

For the past fifteen years I have served as a minister. Besides pursuing an education in theology and ministry, serving as a minister has included opportunities such as volunteering in a local county jail, short-term mission trips to Brazil, and vocationally serving with churches in part-time and full-time roles. I've learned some important lessons along the way, including the sort of minister God has formed me as and gifted me for. I like the word *minister* because it speaks of one who serves. More than a job, ministry is a way of life lived in service to God and neighbor. Ultimately, serving as a minister is about helping people as a follower of Jesus.

A Minister of the Gospel

So who am I as a minister? Perhaps the best way of summing this up is to say that I am a pastoral theologian and leader. I don't mean a theologian in the academic sense, though I appreciate the work academic theologians. What I mean is that I am a pastor and teacher, in terms of spiritual gifting for leadership (cf. Eph 4:11).

- **As a pastoral theologian**, I am continuously engaged in a conversation about what God is saying in scripture in light of present circumstances. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the apostle Paul says that "all scripture is inspired of God" that people might be "equipped for every good work." So whether preaching, teaching a Bible class, or having a conversation with someone over a cup of coffee, I am trying to understand the gospel and its implications for the present circumstances so that others might live by the grace of God full of faith and hope in Christ. Whether it is preaching on Sunday, visiting with someone in a hospital room on Monday, having a Bible study with someone on a later day, and so forth, I enjoy it very much.
- **As a leader**, I am seeking to help the church faithfully participate in the mission of God. In Ephesians 2:10, the apostle Paul describes the church as God's "handiwork" or as God's "work of art" as the New Jerusalem Bible renders the passage. Paul is describing the church as God's artwork on display to the world as the church embodies the gospel through "good works." My role is helping equip a local church for good works so that the gospel is faithfully embodied among the local community in a relevant manner. This is a task that requires listening to the way God is speaking among scripture, the local church, and the local community.

This is the minister I believe God has made me and called me to be. Though far from perfect, I seek to follow Jesus and take scripture seriously. With passion, courage, and conviction, I want to help a local church live as an embodiment of the gospel.

So, how could I help your church? By listening, modeling evangelism and ministry, by mentoring people for discipleship, and by leading the church in biblical reflection for its spiritual and numeric growth through preaching and teaching. If this is the kind of minister your church needs, then contact me at k.rex.butts@gmail.com and let's begin a conversation.