



www.PreciousHeart.net/ti

Can You Hear My Pain Now?—Making Pastoral Theology Relevant in a Modern World

Introduction

by Rev. Dr. Michael G. Maness

Ret. Senior Clinical Chaplain, Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Managing Editor, *Testamentum Imperium*¹

What an honor to work with so many fine-hearted scholars.

When a soul hurts, the person looks to God. Herein, the articles were chosen by Kevaughn Mattis, founder of *Testamentum Imperium*, to look at the theology of pastoral care from a host of experts from a variety of disciplines. As you will see, all have extensive experience in their fields, each 20, 30, 40 years, and some with more.

In many ways, all have given their lives to pastoral care theology. From Greece to Detroit, Michigan; Canada; Limuru, Kenya; Riverdale, Georgia; South Africa; Marburg, Germany; Pasadena, California; Gboko, Nigeria—and more—herein experts from all over the world represent hundreds of years of pastoral care for the soul.

¹ Maness earned a DMin, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a MDiv, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a BA from the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies. He is the author of nine books and over 100 articles, including *How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011—Immeasurable Value of Volunteers and Their Chaplains* (AuthorHouse, 2015; 414 pp., www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved). He is a retired senior clinical chaplain from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (20 years) and a certified professional-diplomate lifetime member of the American Correctional Chaplaincy Association, a designation no longer given. His web domain www.PreciousHeart.net hosts his books and links to over 10k sites to resources over the world and hosts perhaps the largest collection of papers and data on prison chaplaincy in the world and the most for Texas. He has been managing editor and publisher of *Testamentum Imperium* for most of its publication history, www.PreciousHeart.net/ti. See Maness3@att.net and fuller vita under his article below in chapter 16, “Ethics of Judging between Truth and Love when the Absolutely Right Choice Is Elusive.”

Senior academics and researchers mingle with senior clinical practitioners. The institutions represented speak volumes: Medical School of Athens University; Theological School of Athens University; Waynesburg University, Pennsylvania; Ephesus Project, Pennsylvania; University of South Africa; Presbyterian University of East Africa, Kenya; North-West University, South Africa; King’s College and University of Aberdeen, Scotland; Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Germany; St. Paul’s University, Kenya; Catholic Diocese of Gboko, Nigeria; Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Michigan; Heritage College and Seminary, Canada; Grace Theological Seminary, Indiana; MHT Family Life Center, Georgia; University of Pretoria, South Africa; South African Military Health Services; Eastern University, Pennsylvania; Cairn University, Pennsylvania; Texas Department of Criminal Justice; Cape Town Baptist Seminary, South Africa; Concordia University, Minnesota; Loma Linda University, California; University of Bucharest, Romania; Romanian Academy of Science; Charter Hospice, California; Asia Pacific International University, Thailand; Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Michigan; University of Marburg, Germany; H.M.S. Richards Divinity School and La Sierra University, California; Alliance Theological Seminary, New York; Fuller Theological Seminary, California; and St. Andrew’s College, Canada.

Pastoral care and its theology get a gentle boost from some of the best in the business of the soul.

I found jewels in all the articles and learned so much. Furthermore, their references revealed more intriguing books and articles that further transfixed me, and I bought several. Look at the massive bibliography. In the process of editing, I annotated a few to highlight these pathfinders’ magnificent work.

Because each speaks powerfully, uniquely, and artfully, one cannot truly rank the articles. That said, and personally, Dr. Amos Yong’s article on disability caught me off-guard and shocked me. He introduced me—and we hope to help spread the news—to a new and amazingly helpful term: the “temporarily able-bodied”! My goodness, I cannot remember when such an innocent and innocuous term confronted me so powerfully. And his article is written so well, I was totally oblivious as to how many times it occurred until I worked up the index for this volume. Though slightly aware of the

discrimination, I had little idea of the work being done on disability, the continued fight to end discrimination, the continuing struggle to increase dignity in service, and, indeed, on a “theology of disability.”² And the resources unfurled there seemed unparalleled.

The perspectives of Greek Orthodox Dr. Vasileios Thermos and Roman Catholic Dr. Robert Fastiggi enlighten, and do look at the experience they bring to bear. Professor Godfrey Harold on South Africa and Dr. Samuel Yonas Deressa on Ethiopia bring us powerful testaments. I could go on and on.

Dr. Myrna Thurmond-Malone’s midwifing model of pastoral care provided to me another unique metaphor, and from my years of counseling prisoners I could see her heart and the depth into which she walked with the souls blessed by the light of her guidance.

Each uniquely trained and tried author contributes universal insights into the grace of our great God in Christ and challenges pastors throughout the Christian world to kindly consider the heart of the afflicted. The finely hewn stones herein can be used by anyone in the ministry to sharpen their serve.

Kevaughn Mattis began *Testamentum Imperium—An International Theological Journal* in 2005 with a vision to gather scholarly dialogue from a multitude of disciplines on the security of the Christian believer, our “Great Testatment,” which in Latin is *Testamentum Imperium*. Our first publication came in 2009, titled *Perspectives on Eternal Security* with the thirteen articles from the 60 published in the 2007 journal.³

Since that time, we have published hundreds of articles from scholars from many of the best universities, seminaries, and fields of ministry from all around the world. These were specially selected to highlight the relevance of pastoral care today, and they shine a great light.

We offer this collection with a prayer that the principles and deep insights will open new avenues of sensitivity to the hearts and souls of those in travail and aid those who are called by God to serve.

² In reading this article, the 2007 movie, *Music Within*, kept coming to mind, a comedy-drama based on the true story of Richard Pimentel who lost his hearing in Vietnam, befriends a wheelchair-bound man with cerebral palsy, and becomes an activist/catalyst for the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

³ See www.PrciousHeart.net/TI/2007.

Rev. Dr. Michael G. Maness
Managing Editor, *Testamentum Imperium*
Retired Senior Clinical Chaplain
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

