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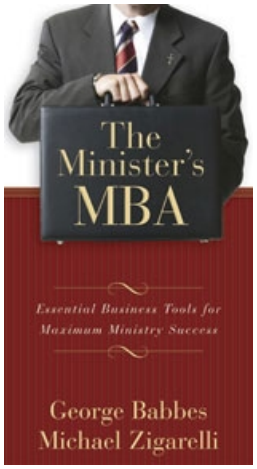

Professor of Business and Management George Babbes and Michael Zigarelli provide a "user friendly" guide for all leaders who seek to follow a mission statement, accomplish their goals, stay within their budgets, and contribute greater good to the world. *The Minister's M.B.A.* (B & H Publishing Group, 2006) is cleverly structured as a tripartite program, each of the twelve chapters being designated as a particular "course". For example, "MMBA 501: Operational Mission: Translating God's Call into a One-Sentence Reason for Being" opens this compact little book while "MMBA 512: Transformation: Leading Major Change Initiatives" closes it. Tucked away in the second part of this interesting "Minister's M.B.A." program is "MMBA 508: Accounting & Finance: From Budgeting to Shrewd Stewardship" which is presented with such clarity that even readers allergic to numbers will gain expertise in handling fiscal issues. Although various "courses" in *The Minister's M.B.A.* can be "elected" in random order, I found the structure designed by the authors—each "course" building upon preceding ones—to be particularly effective for the lay reader like me to build an "M.B.A." vocabulary and repertoire of techniques, strategies, and wisdom.

A few highlights from this book follow: "The leader's character qualities and leadership philosophy, as evidenced by his or her behaviors, drive the culture like nothing else. . . . " "Employees value lots of things besides money—time off, more interesting work, greater responsibility, choice of projects, more autonomy, video equipment, public recognition for a job well done." "And bad data is worse than no data because it generates the illusion of reason. We consequently become confident about a bad decision." "The essence of innovation is identifying and pursuing your most promising mission-consistent opportunities." Finally, quoting from *Fortune Magazine*, Babbes and Zigarelli note, '"Most unsuccessful CEOs stumble because of one simple, fatal shortcoming. . . . It's bad execution. As simple as that: not getting things done, being indecisive, not delivering on commitments.'" *The Minister's M.B.A.* is guaranteed to help prevent this fatal flaw!—Carole Lambert

Assistant Professor of Graduate Psychology Robert Welsh, along with John S. Wilson and Annette L. Ermshar, explores the pathology and behavior of stalkers through presenting four prototypical configurations of stalkers and their victims. Although the "majority of stalking perpetrators do not attempt or cause physical injury to their stalking victims. . . there is a significant subpopulation of stalkers that does represent a substantial risk for physical harm to their victim." The authors' model stresses paranoid defensive mechanisms on a continuum which reveals pathology emerging as the stalker's narcissistic grandiose defenses decrease and paranoid processes increase. They hypothesize that "stalkers are a unique subgroup of insecurely attached individuals with predominant proclivity to use seeking or pursuit behaviors as a way to maintain psychic equilibrium." The most dangerous is the "emotionally detached, glib, grandiose, and aggressive psychopath. . . . self-centered, deficient in empathy, conscience, and remorseless," "a wolf among sheep." Three other less potentially violent configurations of stalkers are also presented along with the caution that stalkers move fluidly from one configuration to another. The authors acknowledge that their model needs to be tested empirically and extensively. This fascinating and very readable "Stalking as paranoid attachment: A typological and dynamic model" is found in *Attachment & Human Development* (June 2006; 8 (2): 139-157). ---Carole Lambert

Professor of Graduate Ministry and Theological Library Roger White explores the challenge of fostering spiritual formation when instructing through distance education. How can a professor mentor students and facilitate faith development while teaching online courses? Key to his exploration of this topic are the Pauline Letters: "The letters of Paul illustrate that spiritual formation can be promoted even when extended geographical distance separates teacher and student." Paul's self-sacrificial love for his congregations, his intense belief that he could be present with them in spirit while absent in body, his personal vulnerability before them, his sincerity, and his impeccable integrity all contributed to his shepherding them long distance with very positive results. Translating this understanding of Paul's example into "E-manuel-mail", White posits five recommendations for fostering spirituality in one's on-line students: (1) Feature spiritual formation as a course goal. (2) Model a redeemed personality. (3) Personalize experience for students. (4) Encourage interaction. (5) Promote a safe and nurturing community. More specifically, he advocates "modeling transparency, establishing boundaries that create safety in online community relating, having frequent individual online contact with students in an effort to nurture them one-on-one, encouraging shy or withdrawn students to connect with the rest of the learning community and helping them overcome their barriers to doing so." Although many believe that on-line teaching risks decreasing the interpersonal communication between professor and students found in the "normal" classroom, White makes the impressive point that students who are often marginalized in just such a classroom because of physical handicaps, race, ethnicity, or gender may find a warmer and more open community in the on-line setting. White's suggestions for compassionate and competent on-line teaching are found in "Promoting Spiritual Formation in Distance Education" (*Christian Education Journal*: Series 3, Vol. 3, No. 2: 303-315).—Carole Lambert

Dr. Eileen Hulme, Executive Director of the Noel Academy for Strengths-Based Leadership and Education and Associate Professor of Higher Education, together with Frank Shushok, Jr., has written a perceptive analysis of the advantages of a strengths-based curriculum for college students in "What's Right with You: Helping Students Find and Use Their Personal Strengths." Hulme and Shushok introduce the concept of strengths-based training by describing an alteration in the discipline of psychology after World War II. According to their research, American psychologists during the post-war years shifted from a model of psychological health to one of pathology. This change in emphasis eventually led to a corresponding shift in the thinking of American college administrators and faculty: in the area of student retention, for instance, administrators often choose to interview students who have left their institutions rather than students who have chosen to stay. In academics, faculty members often focus their attention on students who are failing academically more than those who are succeeding.

Citing several positive psychological and sociological theorists whose research demonstrates that effective leaders consciously cultivate their strengths much more than they correct their weaknesses, Hulme and Shushok argue for a return to clinical balance: "Positive psychology does not negate the need for physiological interventions that address mental illness, but it adds a missing dimension that postulates that human strengths and potential for good should receive equal attention" (3). Hulme and Shushok assert that a higher education curriculum that identifies and nurtures individuals' strengths will train students to develop their "potential for good" during their years in college and will prepare them for careers in which they can excel once they graduate. One example of this type of curriculum is the Gallup Organization's StrengthsQuest program, based on findings from millions of interviews of highly successful professionals. The program identifies thirty-four "themes" within four strength-based "domains": "striving, relating, thinking, and impacting" (6). Each of these themes relates to an area of strength: for example, the ability to lead, or to gather useful information, or to think critically. Hulme and Shushok explain how an understanding of these strengths can function on very practical levels, from negotiating relationships with roommates to engaging in productive student leadership. A strengths-based curriculum also provides students with an emotionally safe avenue for discussing diversity with their peers. Most importantly, an understanding of their individual strengths can lead students to professional and faith communities where they can make positive, satisfying, and lasting contributions. Eileen Hulme's and Frank Shushok's persuasive and informative article appears in the September-October 2006 edition of *About Campus*, published by the Miami University of Ohio, pages 2-8. ---Beth Jones

Professor of Education and first Director of Research at APU Beverly Hardcastle Stanford has identified through qualitative research six group patterns which emerged in her study of elderly women who age well. Meeting in groups and interviewing privately thirteen thriving women between their mid-seventies to nineties, Stanford notes that "loving life is a common attitude for those who aged well," although most of her subjects had suffered illnesses, losses, and trauma in their lifetimes. She defines "*thriving*" as "*doing well*" and "*being happy*" in elder adulthood. The six clear themes that surfaced provide wisdom for others approaching this stage of life: (1) vital involvement and service, (2) desire to continue learning, (3) appreciation of family, health, home, and financial security, (4) valuing honesty and responsibility, (5) a positive attitude, and (6) a reliance on faith. Stanford affirms that her most significant finding in this study "was the unanticipated discovery that most of the thriving women had overcome major life challenges such as the untimely deaths of significant relatives, serious health challenges, and destructive marriages." Her findings also confirm previous studies which report that emotional health and well-being are related to religion and faith. Stanford's fascinating and inspiring "Through Wise Eyes: Thriving Elder Women's Perspectives on Thriving in Elder Adulthood" is found in *Educational Gerontology* (Vol. 32, No. 10, 2006: 881-905).—Carole Lambert

In her article entitled "Systematic Theology: Theology in, for, and from the Church," **Professor of Theology Dr. Heather Ann Ackley** defines systematic theology as "the study of the beliefs and values that Christians have agreed upon as essential to Christian faith and life since the earliest centuries of the church" (99). Aware that many lay Christians view her discipline as an irrelevant academic exercise at best and a dangerous distortion of straightforward Gospel truth at worst, Ackley constructs a convincing argument for the relevance of systematic theology to the everyday life of the church. She discusses systematic theologians from the Apostle Paul through Thomas Aquinas to Reinhold Niebuhr who have reconciled seeming conflicts between Christian doctrine and values, settled issues that have divided Christian traditions and individual Christians, and spoken to power in the face of unjust sociopolitical practices. While supporting each of these far-reaching claims with evidence from the historical record, such as the use of systematic theology to sustain the abolitionist movement during the nineteenth century in this country or to condemn Nazism and fascism in 1930's Europe, Ackley explains the heavy cost involved in accepting systematic theology as "a spiritual vocation" (105). The discipline involves years of academic pursuit in biblical studies, church history, philosophy, and practical theology; offers very limited employment opportunities; and requires involvement in church leadership in addition to regular contributions to scholarly discourse. Although Ackley emphasizes that pursuing the study of systematic theology is not for everyone, she balances this caution with an equal emphasis on the necessity of systematic theology to the church's well-being. According to Ackley, systematic theologians fulfill their vocation best when they maintain a close pastoral connection with the life of the church: "Systematic theologians teach Christians how to understand and apply the truths proclaimed from the pulpit, including how those truths fit together in a coherent whole" (103). The paradigmatic example of this wedding between worship and theology is the Nicene Creed, a liturgy created by systematic theologians in the early church to combat religious heresy, a theological statement that now serves as one of the most beloved devotional confessions of the modern day church. Dr. Heather Ackley's balanced and informative article appears in *Christian College, Christian Calling: Higher Education in the Service of the Church*, edited by Steve Wilkens, Paul Shrier, and Ralph P. Martin, published in 2005 by AltaMira Press, pages 99-109. ---Beth Jones

Associate Professor of Graduate Theology and Biblical Studies Lynn Losie demonstrates carefully and thoughtfully how the Apostle Paul used his knowledge of Greek philosophy, especially Stoicism, to make known to the Greeks the "unknown God" and suggests that this model currently has great relevance for evangelism in a postmodern era: "In our postmodern world, . . . as Western theologians are becoming more aware of the influence of Western traditions on their theological formulations, Asian theologians need to be liberated from overly Westernized forms of theology, especially when their own cultural traditions are in many ways more in tune with the ancient values of biblical cultures and thus can provide insights for the development of theology." Losie views Paul's discourse in Acts 17:16-34 as "an example of the use of general revelation in the proclamation of the gospel in a cross-cultural situation." He notes how Paul communicated with the Epicureans and Stoics via their philosophies rather than Greek religions or cults, obviously aware that serious Greek philosophers pondered questions about nature and deity in order to arrive at wise ethical ways to live. Paul uses ideas about a supreme god that would be familiar to his listeners and even quotes from some Stoic poems: "for we too are his offspring" (Acts 17:28) is cited from Aratus and "for 'in him we live and move and have our being'" from Epictetus. Although some Biblical commentators believe that Paul's speech in Athens was a failure, two listeners became Christians (Acts 17:32-34): "Thus, Paul's effort should be judged a success." Losie further affirms that both of Paul's evangelistic speeches in Acts, the first to a Jewish audience (Acts 13:13-41) and the second to these Athenians, were intended by Luke to be paradigms. The latter model "validates the theological concept of general revelation and shows how it may be pressed into the service of the missionary task." "Paul's Speech on the Areopagus: A Model of Cross-cultural Evangelism: Acts 17:16-34" is found in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004, pages 221-238).—Carole Lambert

The editors of the Research Reporter wish you a refreshing and joyful Christmas as you celebrate the birth of the Christ child. We look forward to reviewing more of your articles and books in 2007.

APU FACULTY RESEARCH

The Office of Faculty Research and the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants work to assist APU faculty with their research and dissemination endeavors, provide external research funding, and promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.

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