

Bookreport FE546  
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## David Switzer "The Minister as Crisis Counselor"

David Switzer's book is basically an introduction to Counseling as a minister. Counseling of a pastor should not be confused with the counseling of professional psychologists or psychiatrists. A Minister is not able to give in depth long-term counseling like a professional. His position enables him to give short-term and crises-oriented counseling which can be very effective and prevent the necessity for longer care if properly administered. The position of a pastor lends it especially this role since the minister already has a long-term relationship with the counselee through the counselee's membership in the church. Furthermore the Pastor is in a position of authority and trustworthiness that makes counseling significantly easier than counseling by a professional who first has to build a relationship with the client and get his trust.

The book is intended to explain to the minister how to use his skills and his environment for crises-oriented counseling. Switzer puts a stress on the necessity of cooperation with skilled mental health-care professionals. Difficult cases and people demanding intensive long-term care should be given over to the professionals. Professionals are important for feedback to the pastor should he get into difficult counseling situations. Switzer therefore recommends that each minister should have steady contact with health professionals to benefit from their experience in this area and to help him avoiding pitfalls in his counseling. The book includes two articles from other authors.

**Robert Beavers** gives a short overview about the types of family systems and common behavior in these system. He distinguishes three different kinds of families.

The *Healthy Family* is a family where each of the members has a high degree of autonomy. There are frequent real encounters and sharing among the family members. Laughter and a positive tone are common. The atmosphere is open and receptive. The parents work together in a parental coalition. As a result of these conditions the family has a good task efficiency.

The *Midrange or Rigidly Structured Family* is where autonomy of the members is possible but only reluctantly allowed. A "Referee" dominates the family members. Child-Rearing is seen as a battle for the control of the children. The atmosphere varies from polite to angry or depressed. The parental coalition is poor or good by "subjugation" of one parent usually the female. Scapegoating is frequent and the family is generally resistant to change, but there is hope for good change.

The Seriously disturbed Family is the queer, odd or strange family with a lack of individual boundaries, general unresponsiveness towards each other and the impossibility of individual choice. Frequently people speak for others. There is a poor parental coalition and a child is often powerful. These families have a very low task performance.

An article of **Richard A. Hunt** gives an overview into the problems and counseling issues coming up with a divorce. Factors that lead to a divorce the usual psychological

development in a divorce and how to affect the outcome of all of it. Issues of remarriage and custody of children are touched upon.