

STORY CARE



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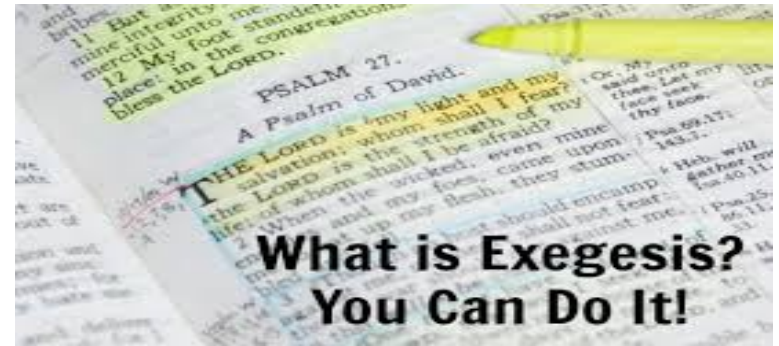
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Story Care and Reading Skills

- We can learn to become better readers through the art of close reading.
- Good News: The skills for reading literature and reading a life are connected.
- If you have learned to do biblical exegesis, you can learn to exegete a life story.



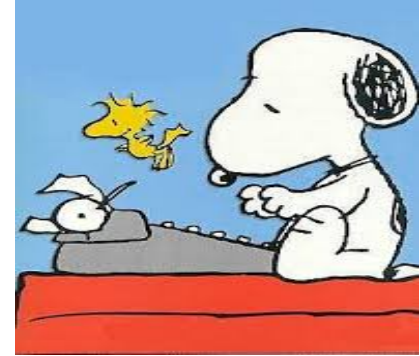
Five Steps of Pastoral Exegesis

- I Getting the text in view
 - II. Getting introduced to the text
 - III. Attending to the text
 - IV. Testing what is heard in the text
 - V. Moving toward interpretation of the life story.
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- Similarities between exegeting texts and lifestories:
 - Both seek a deeper understanding of the story, including its setting, context, form (such as plot and character) and history.
 - A full understanding of the text precedes interpretation.



Reading Practice: Memoirs

- Memoirs present a portion of a life story
- and work well for reading practice.

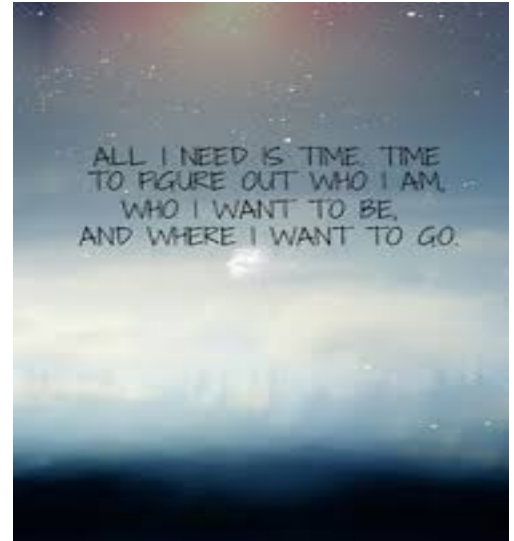


- By applying the skills of life story exegesis we can strengthen our ability to read unfolding life stories, but those of others and our own



Pastoral Memoir

- Pastoral Memoirs: Written by a person in ministry
 - Reflecting on the practice of ministry
 - Describes the formation of



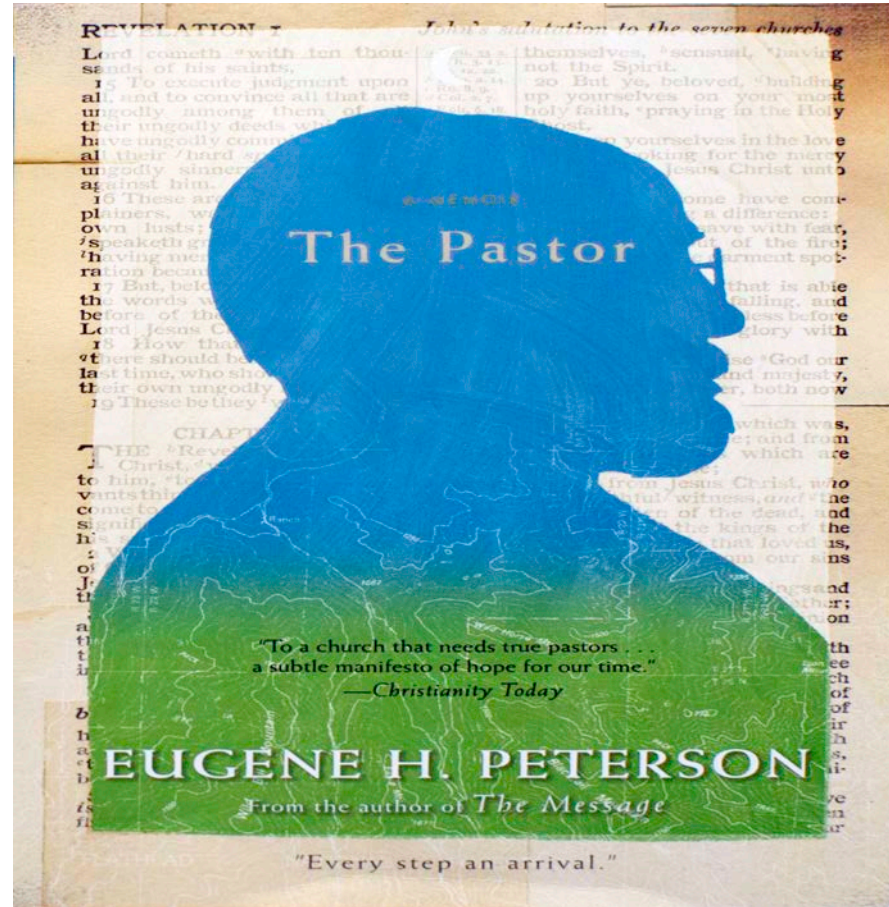
Pastoral Identity

- Pastoral identity is a part of our narrative identity shaped by a myriad of stories from our families, our congregations, denominations, and the larger culture.
- We may not always be aware of influence of the stories of congregations, community, denomination, generation and culture on our pastoral identity.
- Pastoral identity is expressed in how we lead, teach, preach, and care for others and ourselves.

Pastoral Identity: Who Are You In Ministry?



Eugene H. Peterson



Eugene H. Peterson

“I was a pastor long before I knew I was a pastor: I just never had a name for it. Once the name arrived, all kinds of things, seemingly random experiences and memories gradually began to take a form that was congruent with who I was becoming, like finding a glove that fit my hand perfectly- a *calling*, a fusion of all the pieces of my life, a vocation: Pastor.”

Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir*, (New York: Harper One, 2011)

Exegeting A Life Story: Peterson

Attending to the larger story.

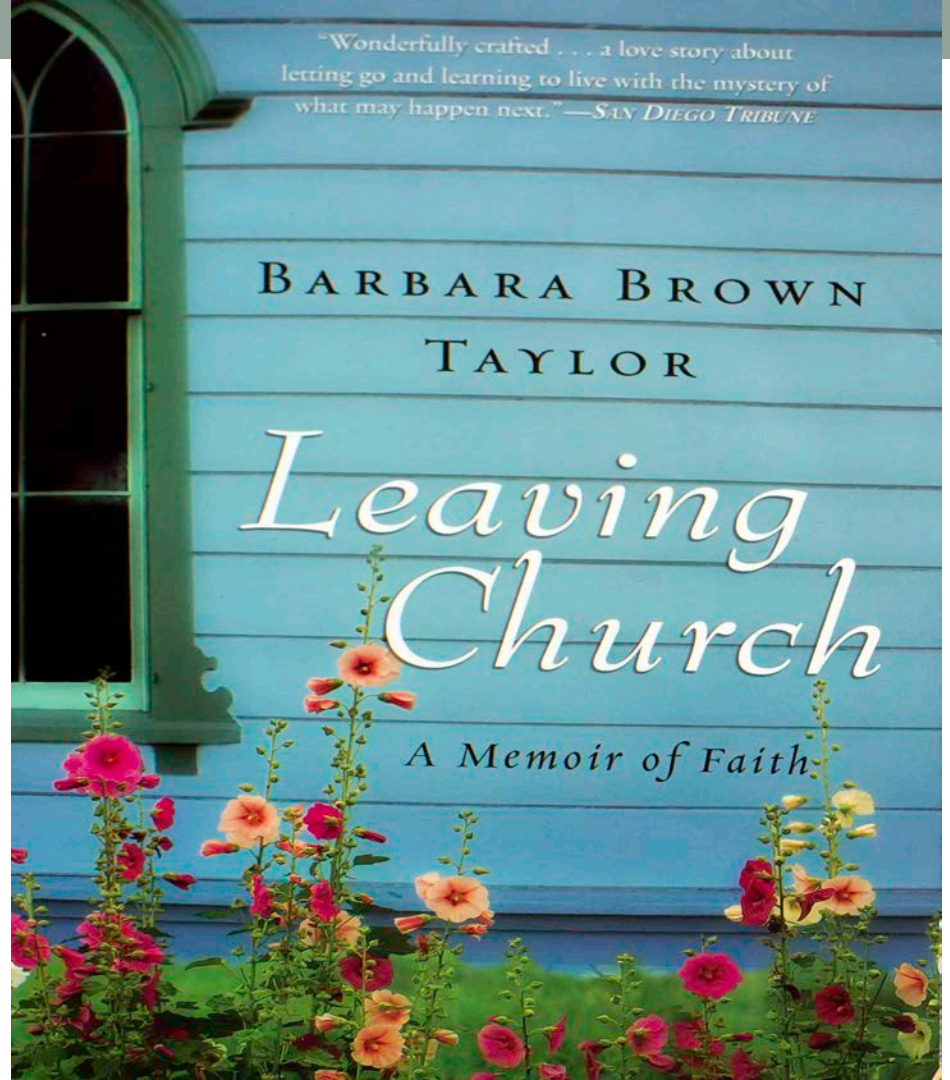
- Peterson's story church fits into the larger story of his generation and a particular historical period.
- He is building a church in the early 1960's when Christian churches were continuing to grow, in a newly developing suburb of Baltimore, buoyed by post war optimism and economic development.

Exegeting A Life Story: Peterson

Influence of narrative environment

- Family:
 - Childhood experiences of accompanying his mother a lay preacher to Montanan logging camps.
- Church:
 - Upbringing in a denomination wary of the world and grounded in Scripture.
- Culture:
 - Resistance to the professionalization of ministry and the adaptation of of business management techniques to church leadership.

Barbara
Brown-Taylor



Barbara Brown-Taylor: Leaving Church

- It was as if I was strapped to a chair, watching the film I had worked on for five years get stuck in the projector.
- Unable to move, I watched the lovely frame in front of me melt and burn, opening up a hole through which I saw things I had managed not to see before.
- ...Beyond my heroic image of myself I saw tiresome perfectionism, my resentment of those who did not try as hard as I did, my huge appetite for approval. Above all, I saw that my desire to draw as near to God as I could had backfired on me somehow. I had ended up with compassion fatigue.

Exegeting a Life Story: Brown-Taylor

Attending to the larger story.

- A child of her time:
 - Shaped by formative experiences of her generation: the Vietnam War, the assassinations of two Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr, all of which had occurred by the time she was eighteen.
- Baby of the Boom:
 - A spiritual seeker who entered seminary to “spend as much time reading, thinking, and writing about God” as possible.
 - Wary of institutions, including the church and ordination.

Exegeting a Life Story: What's Missing

- A Story of Grief

- Brown Taylor becomes the pastor after the sudden and unexpected death of a former beloved pastor.
- She does not tell us about the congregations' grief or how she shepherded them through this loss.
- How might unresolved grief have been linked to the congregants fears of growth or Brown-Taylor's compassion fatigue?

Exercise:

- How might Peterson and Brown-Taylor's stories help us think about our own developing sense of pastoral identity?
- How does your generation shape your view of ministry?
- Do you find yourself trying to resist certain cultural images of ministry?
- Have you struggled with images of ministry that you found to be unrealistic or left you feeling empty?

From Close Reading to Re-Storying

- Many co-authors vie for a role in shaping our life stories, including family members, church members, and voices from the larger culture our.
- Some of these co-authors are helpful and some are not. This discernment allows us to engage in the process of re-storying.
- Close reading of our life stories can also remind us to acknowledge God as the one who told the first story, and spoke the word brining the cosmos into being.

Exercise

✧ Imagine a publisher has just contacted you to write your pastoral memoir.

✧ What's your title?

✧ Can you imagine chapters?



✧ Would you cover your whole ministry or specific episodes?

What's Your
Story?