PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN ACTION
Christian Thinking in the Service of Church & Society
Paul Ballard & John Pritchard

“Practical Theology is a particular field of theology.” p1. So:
Is it specialist field with own special practices or
Is all theol practical in its focus?
“Practical theology therefore is the place where the reality of all theology as a
practical discipline is clearly manifest.” p6

Signs that it has moved into centre stage.
Bob was first lecturer in Pastoral Studies at B’ham Uni.
1993 International Academy for Practical Theology (Princeton)
2. Pastoral care – standards and skills Clinical Theol Assn (now Bridge Pastoral
Foundation – Frank Lake) Westminster Past Foundn (Kyle)
3. Church and Society – IMA, CAP, CCWA, ECUM, UTU, WTF.

- Cultural Shift: post-modern, post-Christian
- New Age, Eastern religions, Social Sciences offer caring professionals theory
  and skill.
- Contextualisation of Theology – context seriously, Kingdom outcomes.

Theology is: Faith Seeking Understanding – Anselm  Practical Theol is this. [But I
much prefer to say Practical Theology is ‘faith seeking intelligent action  LG]
- Descriptive – what Xns have believed
- Normative – calling Xns back
- Critical – facing challenges
- Apologetic – implications

Definition of Terms
Practical Theology – the whole ambit
Pastoral Studies – social sciences, pastoral care by ministers
Pastoral Theology – underpins pastoral ministry
Ministerial Studies – usually part of Practical Theology
Pastoralia – nuts and bolts of ministerial practice
Pastoral – usually ordained personal care

[what about Political Theology?]

Deductive way – starts with truth above and deduced
Inductive way – starts with evidence. Both *then* ask – what now do I do?
Is faith only real in action?
But distinction between theory and practice disappears when learning about God is in order to Know God in himself.

MODELS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

1. Applied Theory
From the Enlightenment.
   A: Applies results of social sciences (Rogerian Counselling)
   B: Bible, Tradition, Natural Theology established by reason.
Schleiermacher: professional practice from good theory
Takes authority seriously but is clerical & always from theory to practice.

2. Critical Correlation
Dialogue between social question and theological answer. (Tillich)
Dialogue between pastoral concern and ethics. (Don Browning, Chicago)
Dialogue between shared meanings and diversity of culture and interpretations (hermeneutics)
Story is key mode for Critical Correlation

3. Praxis Model
“Hermeneutic of suspicion”, Habermas. What’s really going on, who benefits?
Analyse everything – including analyst. Dialogues with gospel – new praxis.
Sees academy at disposal of people of God for the marginalised.
Can be tendency to activism, shortcuts, can become a new dogma.
4. **Habitus Model** – (Edward Farley)

Long training of heart and mind. Orthodoxy as ‘right glory’.
Formation of ministers, habit of prayer and devotion. The prayerful community gives rise to ethical norms and practice.

**Chapter 6: Pastoral Cycle & Tools**

Common ground.
Cardijn’s Catholic Association – see judge act.

*The book then describes the process of the circle.*

**Types of Change Outputs:**

- Cognitive Change
- Affective Change
- Behavioural Change
- Interpersonal Change
- Social & Political Change
- Spiritual Change

**Spiritual Change:**

- Engages suffering
- Depth and integrity
- Draws on the image of journey [?]
- Humility [postcolonial?]
- Values Narrative – we are writing God’s fifth gospel
- Corporate
- Mission-focused & ecumenical
- Celebratory
Practical theology is an academic discipline that examines and reflects on religious practices in order to understand the theology enacted in those practices and in order to consider how theological theory and theological practices can be more fully aligned, changed, or improved. Practical theology has often sought to address a perceived disconnection between theology as an academic discipline (also known as dogmatics), and the everyday-life and practice of the church.