

Buchbesprechungen

Thomas Georg Klammt, A Systematic Theological Investigation of the Marks of the Pastor According to Temporary Baptist Theology in South African and German Contexts. Doctoral Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Theology in the subject Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa, 2006

It is characteristic of the Congregationalist movement that inner-church structures, decision-making processes and the understanding of leadership may vary widely. Local congregations choose to form unions, conventions and fellowships with the understanding of interdependence of the local churches within these networks. But each congregation remains independent in their organizational affairs, calling and dismissing their staff persons, and, most important, interpreting the Scriptures and exercising their Christian faith.

Hence, it is impossible to define within the Baptist movement as one of the leading Congregationalist churches the *one* definition of the identity, role, position, responsibilities, and calling of a Baptist pastor.

Klammt attempts in his doctoral thesis to shed some light on the issue of multiple Baptist interpretations of the make-up of a pastor. And it is high time to raise the questions Klammt is asking. The traditional role of a Baptist pastor has been shaken in the past five decades not only by secularism and the scattering of previously closely knit Christian communities, but also by socio-political developments that have influenced theological thinking – feminist and liberation theology, globalization and the IT revolution, to name but a few. These developments have challenged congregations and ministers alike. Some new orientation is needed as to how we understand and exercise the responsibilities of a Baptist pastor in light of God's calling and human need.

Klammt's thesis is an ambitious attempt to describe the many facets of being a pastor, but without the traditional terminology which might easily polarize the debate and kill it from the start. Instead, he chooses descriptive pairs of terms to define the "Marks of the Pastor". The terms he looks at are as follows: Called & Gifted, Ordained & Trained, Leader & Servant, Preacher & Shepherd.

Restricting himself to literature and mostly to documents published (or used) by Baptists in South Africa and Germany, Klammt explains in detail how each pair of terms expresses a distinct understanding of Baptists about their pastors. He shows the limitations of these aspects and comes to the conclusion that these terms complement each other rather than being exclusive. Klammt examines two of the "Baptist Principles" in particular, the principle of "congregational church government" and the principle of the "priesthood of all believers" as they affect the under-

standing and role of a pastor. He scrutinizes these principles in regard to the make-up of a pastor, especially including the meaning of the pastor's "calling".

As with any thesis worth of serious consideration, Klammt's work raises more questions than he provides answers. His systematic attempt is noteworthy and helpful in showing the direction further research should take. It would have been of interest to the debate to explore several other questions, if Klammt did not have to limit his research to written documents.

Firstly, Klammt – a very gifted linguist – attempts to conduct his literature research in a language which is not his mother tongue, and with texts from South Africa which were (at least in part) not written in the mother tongue of the respective authors. This leaves room for misinterpretation of some very important nuances in the written but also the unspoken understandings of „pastor“ in the various cultures and contexts.

Further, if Klammt did not have to restrict his research to written documents, the important aspects of oral tradition especially in Africa would have been very valuable. In the South African context from which he is writing, literature is very limited especially within the non-Caucasian African community. Their tradition is mainly an oral one, and I suspect that a careful listening to the stories and verbal interpretations from African pastors and congregations would perhaps bring to the fore a somewhat different view. However, the often cited "Winter School of Theology" is a great place to record oral African tradition and at least this source serves as a reliable bridge into oral tradition.

One aspect helpful to further understand the South African situation would be to clearly distinguish between the different South African Baptist camps whose documents Klammt examines. In my view, the different Baptist groups in South African – for many years divided by racial lines – have been influenced over the years by very different Anglophone (and German) schools of thinking. While Klammt quotes the British excessively, he does not mention for example the distinct influence that Southern Baptist missionaries from the USA, with their particular American understanding of leadership, had on African Baptist Churches. These churches are still struggling today to free themselves from the American understanding of the role of a pastor impressed on them by these missionaries.

In terms of the German context, further debate could equally be stimulated by research beyond the literature available and by observation of the practical expressions of pastoral life in the local churches. Recent developments in organizational management for example have changed the expectations of local congregations towards their pastor. At the same time, pastors differ more and more in their own understanding of leadership in the church. More pastors now seem to emerge with a claim on

leadership authority that holds the power over the church, rather than submitting to the power of the whole congregation, which Klammt questions as the only legitimate way to adhere to the Baptist principle of the "priesthood of all believers". The question of pastoral leadership ties in with the phenomena of "emerging churches" and the broad issue of what the Christian landscape will look like anyway in the near future.

Obviously his limited research does not allow Klammt in this study to raise the question of sociological and particularly demographical aspects which determine the role of a pastor. It will be interesting to examine the vast difference between large and small congregations, between urban and rural situations, and the demand on pastors in the respective contexts.

As stated in the beginning, Klammt's thesis raises more questions indeed – a good thing for a paper which attempts to bring more clarity into a confusing topic and which aims to positively define "The Marks of the Pastor". I shall follow the debate emerging from this thesis with great interest.

Regina Claas

Klaus Jakob Hoffmann, Der Streit um die Taufe. Neues Licht auf eine alte Frage, erw. Auflage, (Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, VTR) Nürnberg 2006, 194 S., ISBN 3-937965-60-2, 17,95 €

Wie aktuell der Streit um die Wahrheit der Taufe ist, lässt sich daran ablesen, dass der Verfasser nicht weniger als etwa 100 theologische Autoren zitiert, die sich seit der Reformation bis in die Gegenwart zur Frage der Taufe geäußert haben. Hinzu kommen römisch-katholische, anglikanische, reformierte und freikirchliche Stimmen, sowie Hinweise auf einschlägige Artikel in circa 40 kirchlichen Lexika, Kommentaren, Wörterbüchern, Nachschlagewerken etc. von evangelischen Theologen höchsten Ranges. Dabei überwiegt die Zahl der akademischen Exegeten, die sich zur Frage der Kindertaufe kritisch bis ablehnend äußern, bei weitem die Stimmen von Kirchenleitungen und Stellungnahmen evangelischer Bischöfe, die trotz dieser geballten professoralen Kritik an der Kindertaufe festhalten.

„Taufe“ oder „Wiedertaufe“?

Klaus Jakob Hoffmann schreibt als evangelischer Theologe, der beinahe unversehens in den Streit um die Taufe hineingezogen worden ist. Er kennt die sakramentale Tauflehre der großen Volkskirchen, die in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts durch starke charismatische und pfingstkirchliche Strömungen aufgeschreckt worden sind, weil sich die