

Preparing the Pastors We Need

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[*Preparing the Pastors We Need: Reclaiming the Congregation's Role in Training Clergy*](#) by **George Mason (Alban Institute)**

Preparing the Pastors We Need is long overdue. For years, many Christians have longed to see ministers receive in-depth, hands-on church-based training that applies and extends what they learned in seminary. The Lilly Endowment launched its Transition into Ministry initiative to meet that need in 1999. Pastor George Mason helped pioneer the endeavor through the pastoral residency program at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas. His new book reports and explains what Wilshire and other teaching congregations have learned about equipping pastors.

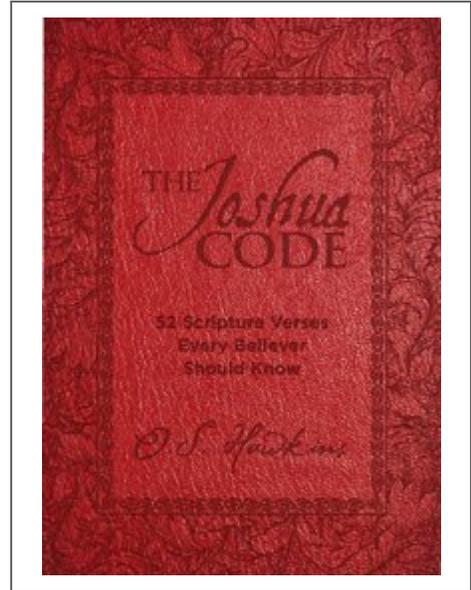
Wilshire's pastoral residency program trains four young ministers at a time. Cohorts of two residents begin their training every summer. Across two years, residents do the work of a pastor, receiving guidance from the pastor and other staff mentors in four primary areas of competency—preaching and worship leadership, teaching, pastoral care and administrative leadership. Wilshire's program has produced strong and capable pastors who now lead churches across the nation.

Mason provides a meticulous guidebook for considering whether a church is able to conduct a pastoral residency program. He covers everything from assessing readiness, to building the program, recruiting residents, implementing and sustaining the program, and evaluating effectiveness. Pastors and church leaders who feel called to help prepare pastors for effective ministry and desire to explore that possibility should read this book. As Mason notes, that exploration is a divine obligation.

Marv Knox, editor

Baptist Standard, Plano

[The Joshua Code & The Pastor's Guide to Leading & Living](#) by O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson)



These books share two common bonds. O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources, wrote both. And proceeds from their sale support Mission: Dignity, GuideStone's financial-support program that helps more than 2,000 retired Baptist ministers and/or their spouses.

The Joshua Code provides a year-long regimen of memorizing, meditating on and applying 52 key Bible verses. Hawkins found inspiration by listening to his granddaughter quote a Psalm. It responds to the command and promise of Joshua 1:8: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

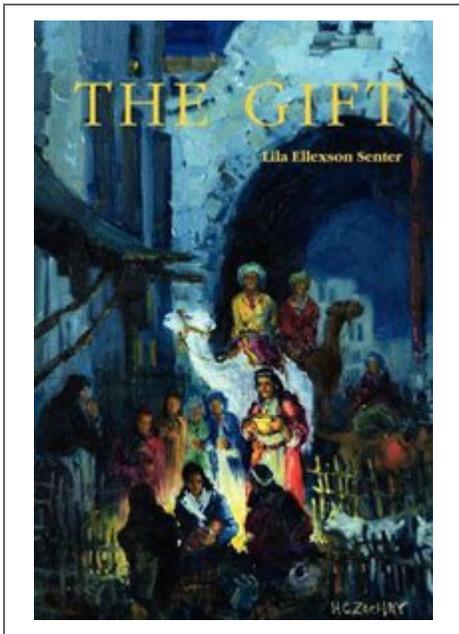
The Pastor's Guide covers a range of 26 topics in the life and practice of ministers. Hawkins draws on his experience as pastor of churches small and large, rural and urban. Each chapter systematically focuses on four points related to each topic—practical "how-to" suggestions, the pressure

of potential problems, an example of how to deal with the issue in the pulpit, and personal applications.

Marv Knox, editor

Baptist Standard, Plano

The Gift by Lila Ellexson Senter (Dorrance Publishing)



Lila Ellexson Senter calls this slender book a medley of Christmas “word gifts.” She gathered poems, prayers, Bible verses, quotations and brief anecdotes given at Christmas through the years. Then she paired them with lovely original photos and artwork provided by friends, creating a book to promote and support Abilene Hope Haven, a ministry to the homeless.

The result is a delightful collection, suited for devotional reading or to pass along to someone else who would draw inspiration and encouragement from a “word gift.” In varied ways, Senter reminds readers God gave the greatest “word gift” of all when he sent his Son, Jesus—the Living Word of God.

Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard, Plano