



Why Ministers Do Not Flourish

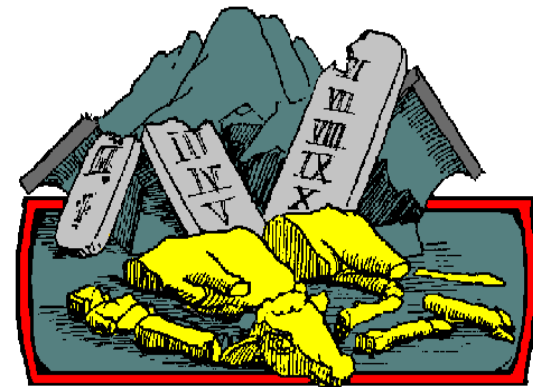


Anthony J. Headley PhD
Professor of Counseling,
Asbury Theological Seminary
Licensed Psychologist
859-858-2267

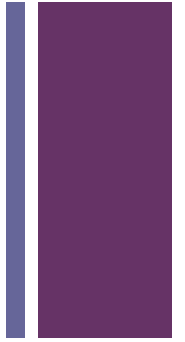


+ The Emotional Hazards of Ministry

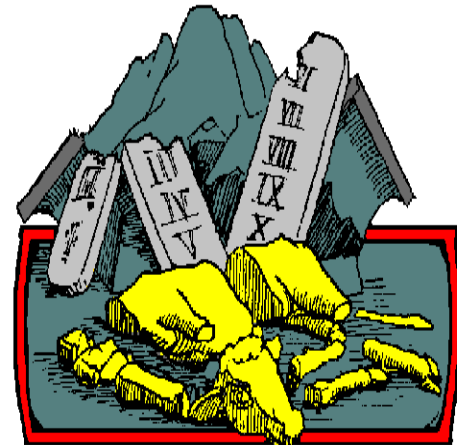
- Failure to care for self
- Nature of the work
- Responsibility for the souls of others
- Desiring others to experience God's fullness



+ The Emotional Hazards of Ministry



- Seeing believers turn cold
- Marital hazards
- Inability to use love to repair relationships



+ The Emotional Hazards of Ministry

- Lack of clear expectations
- Having to narrow a focus
- Confusing role-identity with self-image



+ The Emotional Hazards of Ministry

- Position leads to loneliness
- Inability to relax



+ Ministry is Enmeshing and Demanding!

■ Enmeshment

■ Fosters poor boundaries at several points including between one's role and one's identity

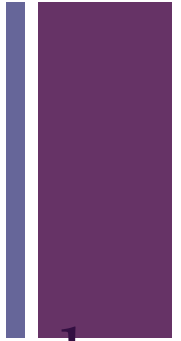
■ Absorptiveness

■ Ministry can take all the energy we have to pour out





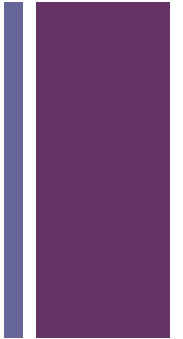
The Repercussions of Demanding Ministry



- 90% work more than 46 hours per week
- 80% - ministry affected their families negatively
- 33% - Ministry a family hazard
- 50% - unable to meet job needs
- 75% - significant stress-related crisis at least once in ministry



The Repercussions of Demanding Ministry



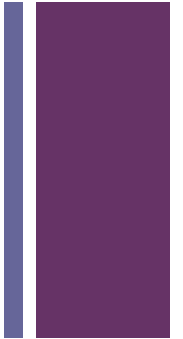
- 90% inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands
- 40% - serious conflict with parishioner at least once a month
- 70% - lower self-esteem now
- 70% - no close friends
- 37% - inappropriate sexual conduct



Ministerial Casualties

- *“Many pastors become casualties by running away from themselves and from God and into their work.”*

Shawchuck and Heuser, p. 28

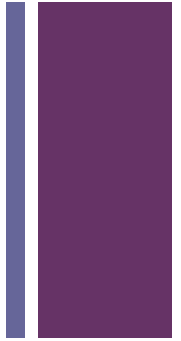




Ministry Out of Balance

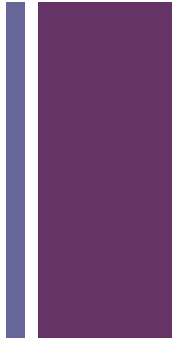
- “ I allowed my life to become a work binge of giving, giving, giving, until I gradually became aware of my own pain and loneliness...Over time, I moved from being physically tired to emotionally exhausted and finally wiped out. I was angry at God - just spiritually drained...I had burned out.”

- Episcopal Minister - Parade Magazine, 1991





Boundary Problems from Real Life



“My life is hectic!, I’ m running all day - meetings, phones calls, paperwork, appointments. *I push myself to the limit, fall into bed exhausted, and get up early next morning to do it all again.* My output is tremendous; I’ m getting a lot done. But I get this feeling inside sometimes, “So what? What are you doing that really counts?” I have to admit, I don’ t know.”

Covey: First Things First



+

Recognizing Boundary Problems in Personal Life



- People pleasers
- No limits on energy, time, space, property, relationships
- Always says yes
- Always available



+ Recognizing Boundary Problems

- Over-commitment
- Chronic fatigue
- Susceptibility to stress and burnout
- Impacts all areas of one's life & work



+

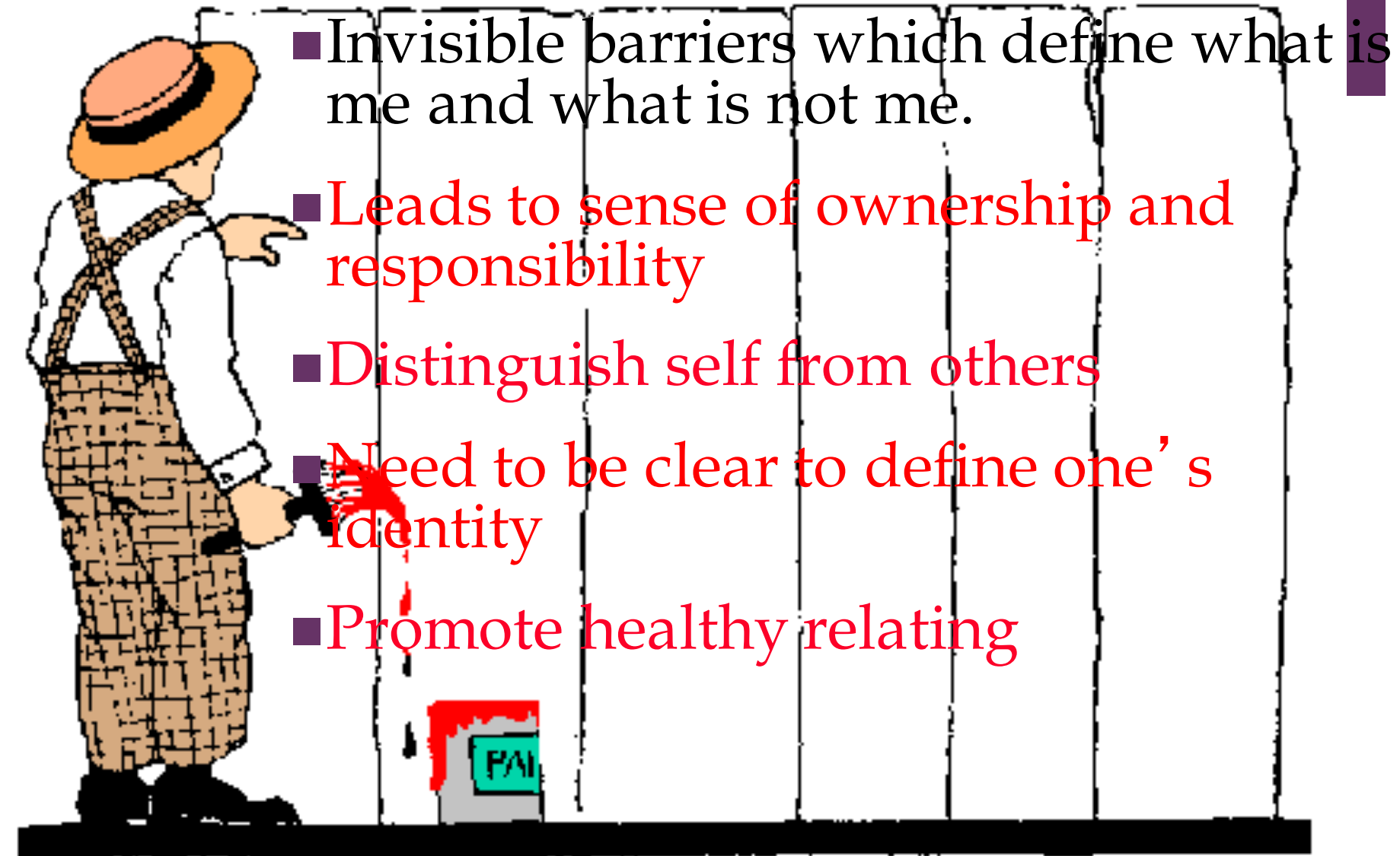
Recognizing A Boundary-less Person



- 110% percent person
- Work addiction
- Over-responsible with a hand in everything



+ Understanding Boundaries



- Invisible barriers which define what is me and what is not me.
- Leads to sense of ownership and responsibility
- Distinguish self from others
- Need to be clear to define one's identity
- Promote healthy relating

+

Boundary Problems



Can't Say

Can't Hear

N
O

Compliant

Controlled by others
Can't set boundaries

Controller

Violates others
boundaries
aggressively
or manipulatively

Y
E
S

Non-responsive

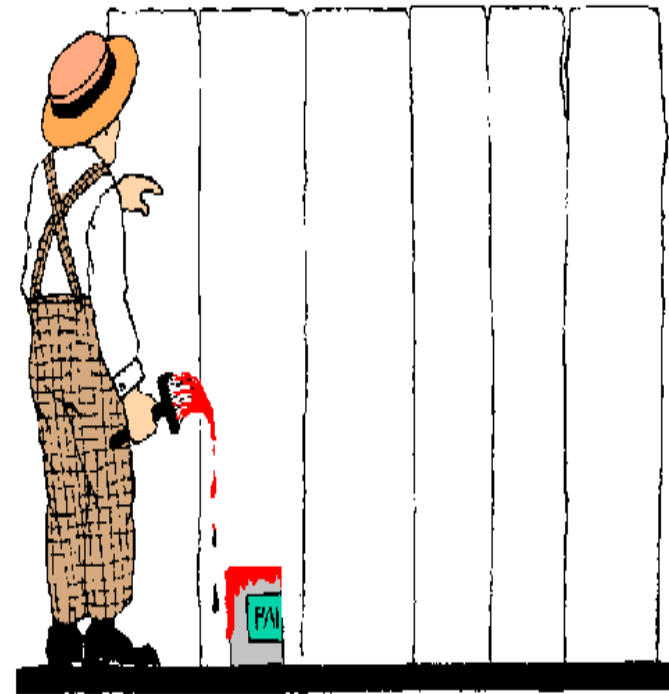
Sets boundaries against
responsibility to love

Avoidant

Sets boundaries
against receiving care
from others

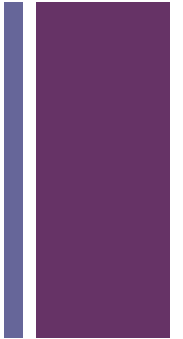
+ Types of Boundary Problem

- Intrapsychic
- Ability to separate feeling and thinking
- Interpersonal
- Ability to distinguish self from others





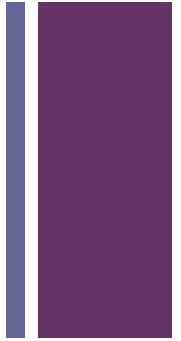
Other-oriented Over-functioning for other



- Distorted view of ministry - other-centered and demanding special commitment
 - Archibald Hart



Playing the Hero



- Often involves playing the hero
- “It is never possible to make others responsible by trying to make them responsible, because the very act of trying to make others responsible is preempting their responsibility.”
- Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, p. 211

+

Overfunctioning for Others:

Rescuers

Toleration of pain in Self

High

Toleration of Pain in Others

Low

Rescuers

Appropriate
Responsibility

High

Helpless People

Woe is Me

Low

+ Avoiding Over-functioning on Behalf of others

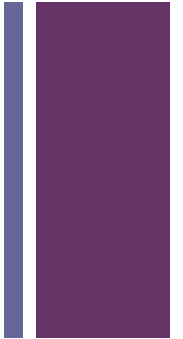


“One of the subtlest yet most fundamental effects of overfunctioning is spiritual. It destroys the spiritual quality of the overfunctioner.”

■ Friedman, *From Generation to Generation* p. 212



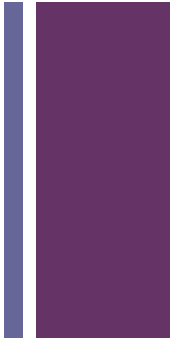
Intrusiveness



- Personal criticisms
- Criticisms directed at the minister
- Presumptive Expectations
- Occur in situations where personal or family plans are canceled or interrupted by congregational emergencies or crises.



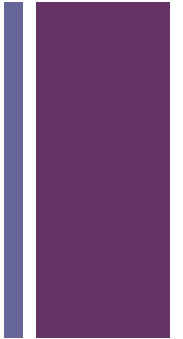
Intrusiveness



- Family criticism
- Criticisms of the minister's family
- Boundary ambiguity
- Involves events such as intrusions on the family by phone calls, unannounced visits to the pastoral home, and various invasions of family privacy.



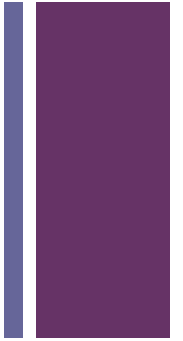
Understanding Ministry: The Advantages



- **The possibility for creative work**
- **Support from one's congregation**
- **High status in community
(changing)**
- **Flexible schedule**
- **Ready made friends**
- **Support from other pastors
(depends)**

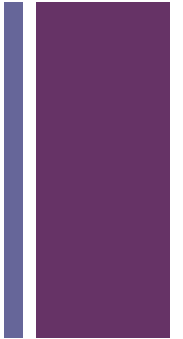
+ Understanding Ministry: The Advantages

- **Job security**
- **Spouse can participate
(doubled-edged sword)**
- **Opportunity for study**
- **Housing provided**

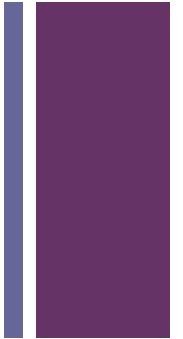


+ Understanding Ministry: The Disadvantages

- **Financial stress**
- **Too heavy workload**
- **Pressures on children to be perfect**
- **Being on call 24 hours a day**
- **Unfair criticism**



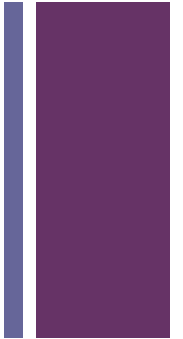
+ Understanding Ministry: The Disadvantages



- **Living in church owned house**
- **Frequent moves**
- **Lack of privacy**
- **Unreal expectations of spouse**

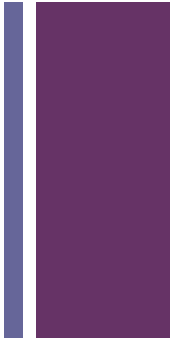


Problems Clergy Families Face



- **Congregation's needs take priority**
- **Lack of personal friends**
- **More expected of minister's kids**
- **Not enough time with family**
- **Isolation of clergy families**

+ Problems Clergy Families Face



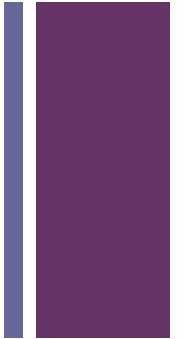
- **Congregation possessive over parsonage**
- **Inadequate income**
- **Too little privacy**
- **Members expect parsonage to be immaculate**

■ **Paul Mickey & Giny Ashmore (1991). *Clergy Families: Is Normal Life Possible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.**

+ Characteristics of Ministry

- **The job is never finished**
- **Cannot always assess results**
- **Work is repetitive**
- **Constantly deals with expectations**
- **Work with same persons**

+ Characteristics of Ministry

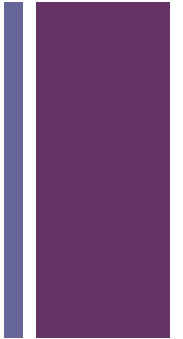


- **Great drain on energy of the minister**
- **People come for strokes not spiritual food**
- **Functions a great deal out of the “persona”**
- **May become exhausted by failure**

Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*, 1992



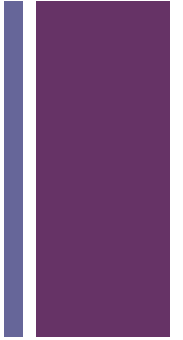
The Moses Model: Features



- **Operates from an unrealistic understanding of person-hood**
- **Lacks balance**
- **Leads to anger and depression**



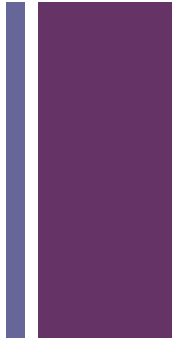
The Moses Model: Features



- **Exposes the self to spiritual dangers**
- **Presents other dangers to the self**
- **Leads to religious addiction - total work orientation**



The Moses Model

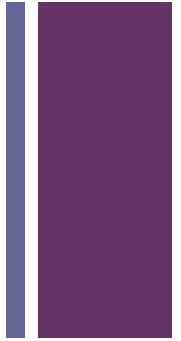


- **Personal Characteristics**
- *Driven by personality flaws and unresolved needs.*
- *Neglects and overextends the self - violates personal boundaries.*
- **Family Characteristics**
- *Ignores or neglects family obligations.*





The Moses Model

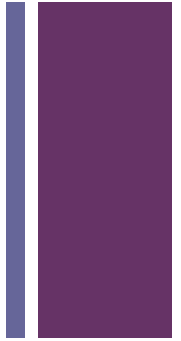


- **Congregational Characteristics**
- *Forgets sources and resources*
- *Rationalizes being stuck in the second movement*
- *Paradoxically works against its best intentions and goals.*
- *Wears out those served*





Spiritual Dangers of the Moses Model



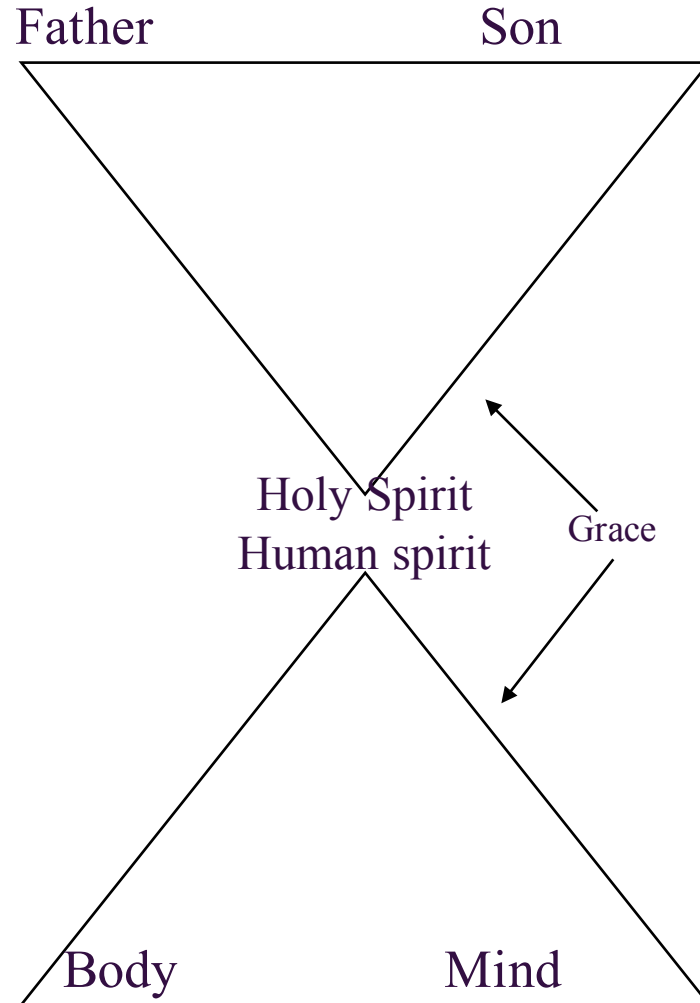
- **Loss of intimate contact with God**
- **The problem of the empty cup**
- **Being eloquent about the spiritual life without living it**
- **The divided life - split between head and heart**
- **Becoming a castaway**



The Western Model of Spirituality



Self initiates;
God rewards





The Western Model of Spirituality: Implications for Ministry



God

God does not call; not involved in ministry; He rewards human effort

The Holy Spirit's presence and power are not necessary

Ministry

dependent on human motivations and abilities

an individualistic search for personal identity

All about performance; doing is more important than being

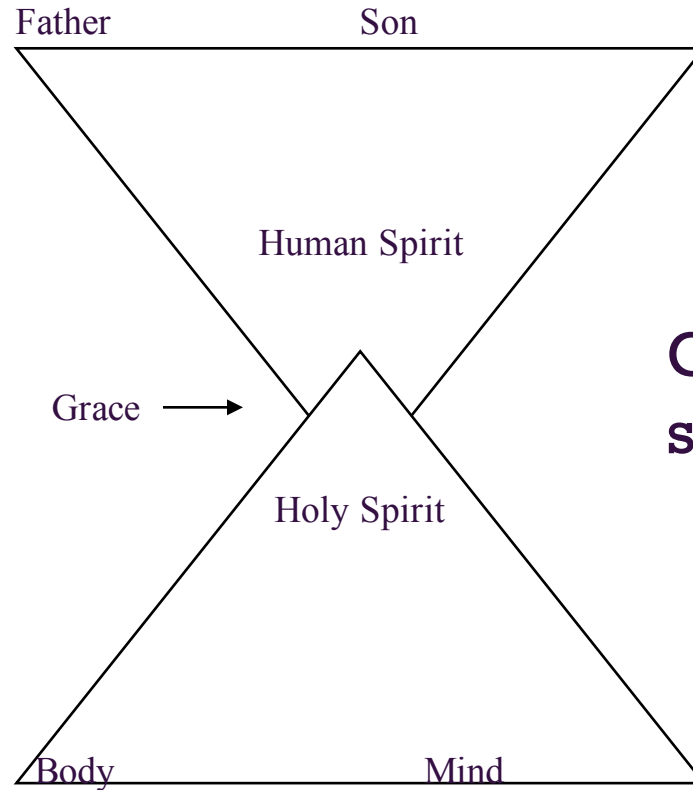
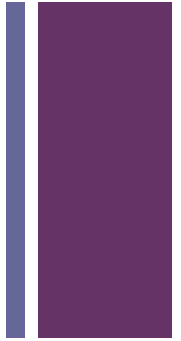
Assumptions of the Western Model

Ministers

We are what we do



The Scriptural Model Self-in-God



**God initiates;
self responds**

Recreated from - In His Spirit: A Guide to Today's Spirituality, Richard J. Hauser, 1982