

Book Reviews

December 1, 2006

Posted: 12/01/06

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[When a Congregation is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Misconduct](#)

by Beth Ann Gaede, editor (The Alban Institute)

The difficult topic of this new book is this: Adult, heterosexual misconduct by ministers in a church setting. Clergy sexual misconduct devastates the victim or victims, the minister's family and the congregation.

Gaede's collection of 30 chapters written by 12 experts (plus an extended bibliography), offers a thorough treatment of the dynamics that lead to such events. Then, with clear, step-by-step instructions, the reader learns how to respond.



Off the **Bookshelf**
What's everyone reading anyway?

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The authors consider different ways to care for victims, church leaders, the congregation, the perpetrator and his (the book points out it is overwhelmingly a male perpetrator) family, and even the "Afterpastor" interims and ministers.

Special consideration is given to walking the reader through the timeline that follows misconduct—from the first emergency response, to releasing initial information, to getting help for victims, to guiding a church through a healing process, and to addressing the issue before, during and after a new minister's arrival.

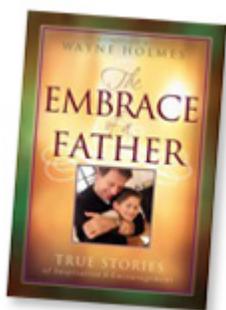
The book is practical and helpful, but the volume of material warns that the steps involved could easily overwhelm the average church. Knowing this, Gaede wisely includes guidance on finding professional help for individuals and for the church, taking preventative measures and training a response team.

Karl F. Fickling, coordinator

Intentional Interim Ministry

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Dallas



[The Embrace of a Father](#) by Wayne Holmes, compiler (Bethany House Publishers)

While the behavioral and social sciences have produced much literature documenting the influence of the father (by both his presence and absence) in the life of a child, Wayne Holmes has compiled true, real-life

accounts of how fathers have encouraged and inspired their children.

Under the banner of such topics as love, wisdom, discipline, forgiveness, provision, comfort, trust, embrace and others, Holmes has collected 53 stories from the memories and pens of a wide variety of recognizable Christian writers. Each account was seminal and profound in the life of the author and will make a lasting impression on the reader.

While acknowledging no earthly fathers are perfect, this book helps remind us of those wondrous occasions when the perfect love of our Heavenly Father is able to shine through. Any pastor desiring a wealth of illustrative material for sermons on family or Father's Day would do well to add this book to the shelf.

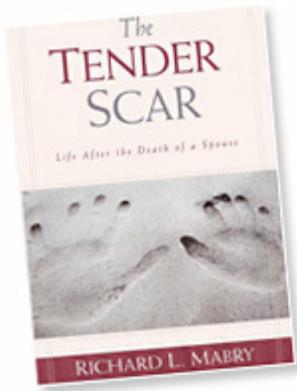
My heartiest recommendation, however, comes from my perspective as a man and a father. When you most underestimate your role and influence, pick up this book and start reading.

Bobby Dagnel, pastor

First Baptist Church

Lubbock

[The Tender Scar: Life After the Death of a Spouse](#) by Richard L. Mabry (Kregel Publications)



The Tender Scar is authoritative, inasmuch as Mabry, a physician, speaks from the trenches and not the pulpit. The book consists of 26 short chapters. Each begins with an excerpt from e-mails and journal entries he wrote after the death of his wife of 40 years. He uses this material to introduce commentary and suggestions, tried in the crucible of his own experience, offering guidance to those who have lost a loved one.

Mabry's use of Scriptures, the sensitive prayers, the obvious desire to help those who grieve—these qualities make the book a must-read-and-share volume for pastors and counselors, as well as people dealing with their own loss.

As I read The Tender Scar, I found myself caught up in Mabry's struggles. What would I have done if the decision to cut off life support had been mine? Could I have disposed of the clothes, the gardening equipment, and all the traces of a life lived and loved? How would I get through the holidays? He deals with all these problems, and more.

After reading this book, the grieving widow or widower—indeed anyone suffering the sting of a loved one's death—is left with the assurance that, although the scar left behind is tender, healing is possible.

Dan Griffin, pastor

Christ Fellowship Baptist Church

Arlington

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