



Ministry And Community: Recognizing, Healing, and Preventing Ministry Impairment

Len Sperry

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Ministry impairment seems to be increasingly problematic for the Church today. While the minister's personality or character are typically the focus of media attention, impairment is also influenced by organizational dynamics such as the recruitment and promotion policies of the religious organization as well as its culture and structure. *Ministry and Community* highlights the interplay of personality dynamics and organizational dynamics for eight of the most common forms of ministry impairment and shows how they can be recognized, treated, and prevented.

In *Ministry and Community* Len Sperry looks at the dynamics underlying and supporting narcissistic behavior, sexual abusing behavior, psychopathic behavior, borderline behavior, depressive behavior, obsessive-compulsive behavior, manic-depressive behavior, and passive-aggressive behavior in ministry personnel. He then describes a number of effective strategies that can modify these individual and organizational dynamics.

Rather than affix blame on ministers or the Church, this book offers a series of observations on concerns faced by the Church and provides suggestions for addressing these concerns.

Ministry and Community also offers a measure of hopefulness about the prospects for professional ministry in the Church. These suggestions include specific criterion for determining fitness for ministry, guidelines for realistically appraising ministry performance, and specific indications and contraindications for psychotherapy and other psychiatric interventions.

Chapters are "Ministry and Community Today: An Overview," "Narcissistic Behavior in Ministry," "Sexually-Abusing Behavior in Ministry," "Psychopathic Behavior in Ministry," "Borderline Behavior in Ministry," "Manic-Depressive Behavior in Ministry," "Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior in Ministry," "Depressive Behavior in Ministry," "Passive-Aggressive Behavior in Ministry," "From Healing to Wholeness in Ministry and Community," and "Fitness for Ministry: Some Selection Criteria."

Len Sperry, MD, PhD, is vice-chair and professor of psychiatry at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He has consulted widely with religious organizations and published some 200 articles and book chapters and 30 books.



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