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Book Review

Calling Out the Called: Discipling Those Called to Ministry Leadership

By Scott Pace and Shane Pruitt
William Carey Publishing, 2023
250 pages
US\$35.99, Paperback

Reviewed by Desmond W. Wallace, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church of Sulphur, LA, and a Doctor of Ministry student at The Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University.

The authors of *Calling Out the Called*, Scott Pace and Shane Pruitt, both have ample experience in ministry leadership, theology, and ministry. Pace received his Doctor of Philosophy and Applied Theology from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and he serves as vice president, Dean of Undergraduate Studies (The College), and Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Pruitt serves as the National Next GEN Director for the North American Mission Board. He has also served in many different capacities within church ministry as a lead pastor, church planter, and student pastor. Pruitt holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Christian Counseling and has written many publications.

Calling out the Called enables those who feel God's calling to vocational ministry to realize and better understand God's call. It consists of eleven chapters, with an introduction and conclusion and a notes section covering the material referenced in each chapter.

The book starts with a powerful introduction and then focuses on how

“calling out the callers requires answering tricky questions.” The introduction sets the stage for the necessity of calling out the called—especially those called to ministry leadership—because the need for more vocational ministers is crucial. The authors provide staggering data, highlighting the “decline of pastors in vocational ministry by fifteen percent between 1992 and 2017, which indicates a crisis because there are more pastors over sixty-five than under the age of forty” (1-2). There is a “need for honest answers that help understand the work of ministry and the ministry calling” (1).

Pace and Pruitt provide a wealth of knowledge and understanding of pastoral calling through personal experience in the context of their ministries. This book covers some of the significant aspects of helping individuals to sense, see, feel, and obey the call that God has purposed them to fulfill. The authors focus on equipping individuals called to ministry by establishing a foundational understanding of the actual work involved in serving others. Pace and Pruitt also explain how to maintain a focus on life’s work and purpose while making the necessary sacrifices associated with serving in ministry. They also do a great job of providing a theological and practical understanding of the call to ministry and the individual’s particular area of gifting, which can aid in targeting and focusing one’s ministry and area of service.

The book begins by highlighting that “calling to ministry should become a concept that is consistently talked about in a variety of ways within the ministry setting” (10). The authors suggest several ways that could help “lead individuals to prayerfully consider potential ministerial calling through extending invitations inviting believers to consider ministry, sharing testimonies providing personal experiences, celebrating the church through highlighting positivity, providing opportunities through service opportunities, and training” (11-12).

All in all, ministry is about serving God first to serve others effectively. As indicated in Chapter Eight, ministry is a “call to servanthood, and requires a deep relationship with God, which is the primary focus” (116). Relationship with God is developed through time and intentionality. Just as building relationships requires time and focus, guiding individuals to understanding the calling of God to vocational ministry takes time and intentionality. This book challenges and encourages all who feel the call to ministry and are working on the call to serve wholeheartedly. The book also helps to mentally, spiritually, and physically prepare individuals to understand the full range of what it means to serve in vocational ministry.