



Unholy Madness: The Church's Surrender to Psychiatry

By Seth Farber



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For nearly four decades social critics such as Philip Rieff and Christopher Lasch have bemoaned the "triumph of the therapeutic" in our "culture of narcissism." But whatever their level of uneasiness about the psychologizing of reality, most Christians have made some degree of peace with the reigning power of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic outlooks. Seth Farber is not one of those Christians. In his estimation psychotherapy has become "a replacement for involvement in the spiritual life of the church," with pastors and other Christian leaders too quickly deferring to psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. *Unholy Madness* is prompted by Farber's passionate insistence that Christianity and psychiatry are nothing less than competing faiths. Farber's radical argument cuts to the root of the mental health system and challenges the church to consider how much it may have constricted its own vision and neglected its unique responsibilities in its accommodation to that system. Taking on giants from Augustine to Freud, wide-ranging and never boring, *Unholy Madness* is not likely to persuade all its readers. But none will be able to see these issues in the same way again.

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