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**BOOK REVIEWS****BUILDING CULTURES OF TRUST**

BY: MARTIN E. MARTY

Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010

184 pp. Hardback

ISBN 978-0-8028-6564-5

Martin E. Marty reflects on trust in the public sphere in *Building Cultures of Trust*. He begins by claiming that those who are old enough to remember pre-9/11 United States also remember their notions of security at that time. Post-9/11, he argues, these notions for our generation have morphed into conspiracy theories, mistrust, and war, encompassing a long list of culpable, blame-worthy institutions and situations.

In this context, Marty invites readers to think about creating new cultures of trust in which people learn to count on other members of community by understanding that community members will keep commitments. Marty states his thesis: "...the development of cultures of trust will hold more promise and can draw on the energies of more citizens if there is a concentration on the building blocks of society" (43). He addresses cultures and their subcultures in three areas—science, religion, and public life—to develop his model.

Marty's case study, the public mistrust displayed between many scientists and religionists, begins by examining definitions of trust in the religio-secular world. Chapter 3 investigates biblical and theological narratives in the Judeo-Christian spectrum that illustrate trust and mistrust, faith and fear. Chapter 4 explores humanistic philosophy, invoking thought from Plato, Hobbes, Hume, Kierkegaard, Kant, and Onora O'Neill, about a millennia-long discourse on the nature of trust. Marty raises an important assertion here from his historical survey: the greater the sense of security or assurance, the less need for trust.

Chapter 5 engages the case study, public scientific and religious debate. Mistrust occurs between these two worlds,

Marty asserts, because each makes the mistake of offering irrelevant conclusions by applying a category mistake (*ignoratio elenchi*), based on misplaced rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion. In other words, the argument itself becomes a category mistake when it functions on premises that are not related directly to the issue at hand. Marty claims that it would be more helpful for building trust when each representative gives distinctive voice to a mode of experience in a mutual conversation that is at its core open and hospitable. Chapter 6 speaks to the nature of such conversation, formulating it as following a question wherever it may go—in the mode of dialogue or civil discourse. Marty relies on English philosopher Michael Oakeshott and Roman Catholic theologian David Tracy to articulate the significance and qualities these conversations might exhibit. Chapter 7 describes what happens when conversations between science and religion move specifically to the public square, where conversation becomes controversy. Marty takes on politics, theorizing that good example (one who sheds light), and cultivation of trust through binding customs of behavior and honoring contracts in public life are the components of trust-building necessary for fruitful human interaction.

Marty ends his work with the “how to” chapter. He cautions that building communities of trust is difficult and incremental work. He reminds us that universes of discourse in the private and public sphere overlap and affect each other. Again, relying on Oakeshott, Marty claims that creating a meeting place in discourse requires a “distribution of ideas and their convergence,” perhaps inconclusive, unending, or even playful, while at the same time contributing to human good. Argument, inquiry, and information are components of the conversation but may not be the most captivating. Dialogue creates deeper understanding, forming meeting places where disciplines uphold their integrity and acknowledge their weaknesses. For example, science and religion are interacting enterprises, working to discover the mechanism and meaning of the universe. Civil discourse might weave together a more significant, deeper pursuit of both enterprises for the common good. Marty ends with an outline of the *Religion and*

*Public Discourse* document, developed at Park Ridge Center in Chicago, which lists behavioral commitments that promote effective civil discourse. The epilogue is a playful narrative that drives home his thesis.

Marty shows noteworthy research initiative in his book, though he spends a significant amount of space defining terms and introducing a rationale for his method before he actually tackles the approach and substance of his thesis. The book is a massive historical and literary survey about the evolution of trust and community, interlaced with current political, social, and scientific narratives as supporting information for each chapter's focus. At times the argument gets lost in the detail of a well-read author who is interested in everything. Nonetheless, Marty's conclusion about meeting places and civil discourse for the sake of the common good, illustrated by the science-religion conversation, makes a convincing case for our efforts to bring about a more humane, trusting world.

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**LIVING INTO COMMUNITY:  
CULTIVATING PRACTICES THAT SUSTAIN US**

BY: CHRISTINE D. POHL

Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012

248 pp. Paperback

ISBN: 978-0-8028-4985-4

Christine Pohl has created a multifaceted jewel in *Living into Community*. Her purpose is to illumine four practices that sustain all types of human communities but are perhaps most crucial for communities of faith. The practices of gratitude, promise-making and keeping, truthfulness, and hospitality are each explored in detail in their own section, although she notes that the practices are intertwined and support each other. Each section opens with a chapter situating the practice within theology, scripture, Christian tradition, and other traditions. The second chapter in each section delineates how implementing each practice is more difficult and complicated than it appears. The final section chapter explores how each practice is deformed by sin and frailty. Pohl closes each section by offering ways of strengthening the practice individually and within congregations. She also includes questions for group reflection for each practice at the end of the book.

Pohl begins by exploring the practice of gratitude—a response to understanding that our lives are redeemed by grace. Gratitude is central to sustaining our communal lives and its absence kills. However, gratitude is complicated by obliviousness, feelings of obligation, and the expectations of others. Pohl is most adept in describing how gratitude is deformed, both individually and communally. She eloquently depicts the effects of envy and its destructive impact on the community as well as the results of grumbling and using gratitude to gain power and favor. It is obvious she has spent much time considering how these deformations are played out in congregations. To offset these deformations, Pohl suggests creating habits of grateful reflection, testimony, blessing, and Sabbath-keeping.

Pohl moves to promise-making and keeping in the second section. Promises and the related topics of fidelity and commitment are the internal framework that supports relationships. Yet, like gratitude, promises are complicated. Our culture no longer supports promise-keeping. Utilitarian attitudes and carelessness undermine our capacity to honor trust-filled commitments. Here again, Pohl does not hesitate to delve into the messiness of communal life. We often betray and abandon each other and fail to endure hard times patiently. We too-easily cast aside vows. As this section concludes, she suggests ways leaders and congregations can assist their members as they struggle to keep commitments large and small.

The third section examines the practice of living truthfully. Living truthfully involves much more than just conveying the facts, but instead consists of “truth-shaped living.” As such, it encompasses reliability, faithfulness, and the telling of many types of truth. Truth-telling is not easy and Pohl identifies every complication, especially how those complications play out in a congregation. She has a keen eye (and ear) for how deeply the various forms of lying are embedded in our lives and our communities. In the final chapter of this section she explores the many ways we deform the truth. Once again Pohl suggests practical methods for strengthening truth-shaped living, both individually and communally. One of the strengths of this section is that the question of whether it is ever proper to lie is explored from different viewpoints.

The final section explores the practice of hospitality. Pohl has written extensively on hospitality in *Making Room* and states that she does not wish to review that material here. Thus, the section on hospitality consists of one chapter, which succinctly explores the history and tradition of hospitality, its complications, and deformations. For complications and deformations she moves to a question and answer format to explore common difficulties in offering hospitality to those who need it most but are often unable to respond to it or openly abuse it. The chapter closes by offering the ways in which the four practices are intertwined.

This book is full of wisdom for individuals and communities. It underlines practices that are often overlooked as we focus on getting things done in our congregations. However, its real strength is in highlighting how difficult these seemingly easy practices are and how all of us fail in them. I highly recommend this book to communities wishing to deepen their life together.

*Reviewed by*

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**KNOW YOUR STORY AND LEAD WITH IT:  
THE POWER OF NARRATIVE IN CLERGY LEADERSHIP**

BY: RICHARD L. HESTER AND KELLI WALKER-JONES

Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009

156 PP. PAPERBACK

ISBN 978-1-56699-388-3

“Our aim in this book is to show ministers how to explore their story of reality, how to tell it to other group members, and to consider how it can be used as a resource for leadership. This narrative perspective holds that because there’s always more than one story about a situation, we have choices about which story we will embrace” (3).

*Know Your Story and Lead with It* is the fruit of a six-year project sponsored by the Lilly Endowment’s Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Project in Raleigh, NC. Twenty clergy were involved in the project, participating in long-term groups that provided safe space and structure for exploring their personal stories and developing their own narrative leadership approaches. The project’s co-directors and the book’s authors are a Baptist minister, professor, and pastoral counselor (Hester) and a United Methodist pastor who coaches in a children’s creative problem-solving program (Walker-Jones). True to their topic, they begin by telling something of their own stories. Both describe moving from thinking of themselves as experts always expected to know the answers and provide solutions, to what they call a not-knowing stance. This means approaching every situation with curiosity and openness to learning more.

Hester and Walker-Jones are keenly aware of the difficulties clergy face. They note that pastors are answerable to a whole congregation, and since so many people have access to them, daily life is often unpredictable. Lay leadership may shift frequently so there may be a deficit of workers and at the same time a surplus of advice-givers. The work is of course never-ending. “Clergy leadership is an acid test for any leadership approach. If narrative leadership works here, it can surely work in other settings” (6).

In the authors' view of narrative approach, a story is an account of connected events. A story has a plot including an intention to head somewhere, a phase of uncertainty or crisis, and a resolution. Storytelling has a context—the situation that calls forth the re-telling—and a purpose. But storytelling always leaves things out; information is dropped like scraps on a cutting room floor, unnoticed or forgotten. And so “the gap between what actually took place and what people can tell of it is the place where a narrative approach does its primary work” (11). A first step is to pick up some of what's on the floor and “thicken” the story with more information and detail. As stories are told and heard in more depth and detail, previously unrecognized resources are discovered, and leadership capacity increased.

Subsequent chapters tell the story of the clergy groups and how they functioned. Practices of hospitality and clear group covenants created relatively safe places set apart from participants' day-to-day contexts. Thus the groups became liminal spaces where participants had room to explore alternative understandings of themselves and the important others in their lives. The authors recommend core activities that include writing down one's earliest childhood memory, asking how a favorite biblical narrative might be connected to that memory, drawing a family genogram, and telling of a leadership experience before age twenty. Participants also experienced a structured process for presenting case studies and opportunities to meet individually with mentors. Along with the themes of not-knowing and thickening, another theme in the book is that of overhearing. The clergy groups in the project were set up to promote people overhearing others' responses to their stories, thus opening up more possible meanings.

The book moves on to explore how this open, not-knowing approach can shape a pastor's style of leadership, allowing social power to build and the leadership of others to emerge. Signs of transformation in clergy are identified and “little narratives of hope” affirmed as an alternative to grand narratives. The concluding chapters give instructions for forming and leading narrative clergy peer groups.

As with many Lilly Endowment projects, the tremendous resources available to participants opened many possibilities for learning and transformation. And not all of this would be easy to replicate. The type of narrative peer group the authors recommend requires time, commitment, and probably money at least for travel. However many ideas and approaches could be applicable to classroom case study work, informal peer consultations, and individual reflection on ministry and leadership. There is rich reflection on a number of topics including liminality and ritual, overhearing, assumptive covenants, self-differentiation—and a very useful list of “questions to ask when put on the spot” (58). The encouragement to let go of the expert, fix-it role is an especially powerful word to all in positions where training and the expectations of others impose those expectations.

*Reviewed by*

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**LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE:  
WISDOM FROM THE EARLY CHURCH FOR TODAY**

BY: CHRISTOPHER A. BEELEY

Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012

149 pp. Paperback

ISBN978-08028-6700-1

Christopher A. Beeley, in *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today*, focuses on the ministry of bishops, priests, or pastors of the early church, whom he refers to as "primary leaders of the church," people engaged in the core task of shepherding God's flock. Early sources, the author argues, depict that bishops were the primary leaders of local churches who devoted much more of their time to pastoral ministry than to mere administration.

Beeley contends that pastoral ministry in the early church was characterized as servant leadership. Authority and service in pastoral ministry involve the demonstration of God's formative and redemptive power in the absolute humility evident in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Gregory the Great avidly accentuates this idea as he describes the key job of bishops as "servants of the servants of God" (11). Beeley references the epistle to the Ephesians, and notes that leaders are endowed with spiritual gifts to equip the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ. He further asserts that our accomplishments as leaders should be measured against the maturity of people in Christ (14).

The gist of pastoral ministry is the imitation of Christ, the Great Shepherd. Beeley invites pastoral leaders to minister as fellow shepherds of God's flock, and he grounds his discussion in examples from the early church. He cites, for example, Gregory Nazianzen and Augustine, who remind us that Christ is "always the source, the standard, and the primary agent of ministry" whom leaders need to emulate closely (23). Beeley describes pastoral ministry as the "cure of souls," involving "mending, healing, and restoring individual and social life" (57) and, ultimately, "participation in the ministry of Christ himself" (74). Teaching and preaching of the word, as Augustine emphasizes, are the

primary vehicles in the cure of souls. Although pastoral ministry focuses on the “hidden person of the heart” (1Pet. 3:4), Beeley strongly asserts that it is no less concerned about the physical and social aspects of life.

Holiness is the main constituent of spirituality of pastoral leaders, adorned with the virtues of love, hope, and faith (34). Authentic leaders command credibility as they demonstrate these virtues in their life and ministry. Leaders, thus, shun vainglory, which Gregory the Great refers to as the prostitution of oneself “to the corrupting spirit in [one’s] lust for praise” (39). Pastoral holiness, on the other hand, is characterized by a continual humility and repentance, counter to the “moral rigorism” that was evident in the movement of Novatianism in the early church (53). Highlighting the needfulness of repentance, Beeley further avers that “repentance is the way to holiness for all Christians, but it is especially necessary for the leaders of the church” (51).

Church leaders encounter many challenges as they carry out the Trinitarian mandate of “leading people toward God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit” (24). Leadership challenges have to do with time management in not only the discipline of study and nurture of God’s flock, but also in administrative and philanthropic matters. Many of the early pastoral literatures indicate that church leadership is one of the most difficult of tasks. Gregory Nazianzus, for instance, reflects that “the leadership of men and women, the craftiest and most complicated of all creatures, seems to me the art of arts and the science of sciences” (54). The difficulty of guiding people, moreover, arises from the reluctance and unwillingness that people usually show toward endeavors to address their internal needs and the influence of satanic forces. Pastoral leadership, with all its challenges, however, remains a rewarding ministry for its immeasurable value in “building up the entire body of Christ” (120).

Wisdom from the early church can be used to enlighten our leadership practices within the church today. Beeley’s *Leading God’s People* could be an important source of wisdom both for leaders of a congregation and for training church leaders at every echelon, in spite of its tendency to emphasize the rather monochromatic pastoral leadership at the cost of

team leadership, which was an equally important and dominant type of leadership in the early church. This and other aspects of the early church leadership, therefore, remain fertile fields for further research.

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**WOMEN, CHURCH, AND LEADERSHIP NEW PARADIGMS:  
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF JEAN MILLER SCHMIDT**

EDITED BY: EUNJOO MARY KIM AND  
DEBORAH BETH CREAMER

Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012

185 pp. Paperback

ISBN 978-1-60899-901-9

Inspired by the writings, teachings and leadership of Jean Miller Schmidt, the nineteen contributors to this work honor their colleague with essays on women, church, and leadership. Schmidt was a pioneer and leader in theological education at the Iliff School of Theology. The authors take cues from her life and speak to women today about the steady, deep roots that are needed for bold, engaging, adventurous, and authentic leadership.

The construction of the book honors Jean Schmidt's life-long quest to take her theological musing from within the academy to the local church, to practice her theology in various ministry contexts. The chapter authors write from the context of theological education, while each respondent is a practicing minister, giving the view from the local church.

In the introduction, Eunjoo Kim and Deborah Creamer set the stage for the three-part volume by reminding us that changing gender roles, globalization, consumerism, and advances in technology and communication are causing decisive shifts in the theory and practice of leadership. The three chapters in Part One offer a socio-historical analysis of leadership in the American church, based on women's experiences and theological insights. Four chapters in Part Two focus on fundamental areas of pastoral leadership—preaching, vocation and identity, spirituality and pastoral care/counseling. Each chapter proposes a new paradigm of leadership from women's perspectives. Part Three, "Women and Scripture," is a single essay that helps us explore the feminine metaphor of Zion as refuge—a place where God is present and available to God's people.

The audiences for these essays and pastoral responses are women and men preparing for ministry, experienced ministers currently serving in diverse ministry contexts, and those looking for insights to help them refuel and find renewal. The book could be used in a variety of teaching settings, from the academic classroom to the weekly, small group conversations that happen in church communities of all denominations. It lends itself to an eight-part or eight-week study.

For this reviewer, the book was an engaging reflection on diverse issues of pastoral leadership. For years I have had the practice of skipping over a Foreword, Preface and Introduction, in favor of jumping into the meat of the volume. I did the same as I began this review, ending with a reading of the Foreword. To my surprise, I found myself wishing that the editors had used the Foreword by Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore as the final word for the whole work. Moore does a brilliant job of pulling together the book's diverse content into a few summary pages about the images of leadership—the roots, risks, and rudders. She notes that:

- God is the taproot of leadership—the roots for one leader may seem strange to another—*Missio Dei* is shared, but the particular roots of an individual leader of community of faith differ according to the gifts and challenges that are particular to them.
- Risk is involved in following one's deepest passions—community is strongest when it is rooted in a common mission, yet people function best when they draw upon their unique gifts, passions, and experiences.
- God's Spirit is the primary rudder, and various rudders developed through years of experience and wisdom support people with extraordinary calls—leadership is deeply challenging and we need new models and courage.



The book is a refreshing read, a wonderful recognition of the work of Jean Miller Schmidt, and a much-needed addition to the conversations we have been having around the table of the Academy of Religious Leadership (ARL). It should be added to the reading list for all future church leaders and part of the renewal reading list for us all.

*Reviewed by*

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