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Ministry Burnout

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presence of a *woman* in the pulpit breaks female stereotypes, what she says and how she says it may in fact reinforce those stereotypes. Fourthly, the book is wonderfully well organized, with appropriate summaries and sub-headings. Each chapter poses the problem, analyzes its several dimensions in practical ways, and draws out implications. (Only in the last chapter did I have difficulty following her, and I'm still not sure why I get *six* characteristics of "liberation feminist liturgies" to her stated *five* nor why they are sometimes called "assumptions".)

Should men read this book? YES! YES! YES! Though the book is intentionally addressed to women preachers, I found myself again and again reflecting on my own call, my own hermeneutics, my use of language, my concepts of authority, my metaphors for God, and, yes, my world of stereotypes of women.

I hope the book gets the widest possible circulation, not only among preachers, but discussion groups and pulpit committees as well. Thank you, Professor Norén!

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Ministry Burnout

John A. Sanford

Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992

XII + 117 pages U.S. \$8.99

This edition of *Ministry Burnout* is a reprint of the book first published in 1982. However, its topic is by no means outdated, and neither is the book. In the foreword to this edition, Morton Kelsey says that "John Sanford gives us tools that enable us to be faithful and yet avoid the disaster of hopelessness and burnout." This is indeed an apt description of what Sanford does in the book. In fact, Sanford himself describes the book as "a kind of cookbook: a list of recipes that have [sic] proved useful to some people" (115).

The format that Sanford uses is easy to grasp and simple to follow. He begins by laying out the "ground rules", as it were, and gives the intended audience of the book as those "whose profession it is to minister to other people through the Church" (1). He then proceeds to point out nine special difficulties that ministering persons face which can contribute to burnout. Each of the succeeding chapters, then, addresses one of these difficulties. The difficulties include having a job that is never done, seeing a lack of tangible results from one's work, and being involved in repetitive work. Dealing with people's expectations, working with the same people year after year, and the drain on one's energy from working with people in need

are also identified problems. Finally, the ministering person will have to deal with people who come to the church for "strokes", will function much of the time on their "persona", and may become exhausted by failure.

Having looked in turn at each of the preceding difficulties, Sanford includes two final chapters. The first of these chapters deals with the problem of the exhausted ego and points to the need for a spiritual pilgrimage. The final chapter addresses how to find energy again and gives eight practical suggestions for where to find our own source of energy. These final chapters are quite appropriate to the tone of the rest of the book, as Sanford points repeatedly to the necessity of cultivating a spiritual life that will nourish the soul. As well, Sanford recognizes throughout the book that all people are not going to find themselves in the same sort of situation, nor will they all require the same solution. Every solution offered is given in such a way that one is free to wear the shoe if it fits or leave it for somebody else if it does not.

Throughout the book, Sanford draws upon many other writers and disciplines. As a Jungian analyst himself, the author understands and utilizes various aspects of psychology. Several chapters have an embedded "mini-exkursus" in psychology. Although these sections may seem superfluous at first, it soon becomes apparent that these ideas are essential to understanding terminology used later in the book.

Taken as a whole, there are several factors that make this particular book stand out from others on the same topic. One such factor is the wide applicability of the book. This particular treatment of burnout is applicable to all ministering persons, whether male or female, married or single, with children or without. The author writes in a manner that is specific enough to be helpful, yet general enough to be inclusive. The book would also be helpful for all denominational backgrounds.

As one reads the book, a refrain emerges. This refrain could be characterized as "The answer is within you." There is a hopefulness in *Ministry Burnout* that makes it a potentially empowering book. Anyone who has struggled with burnout or has struggled with trying to avoid burnout will find this book to be a truly valuable resource.

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