

SHEPHERD'S ANTHOLOGY

The Nature of Spiritual Care

The goal of all preaching, catechesis, liturgy and pastoral care in the church is to bring God's people into communion with Jesus Christ so they might have health and wholeness. Those serving in the pastoral office are sent by Jesus Christ, in His name and stead, to bring healing and release for souls ravaged by sin and in bondage to death. Pastors have a heavenly calling for a very earthly people: to announce the presence of the living Lord among His people. In spiritual care, the task is to administer the particular medicinal gifts of the gospel that address the unique sickness of each soul. While the care of the soul involves the human being in totality, it is addressed most pointedly at man in his inmost being.

To speak of the cure of souls, then, is to understand that pastoral care is not in its ultimate sense a pastor's care. All genuine seelorsgers provide a therapeutic ministry that is actually Christ's own ministry in His church. This ministry has spiritual, bodily, emotional and mental dimensions precisely because it is a ministry to souls, created in the image and likeness of God, but living amid the broken rubble of their own and others' sins.

DOXOLOGY seeks to provide contemporary pastors with the time-honored skills of spiritual care. These are the only weapons that will stand up against the wiles of the Devil. In every age savage wolves attack the flock, and they frequently begin with the shepherd. When pastors themselves each receive soul care, not only will they themselves be spared much heartache and spiritual destruction, but they can better hone their own skills in the art of spiritual care for the benefit of the sheep in their own flocks.

Dr. Harold L. Senkbeil
Executive Director, DOXOLOGY

Not the Groom, But the Best Man

The pastor who seeks to learn the art of the cure of souls begins cautiously and humbly; he must have the heart and soul of John the Baptist: *I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him. The bride belongs to the bridegroom.* (John 3:28-29) The pastor, while compassionate and empathetic to every soul, consciously remembers that the soul is pledged to Another.