

*Resurrecting Excellence: Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry*, L. Gregory Jones & Kevin R. Armstrong. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006. ISBN-10: 0-8028-3234; 182 pgs.

In this book, which emerges in part from a series of conversations with scholars and pastors on the topic named in the title, Jones and Armstrong confront this nettlesome question: Can pastoral excellence be discerned, measured, and taught? The authors offer helpful typologies for conversation about ministry, such as the difference between the “office,” “call,” and “profession” of the pastorate. They also expand an argument that appears in others of Jones’ writing about what he calls the “relay race” assumption undergirding the relationship between seminaries and the church. The fifth chapter entitled “Learning and Leading: Cultivation of Excellent Ministry,” taken alone, can serve as a helpful resource for a group conversation with theological educators from different disciplines.

*Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters*, Scott Cormode, Abingdon Press, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-0-687-49223-7; 139 pgs.

Cormode makes the bold claim that the task of the pastoral leader is to frame reality in spiritual terms for a faith community. By providing numerous examples of how this can be done well, Cormode argues his case successfully. Perhaps the most helpful contribution this book makes to theological education – field education in particular – is that it ultimately answers the perennial student question: “What does this abstract discipline have to do with ministry?” Cormode’s definition of leadership leads one to conclude that all theological education is leadership formation, as long as it helps the student to see the world from a theological perspective. The book’s cover art, with a pair of glasses through which a black-and-white scene emerges in full-color, says it all.

~ Sarah Drummond