three test groups and comparing their responses to the Practitioner Roles of the pastor, there is confusion when it comes to the responses given by the test groups as they compare to the Master Roles given by the test groups. The pastors responding to the survey listed the Master Role of the pastor as that of a shepherd and listed preacher as their number one Practitioner Role and teacher as their number two Practitioner Role. When comparing these two answers, it is easy to see that these two descriptions conflict. The Biblical understanding of a shepherd is that of one who

³See Chapter 3, pages 52-56.
protects, nurtures, supervises, and teaches the members of the congregation. The pastors listed the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor as a preacher. A preacher is one who preaches evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision. A preacher also preaches relevant Bible-based messages. The pastors’ number two response was a teacher. A teacher is one who instructs in the comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message and provides extensive training for new converts. The prevailing view from the pastors on the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches is that of a shepherd who preaches evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision and who preaches relevant Bible-based messages. Closely followed by a shepherd who teaches the total message of the Bible and provides extensive training for new converts. The prevailing view of the role of the pastors in Southern Baptist Churches among pastors is one that causes confusion.

The seminary students responding to the survey also listed the Master Role of the pastor as that of a shepherd and listed preacher as their number one Practitioner Role. As with the pastors who responded to the survey, these two responses are conflicting. The Biblical understanding of a shepherd is that of one who protects, nurtures, supervises, and teaches the members of the congregation. The seminary students listed the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor as a preacher. A preacher is one who preaches evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision. A preacher also preaches relevant Bible-based messages. The seminary students’ number two response was a teacher. A teacher is one who instructs in the comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message and provides extensive training for new converts. The prevailing view from the seminary students on the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches is that of a shepherd who preaches evangelistic sermons, which call for a decision, and who also preaches relevant
Bible-based messages and teaches the total message of the Bible and provides extensive training for new converts. The prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches among seminary students, along with the pastors, is one that causes confusion.

The most confusing of all three of the test groups was that of the laity. The laity listed as their Master Role of the pastor that of a servant and listed pastor as their number one Practitioner Role. As with the pastors and seminary students who responded to the survey, these two responses are conflicting, but the laity's responses were to the extreme. The Biblical understanding of a shepherd is that of one who protects, nurtures, supervises, and teaches the members of the congregation. While the pastors and seminary students agreed with this, the laity responded with a servant as the Master Role. A servant is defined as:

One who serves; an attendant in a household; a drudge.4

While the laity saw the Master Role of the pastor as that of a servant, they saw the number one Practitioner Role of the pastor as that of a pastor. A pastor is one who visits the sick and shut-ins, or grieving persons, visits church members regularly and faithfully in their homes, and counsels persons with problems and those about to be married. To add to the confusion, the number two Practitioner Role of the pastor, as listed by the laity, was that of a teacher. A teacher is one who instructs in the comprehensive teaching of the Bible's total message and provides extensive training for new converts. The Master Role listed by the laity is in no respect close to the Biblical model, but the Practitioner

Roles are in complete agreement with the Bible. However, these responses stand in stark contrast to one another.

While a servant is one who serves or attends, the Practitioner Role of a pastor does not coincide with that of a servant. A pastor is one who visits, encourages, and counsels people. The Practitioner Role of a teacher, like that of a pastor, does not fall in line with the task of a servant. A pastor, as a teacher, is one who comprehensively teaches the Bible’s total message and provides extensive training for new converts. In looking at the responses of the laity in Southern Baptist Churches and what the prevailing view of the role of the pastor is from the perspective of the laity, it is easy to see why there is confusion over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches.

In comparing the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, it is easy to see why there is confusion over the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. All three groups had various views when it came to the Master Role, Practitioner Role, and the Practitioner Role Tasks of the pastor. However, one question in the survey that shows very clearly why there is confusion when it comes to the role of the pastor was made evident by the responses to one question in the survey.

All three test groups were asked, “What experiences have most shaped your understanding of the Pastor’s role?” The responses to this question were very surprising. Of the pastors responding to the survey, 47% said that the experience that had most shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor was “life experience/pastoral experience.” Of the seminary students, 43% said that a former pastor had most shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor. While, 40% of the laity said that being on a
pastor search committee had most shaped their understanding of the role of the pastor.
The answers from all three test groups to this question, which was made very clear in the research, showed that the reason the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor differ and the reason why there is confusion over the role of the pastor is that the majority of the pastors serving in Southern Baptist Churches, seminary students attending Southern Baptist seminaries, and laity serving in Southern Baptist Churches had obtained their view of the role of the pastor from the world and not from the Bible.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This research was done to clarify the view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches by looking at the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view in Southern Baptist Churches of the role of the pastor. Biblical research was gathered through the word studies, exegetical study of Ephesians 4:11-12, the Pastoral Epistles, New Testament passages, as well as through authors who have written commentaries on the Biblical text as well as other books. To gather information on the prevailing view of the role of the pastor, surveys were conducted among Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and Southern Baptist laity.

Objective

The purpose of this project was to clarify the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches in order to better prepare pastors, seminary students, and laity so they better understand the Biblical role of the pastor in the local church, and in doing so to increase the effectiveness of the pastor. Through this research, the author has sought to clarify his understanding of the pastoral office and apply this to his ministry setting. This project has provided a view of the role of the pastor from the Bible and an overview of the role of the pastor within Southern Baptist Churches.
The Goals

1. The first goal was to study the role of the pastor for professional growth in the author's own ministry skills. This goal was fulfilled. In conducting this research, the author was able to gain understanding on the role of the pastor from the Bible and then compare that understanding with the understanding of the role of the pastor from the perspective of pastors in Southern Baptist Churches, Southern Baptist seminary students, and Southern Baptist laity. Upon looking at many of the answers in the surveys and comparing those with the author's ideas on the role of the pastor, the Bible helped the author clarify misconceptions from the prevailing view of the role of the pastor.

2. The second goal of this project was to give Biblical clarification of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches in order to better prepare pastors, seminary students, and laity of Southern Baptist Churches. This goal was accomplished. Through exegesis and interpretation of selected Old and New Testament texts, the role of the pastor from the Biblical view was given. The exegetical study of Biblical texts on the role of the pastor was limited to those texts with the greatest relevance to this study. For this project, Ephesians 4:11-12 is a key text. The Bible defines the pastor's role and purpose for ministry in Ephesians 4:11-12:

   It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

3. The third goal of this project was to ascertain the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. This goal was also fulfilled. Three test groups were selected to receive surveys in order to gain information as to their perception of the

\[\text{1The New International Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1986), 1033.}\]
role of the pastor in the Southern Baptist Church. The goal was also accomplished. The three test groups provided critical information for this research, which enabled the author to establish a prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches.

4. The fourth goal of this project was to use the findings of this research to help educate Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and the laity of Southern Baptist Churches so that they might understand the Biblical role of the pastor in the local church. This could be done in a classroom setting. While writing this project, the author was asked to put together a syllabus to teach this material as part of an educational curriculum for pastors and laity of the Christian County Baptist Association in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. I would also like to see this project developed so that it could be utilized to teach young pastors in other associations and Bible Colleges.

The Research Instrument

The research instrument was a five-page questionnaire. The instrument included two sections: 1. Personal Information. 2. The Pastor’s Priorities. The personal information section of the survey was adapted from and the pastor’s priorities section was taken from Byron Fenwick’s work, “The Perception of the Role of the Pastor in the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces of Canada. It proved to be an excellent instrument in fulfilling the goals set for this project. By the responses to the survey, the instrument proved to be easily understood by all the respondents, while at the same time, providing a wide spectrum of responses. One section of the instrument was there to measure the pastor’s frustrations when it comes to his role as a pastor. The responses to this item were overwhelming, but seemed to add no value to this research.
The Selection of the Test Groups

To ascertain the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, a select group of pastors, seminary students, and laity from Southern Baptist Churches were sent surveys. The selection of Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist seminary students, and Southern Baptist laity to insure a wide cross section of representation was very important to this research.

Surveys were sent to 200 Southern Baptist pastors. There was a conscience effort to mail these surveys to pastors serving in different areas of the country and in various size churches. There was a very good response to the 200 pastor surveys that were mailed. Of the pastors, 144 responded to the surveys. This is a return rate of 72%, a response that was well above expectations. The pastors who responded to the survey were very candid in their remarks, and it was easy to tell much time and thought had gone into their responses.

Surveys were also sent to 200 Southern Baptist seminary students. As with the pastors, a great effort was undertaken to see that these surveys were sent to all of the Southern Baptist theological seminaries so as to reach a more diverse group of individuals. The seminary students were also very open in their remarks on the survey. Of the 200 survey's mailed and distributed, 122 of the surveys were returned. That is a return rate of 61%. As with the pastors, this return rate was well above expectations.

Surveys were sent to 200 Southern Baptist church members. Again, there was a conscience effort to mail these surveys to laity serving in different areas of the country and in various size churches. A criteria for selection for this group was that the members had to be currently serving on a pastor search committee in their church or had served on
a pastor search committee in the last 12 months. These surveys were sent to Southern Baptist laity by mail, addressed to the church they belonged to and directed to the chairperson of the pastor search committee. Of the 200 surveys mailed, 118 were returned. This is a return rate of 59%, and this as well was well above expectations. These surveys, as with the other test groups, included candid replies to many of the questions.

The Value of the Research

The information gained through the surveys and the Biblical research could be of value to Southern Baptist Churches. Whether this research is beneficial to Southern Baptist pastors, Southern Baptist Seminary students, or Southern Baptist laity depends upon the development of the findings of this research into a formal training setting.

The research indicated a difference between the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. All members involved in Southern Baptist life need to take note of the confusion between the Biblical view and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches in order to avoid conflict and problems in pastor/church relationships.

Pastors and churches could use the findings of this research to better understand each other and the expectations that each group has for the other. If the pastors of Southern Baptist Churches and the laity of these churches are operating with different views on the pastor's role in the church, difficulties and discouragement will follow. But, if pastors and the churches can understand their differences and focus on the Biblical role of the pastor, each party can moved toward Godly ministry, with contentment and focus.
This research could serve as a tool to assist pastors and churches to recognize their differences and move toward a pastor who is serving based on the Biblical view.

Seminary Students could also benefit from this research. The focus of all of the Southern Baptist theological seminaries is to train pastors to serve in Southern Baptist Churches. It is, therefore, important that the Southern Baptist seminaries realize the differences between the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. This research could contribute to the awareness of the differences in the Biblical view of the role of the pastor and the prevailing view of the role of the pastor. This awareness in the difference of the two roles would allow Southern Baptist seminaries to design courses in their curriculum that would prepare current and future pastors to be aware of the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. But, this could also be used to teach students their role as a pastor from the Biblical view and so they could be better prepared to be a pastor in Southern Baptist Churches.

The Impact of the Research on the Author

Finally, this research has benefited the author. The author has struggled with the role of the pastor in the local church since the time of his call and during his time of service as a pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The ultimate goal of the author in ministry has been to be the best pastor that he can be with God's leadership and the direction of the Holy Spirit. But even with this outlook, with all of the expectations of the pastor based on the prevailing view of the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches, this has been confusing.
Being a pastor in a Southern Baptist Church is a very important call and even a greater honor. This research has strengthened the author’s convictions in that belief, and this research has also brought to light the truth of being a God-called pastor. This author has learned, by looking at the prevailing view of the role of the pastor as given by the pastors, seminary students, and the laity that have responded to the surveys, that as a pastor, he must be aware of all of the expectations and perceptions others have regarding the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. The author has learned the pastor must be able to do the work of the pastor as set forth in the Biblical view of the role of the pastor without allowing the prevailing view of the role of the pastor to control how this author fulfills his call.

As a pastor, this author must focus on the Biblical view of the role of the pastor. The author must look at the findings of this research, and then, look at the author’s understanding of the Practitioner Role and the Practitioner Role Tasks and how the author sets his priorities. In looking at all of the information, this author must keep in mind the Bible and the instructions set out in Ephesians 4:11-12. This research has given the author the conviction that, for one to fulfill the role of the pastor as based on the Biblical view, this author must be God’s man and to be true to the calling that God has given. The author must function as a “pastor/teacher,” and establish his tasks and priorities with the ultimate goal of “equipping the saints for the work of ministry.”
Dear Participant:

I am a pastor of a Southern Baptist Church and a Doctor of Ministry student at Liberty University. I am conducting research and writing on my thesis, *The Role of the Pastor in the Southern Baptist Church: A World Biblical View Verses A Prevailing View.*

The purpose of this survey is to discover your thoughts on the role of the pastor in Southern Baptist Churches. You are one of 200 pastors, 200 seminary students, and 200 members of Southern Baptist Churches that is being asked to complete this survey. Your opinion is very important and could help to improve the understanding of the role of the pastor in the local church.

Thank you for your time. Please express your views as frankly as possible and be assured your responses will remain anonymous.

Rev. Will Stone
APPENDIX B

Sample Survey

Pastors:

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please mark the following items, which pertain to you.

1. What is your age?
   
   _____ 18 – 34
   _____ 35 – 49
   _____ 50 – 64
   _____ 65 or over

2. What is your marital status?
   
   _____ single
   _____ married
   _____ separated or divorced
   _____ widowed
3. Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?

_____ yes (mark all that apply)

_____ 0 – 5 years old
_____ 6 – 12 years old
_____ 13 – 18 years old
_____ older

_____ no

4. What is your Education level?

_____ some college

_____ university undergraduate degree

_____ Master of Divinity

_____ Doctor of Ministry or PhD

_____ other

5. Where did you receive your education?

_____ Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____ Golden Gate Theological Seminary

_____ Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____ Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____ Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____ New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

_____ Seminary Extension

_____ other (please specify) ____________________________________________
6. How long have you been in your current ministry?
   ____ 1 – 5 years
   ____ 6 – 10 years
   ____ 11 years or more

7. Does your church employ others on the pastoral staff?
   ____ yes
   ____ Associate Pastor
   ____ Minister of Education
   ____ Minister of Music
   ____ Minister of Youth
   ____ other (please specify) __________________________
   ____ no

8. What is the total membership of your congregation?
   ____ 1 – 99
   ____ 100 – 299
   ____ 300 – 499
   ____ 500 or more

9. What size is the community in which you serve?
   ____ 1 – 999
   ____ 1000 – 9,999
   ____ 10,000 – 49,999
   ____ 50,000 – 99,999
   ____ 100,000 or over
APPENDIX C

Sample Survey

Church Laity:

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please mark the following items, which pertain to you.

1. What is your age?
   
   _____ 18 – 34
   _____ 35 – 49
   _____ 50 – 64
   _____ 65 or over

2. What is your sex?
   
   _____ male
   _____ female

3. What is your marital status?
   
   _____ single
   _____ married
   _____ separated or divorced
   _____ widowed
4. Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?

_____ yes (mark all that apply)

_____ 0 – 5 years old

_____ 6 – 12 years old

_____ 13 – 18 years old

_____ older

_____ no

5. What is your Education level?

_____ some college

_____ university undergraduate degree

_____ Master’s degree or higher

6. For what length of time have you been a member of a Southern Baptist Church?

_____ 1 – 5 years

_____ 6 – 10 years

_____ 11 – 20 years

_____ 21 years or more

7. What is the total membership of your congregation?

_____ 1 – 99

_____ 100 – 299

_____ 300 – 499

_____ 500 or more
APPENDIX D
Sample Survey

Seminary Students:

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please mark the following items, which pertain to you.

1. What is your age?
   ____ 18 – 34
   ____ 35 – 49
   ____ 50 – 64
   ____ 65 or over

2. What is your sex?
   ____ male
   ____ female

3. What is your marital status?
   ____ single
   ____ married
   ____ separated or divorced
   ____ widowed
4. Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?

    ____ yes (mark all that apply)
    ____ 0 – 5 years old
    ____ 6 – 12 years old
    ____ 13 – 18 years old
    ____ older
    ____ no

5. Are you a member of a Southern Baptist Church?

    ____ yes
    ____ no (if no, please specify)

6. In what degree program are you currently enrolled at Southern Seminary?

    ____ Master of Divinity
    ____ Master of Theology
    ____ Doctor or Ministry or PhD
    ____ other (please specify)

7. In what year of your studies are you currently at Southern Seminary?

    ____ first
    ____ second
    ____ third
    ____ forth
    ____ other (please specify)
8. Are you currently involved in a ministry in a Southern Baptist Church?

_____ yes (if yes, please specify) _______________________________

(Also indicate how long in that ministry)

_____ 0 – 4 years

_____ 5 – 10 years

_____ 11 years or more

_____ no
APPENDIX E

Sample Survey

THE PASTOR’S PRIORITIES

In your opinion, how high or low of a priority should each of the following tasks be for a pastor? It is worth remembering that not every task can be of the highest priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very high</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>moderate</th>
<th>low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Visiting sick, shut-in, or grieving persons.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leading the church in worship which creates a sense of the presence and holiness of God.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comprehensive teaching of the Bible’s total message.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Visiting church members regularly and faithfully in their homes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Developing effective church programs to meet people’s needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Preaching evangelistic sermons which call for a decision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Preaching relevant Bible-based messages.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Giving careful attention to the details of administrative responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Helping the church to develop thorough plans for the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Providing extensive training for new converts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Conducting the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in a reverent manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Counseling persons with problems and those who are about to be married.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Helping church committees and organizations to function effectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Pastor tasks not mentioned which are of special concern to you. (please specify)

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Please return now to the preceding statements and select the FIVE most important tasks and rank them in order of priority – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

1. Number in the order of importance the following pastoral roles.

____ Administrator

____ Preacher

____ Teacher

____ Worship Leader

____ Organizer

____ Pastor

____ Other (please specify) __________________________________________

2. What image or concept best explains the work of a pastor?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

3. What experiences have most shaped your understanding of the pastor’s role?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
4. (For pastors only) What aspects of your work cause you the most frustration?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your cooperation!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Horne, Chevis F. “Pastor, Your Role is Important,” Baptist Program: January 1985.


Schooley, Keith. “What is the Biblical Role of the Pastor in the Church.” 1 January 2005 [article online]; available from http://www.bibleanswerstand.org/pastors.htm; Internet; accessed 26 June 2005.


VITA

Wilford A. Stone

PERSONAL
    Born: February 9, 1964
    Married: Paulette C. Pullam, November 9, 1991
             Micah Collen, born July 14, 2004

EDUCATION
    B.S., Mid-Continent College, 2003
    M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003

MINISTERIAL
    Ordained: September 11, 1997, Henderson Memorial Baptist Church,
             Hopkinsville, Kentucky.