

1: Continued Growth and Learning | The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church

Resurrecting Excellence aims to rekindle and encourage among Christian leaders an unselfish ambition for the gospel that shuns both competition and mediocrity and rightly focuses on the beauty, power, and excellence of living as faithful disciples of the crucified and risen Christ.

Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry L. Gregory Jones and Kevin R. After the winter snows melted, the fields looked barren, and the horizon was an endless vista of grayish-gold stubble of half-rotten straw. But after a pass with the discs, the turned-over soil glistened, and the earthy smell wafted through the air, filling my nostrils with a palpable sense of richness and potential for the harvest to come. Perhaps the most compelling result of this ambitious project is that it helps us to view the same old field of ministry with fresh eyes. At the outset of the work, project director Jackson W. Arising from this worrisome starting point, the project had both a descriptive and a normative purpose. First, the researchers were to describe the state of Protestant and Catholic pastoral leadership in the U. Second, they were to contribute to an understanding of pastoral excellence and how it can be called forth and nurtured. *Hopeful Stories in Times of Crisis and Change*. The books turn the soil of our assumptions, giving readers new eyes to see why despite difficulties so many pastors report deep satisfaction and great hopes for their vocation in ministry. In *Resurrecting Excellence*, L. The church can and ought to have a distinctive definition of excellence that is shaped by the self-giving life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Resurrecting Excellence* persuasively argues this point and draws us into the conversation about what constitutes excellence in Christian life and in pastoral leadership in particular. Drawing on the luminous work of Marilynne Robinson in *Gilead*, Jones and Armstrong portray pastoral excellence in aesthetic terms, as something beautiful to behold. Jones and Armstrong often quote this or that story or idea from one or another member of the colloquium, a practice that makes the final product feel as much like pastiche as portrait. But perhaps this is the time for pastiche, a multivalent form that invites dynamic interaction and varied points of connection. In agricultural terms, it is the difference between a newly tilled field, bursting with fertile soil, and acres of corn as far as the eye can see—awesome in its own way, but not such a spark to the imagination. While the report confirms many well-known trends greatly increased diversity of the clergy in age, gender and ethnic background; worrisome struggles with isolation and loneliness; and difficulty relating to a changing culture, for example, some surprises also surface. Perhaps most important among these is the overwhelming number of clergy who, despite various challenges, find their work enormously satisfying. Where the researchers did find discontent, it resulted from fairly predictable causes: As a self-confessed clergy watcher for the better part of 40 years, Carroll combines his own sage insights with the responses of focus groups to define excellence in ministry and to suggest means to encourage and sustain it. After noting the ways that various institutions can nurture pastoral excellence, Carroll ends with a rousing call for pastors to push themselves to be disciplined in seeking the means to learn and grow in their ministries. These books will not draw attention to themselves so much as provoke fresh and fertile thinking about congregations and the leadership of pastors who are called to work on their behalf for the sake of the world God loves. If this is so, then we can give thanks that their publication is not the end of talk about pastoral excellence, but its intensification.

2: Resurrecting Excellence: Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry by L. Gregory Jones

ch. 3 Resurrecting excellence in the Christian vocation ch. 4 Resurrecting excellence in the pastoral vocation ch. 5 Learning and leading: the cultivation of excellent ministry.

Resource Library Pastoral and Worship Excellence: Becoming more like Christ A feature story exploring Pastoral and Worship excellence. Wood and Paul Ryan offer a biblical framework for cultivating congregational conversations about pastoral excellence and standards for worship excellence. Pastoral and Worship Excellence: Becoming more like Christ Talking about excellence in church can be risky. People often meet God in well-crafted sermons, thoughtful congregational prayers, or compassion for the socially awkward. Excellence is a process Excellence is a process of becoming better than we once were, author Harold M. But Best and Wood caution against importing one-up cultural meanings into Christian excellence. And what you do, Wood explains, flows out of who you are. Gregory Jones and Kevin R. Pastors grow in imagination by paying careful attention to Scripture, creation, the church universal, and the life of the congregation. Pastors need friends to develop pastoral imagination and excellence. Rather than spending more time alone to pray, meditate, or journal, Wood asks pastors to reclaim a Christian understanding of friendship as formative. The theme of friendship runs from Aristotle through the Gospels, Augustine, and Aquinas yet is at odds with contemporary individualism. Relationship is who God is, not just what God does. His pastoral life was who he was. This congregational collaboration forms a shared notion of pastoral life and ministry. Congregations begin to think of themselves as a place where pastors are formed. Wood describes several marks of pastoral excellence in multi-staff churches: Who are your friends? Are you spending any time with them? He has worshiped in nondenominational, charismatic, Episcopalian, and seeker-sensitive churches and knows better than to hold up just one type of worship as excellent. Instead Ryan offers broad general standards that apply to excellence in any area of worship, whether music, preaching, visual arts, or hospitality. He discusses four standards of excellence and outlines a simple process for pursuing excellence in worship. Technical, aesthetic, and functional excellence Technical excellence refers to skills that we practice. Just as musicians must master scales, rhythm, chords, and reading music to become technically excellent, so those who lead prayers need to learn the basics. He suggests thinking of prayer in terms of form. A worship prayer needs at least an address to God, a name for God, and a final acclamation, such as amen. You can pursue technical excellence by studying polished ancient prayers or using a common prayer pattern, perhaps adoration-confession-thanksgiving-supplication. It involves wonder and appreciation and is something you have to experience. You might compose an aesthetically excellent prayer according to a metaphor, theme, or repeated phrase. Functional excellence refers to how a worship element functions within a community. Worship leaders often focus on technical or aesthetic excellence without thinking about how to help worshipers participate: Making a prayer more communal may mean asking different people, including youth or those with disabilities, to lead prayers naming shut-ins praying on behalf of those who struggle with depression, middle managers ordered to lay off employees, or children who have trouble learning. Worship that reflects God Theologically excellent worship reflects who God is, what God does, and who we are in relationship to God. The Father invites us into our worship. The Son perfects it and makes it holy and righteous before the Father. God is already present. You can enter the cycle of worship excellence at any point: Come to the Worship Symposium. Find a mentor, maybe in a community of worship leaders who get together periodically. Ask whether or how it is theologically excellent. Ask what else you need to expose your church to. Learn More David J. Gather a group of pastors to explore experiences in developing pastoral imagination and holy friendships. Any of these books will spark good conversations: Becoming a Blessed Church: Graham Standish Becoming Friends:

3: Education and Pastoral Excellence! Please Read!!! | Baptist Christian Forums

The task of resurrecting excellence in Christian ministry is a daily renewal of our vocation to bear witness to the new life of Easter. It is also a particularly important task in our culture, where a variety of forces has led us too often to lower our sights and to turn away from being ambitious for the gospel.

Gregory Jones As human beings, we long for excellence in our lives and among those with whom we interact. We hope to be treated by an exceptional physician. We desire to learn from a master teacher. We relish the opportunity to hear a gifted musician. For Paul, this way of excellence is a way of love patterned in Christ. Regrettably, we often lose our way by uncritically adopting worldly understandings. Excellence has become the holy grail of American culture. It is the aspiration of the athlete, the benchmark of business and industry, the essence of personal coaching. This culturally conceived excellence promotes individual effort and puts a premium on exceptional competence and skill. Such interpretation has crept into the church without any adaptation or translation into Christian terms, leading even pastors we would characterize as excellent feeling frustrated. If excellence in Christian life is only or even primarily about our expectations and our achievements, then we would agree that there is something dangerous and even perverse about commending excellence. But we also do not think that we are called to lower expectations in order to resist cultural standards of excellence. Rather, it is an appropriately Christian understanding of excellence. Ironically, in our culture it is business leaders who are helping the church reclaim our understanding of and emphasis on excellence. Jim Collins, for example, begins his important and provocative book *Good to Great* HarperCollins, by stressing that the only way we will discover and sustain excellence is if we continually highlight its significance. Too often our sights are set too low, in business as well as in the church. Collins suggests that the desire for excellence comes from within: Collins notes that the best leaders combine a personal humility with a passion for the welfare of the larger organization. Here Christians begin to recognize the contours of our own forgotten understanding. And indeed, Paul goes on to describe it: We are to be ambitious for the gospel. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are both the basis and the goal of our summons to excellence. The worthiness—the excellence—of our lives is to be patterned by Christ, and specifically the hope and new life we discover in the power of the resurrection. Our ambition for the gospel is a call to the resurrecting excellence of the Triune God. Gregory Jones and Kevin R. *Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry* There is another sense in which we use the term resurrecting excellence. The task of resurrecting excellence in Christian ministry is a daily renewal of our vocation to bear witness to the new life of Easter. It is also a particularly important task in our culture, where a variety of forces has led us too often to lower our sights and to turn away from being ambitious for the gospel. If there is any excellence in Christian life and Christian ministry, anything worthy of praise Phil 4: Within faithful Christian communities—understandings of excellence and practices of excellent ministry will often be complex and somewhat ambiguous given at least the following factors. First, at the center of our proclamation and our hope is a crucified Savior—! Third, while pursuing holiness or excellence, Christians recognize the persistent reality of human sinfulness. And finally, our own motives and efforts in ministry are often a strange mixture of sin and grace, skill and frailty. Excellence in Christian ministry is perceptible and palpable. Excellent ministry may be revealed in the number of mission trips and outreach projects and money spent in ministry efforts, but it is also revealed by the power and presence of God reflected in signs of forgiveness and gestures of reconciliation. How do we calculate the effect of reconciling forgiveness, the value of deepened prayer life, the impact of passing on faith to a child, the quiet presence of sitting with a dying parishioner or hammering nails to help provide housing for a homeless family? Such activities are crucial to the way of discipleship, yet they often seem less significant when measured against the ways of the world. Richard Lischer, in his memoir *Open Secrets* Random House, , offers an eloquent description of resurrecting excellence in ministry. In particular, he points to his own struggles in reconciling his pastoral ministry in a small congregation in southern Illinois where very little seemed to be happening at the time of the televised Watergate hearings that had transfixed the American people in the summer of Who sees this act and judges it to be good? The pastor may devote years of

conversation and behind-the-scenes maneuvering in order to promote reconciliation among factions in the community. The preacher may invest fifteen hours of biblical research and reflection on a fifteen-minute speech for no other purpose than to make God a little more believable to the congregation. Place this near-quixotic pursuit of souls beside the creamy power of people like John and Mo, and even a saint will doubt his or her vocation. Does the work of ministry really have the significance we attach to it? To be sure, the criteria by which we ought to measure Christian life will be qualitative as well as quantitative, and thus, difficult to summarize. There is no one standard or criterion for measuring excellence, other than fidelity to the crucified and risen Christ. We suggest, then, that the focus should be fixed on how congregations and pastors are bearing witness to the presence and power of God. To be sure, even with such a focus on God there will inevitably be debates and disagreements about the best images of excellence, the appropriate criteria for excellence, and whether particular congregations, laypeople, and clergy merit identification as excellent. Yet while such disagreements and debates are to be expected, a focus on resurrecting excellence will enable both the understanding and the practice of Christian life in general, and of pastoral ministry in particular, to grow in grace and purpose and in beauty in relation to God. *Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry*, co-authored by L.

4: Resurrecting Excellence Quotes by L. Gregory Jones

Resurrecting Excellence aims to rekindle and encourage among Christian leaders an uns We commend excellent teaching, seek out excellent health care, and celebrate excellence in the arts. When a Christian life or congregation is described as excellent, however, we suspect that ambition or success may be getting the better of us.

To all who have an ear: There has been much debate on this section of the BB about "educated clergy" preachers vs "uneducated clergy. Anyway, I am required to read Resurrection Excellence: Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry by L. Armstrong for a colleague group of which I am a part. It is one of the best articulations of the "why" to do a formal and seminary education that I have seen of late. I quote it here at length I hope accurately typing: She makes this argument not by emphasizing the content of what we must know, but rather the capacity we must cultivate in order to be able to pray or to be present to our suffering neighbor. That capacity, the capacity for attention, can be developed through intellectual work, she argues, because such work demands that we make ourselves patiently available to what is other than ourselves. When we develop the capacity to be attentive to grammars and ideas and vocabularies that are not our own, she insists, our capacity to pray and to be present to those who are suffering increases. My hope for these students is that they come to understand the academic work they are called upon to do in divinity school not as And I know some of your minds are made up that education is not needed. And I also know that some of you believe that me and many others on this section of the BB are "educational snobs. Service calls for some sacrifice. Preparation allows us with the help of the Holy Spirit to communicate the gospel in the most articulate and well thought out manner possible. Certainly, there are many problematic clergy on both ends but I have seen quite a few uneducated clergy bring the gospel into disrepute by ignorance and discouraging others from seeing Christianity as anything but a refuge for the uneducated and less intelligent. There are now so many options out there. If you have financial difficulty there is South Africa Theological Seminary. There is Liberty U with a great deal of distance education. That is not to say that you will not find an RA preference out there and that has to be taken into consideration when searching for education.

5: Pastoral and Worship Excellence: Becoming more like Christ

"Resurrecting Excellence in Ministry" Christian vocation, and strengthening the church Christian excellence is patterned in the life, death, and.

6: Sean Michael Lucas: Resurrecting Excellence

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7: Resurrecting Excellence/ God's Potters | The Christian Century

for Christian Formation, the Walltown Neighborhood Partnership, and a partnership. Dean Jones is the author or editor of 13 books and more than articles in varied publications. His writing and teaching cover issues such as forgiveness and reconciliation, Christian vocation, and strengthening the church and its ministry.

8: Resurrecting Excellence, Gregory L Jones Kevin R Armstrong - Shop Online for Books in Germany

Resurrecting Excellence persuasively argues this point and draws us into the conversation about what constitutes excellence in Christian life and in pastoral leadership in particular. Drawing on the luminous work of Marilynne Robinson

in Gilead, Jones and Armstrong portray pastoral excellence in aesthetic terms, as something beautiful to behold.

9: Resurrecting Excellence - Reformation21 Blog

At the center of the book is the multivalent metaphor, "resurrecting excellence." Playing off the theological theme "resurrection," Jones and Armstrong note both the power of the resurrection is necessary for pastoral excellence as well as the need to resurrect excellence in ministry, especially among mainline Protestants.

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