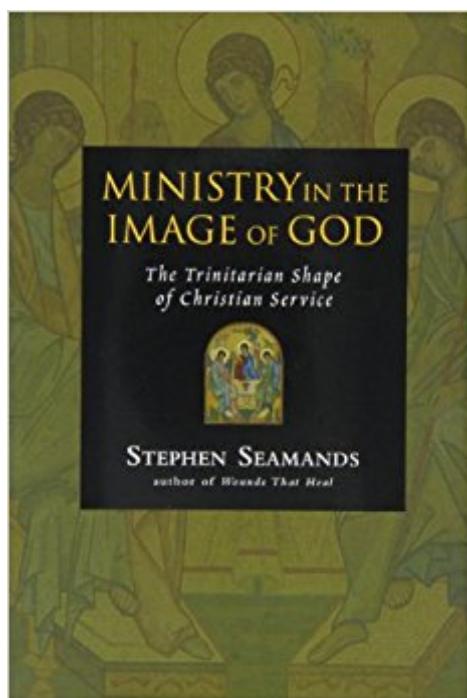


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# Ministry In The Image Of God: The Trinitarian Shape Of Christian Service



## **Synopsis**

Merit winner in the 2006 Christianity Today Book Awards! "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Those of us called to Christian ministry are commissioned and sent by Jesus, just as he himself was called and sent by the Father. Thus we naturally pattern our ministries after Christ's example. But distinctively Christian service involves the Spirit as well, just as Jesus himself accomplished his ministry in the power of the Spirit. Thus the whole Trinity--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--gives shape to truly authentic Christian ministry. Though as Christians we all affirm the doctrine of the Trinity, many of us might struggle to explain how understanding the Trinity could actually shape our ministry. Stephen Seamands demonstrates how a fully orbed theology of the Trinity transforms our perception and practice of vocational ministry. Theological concepts like relationality and perichoresis have direct relevance to pastoral life and work, especially in unfolding a trinitarian approach to relationships, service and mission. A thoroughly trinitarian outlook provides the fuel for our ministry "of Jesus Christ, to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, on behalf of the church and the world." Essential reading for pastors, parachurch workers, counselors, missionaries, youth ministers and all who are called to any vocation of Christian ministry.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"I had several reactions when I saw *Ministry in the Image of God* by Steve Seamands. First, I will benefit from this book. I personally need to understand how to more effectively minister in a 'trinitarian shape' as Steve calls it. Second, there are periodic books which go deeper, go well

beyond the 'norm' of life. This is one of those. Who would have thought that focusing on the Trinity would give us so much practical help in ministering? Third, anything by Steve Seamands is worth reading. I knew him as a fellow classmate at both Asbury Theological Seminary and later Princeton Theological Seminary. He was thoughtful, focused, reflective, fun, warm and caring. And as you'll learn from this book, he still is!" (Jim Garlow, senior pastor, Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, California)"In a masterful way, Stephen Seamands teaches us afresh to think Trinity, own the mystery and live in the radical middle of God's mission. This book combines the power of old ideas and contemporary experience with life-changing outcome. I highly recommend it." (Timothy C. Morgan, deputy managing editor, Christianity Today)"Seamands connects the dots between ancient doctrine, Holy Scripture, modern theology and Christian experience, giving us a vision of the Trinity in life that is comprehensible, subtly childlike, a joy to embrace and an invitation to be embraced." (David Hansen, author, *The Art of Pastoring*, and contributing editor, *Leadership Journal*)"One thing too often missing from the contemporary renaissance of the doctrine of the Trinity is its practical application especially to ministry. Stephen Seamands has helpfully closed that gap with *Ministry in the Image of God*. Now we know how belief in the Trinity impacts the practices of ministry. Every Christian minister (lay or professional) interested in integrating theology with Christian service should read this book." (Roger E. Olson, Professor of Theology, George W. Truett Theological Seminary)"Truth about God is not merely academic. It's passionate and practical. Seamands's treatment of trinitarian theology did so much more than inform and challenge me. It did both, but it also reached my soul where the passion to enjoy their community and reveal their character burns like a hot fire." (Larry Crabb, founder and director, New Way Ministries)"Few wear the titles of theologian and pastor as well as Steve Seamands, pastoral theologian. Harvesting a bumper crop of contemporary reflection on the triune nature of God, he is able to develop a theology of ministry that flows from and mirrors the communal life of God: Father, Son and Spirit. At once profound and disarmingly simple, here is the sort of theologically practical work that deserves a wide readership." (Joel B. Green, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Asbury Theological Seminary)"One of the quiet and unnoticed revolutions of our time has been the extraordinary recovery of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian circles. Initially the crucial task was to come to terms historically, conceptually and intellectually with this much-needed breakthrough. Yet the doctrine of the Trinity was from the beginning not some abstract, numerical, metaphysical dispute. The Trinity is the heartbeat of a life lived before God that cries out for further exploration in the ministry of the church. Stephen Seamands has answered that cry to telling effect. This is a work that is elegant, sensitive, unpretentious, accessible and eminently practical. It displays a pleasing familiarity with the critical

literature; better still it exhibits a burning piety bereft of sentimentality and filled with realistic optimism. This is pastoral theology at its very best!" (William Abraham, Albert Cook Outler Professor of Wesley Studies, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, and author of *The Logic of Evangelism*) "This is the book that I was looking for when mentoring pastors in our Doctor of Ministry program years ago! In this lucid and luminous treatment of Christ's ministry to the Father on behalf of the world through the power of the Holy Spirit, Stephen Seamands takes the doctrine of the Trinity off the shelf and reveals the dynamic of God's mission of love and reconciliation from the inside out. Combining scholarly insight with spiritual passion, Seamands traces out the contours of the divine mystery of redeeming love as the image of that which all humans were created to be and that which we who minister are called to do." (Ray S. Anderson, Senior Professor of Theology and Ministry, Fuller Theological Seminary, and author of *The Shape of Practical Theology*)

Stephen Seamands (Ph.D., Drew University) is professor of Christian doctrine at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He also frequently speaks and leads retreats and seminars on such issues as emotional healing and spiritual renewal. His books include *Christology and Transition in the Theology of Edwin Lewis* (University Press of America, 1987), *Holiness of Heart and Life* (Abingdon, 1990), *A Conversation with Jesus* (Victor, 1994) and *Wounds That Heal* (InterVarsity Press, 2003).

A thoughtful examination of the Trinity and its application to life and ministry. EVERY minister should read this book. EVERYONE! It has eight chapters: 1. Trinidadian Ministry: Why It Matters 2. Relational Personhood: The Nature of Trinitarian Ministry 3. Joyful Intimacy: The Foundation of Trinitarian Ministry 4. Glad Surrender: The Heart of Trinitarian Ministry 5. Complex Simplicity: The Mystery of Trinitarian Ministry 6. Gracious Self-Acceptance: The Particularity of Trinitarian Ministry 7. Mutual Indwelling: The Reciprocity of Trinitarian Ministry 8. Passionate Mission: The Impulse of Trinitarian Ministry

Seamands' book is a needed and sound treatise on practical application of Trinitarian theology. We have used it in our large southern church as the summer sourcebook for a sermon series titled "Serving in the Image of God", meaning it was the basis for both the sermons and Sunday School lessons for adult and teen classes, adapted by our resident theologian and author. Seamands' theology is refreshingly pure Wesleyan, and we are Nazarenes, so the fit was warm and wonderful. The biblical passages in each chapter provided the biblical foundation for the sermons and lessons,

and Seamands' excellent quotes from prominent theologians and practical applications were so helpful. I highly recommend this book with the highest of endorsement.

Seamands, Stephen. 2005. *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books. How does the doctrine of the Trinity apply to ministry today? That is the question that Seamands answers in his book on how the Trinity affects Christian service. He declares, "I am convinced that no doctrine is, in fact, more relevant to our identity and calling as ministers than the Trinity" (11). Although Seamands tends to relate more to those in pastoral ministry, what he says applies to all believers if we understand the priesthood of all believers. The first chapter "Trinitarian Ministry: Why it Matters" sets the agenda for the following seven chapters dealing with and progressing from the "Nature of Trinitarian ministry" through to the "Impulses of Trinitarian Ministry." This reviewer found this was an extremely helpful book to prepare for teaching how the doctrine of the Trinity applies in the life of both believers and the functioning of the local church. The only question one will need to ask from time to time is to what degree does Seamands pastoral tendency flow into his teaching on the Trinity rather than out of it. Nevertheless, I highly recommend this book to delve into just that question.

This book right here is life changing. Very well written. Opens up your eyes to the things that we may lack in our Christian walk as ministers, leaders and members of the church body. I recommend it for all Christians who have a deep desire to walk faithfully with God.

This book should be on everyone's top 10 reading list, if you are in any type of ministry. Steve Seamands is a modern day apostle. His insightfulness challenges us as Jesus challenged his disciples. This book is currently being used as a text book in seminaries in subjects such as pastoral care and counseling. A must read!!!

This book has been one of the most influential regarding the nature of Christian ministry that I have ever seen.\* It takes the doctrine of the Trinity and shows how the truths of the nature and work of the Trinity apply directly to our ministry.\* It encourages a God-centered ministry. Our ministry is the ministry of Christ to the Father in the power of the Spirit on behalf of the world.\* It encourages a vibrant relational unity within the church, and helps the reader to see barriers to that unity.\* It reminds us that the natural flow of the Trinity moves outward, encouraging us to be on mission, reaching out to draw people into relationship just as we have been drawn into the Trinity.

I wanted to know more about the Trinity: this is a wonderful book to deepen one's knowledge of the Godhead.

This book was required for my Christian Leadership class, was very informative.

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