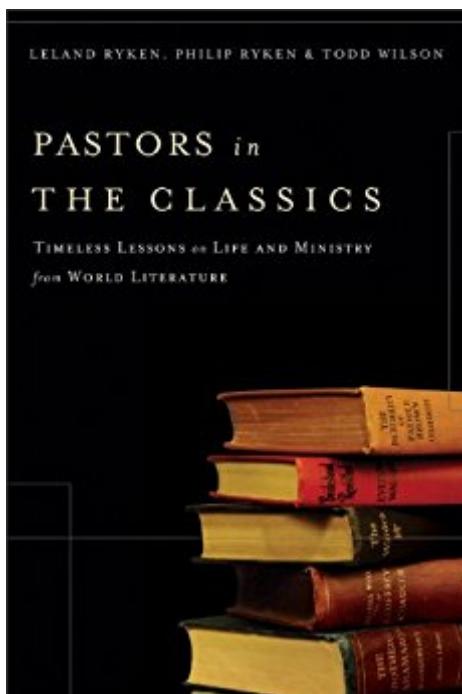


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Pastors In The Classics: Timeless Lessons On Life And Ministry From World Literature



Synopsis

Throughout the history of English literature, church ministers have figured prominently in novels, plays, morality tales, and even poetry. *Pastors in the Classics* is a unique, unprecedented collection of relevant literary masterpieces in which the pastor's experience is a major part of the story. Part 1 is a reader's guide to twelve important classics written over four centuries and covering seven different nationalities. Each chapter not only describes and interprets the work in question, it also highlights a specific feature of pastoral ministry explored in the work. Part 2 is a handbook that defines the canon of literary masterpieces that deal with the pastor's experience, offering reading suggestions for both ministers and lovers of literature. From the familiar (*The Canterbury Tales*; *Cry, the Beloved Country*; and *The Scarlet Letter*) to the lesser-known (*Silence, Witch Wood*) to the surprising (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), this collection uncovers the good, the bad, and the ugly ways in which pastors have been presented to the reading public for the past half millennium.

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Customer Reviews

This book teaches us to read literary works, with a special focus on learning the portrait of pastors, leaders, and the pastoral calling. Written in two parts, it is different from a typical non-fiction book in the sense that it shows rather than tells us what to do. The authors gently remind us that literary works are firstly to be understood as a presentation of a human experience. This keeps readers patiently mindful and emotionally ready to shake hands with the text. Secondly, literary texts are for readers to appreciate the authors' interpretation of that experience. This enables readers to embrace the author's understanding like a warm hug. Whether the reader agrees or not is another matter. Understanding is key. Thirdly, it is for the enjoyment of the many creative literary techniques, forms, and beauty. This helps readers to look with the original authors, interpreters, and all, to look in the same direction to appreciate life as a whole. Part One is the major section of the book, drawing a sharp portrait of the pastoral life through 12 classic works. It lists some essential information like author's background, date published, era concerned, book length, setting, and plot overviews. What is helpful is the description of the characters played out. The unique value of this book is the way the authors sieve out the implications for pastors, leaders, and the pastoral ministry, through themes and insights for leadership. For example, in "The Scarlet Letter," the Rykens summarizes the book with the words, "Hidden Sin and Its Consequences" while at the same time describes the themes of sin, shame, revenge, punishment, salvation, and forgiveness. It is a 'negative example' that can be used to facilitate a life more aware of the potency of sin.

This is one of very few books on an interesting and significant subject, and I hope it becomes widely used. This volume covers seventy books in which Christian ministers feature prominently. Twelve books are covered in depth, while the rest have enough information to help you evaluate whether you want to read the book. In fact, I found this book made me want to read some of the novels it describes. I have read eleven of the books (The Canterbury Tales, The Diary of a Country Priest, Gilead, And the Shofar Blew, The Book of Bebb, Death in Holy Orders, the Father Brown stories, Mansfield Park, Pride and Prejudice, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, and

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