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### A Seminar On The Dynamics, Prevention, And Legal Implications Of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

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ABSTRACT

A SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

by

Jorge E. Rico

Chair: Benjamin D. Schoun

areas of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This seminar was attended by fifty-seven pastors.

### Results

Pastors believed that all colleges and/or the seminary should include in their ministerial training program a core course on sexual ethics in the ministry. Also, seminars and/or programs should be created to help ministers who are already serving in their respective responsibilities. They also indicated that new and transferring pastors should be screened before hiring them and be asked to attend an orientation process. Finally, the pastors expressed the hope that some fallen ministers may be given the opportunity for restoration providing that certain requirements are met.

### Conclusions

Church leaders should study the development and implementation of an instrument to screen new and transferring pastors which includes an orientation process. Colleges and/or the seminary should consider creating and incorporating a class on sexual ethics in the ministry. Seminars/workshops should also be made available to help ministers, especially those coming from outside of North America, deal with this problem in a Christian, professional, and responsible way. Finally, more study should be done to create a system of restoration for fallen pastors and a recovery program for victims of clergy sexual misconduct, their relatives, and congregations.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Jorge E. Rico  
April 1997

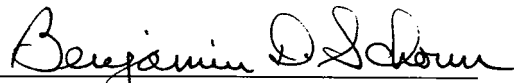
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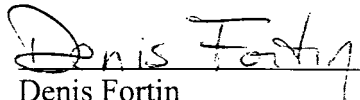
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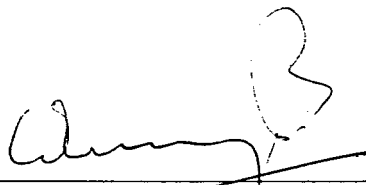
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **The Task**

The task of this project was to prepare, present, and evaluate a seminar for pastors on the dynamics, prevention, and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.

#### **Justification of the Study**

##### The Need

Clergy sexual misconduct has become a major problem among Christian denominations. It involves violation of expectations and the breaking of public trust. There is a growing awareness in our society of the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct. Yet, many ministers do not yet realize how vulnerable and close to disaster they are.

Research has indicated that "approximately 10 percent of clergy (mostly male) have been or are engaged in sexual malfeasance. Another 15 percent are on the verge-- waiting for an opportunity."<sup>1</sup> In other words, one out of four ministers in North America has been or will be involved in some kind of sexual misconduct. On January 9, 1996,

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<sup>1</sup>G. Lloyd Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 2.

during the Oregon Conference<sup>1</sup> workers' meeting, a presentation was made on clergy sexual misconduct by Dr. Craig S. Montgomery, a clinical psychologist. He stated that "about one pastor a year leaves the Oregon Conference on the issue of sexual misconduct." This is very significant.

However, the church has addressed the issue in only a limited way. Therefore, there is a need to help ministers understand the dynamics, prevention, and the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.

### Biblical Relevance

The New Testament writers provide clear instructions regarding the minister's conduct before the congregation and the community. Ministry is considered a holy office and ministers ought to live accordingly. That is why they are clearly instructed to live blameless lives (Titus 1:6), to be above reproach (1Tim 3:2), and to serve with a clean conscience (see 1Tim 3:9). For Paul, this issue of godliness becomes more relevant as we get closer to the coming of the Lord (Titus 2:11-14). The reason is that when a minister engages in sexual misconduct, the ministry and the gospel are discredited in the community he is serving (2 Cor 6:3), and his life will be affected with the loss of reputation before the church and the community (1Tim 3:7). Added to this situation is the problem of the legal implications of sexual misconduct. Ministers and churches are

---

<sup>1</sup>The Oregon Conference is the association of all the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the State of Oregon with headquarters in Clackamas, Oregon. This Conference, in turn, belongs to the sisterhood of Conferences in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

not only having to deal with the issue of discredit and loss of reputation, but they are also being taken to court for this problem. Although the Bible does not deal directly with the issue of the minister and the law, it does provide some general guidelines to all Christians. These guidelines can be applied to ministers as well (Rom 13:1-6; 1 Pet 2:13-17).<sup>1</sup> I believe ministers can profit from those guidelines.

### Current Issue

Clergy sexual misconduct is a current issue as seen by the number of recent publications in this area. My preliminary research has shown that the earliest work in this area was the Documentation Packet on Code of Ethics and Due Process published in 1971.<sup>2</sup> Since then several books, journal, and magazine articles have been written, most of them after the mid-1980s.<sup>3</sup> This fact indicates that this is a recent, yet growing issue in the community in North America.

### Its Relation to Ministerial Responsibilities

Clergy sexual misconduct has been considered “a distortion of spiritual leadership.”<sup>4</sup> It is accentuated when one understands that the moral health of the clergy is crucial to the moral health of the church. Furthermore, legal risks are increasingly

---

<sup>1</sup>The New International Version is used unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup>Interfaith Coalition for Ministry, Documentation Packet on Code of Ethics and Due Process (Boston, MA: Enablement, Inc., 1971).

<sup>3</sup>A list of a selected number of these sources can be found on Appendix 7.

<sup>4</sup>Rediger, 1.

becoming a part of ministry. This situation requires that the church reexamine the issue and provide a support mechanism that will help ministers understand the dynamics, prevention, and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.

### **Its Relation to the Mission of the Church**

There is a relationship between the issue of clergy sexual misconduct and the mission of the church. I served in a church where a previous pastor had a problem with sexual misconduct which eventually involved the district court. It seriously affected the morale and spiritual condition of the congregation. Some members felt so bad they stopped coming to church, and others would not even think of inviting anyone to church. My first year and a half was dedicated to bring healing to the congregation. After spending quality time with the members I noticed that some positive changes started taking place and new faces were seen in church. From this experience I have learned that the presence of this problem may hinder the mission of the church and the ministry of pastors.

### **Organization of the Study**

This dissertation describes the development of a seminar on the dynamics, prevention, and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct. It is organized in seven chapters in addition to the appendixes and bibliography. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the dissertation. It describes, as clearly and precisely as possible, the task of this study, its justification, organization, and limitations.

Chapter 2 discusses the biblical foundations of the relationship of the minister with the congregants, his moral standards, and the law. This is done in two separate sections by discussing the minister and moral standards, and the Christian and the law. The first section analyzes the content and theology of 2 Cor 6:3; 1 Tim 3:1-9, and Titus 1:6-9. The latter section discusses the issue of the Christian and the law. Then, this chapter concludes with some final remarks.

Chapter 3 describes the phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct. First, it provides a definition of the problem. Second, it talks about the nature of the problem. Third, it presents the legal implications of the problem. Fourth, it describes the dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct. Several elements are mentioned: the contributing factors, progressive steps, and the common characteristics which include the personality, power and authority, sexuality, self-disclosure, and other common characteristics.

Chapter 4 presents the effects of clergy sexual misconduct on the minister, the parishioner, the respective families, the church, and the community. It also discusses ways of helping a pastor get out of a bad situation and concludes with a discussion on the restoration of a fallen minister into the ministry. The seventh section discusses the recommendations for prevention. These recommendations include the building of a strong spiritual life, building of a strong marriage relationship, education, avoiding the appearance of evil, and being professional. To be professional means to be responsible, accountable, consistent, and to have a personal code of ethics.

Chapter 5 describes the presentation of the seminar. First of all, it provides the seminar outline. This outline includes the devotional, pre-test, nature of the problem,



video presentation, dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct, recommendations for prevention and the post-test. The materials used in the seminar are described, namely, visual aids, handouts, etc. Finally, it discusses the questionnaire and its design.

Chapter 6 records the implementation and evaluation of the seminar. The pre-seminar steps are described as well as the participants and the procedure of the seminar. Details concerning the pre-test, the presentation, the post-test, and the evaluation of the seminar are analyzed. Finally, the results of these tests and evaluations are presented. Chapter 7 offers the conclusions of this research with some recommendations for future study and consideration.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research was limited to the study and understanding of the problem of clergy sexual misconduct in North America. Its focus was primarily in prevention within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>1</sup> Although the recommendations provided for the prevention of clergy sexual misconduct may be applicable in other contexts outside North America, they are presented to pastors who are serving in North America. It is my prayer that the material presented here can be helpful and a blessing to whoever reads it.

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<sup>1</sup>The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born in the early part of the nineteenth century under the leadership of dedicated Christians like James White, Ellen G. White, Joseph Bates, and others. The name was adopted in 1863 as an expression of the faith and position of its members. Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide movement with about nine million members proclaiming the soon coming of Jesus Christ. Its mission is accomplished through its different educational, health, publishing, and other institutions.

## CHAPTER II

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MINISTER, MORAL STANDARDS, AND THE LAW

#### **The Minister and Moral Standards**

To be a pastor is to be entrusted with a sacred responsibility. This responsibility is reflected in the words of the apostle Paul when he charged the elders of Ephesus to “keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Through these words, Paul presents the minister with two elements that make this responsibility a sacred one: the first one is that ministry is a divine calling. It is the Holy Spirit who calls people into the ministry. The second one is that the church was established and purchased with the blood of Christ. These two elements make the ministry not only a position of great trust and sacred responsibility, but also a position of great influence over others. Such influence can come only by virtue of the trust people place in the office and the person of the pastor.

It is no wonder that, in her writings, Ellen G. White<sup>1</sup> stated that “of all men, those who have been trusted and honored by the Lord, those who have been given special service to perform, should be circumspect in word and deed.”<sup>2</sup> It is my personal conviction that ministers are a powerful means for the salvation of perishing souls, and they can be successful in their work inasmuch as they dedicate their lives to the Lord. Therefore, the devil directs his temptations against the ministers “for in committing sin, they make themselves ministers of evil.”<sup>3</sup> Consequently, when persons are hurt by the actions of God’s servants and representatives, the church itself and its message are also affected.<sup>4</sup> With this understanding I would like to explore three biblical passages that are pertinent to the moral standards of the minister.

#### 2 Cor 6:1-4: Its Content and Theology

In his second letter to the Corinthian Church, Paul wrote a message that ministers today should give special consideration:

As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “in the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White is the co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Seventh-day Adventists believe that she received from God the gift of prophecy to provide direction to the church.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1943), 124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Marie M. Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 135.

our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way. (2 Cor 6:1-4)

Paul's message is very clear and timely. In it he expressed his concern for the ministry. He was aware that the message of the cross was an offense to the unconverted mind (see 1Cor 1:18, 23; cf. Gal 5:11); but for the messenger of the gospel to place a stumbling block in the way of unbelievers by behavior that is improper and inconsistent with his/her message is quite another thing, and altogether inexcusable. He did not want the ministry to be discredited, nor the message of the cross to be emptied of meaning and effectiveness because of the misconduct of its bearer (cf. 1Cor 1:17). A closer look at the historical setting reveals that one of the circumstances that prompted Paul to write and send his second letter to the Corinthians was the arrival of fresh and disturbing news concerning the church. Apparently, there were some charges of inconsistent or dishonest conduct on the part of God's servants. This conduct was giving the enemies of God's church an opportunity to ridicule and attack not only the church, but also the message.<sup>1</sup>

Paul urged the church believers in his time to seriously consider that they were living in special times. Therefore, Christians and, especially, ministers should not place themselves in a situation that would discredit the church and the gospel. Rather, they should be examples of, among other things, purity (2 Cor 6:6). This message comes to us today in a timely manner. Ministers today should keep the subject of purity and propriety of deportment before them constantly. "Let them keep their proper place with becoming

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<sup>1</sup>Murray J. Harris, 2 Corinthians, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 356.

dignity. They must stand aloof from everything that savors of commonness and familiarity. I urge upon our workers the necessity of purity in every thought, every act."<sup>1</sup>

Let us now study 2 Cor 6:3 more carefully. Please notice that in vs. 3 Paul does not use the word σκανδαλον, but προσκοπη, which occurs only here in the New Testament. The difference is very interesting and significant. The former one conveys the idea of causing only the foot to strike and the person to stumble, at the most to fall and suffer only a slight hurt. But the latter one is fatal and kills, for it gives the idea of a trigger stick in a trap, to which the bait is fixed and by which the trap is sprung.<sup>2</sup>

The concept is clear. For Paul the lack of purity and morality in a minister is a very harmful and destructive form of behavior for the church and the gospel than any other form of misbehavior among Christians. This makes the minister a special target for the devil. This can be better expressed by John Calvin's own words:

It is an artifice of Satan to seek some misconduct on the part of ministers which may tend to the dishonour of the gospel; for when he has been successful in bringing the ministry into contempt all hope of progress is destroyed: therefore the man who wishes to serve Christ with usefulness must apply himself with all possible diligence to preserve the honor of his ministry.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>White, 125.

<sup>2</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 1062.

<sup>3</sup>John Calvin, quoted in Philip E. Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), 221.

## 1 Tim 3:1-7: Its Content and Theology

The first letter of Paul to Timothy was written to provide instructions regarding various aspects of the church life and leadership. Part of those instructions included a list of fifteen specific qualifications of an overseer. The focal point of these qualifications is the candidate's reputation among believers and unbelievers which is to be tested on the basis of his or her proven moral character and maturity. To be an overseer is to desire a "noble task" (1 Tim 3:1).

Therefore, whoever desires to hold this church office "needs to be sure that such a desire is not an expression of carnal pride, but that rather it reflects a deep consecration to the work of the church."<sup>1</sup> That is why the qualifications required are of permanent significance, indicating that the overseer must command the respect of all.<sup>2</sup> Donald Guthrie considers that this list of qualifications "accurately reflects the earliest state of the Christian Church, when the majority of converts probably came from a background of low moral ideals."<sup>3</sup> Thus, for Paul the best kind of leadership is the leadership by example.

The first qualification in Paul's list to Timothy is that the overseer "must be above reproach" (1 Tim 3:2). The expression *above reproach* comes from the Greek

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Earle, 1 Timothy, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 363.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald A. Ward, Commentary on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1977), 54.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 80.

ανεπιλημπτος which describes “one against whom it is impossible to bring any charge of wrong doing such as could stand impartial examination.”<sup>1</sup> This word is also found in 1 Tim 5:7 and 6:14 where it is used to describe the spiritual condition of the Christians, especially of those living prior to the second coming of the Lord. The fact that Paul starts his list of the ministerial qualifications with an invitation to be *above reproach* shows the importance given to the character of the Christian minister. The pastor is representing not just the church of God, but God Himself. The rest of the qualifications are a further description of what it means to be *above reproach*.

Paul, however, ends his list of qualifications by returning to the same concept of irreproachability but now with a particular audience in mind: “outsiders” or unbelievers. He states that the minister “must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap” (1 Tim 3:7). Paul now relates the reputation of the minister to the community. Deficiencies in the minister’s reputation or behavior that affect the testimony of the church open the leader up to disgrace from outsiders, thus falling “into the devil’s trap.” This situation, indicates Ralph Earle, “often brings irreparable damage to the local congregation and indeed to the entire cause of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Earle, 364.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 366.

Finally, to put Paul's list of qualifications into the proper perspective, the importance and urgency of the church's evangelistic mission require that the ministers be of the highest caliber (see 1 Tim 3:14, 15). As rightly stated by Philip H. Towner, "they must be leaders whose management skills and purity of lifestyle instill confidence in Christians and elicit respect from outsiders to the faith."<sup>1</sup>

#### Titus 1:5-9: Its Content and Theology

When Paul wrote his letter to Titus, the churches of Crete were still young, but growing. Therefore, it was necessary for Titus to finish the work of organization and structuring of the churches (see Titus 1:5). Local leadership was becoming essential for the churches to carry on the work of the ministry and the proclamation of the gospel.

To guide Titus in the appointing of elders in every town, Paul presented him with a list of qualifications similar to the one given to Timothy in his first letter. The purpose of this code is, also, to test the candidate's "blamelessness." This broad standard appears twice in vss. 6 and 7. But, contrary to the letter written to Timothy, Paul stresses to Titus that Christian conduct must be based on and regulated by Christian truth. Nowhere else does the apostle connect the gospel truth with the moral conduct of a Christian, particularly of a minister (see Titus 1:9).

In vss. 6-9 Paul treats the candidate's blamelessness in three aspects of his life: domestic, personal, and ecclesiastical. The basic message is that the church leadership

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<sup>1</sup>Philip H. Towner, 1-2 Timothy and Titus (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 89.



must be of the highest moral standard in all aspects of life; to expect less is to place the church's reputation, ministry, and message in jeopardy.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, "what qualifies a person to be an elder? Not management skill alone, but also a lifestyle within the church and on the outside."<sup>2</sup>

Paul's reasons for requiring such a high standard for a minister are very precise. The pastor "is entrusted with God's work" (Titus 1:7). "Whoever holds a position of Christian responsibility must similarly be beyond reproach in order to serve as a true example to others."<sup>3</sup> Ministry makes high demands on the character of the minister.

### **The Christian and the Law**

The issue of clergy sexual misconduct cannot be placed only in the area of morality and the breaking of public trust. The reason is that this problem includes a growing awareness in our society of the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct. The New Testament does not deal directly with the issue of the minister and the law. Nevertheless, it does provide Christians with some general principles that can help us understand our relationship with the government. Ministers can be guided by these principles. They are found in Rom 13:1-7 and 1 Pet 2:13-17.

The first general principle that needs to be considered is that the State must be respected and its directions complied within its own proper sphere (see Acts 5:29). The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 228.

<sup>3</sup>Guthrie, 185.

reason is that the government is an institution of divine appointment (Rom 13:1). The apostle Peter helps us gain a deeper understanding of this concept through the use of two words (1 Pet 2:13).

These two words are κτισις and ανθρωπινη. Let us understand them individually. In classical Greek the word κτισις is used to refer to the human founding of a city.<sup>1</sup> Hence, we have the connotation of an established institution. However, in biblical Greek κτισις is used exclusively of the products and activity of God, not man.<sup>2</sup> This seems to indicate that Peter is not talking about submission to institutions per se. He is, rather, speaking of submission to a kind of people who have received from God a special role to fulfill in God's divine appointment.<sup>3</sup> The implications are significant.

In the first place it indicates that all governing authorities are also creatures of God to whom proper respect is due. Second, the fact that they all are creatures of God indicates that their role has been ascribed directly to the divine initiative.<sup>4</sup> It is God Himself who has placed them as rulers in this world with the task of punishing "those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Pet 2:14). This concept does not apply only to "the king, as supreme authority" but also to "governors" whose authority is

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<sup>1</sup>A. M. Stibbs and A. F Walls, 1 Peter, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 109.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Mark 13:19 where the word is rendered "creation" and 2 Cor 5:17 where the word is translated "creature."

<sup>3</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 105.

<sup>4</sup>Stibbs and Walls, 110.

not to be regarded as merely deriving from the king, but rather as sharing in the divine commission.<sup>1</sup> They are to be responsible for the citizens' material well-being and, most of all, for their moral well-being.

The second word is *ανθρωπινη*. Michaels states that this word is not used to "define a human creation or institution in contrast to God's creation . . . but to focus on humanity . . . as God's creation."<sup>2</sup> Thus, Peter's assumption is that all people, even those who accuse and slander the Christians, are creatures of God, deserving of respect and consideration on that ground alone. Peter's use of these two words helps us understand more the role of the State in the divine economy. Its role is not simply to rule, but also to watch and care for the material and moral well-being of its citizens. Thus, Christians and, especially, ministers should respect and comply with the State directions as long as they do not interfere with the loyalty and service due to God. Walter L. Liefeld believes that doing this is part of the Christian religious duty.<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White calls it a "sacred duty."<sup>4</sup>

The second general principle is that to disobey the authorities is tantamount to disobeying God Himself (Rom 13:2). Of all people, Christians ought to obey the laws, pay their taxes, and respect the authorities. Not because it will be worse for them if they

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1988), 124.

<sup>3</sup>Walter L. Liefeld, *Luke*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 1016.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 6:402.

do not, but because this is one way of serving God and witnessing to the community.<sup>1</sup>

Herman Ridderbos sees this as the Christian liturgy.

Viewed in this context Paul's intention becomes more transparent: obedience to earthly authorities is also involved in what Romans 12:1ff. calls the spiritual sacrificial service, the placing of oneself at the service of God in virtue of the mercy of God shown to the church.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this context that Paul calls a ruler "God's servant" (Rom 13:4). He is not only the instrument of God for the commendation of those who do good; he is also the instrument of God's wrath to be used to combat evil. That is why he bears the sword. But, it is not only the fear of punishment that should move Christians to do good; rather, their main motivation must come from their conscience (Rom 13:5).

These two biblical principles not only help us see that respect and obedience to the authorities are not merely a minor and incidental matter, they form an integral part of the worshiping experience of the Christian church. They are also very significant for ministers today. A minister who loves God and lives in harmony with His principles will not have any problems in obeying the civil authorities. "As citizens Christians should neither forget that they are free, nor be tempted to presume upon their God-given freedom by using it wrongly as a kind of cover of evil."<sup>3</sup> Rulers have a divinely appointed responsibility to preserve law and order, to prevent anarchy and moral corruption, and to

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<sup>1</sup>F. F. Bruce, Romans, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 221.

<sup>2</sup>Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, trans. John R. Dewitt (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 321.

<sup>3</sup>Stibbs and Walls, 109.

promote and encourage good conduct.<sup>1</sup> Let this concept guide all ministers, and Christians in general, in their decisions, attitudes, and conduct before God and man.

### **Conclusion**

The ministry, perhaps more than any other profession, presumes that the minister's vocation and personal life are inseparable. One cannot be accepted without the other. Both come together. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that what a minister is as a person takes precedence over what he or she does as a pastor.

We Christian ministers live in a community not only for the purpose of preaching Christ, but to show . . . what Christ was like. We are Christianity with skin on. We are no perfect people, but we ought, like Christ, to be persons of principles.<sup>2</sup>

God's ideal for His ministers is described in the following passages. Let Paul's admonition to young Timothy and Titus be also ours:

Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. (1 Tim 4:12)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:11-14).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>2</sup>The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual (Silver Spring, MD: The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 59.

<sup>3</sup>See also Phil 1:1, 9, 10, 27; 2:14, 15; 4:8; Titus 2:6-8.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PHENOMENON OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

In the process of this research I became acquainted with a variety of literature dealing with the issue of clergy sexual misconduct. The literature included books, magazines, and journals from the following areas: psychology, sociology, and theology. Also, some articles could not be defined as belonging to any one of these areas, yet they also address the issue of clergy sexual misconduct from a more general perspective. Although I attempted to be as thorough as possible in my research, I do not claim to be exhaustive.

In order to present the results of my research in a clear way, I have divided this chapter in the following sections: Definition of the Problem, Nature of the Problem, Legal Implications of the Problem, and Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct.

#### **Definition of the Problem**

The first step in dealing with the problem of clergy sexual misconduct consists in understanding its definition. Although several authors have attempted to provide a definition to the problem of clergy sexual misconduct, I personally like the one provided by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. I think it is clear and precise.

Sexual abuse happens when someone in a ministerial role (clergy, religious, or lay) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, employee, student or counseling client in the ministerial relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual misconduct includes physical contact from the minister, such as:

1. Sexual touch and “accidental” touch of sexual areas of the body
2. Tickling and playful aggression that seems uncomfortable to the person
3. A prolonged hug when a brief one is customary behavior
4. Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate
5. Pressing up against the body when hugging
6. An inappropriate gift from the minister such as lingerie
7. Sexual intercourse with a congregant.<sup>2</sup>

Clergy sexual misconduct is not, however, limited to the physical contact in the ministerial relationship. Unfortunately, some have chosen to define it so narrowly that a person can live by the letter of the law and yet fail the spirit of the Lord’s intentions. In Charbonneau’s own words, “we have lived legally but not legitimately.”<sup>3</sup> Sexual

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<sup>1</sup>Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, “What You in the Congregation Need to Know About Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship,” TMs, 1991, in my possession.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Steve Charbonneau, “A Frightening Place,” in Broken Hearts, Broken Lives (Columbia, MD: Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1993), 8, in my possession.

misconduct can also include a verbal behavior that would sexualize the ministerial relationship. Notice the following examples:

1. Sexual talk or innuendo
2. Suggestive comments
3. Tales of the minister's sexual exploits or experiences
4. Questions about the intimate details of the person's relationships
5. Looking for sympathy about the sexual inadequacies of the minister's spouse
6. Inviting the person to inappropriate activities such as hot tub, swim naked, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, I found it very interesting to read how some ministers and Christian writers compare ministerial sexual misconduct with incest. For them, the violation of trust in a ministerial relationship is similar to the violation of trust that occurs in incest. "There is an incestuous quality to every violation of trust by pastor or counselor when sexual intimacy is involved."<sup>2</sup> Marie Fortune believes that incest is an appropriate model to compare the sexual misconduct of clergy because the church is often seen as a family.<sup>3</sup> This concept makes the phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct look uglier before the church and the community of unbelievers.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Karen Lebacqz and Ronald G. Barton, Sex in the Parish (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 104.

<sup>3</sup>Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? 103.



### Nature of the Problem

Pastoral ministry is very complex. On one hand, pastors are considered to be role models and are also expected to adhere to high moral standards. On the other hand, ministers meet human needs, sometimes in very intense, highly personal situations that can develop an incremental intimacy.<sup>1</sup> "The pastoral role by its very nature gives the pastor access to people's lives on a very immediate and intimate level."<sup>2</sup> This intimacy gives pastors not only more access to people but also an ability to hug, kiss, or provide friendly physical gestures to express their caring. Unfortunately, it is this very access and intimacy that create problems.

The pastor can easily abuse that access and intimacy, especially when the parishioner is in crisis, despair, or grief. Situations like these make the parishioner more vulnerable and likely to trust the pastor. The parishioner can also misread those pastoral gestures of care and think that an offer of human caring is an offer of sexual interest. Be that as it may, sexual contact between the minister and a parishioner undercuts an otherwise effective pastoral relationship and violates the trust necessary in that relationship.<sup>3</sup> However, Marie Fortune considers that "it is not the sexual contact per se that is problematic, but the fact that the sexual activity takes place within the pastoral

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<sup>1</sup>R. O. Stenbakken, "Can I Be Tempted?" Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 16.

<sup>2</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 100.

<sup>3</sup>Marie Fortune, "Is Nothing Sacred?" Touchstone 9, no. 3 (September 1991): 13.

relationship."<sup>1</sup> She provides two reasons: "It changes the nature of the relationship and the harm that it causes is enormous."<sup>2</sup>

This phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct has come under public scrutiny since the early and mid-1980s. Neil and Thea Ormerod believe that this phenomenon "is one of the major issues of the 1990s."<sup>3</sup> And according to Francis and Turner, "the incidence of clergy sexual misconduct seems to be on the rise."<sup>4</sup> Across the country one church after another is being torn apart by disclosures of sexual abuse or misconduct by those who have been well-loved and well-respected leaders of their communities. This rise of clergy sexual misconduct is called by David R. Williams an "epidemic"<sup>5</sup> and is mostly committed by males against females. Just as in domestic violence, "the vast preponderance of these cases involves male clergy."<sup>6</sup>

It is unfortunate, however, to learn that there are no official national statistics on clergy sexual misconduct available. Nevertheless, some research has been done that can

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Neil Ormerod and Thea Ormerod, When Ministers Sin: Sexual Abuse in the Churches (Alexandria, Australia: Millennium Books, 1995), ix.

<sup>4</sup>Perry C. Francis and Nancy R. Turner, "Sexual Misconduct Within the Christian Church: Who Are the Perpetrators and Those They Victimize?" Counseling and Values 39 (April 1995): 219.

<sup>5</sup>David R. Williams, "Why Does Sexual Abuse Occur?" Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 18.

<sup>6</sup>Pamela Copper-White, "Soul Stealing: Power Relations in Pastoral Sexual Abuse," The Christian Century, February 20, 1991, 197.

shed some light on the scope of this problem. In 1984, Richard Blackmon surveyed 300 ministers<sup>1</sup> from different denominations. He found that nearly 39 percent reported sexual contact and 12.7 percent reported having actual sexual intercourse with a parishioner. He also found that 76.5 percent indicated that they knew of a minister who they believed had sexual intercourse with a church member.<sup>2</sup> Also, in a document adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the following statement is found:

“Statistical evidence suggests between 10 and 23 percent of clergy nationwide have engaged in sexualized behavior or sexual contact with parishioners, clients, employees, etc., within a professional relationship.”<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the research department of the journal *Christianity Today* conducted a survey with 300 evangelical ministers. The survey included the following question: “Since you’ve been in local church ministry have you ever done anything with someone (not your spouse) that you feel was sexually inappropriate?” The answer to this question revealed that 23 percent said yes; 12 percent acknowledged that they had had sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse, and 18 percent admitted that they had

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<sup>1</sup>Out of those 300 ministers, 286 were male and 14 were female.

<sup>2</sup>John D. Vogelsang, “From Denial to Hope: A Systematic Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 197.

<sup>3</sup>Ormerod and Ormerod, 6.

participated in other forms of sexual contact like passionate kissing and fondling/mutual masturbation. Interestingly enough, only 4 percent said that they were found out.<sup>1</sup>

A study conducted by G. Lloyd Rediger indicates that about 10 percent of clergy have been or are engaged in sexual misconduct. Another 15 percent are basically on the verge, waiting for an opportunity. Seventy-five percent of clergy appear to be functioning well, although they are just as vulnerable.<sup>2</sup> Based on the figures provided by all of these studies, one may conclude that between 25 and 30 percent of all the clergy in North America have been involved in some kind of sexual misconduct. This is a serious problem that needs to be addressed and dealt with without delay.

This concern led the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists<sup>3</sup> to establish a Sexual Ethics Commission. It was asked "to develop guidelines, policies, procedures, and training programs to address these issues."<sup>4</sup> This commission of twenty-five members was to meet once a year starting on March 8, 1993. That same year it was

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Exley, Perils of Power: Immorality in the Ministry (Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, 1988), 11.

<sup>2</sup>Rediger, 2.

<sup>3</sup>The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists comprises the sisterhood of all the Adventists churches in North America including Bahamas and Hawaii.

<sup>4</sup>Rosa T. Banks, "How Should the Church Respond to Sexual Misconduct?" Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 5.

voted at the year-end meeting<sup>1</sup> to include, for the first time in the North American Division Working Policy, an appendix on sexual misconduct. One of its purposes is to provide a guide for training persons in the prevention of sexual misconduct.<sup>2</sup> In the same vein, a former Union<sup>3</sup> administrator expressed his concern in the following words: "I am concerned about the growing number of denominational employees, in and outside of our union, who have found themselves in trouble due to inappropriate sexual activities."<sup>4</sup>

As a result, the Columbia Union of Seventh-day Adventists also established a committee to deal with the problem of clergy sexual misconduct. This committee, consisting of fourteen members, functions in an advisory capacity to the Columbia Union Executive Committee. "Its goal is to develop guidelines for appropriate interventions and education addressing employee sexual misconduct."<sup>5</sup> Three areas will be addressed by this particular committee:

1. A code of ethics to guide the professional

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<sup>1</sup>This meeting convenes all the church leaders to discuss issues affecting the church. They take votes regarding those issues or they simply make recommendations to the General Conference session that meets every five years.

<sup>2</sup>North American Division Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1994-1995).

<sup>3</sup>The Union is another layer within the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It comprises the sisterhood of all the Seventh-day Adventists Churches in a given territory. Usually a Union includes several Conferences and covers several states.

<sup>4</sup>Ron M. Wisbey, "Sexuality: A River of Life or Death," in Broken Hearts, Broken Lives, 1.

<sup>5</sup>Dick Tibbetts, "Employee Sexual Misconduct," in Broken Hearts, Broken Lives, 12.

2. Continuing education to "grow" the professional
3. Appropriate supervision to help the professional deal with difficult cases and understand personal needs that may impact the counseling relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual misconduct in the ministry is not a new problem. Actually, its incidence was also present in the past. Church leaders have been aware of this problem for years, but they have been in denial. It was just too painful to admit that such a problem could be happening in our church.<sup>2</sup> Also, "sex is not a topic the church talks about, at least not openly."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, "one of the great losses resulting from years of denial and coverup of clergy malfeasance by the church is the loss of our integrity."<sup>4</sup>

This is, therefore, no time to pretend that the church does not have sexual misconduct problems among the clergy. They are real and must be faced and dealt with, painful though they may be. It must be remembered that the moral health of the clergy is crucial to the moral health of the church. However, I am so thankful to the Lord that there is still hope. Johnson says that although "the problem is big enough to concern us all . . . there is grace enough for healing and for deliverance."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>William G. Johnsson, "Sins of the Family," Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 4. He states that "as a people we have been in denial," but the problem is real and we must face it openly and honestly.

<sup>3</sup>Wisbey, 1. He, also, states that we have refused to talk about this issue openly.

<sup>4</sup>Rediger, 117. In his book Rediger defines "malfeasance" as a "violation of expectations and the breaking of public trust."

<sup>5</sup>Johnsson, 4.

### Legal Implications of the Problem

I would like to begin this section by agreeing with several authors who state that the days are gone when ministers were held sacrosanct and immune from legal actions.<sup>1</sup> Their once-revered position in the community has become illusory in a society that is turning to the courts with increasing frequency. The church can no longer appeal to the separation between church and state for protection from a lawsuit when a pastor or other church leader commits sexual misconduct.<sup>2</sup> Historically, the practice was to hide the problem. However, "the media and the legal system are forcing us to deal more openly and honestly with all these issues."<sup>3</sup> Inevitably, "clergy must now face the legal consequences for professional negligence or intentional wrongdoing that are imposed upon other professional groups."<sup>4</sup> This situation puts ministers on the same level with

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<sup>1</sup>See authors such as H. Newton Malony, Thomas L. Needham, and Samuel Southard, Clergy Malpractice (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 7; Lindell L. Gumper, Legal Issues in the Practice of Ministry (Birmingham, MI: Psychological Studies and Consultation Program, 1981), 13; The Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy, Entrusted to Our Care (Minneapolis, MN: Northwestern Counseling Center, 1989), 16; The Ministerial Association, 56; and, Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, Ministerial Ethics: Being a Good Minister in a Not-so-Good World (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), 173.

<sup>2</sup>The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 56. See also Maloney, Needham, and Southard, 62, where they discuss the complicated "first amendment issues relative to church-state separation" and how the "first amendment protection is not absolute and inviolate but is subject to being outweighed by the state's duty to protect its citizens."

<sup>3</sup>Mark R. Laaser, "Sexual Addiction and Clergy," Pastoral Psychology 39, no. 4 (March 1991): 214.

<sup>4</sup>Ronald K. Bullis and Cynthia S. Mazur, Legal Issues and Religious Counseling (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 34.

other professional caregivers, which makes them more responsible than the general citizen. That is why both clergy and other professional caregivers share the same legal implications of sexual misconduct. This movement, which has taken place within the past decade or so, is exemplified by a legislation recently passed in the State of Minnesota.

In 1984 the Minnesota State Legislature established a task force of eight subgroups to study the concerns of sexual exploitation by counselors and psychotherapists. One of these subgroups was a committee called the Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy. This committee was given the task of assisting the church in addressing this issue.<sup>1</sup> As part of its work, the committee asked people who had been directly affected by caregiving professionals to provide their testimonies. Unfortunately, the most compelling ones came from those who were sexually abused by ministers. Those testimonies “powerfully influenced state lawmakers”<sup>2</sup> in such a way that two statutes pertaining to sexual exploitation by counselors and psychotherapists were passed in 1992.

This legislation left a landmark in the religious community because in it “clergy are specifically identified within the definition of ‘psychotherapist’.”<sup>3</sup> In this legislation sexual abuse or exploitation was defined as “any form of sexual penetration, any contact

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<sup>1</sup>The Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 16.



to the breasts or genital area or clothing covering these areas, or any request for sexual contact or intercourse."<sup>1</sup>

Sexual penetration was considered a third-degree offense and sexual contact was considered a fourth-degree offense if:

1. The sexual misconduct occurred during the psychotherapy session.
2. The patient or former patient was emotionally dependent upon the psychotherapist.
3. The sexual misconduct occurred by means of therapeutic deception.<sup>2</sup>

Notice now the consequences of criminal sexual misconduct. If the offense is in the third degree (sexual penetration), the sentence would be imprisonment for not more than ten years, or a fine of not more than \$20,000 or both. If the criminal offense is in the fourth degree (sexual contact), the sentence would be imprisonment for not more than five years, or a fine of not more than \$10,000 or both. However, "in most instances, conviction on charges of criminal sexual conduct carries a mandatory prison sentence."<sup>3</sup>

Minnesota, however, is not the only state in the United States to pass such a legislation. Legislators of other states have also become involved with this issue as complaints of sexual misconduct reach their offices. The result is that other states have also enacted laws against sexual misconduct by clergy and therapists. These states

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 18.

include California (1990), Colorado (1990), Florida (1991), Georgia (1992), Iowa (1992), Maine (1991), North Dakota (1989), and South Dakota and Wisconsin (1990).<sup>1</sup> Whereas the Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin statutes specifically include clergy, the others include clergy only by implication. For them "sexual activity with a parishioner in counseling is no longer just a moment of weakness, but a criminal act."<sup>2</sup> All these statutes have several common elements. Bullis and Mazur describe them as follows:

First, the caregiver is called generically the "psychotherapist." The term "psychotherapist" may be broad enough to include both the religious counselors who are licensed counselors and those who are not. A nonlicensed, religious counselor who suggests to a counselee that he/she is a counselor or that he/she can provide counseling services fulfills the definition for the purposes of these laws and is liable and accountable under the statute. The second element . . . is that "consent" is *not* a defense to this crime. Sexual behavior of people past the age of majority, however, will be criminalized if it involves a person who is mentally incapacitated, mentally deficient, or physically helpless. The third element . . . is that the definition of "sexual misconduct" is generally broad and includes a wide range of sexual behavior.<sup>3</sup>

By law, now, clergy would always be held responsible for any sexual intimacy with someone they counsel regardless of the person's willingness to participate or actual solicitation. The reason is in their position of power, authority, and emotional maturity in

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<sup>1</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 34. See also James A. Sparks et al., "Sexual Misconduct in Ministry: What Clergy at Risk Are Doing About It," Congregations--The Alban Journal, November/December 1992, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Cordes, "Responses to Sexual Misconduct," Sexual Ethics Issues for Church Administrators in the 90's, TMs, July 1994, 16, in my possession.

<sup>3</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 34-35.

the counseling relationship. This position creates a "power imbalance" or "power differential" between the minister and the counselee. The above elements show how clergy and other professional caregivers share the same legal implications.

On the other hand, in states where sexual abuse or exploitation by those in the helping professions "does not hold any criminal penalties, the victims can file a civil suit against the professional and/or the employer, such as a hospital, university or church."<sup>1</sup> The employing organization or church can also be held responsible and liable for the minister's sexual misconduct. Churches can be sued for issues arising from negligence, including malpractice.<sup>2</sup> For example:

If a conference or mission moves a pastor to another church, knowing that the pastor has been guilty of moral misconduct in the previous church, and if the new church has not been notified and the pastor given counseling help, the conference may be held accountable by law for future misconduct.<sup>3</sup>

The above legislatures clearly indicate that the problem is a serious one that demands our attention and requires immediate action. Unfortunately, clergy are

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<sup>1</sup>Sharon Foster, "The Consequences of Violating the Forbidden Zone," Counseling Today, January 1996, 24. A church may be held responsible for injuries resulting from its negligence. If a pastor who has committed sexual misconduct, is moved to another church without the employing organization notifying the church of his previous conduct, then the church or the religious organization may be held accountable.

<sup>2</sup>See Malony, Needham, and Southard, 22; Gumper, 14; Richard R. Hammar, Pastor, Church and Law (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), 61, 62; and, The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 56.

<sup>3</sup>The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 56.

becoming more liable to civil actions because “they may well be the least prepared for their professional roles in terms of their legal training.”<sup>1</sup> As Tiemann rightly stated:

Most pastors care little and know less about the “law”. Capitalize the word, set it in the context of the Old Testament, and they become experts. But ask them the difference between statute and common law or question them about the legal rights of a minister under the rules of evidence and they become mute.<sup>2</sup>

That is why I have become persuaded that a pastor’s ministerial training today must go beyond the theological training, important as it may be. The practice of ministry must include a seminar on the dynamics, prevention, and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct. It is possible that fear of the legal consequences may motivate ministers to move in the right direction. Yet, as Christians, we must first be motivated by a genuine concern to help others and the desire to be faithful to moral and ethical obligations and responsibilities.

### **Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct**

Most of the ministers who have been involved in sexual misconduct never thought it would happen to them. They were godly men dedicated to the work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. People were being brought to Jesus; lives were being saved through their ministry. The Lord was using them in a mighty way. But it was precisely this factor that made them a target for Satan. Ellen G. White comments, in

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<sup>1</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 34.

<sup>2</sup>William H. Tiemann, The Right to Silence: Privileged Communication and the Pastor (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964), 24.

the context of the experience of Israel with Balaam, that “near the close of this earth’s history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before entering the land of promise.”<sup>1</sup> His target, however, would not just be Christians in general; rather, he would target especially God’s ministers because the results are more devastating to the Christian church. Note the following statement:

And men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God’s law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid--over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work, and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character.<sup>2</sup>

Expanding on the Balaam event White indicates that the leaders of Israel were also involved in the transgression of God’s law: “The rulers and the leading men of Israel were among the first to transgress.”<sup>3</sup> These leaders were then followed by the rest of the people. Then she states that as we get closer to the coming of the Lord, the devil will use the same temptations he used at Baalpeor against “those in the highest positions, in the most holy office.”<sup>4</sup> It is unfortunate, however, to see how these words are gaining more meaning and relevance as we hear of more cases of ministers who have betrayed their

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 84. Read also on p. 195 for a further understanding of this statement.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>3</sup>White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), 454.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 458.

sacred trust. They were upright, spiritual, and well-intentioned ministers. But what was it that caused their fall? What made them vulnerable to temptation? I think Hart is right when he states that “morality isn’t always enough.”<sup>1</sup> There is a need for more than just morality in the ministry. For Tim LaHaye, “sexual sin is always the result of progressive steps, any one of which should have warned the pastor long before he jumped into bed with the wrong woman.”<sup>2</sup> At some point in time of vulnerability, the pastor started making small compromises until the unavoidable happened. What are those progressive steps that can lead a minister into sexual misconduct? What factors can contribute to the fall of a minister? Are there any common characteristics present in ministers who end up involved in sexual misconduct? Let us look first at the progressive steps.

### Progressive Steps

Getting involved in sexual misconduct requires that some steps may be followed. Those steps can take place in a short or long period of time, like months or even years. “These steps are not only predictable, but they are also preventable.”<sup>3</sup> Len McMillan indicates that although these steps do not take place in an exact pattern, they may occur in the following order:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Archibald D. Hart, “Being Moral Isn’t Always Enough,” Leadership (Spring 1988): 25.

<sup>2</sup>Tim F. LaHaye, If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored? (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 35.

<sup>3</sup>Len McMillan, “Sexual Ethics in Adventist Ministry,” in Broken Hearts, Broken Lives, 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 3-7.

1. Extended Look. The extended look goes beyond a casual glance or appreciation of female beauty. It is a look of interest in that particular person. Once this look of interest is acknowledged by the opposite sex, then bonding begins to take place.

2. Careful Observation. Careful observation consists in monitoring the person in order to determine her level of attraction.

3. Fantasizing. Fantasizing is more than a harmless daydream. It begins by starting to think about a woman and is followed by finding ways to be with her alone.<sup>1</sup> Lebacqz and Barton give us several reasons to be concerned about fantasizing.<sup>2</sup> First of all there is a possibility that the fantasy will turn into reality. Second, it can become all-consuming. Third, it distracts the minister from his responsibilities. Fourth, it can distort judgment. Fifth, it drains energy and makes one less able to deal with reality. Lastly, a fantasy can even become addictive. McMillan calls it an "obsession."<sup>3</sup>

4. Suggestive Statements or Movement. At this stage the pastor is already probing for sexual responses. He may talk about sex or sexual feelings or he may engage in physical contact.

5. Seduction. This takes place when the minister puts aside his professional ethics and responds to the person's seductive behavior.

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Mcburney, Counseling Christian Workers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 269.

<sup>2</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 61-63.

<sup>3</sup>McMillan, 3.

6. Conscience Calls. Here is when the minister finally pushes away any doubts or spiritual restraints.

7. Opportunity. Everything is in place. The minister now looks for the proper environment or opportunity.

8. The Act. This is the culminating point in this series of progressive steps. The pastor now sacrifices everything for the sake of a sexual passion that started as a simple attraction.

I would like to conclude this section by referring to a letter written to Elder T. In it Ellen G. White describes the process by which Elder T. started giving special attentions to other women besides his wife. I noticed that this process is basically a summary of the one mentioned above. Then she concludes by expressing how terrible these types of affairs look in a minister.

The root of the whole matter is unchaste thoughts [that] are entertained which lead to improper attentions and advances, then to improper actions. All this is bad enough in men who have only a common work to do, but it is a hundredfold worse in those who have accepted sacred positions of trust.<sup>1</sup>

#### Contributing Factors

Many factors can contribute to clergy sexual misconduct. However, those factors can be attributed to changes in the role of clergy, both in church and society.

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<sup>1</sup>White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce, 194.



## Role of Clergy in Church

The first factor that has affected the role of clergy in church and can contribute to sexual misconduct is the expectations placed on ministers. Ministers, among other things, are expected to work unending hours and to be available at all times to their congregants. For many, growth is an important factor in determining the individual's calling into the ministry. Hence, there is pressure to be successful at church and to meet all the goals. Clergy are also expected to maintain a good relationship with the Lord and their families. But, unfortunately, when they place their priority on these expectations, in LaHaye's own words, "they have gradually allowed their moral lives to corrode, setting themselves up for a fall."<sup>1</sup>

Hart considers that a second factor affecting the ministry is the lack of "broad ethical guidelines to govern the practice of ministry."<sup>2</sup> Many members of the clergy who have fallen have done it because they ignore their ethical boundaries. This absence of clear and specific ethical guidelines leaves what Rediger calls "a vacuum in standards for behavior."<sup>3</sup> There is not an intentional decision to do it, but a lack of sound judgment in their relations with the opposite sex. I like Hart's illustration of this factor:

I think of morality as the edge of the precipice. On the one side is safe ground (nonsin); on the other, disastrous sin. It's only one step from safety to falling off the cliff. A code of ethics is like a fence erected well

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<sup>1</sup>LaHaye, 40.

<sup>2</sup>Hart, 25.

<sup>3</sup>Rediger, 115.

back from the precipice edge. It warns all those who come close that this is dangerous territory.<sup>1</sup>

The third factor has to do with the place of the minister's home in his life.

Unfortunately, the home is no longer the only place where the minister meets his personal needs. For one thing ministers are being required or invited to attend conferences, meetings, and continuing education events that keep them away from home frequently. On the other hand, more clergy spouses are involved in jobs and careers that also reduce the time the couple can spend together. The result is what Rediger has described as an increased rate of clergy divorce which, added to the fact that there is also a number of single persons in clergy ranks, has developed a greater potential for inappropriate sexual activities.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, there is a change in the image of clergy. "The pedestal or halo effect is nearly gone. Few people now believe that clergy are closer to God than laypersons."<sup>3</sup> Actually, their pronouncements, opinions, or counsels are not blindly accepted anymore. This is partially attributed to the fact that people today have better opportunities to further their education. Clergy are no longer the best educated people in church or town. In fact, the opposite can be true in many settings. Thus, education has led people to question or even ignore the opinions of ministers. Consequently, the traditional role of clergy has been relegated to the stature of a moral model. "This rather sudden loss of

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<sup>1</sup>Hart, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Rediger, 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 114.

status and power causes some clergy to seek control through manipulation and reassurance in sexual fantasies and gratifications.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Role of Clergy in Society**

Clergy used to operate as the center of society. City officials, civil authorities, and social policymakers would not make final decisions without consulting the minister(s). This is no longer the case. Unless the clergyperson plays an important role in a constituency the minister will not be consulted. Today “ethical issues tend to be resolved on scientific, medical, and political grounds rather than on theological ones.”<sup>2</sup> Together with this, “the rise of psychotherapy and counseling has decreased the perceived need for clergy.”<sup>3</sup> As mentioned before, all these elements have relegated the role of clergy to a mere moral model.

### **Common Characteristics**

So far I have discussed the contributing factors and the progressive steps as essential aspects in the understanding of the dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct. There is, however, another aspect that will enhance that understanding. This aspect consists in a description of certain common characteristics that are found in offending pastors. Some of these characteristics might have been with them when they felt the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

calling to the gospel ministry. Others may have developed them during their ministerial training or after they started their ministry.

### **Personality**

The first common characteristic of offending pastors is their personality traits. Clergy are spiritual, sensitive, caring, and giving persons. They are perceived to be bright, knowledgeable, and talented. Ministers provide leadership to congregations and, generally, dress well. All of these things make ministers not only vulnerable, but also attractive to women with various needs or problems.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if ministers have personality problems then they can also be used by Satan to get them “all tangled up in life.”<sup>2</sup> In either case they are “prime candidates for Satan’s sinful attacks.”<sup>3</sup> Marie Fortune has classified them into two categories: the “wanderer” and the “sexual predator.”<sup>4</sup> The wanderer is the uninformed pastor who has failed to establish his boundaries. Very seldom is he able to distinguish between right and wrong conduct with the opposite sex. This may be attributed to a lack of training, experience, and supervision. Nevertheless, the wanderer may be helped to fulfill his vocation through

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<sup>1</sup>For a better discussion on these personality traits refer to Mcburney, 264, and Clyde M. Narramore, Why a Christian Leader May Fall (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 61-63.

<sup>2</sup>Narramore, 60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>4</sup>Marie M. Fortune, Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship (Seattle, WA: Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1992), 20-21.

appropriate education and supervision. The sexual predator, however, is the minister who is characterized by personality disorders. Contrary to the other, this pastor uses others to meet his own personal needs. He sees no need for counseling, and the chance to help him recover is very minimal.<sup>1</sup>

### **Power and Authority**

Power and authority are the second common characteristics of an offending pastor. There seems to be an important structural difference between the professional role of a minister and the trust relationship of parishioners. People see the minister as a physical representation of the whole community of faith, tradition, and way of understanding the meaning of life and of God.<sup>2</sup> This physical representation puts the minister in a position of power and authority. Thus, the minister's power and authority becomes, as Lebacqz rightly stated, "legitimated and institutionalized."<sup>3</sup> He has power and authority not only as a professional person, but also as an ordained pastor. People would come to the minister precisely because of the power and authority he has in relation to spiritual matters. They trust that the pastor will act in their best interest.

Unfortunately, "many clergy have difficulty seeing themselves as people with power. They do not fully understand the uneven power in their relationships with

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<sup>1</sup>Francis and Turner, 220-222.

<sup>2</sup>Karen Lebacqz, Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 113.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

parishioners.”<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Mundy indicates that “ninety six percent of sexual exploitation by professionals occurs between a man in power and a woman under his care.”<sup>2</sup> When a minister enters into a sexual relationship with a parishioner, he is not only breaking the trust relationship, but is also abusing his pastoral position for his own sexual advantage. His position of spiritual healing and moral support is thus perverted into an instrument of destruction. “The more powerful the abusive person is, the more damage he is likely to do.”<sup>3</sup> That is why some consider that this problem of clergy sexual misconduct is primarily an issue of power and control and not a matter of sex or sexuality.<sup>4</sup> The term “adultery,” in this case, would not fit adequately the minister’s sexual involvement with a parishioner. Adultery would imply that both participants are consenting equals.<sup>5</sup>

Like some other professionals (doctor, therapist, etc.), the minister sees people at their most vulnerable situation. They come to him in very critical and stressful moments. During these moments, people are vulnerable emotionally and can be taken advantage of by a minister who does not act in a responsible and ethical matter. They actually have a

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<sup>1</sup>Donald C. Houts, Clergy Sexual Ethics: A Workshop Guide (Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1991), 6.

<sup>2</sup>H. Susi Mundy, “Behind Closed Doors--Mutual Consent or Abuse of Power?” Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ormerod and Ormerod, xii.

<sup>4</sup>See Mundy, 14, and Copper-White, 196, for a wider discussion on this concept.

<sup>5</sup>Ann-Janine Morey, “Blaming Women for the Sexually Abusive Male Pastor,” The Christian Century, October 5, 1988, 42.

diminished ability to reject these advances because the minister is looked upon as more powerful. This "inequality of power can restrict the capacity for voluntary action."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the minister has the primary responsibility to protect the pastoral relationship. As a person invested with power and authority, the minister is expected to act in the best interest of the person with lesser power. "A healthy professional, pastoral relationship realizes the fact of pastoral power, acknowledging both the gift that it brings and the implication that the pastor is at risk to misuse that power."<sup>2</sup>

However, pastors are not only at risk to abuse or misuse their position of power and authority. They are also the target of parishioners who feel attracted to them because they see them as authoritative figures. Pastors are powerful persons, at least within the church, because they are leaders and they speak with the authority that comes from God's Word.<sup>3</sup> Trull and Carter consider that there are also parishioners who are emotionally insecure. For them to have a sexual relationship with a minister would mean that they "had established a more intimate relationship with God through intimate contact with a minister."<sup>4</sup> This attraction to powerful people can be a common cause for sexual misconduct. But, again, it is the responsibility of the minister for "maintaining the necessary boundary, even if the other acts seductively in the relationship."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 119.

<sup>2</sup>Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? 102.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen Grunlan, "Pastor, I Love You," Ministry, November 1983, 16.

<sup>4</sup>Trull and Carter, 83.

<sup>5</sup>Mundy, 15.

I would like to conclude the discussion on power and authority with the following remarks. The clergy role carries a great deal of power in and of itself. For a trusting parishioner who looks to the minister for spiritual guidance and support, he carries the ultimate spiritual authority. It is, therefore, important for ministers to act ethically and responsibly when dealing with parishioners of the opposite sex. Note the following statement by Ellen G. White.

When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to the sacred service of God; when they occupy the position of expositors of Bible truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and angels are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body and spirit to God's service--then shall these men who minister in a most holy office desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes? Shall the sacred vessel, whom God is to use for a high and holy work, be dragged from its lofty, controlling sphere to administer to debasing lust? Is not this idol worship of the most degrading kind?<sup>1</sup>

### **Sexuality**

Sexuality is another aspect of the minister's vulnerability. Ministers, like anybody else, are sexual beings. Studies in the psychology of human sexual selection show that "each person is particularly attracted to certain features in the opposite sex while other features do not arouse strong attraction."<sup>2</sup> This is also true of ministers. Although they are not likely to feel sexually attracted to every woman in the parish, yet they will feel the attraction when certain women meet their personal criteria for feminine

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), 434-435.

<sup>2</sup>Charles L. Rassieur, The Problem Clergymen Don't Talk About (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), 20.



beauty. Research interviews with pastors have shown that they are not insulated against sexual attraction because of their holy office. They also respond to beauty and charm just as any other man.<sup>1</sup> This is what Stroup and Wood define as the awesome power of sex<sup>2</sup>-- a power that can also be overwhelming and, in Carlson's own words, "exceeds rationality."<sup>3</sup>

Let us look briefly at some factors that may influence the sexual attraction of a pastor toward a woman:

1. Close Relationships. Ministers work in a close relationship with people like secretaries, staff members, counselees, church members, organists, choir directors, etc. The nature of their work brings them into regular contact that can provide the opportunity for the development of a romantic relationship.<sup>4</sup>

2. Stimulating Conversation. Pastors, like some other professionals, are involved in stimulating conversations as parishioners share their sexual insecurity, struggles, failures, griefs, and longings with them. Though clergy are perceived to be safe people, nevertheless there is the danger that the minister may find this conversation arousing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert W. Stroup, Jr., and Norma S. Wood, Sexuality and the Counseling Pastor (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974), 36.

<sup>3</sup>Robert J. Carlson, "Battling Sexual Indiscretion," Ministry, January 1987, 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Rassieur, 22-23, also discusses this factor as an important one.

3. Sexual Availability. Charles L. Rassieur indicates that another equally important factor in the sexual arousal of a minister is the perception that the parishioner is sexually available to him.<sup>1</sup>

4. Sexual Addiction. Addiction is defined as “a progressive condition where the individual cannot control when he or she starts or stops an activity, and continues that pattern of behavior in spite of destructive consequences.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, for the sexual addict the preoccupation with sexual things becomes more important than anyone or anything else.<sup>3</sup> As a result the person becomes dependent on sex to cope with life. Mark R. Laaser defines sexual addiction as a “repetitive, unrollable sexual activity of any kind.”<sup>4</sup> It works like any addiction and “it has a numbing, narcotic-like effect.”<sup>5</sup> Marie Fortune classifies sexually addicted ministers as “sexual predators.”<sup>6</sup> That is why Laaser sees sexual addiction as “one possible reason that clergy sexual misconduct occurs.”<sup>7</sup> He cites

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<sup>1</sup>Rassieur, 24.

<sup>2</sup>Grant L. Martin, “Relationship, Romance, and Sexual Addiction in Extramarital Affairs,” Journal of Psychology and Christianity 8, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>4</sup>Laaser, 215.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Fortune, Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship, 20, 21.

<sup>7</sup>Laaser, 214. See also Francis and Turner, 222.

a variety of ways through which sexual addicts act out.<sup>1</sup> They may act out in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Fantasy or preoccupation with sexual thoughts
- b. Masturbation
- c. Sexual activity with other people
- d. Indecent liberties like grabbing, hugging, pinching, tickling, rubbing up against, etc.
- e. Exhibitionism and voyeurism<sup>2</sup>
- f. Rape, incest, and child molesting.<sup>3</sup>

Now, several elements make sexual addiction a serious problem. It is repetitive and uncontrollable. Moreover, "like any addiction, sexual addiction is a progressive disease. The symptoms will get worse."<sup>4</sup> In a study conducted in 1991, Carnes was able to document that 97 percent of all sex addicts have been emotionally abused, 81 percent have been sexually abused, and 74 percent have been physically abused. In many of these cases they have been abused in all three ways.

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<sup>1</sup>Laaser, 216-217.

<sup>2</sup>Laaser describes exhibitionism as the revealing of intimate details of the minister's life to the parishioner. Voyeurism is described as the browsing in lingerie departments, positioning to get a look when someone bends over or simply the undressing of a woman with the eyes.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 218. For Laaser these three forms of sexual addiction are clearly exploitive and criminal.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Carnes also discovered that sex addicts come from rigidly disengaged homes where there was no emotional bonding of a positive nature. Consequently, the sex addict was not able to learn about healthy love, nurturing, and relationship. What is more unfortunate is that they use the pastoral role to meet those needs, thinking that they are not hurting anybody and that they will not get caught.<sup>1</sup>

5. Transference and Counter-Transference. Transference has been defined as “the process in which people project their own (often unmet) needs onto an idealized figure.”<sup>2</sup> Transference may include positive elements such as affection, warmth, etc. It also includes negative ones like anger, rejection, etc. Counter-transference, on the other hand, refers to the projections that the individual in the professional role imposes onto the individual.<sup>3</sup> Both factors are considered to be “the most powerful force in romance.”<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, contrary to most counselors, ministers do not generally receive training in these areas. This lack of training leaves them more vulnerable to these kinds of situations and can lead clergy to both “legal and therapeutic disaster.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 219, 220, 234. See also Francis and Turner, 220-222, where they state that the chances to help a sex addict recover are very minimum.

<sup>2</sup>Trull and Carter, 83.

<sup>3</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 37.

<sup>4</sup>Peter L. Steinke, “Clergy Affairs,” Journal of Psychology and Christianity 8, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 57. He also calls these two factors “projective identification” and describes them as a “pattern of interpersonal behavior in which a person induces another person to respond or behave in a particular way” (p. 58). See also Francis and Turner, 221.

<sup>5</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 37.

## Self-Disclosure

As a person who is constantly with people, the pastor is deeply involved emotionally with them. He is perceived as a warm, caring, and sensitive individual, as one who listens and understands. This caring role and warm personality places the minister in jeopardy. As Richard Exley correctly stated: "Emotional bonding is often the first step toward infidelity, and nothing facilitates such bonding faster than an emotionally deprived woman and a compassionate pastor whose marriage and personal life are unfulfilling."<sup>1</sup>

Such bonding deals with deep emotions that draw both the pastor and the parishioner into an intimate relationship. Different things are discussed that may include personal and sexual feelings, and personal and family problems. The initial tendency will be for the pastor to compare her with his wife. Once he starts doing this, the wife's faults will begin to look greater. The other woman is different and usually seen at her best; the pastor's wife, on the contrary, may be demanding and is not seen well groomed all the time. The next step will be to want to share his marital problems and dissatisfactions with the parishioner.<sup>2</sup> Susi Mundy sees this kind of self-disclosure as "the most common early signal"<sup>3</sup> of sexual misconduct.

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<sup>1</sup>Exley, 39.

<sup>2</sup>McBurney, 270.

<sup>3</sup>Mundy, 15.

This situation, however, can be avoided. Ministers can find good spiritual counseling in the following words: "Be careful how you are enticed to make women your confidants or to allow them to make you their confidant."<sup>1</sup>

### **Other Common Characteristics**

In addition, some other less recognized characteristics are at work that deserve our attention, at least briefly. Together they all contribute to the total effect ministers have on others romantically.

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<sup>1</sup>White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 167. I, also, would like to refer to two letters written by Ellen G. White to a Brother N. and a Brother R. In those letters she discusses the same problem of self-disclosure which, I believe, can shed some light on this issue. The case of Brother N. is that he was married to a woman who had not embraced the gospel truth. His first mistake was that he associated himself with a woman who professed great sympathy for him and made her manners fascinating. He poured into her ears that which should have been entrusted alone to his wife. His second mistake was that he forgot to watch and pray always "lest you should enter into temptation" (ibid., 89). Yet, there was hope for him. She said that although the fortifications preserving sacred the privacy and privileges of the family relation have been broken down, he can build them up again only in the strength of God. The case of Brother R. is that he was married to a shy woman who lacked order and neatness at home. His mistake was that he allowed himself "to be a confessor to some sentimental woman who desired sympathy and wished to lean upon others" (Ibid., 302). His spiritual condition, also, left much to be desired. He was too slack in his deportment; his words were not elevated, chaste, and pure; the intellectual and noble powers of his mind were brought into subjection to the animal passions; and, he did not abstain from every appearance of evil. This situation led White to provide an important principle that can be helpful in the prevention of sexual misconduct which, I believe, can be very relevant and pertinent for ministers today. "If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach" (Ibid., 306). The opposite can also be true when a minister approaches a Christian sister with a tale of his problems and needs. Both of these letters are also found in the following source: Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 2:89-91, 301-306.

1. Self-confidence. Regardless of how he feels inside, the pastor is perceived as being self-confident. This makes it easier for others to feel good about themselves.<sup>1</sup> This characteristic makes the pastor very attractive.

2. Showing Interest and Concern. By the very nature of the ministerial work, pastors show interest in others and listen to their problems. "They are taught to be attentive, empathic, and responsive listeners--the very behaviors and attitudes that make them attractive to members of the opposite sex."<sup>2</sup>

3. Gentleness. Ministers usually reach out to people in tenderness and provide comfort when they are hurting. Yet, what is meant to be of comfort and support "may draw the individual to the pastor in a romantic attraction."<sup>3</sup>

4. Public Recognition. The ministry, like no other profession, offers the pastor the opportunity of standing in front of a congregation at least once a week to interpret God, life, and morality. Yet, this opportunity can blind "the performer and the admiring observer to the realities of meaningful, responsible relationships."<sup>4</sup>

5. Accepting and Giving Gifts. The matter of gifts in general presents a problem. No matter how trivial the gifts may seem, they can be a serious indication of an

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<sup>1</sup>Grunlan, 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Rediger, 18. See also Grunlan, 16, and Francis and Turner, 221.

increasing emotional investment on either part. The pastor's duty to be true to his calling and to act without partiality can be affected.<sup>1</sup>

6. Unresolved Issues. Peter L. Steinke provides another characteristic he observed in sixty-five male clergy who were involved in sexual affairs. This characteristic is one of unresolved childhood issues. Some of those issues would include deficits in emotional nurture, trauma centered around self-worth and the emotionally distant or unavailable father who seldom confirmed his son but habitually admonished him for his failure, inadequacy, or ignorance.<sup>2</sup>

7. Inadequate Training. Pastors are usually trained in preaching, administration, leadership, etc. Yet, little attention is given to training in relational and counseling skills. How to listen, understand human problems/needs, and relate effectively to people are some elements that are lacking attention in seminary programs.<sup>3</sup>

Let me conclude this discussion on the dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct with the following remarks. Ministers are human beings dealing with people who are wounded and hurting. These individuals come to ministers for help and comfort; but, unfortunately, this situation can also open some doors that would lead into sexual

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<sup>1</sup>For more discussion on the subject refer to Mcburney, 270, and Hart, 27.

<sup>2</sup>Steinke, 57.

<sup>3</sup>Carlson, 4. Personally, I can relate to this issue because these elements were not part of my seminary training. I believe there is a growing need of restructuring or adjusting the seminary's training program to allow future pastors to be better prepared to deal with the issue of a potential sexual misconduct. For those who are already working as pastors, they should be given the opportunity to attend seminars or workshops. After all, ministers deal with this issue very regularly.



misconduct. Trying to understand the mental and emotional dynamics of sexual attraction still remains a difficult subject for me. But, the Bible does mention that some women have power to entrap and destroy men (Prov 7:25-27)<sup>1</sup> and, of course, this is also vice versa. Ellen G. White describes it as a “bewitching”<sup>2</sup> power. Of even more pointed concern is that the issue of sexual misconduct will be Satan’s greatest temptation to clergy in the time of the end.

Satan well knows the material with which he has to deal in the human heart. He knows-for he has studied with fiendish intensity for thousands of years-the points most easily assailed in every character; and through successive generations he has wrought to overthrow the strongest men, princes in Israel, by the same temptations that were so successful at Baalpeor. *As we approach the close of time*, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, *as of old*, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their souls, he can through them destroy many. *And he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago*. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, *he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This text appears in the context of a prostitute who uses her sexual enticement power to seduce a young man of poor judgment (see vss. 5, 7, 21) into going to bed with her. Now, beauty is not sinful but it can be used in a sinful way. Conversely, beauty may provoke a sinful lustful reaction in a man because he has a sinful tendency not because she is enticing him.

<sup>2</sup>White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 457.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 457-458, italics mine.

## CHAPTER IV

### EFFECTS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct is a very serious one. That is why, this research has been eye-opening and a blessing for my ministry. It has led me to conclude that the widespread extent of this problem has only been recognized recently, and also that its effects can be devastating and long lasting. Blanchard considers that the effects of clergy sexual misconduct are very similar to those of incest.<sup>1</sup> The effects can be emotional, psychological, and spiritual. They affect the minister, the parishioner, their respective families, the congregation, and the community. Let me discuss them individually.

#### **The Minister**

A minister who becomes involved in sexual misconduct with a parishioner can go through a lot of pain. The cost can include loss of his family, health, friends, career,

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald T. Blanchard, "Sexually Abusive Clergy Men: A Conceptual Framework for Intervention and Recovery," Pastoral Psychology 39, no. 4 (March 1991): 237-246. See also Jeannette H. Milgrom and Gary R. Schoener, "Responding to Clients Who Have Been Sexually Exploited by Counselors, Therapists, and Clergy," in Sexual Assault and Abuse (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987), 210. Both writers provide a detailed comparison between clergy sexual misconduct and an incestual relationship.

credibility, reputation, legal standing, and even his eternal life.<sup>1</sup> The cost is very high and, as a result, his life will be affected. Fortunately, it is possible for the minister to experience recovery through spiritual and professional help. Perhaps, the negative element may be that this situation might influence the restoration to ministerial work.

### **The Parishioner**

The effects of clergy sexual misconduct can be even more damaging and traumatic for the parishioner. For her, the minister's actions exhibit a contradiction between his beliefs and his practices. Her trust and confidence were betrayed by one who professed to represent God. Hence, the crisis becomes a crisis of faith for she also feels betrayed by God<sup>2</sup> and "totally unworthy of God's love and forgiveness."<sup>3</sup> In many cases the parishioner ends up drifting away or rejecting the church.<sup>4</sup>

Besides the crisis of faith there is also a crisis of trust and confidence. The parishioner will develop an impaired ability to trust subsequent ministers<sup>5</sup> and to trust

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed description of the effects on the minister see Vogelsang, 199, and Mundy, 2. Ellen G. White adds to this list the spiritual element. She says that the earthly and sensual thoughts and actions can cripple the pastor's endeavors and dwarf his spiritual growth. White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 194.

<sup>2</sup>Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? 110-111.

<sup>3</sup>Ormerod and Ormerod, 10.

<sup>4</sup>Deborah B. Geeseman, "I've Got a Secret," Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 12.

<sup>5</sup>Milgrom and Schoener, 212.

their own feelings and experience.<sup>1</sup> She would not even be able to trust the same minister in the event that the two should later marry. "There will always be," says Len McMillan, "the nagging uncertainty that perhaps he might have an affair with someone else."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the above, the parishioner experiences an emotional and psychological crisis. This crisis may include the following elements:<sup>3</sup>

1. Depression (It can be severe to the point of contemplating suicide.)
2. Loss of self-esteem and motivation
3. Loss of personal and professional reputation
4. Ambivalence
5. Anxiety and despair
6. Fear of being disbelieved, blamed, or ostracized (In some cases she may even fear his retaliation and loss of job if she is employed by the church.)
7. Intense shame and feelings of guilt
8. Anger at the violation of sacred trust
9. Sense of emptiness and isolation
10. Cognitive dysfunction

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<sup>1</sup>Ormerod and Ormerod, 11.

<sup>2</sup>McMillan, 6.

<sup>3</sup>This list of elements was gathered from the following sources: Milgrom and Schoener, 211; Ormerod and Ormerod, 11; Kenneth S. Pope, "How Clients Are Harmed by Sexual Contact with Mental Health Professionals: The Syndrome and Its Prevalence," Journal of Counseling and Development 67 (December 1988): 51-52; Rediger, 29; The Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy, 8; Vogelsang, 199.

11. Grief over the loss of the relationship with the minister and the church
12. Vulnerability to repeated abusive relationships
13. Intense inner conflict created by confused emotions of love-hate toward the pastor
14. Emotional liability (There is an impaired capacity for emotional and sexual intimacy.)
15. Sense of responsibility.

### **The Respective Families**

In addition to the impact that clergy sexual misconduct causes on the minister and the parishioner, there are also profound effects on their respective families. Francis and Turner call them the “secondary victims or co-victims.”<sup>1</sup> But despite the profound effects that this problem can cause on their respective spouses, children, and/or other relatives, it is sad to realize that they are usually forgotten. Yet, they all experience similar feelings.<sup>2</sup>

1. They feel betrayed, shamed, and belittled. They feel betrayed by their family member and, also, by God.
2. They experience loss of support from the church.
3. The ability to trust is often seriously impaired.

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<sup>1</sup>Francis and Turner, 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

## The Church

When clergy sexual misconduct occurs the church also suffers. It, actually, becomes another victim of the offense when the sacred trust is violated by the pastor. Not being sure what to do, the church's initial reaction is to defend the pastor and to blame the parishioner together with the accusers.<sup>1</sup> The result is a polarization of the church into two groups.<sup>2</sup> One is the group of people who still trust and believe in their pastor; they would even go as far as blaming the parishioner for seducing their pastor. The second group, usually a smaller one, is the one that takes seriously the accusation and loses trust and confidence in the pastor. When this division takes place within the congregation, the damage can be both long-term and acute.<sup>3</sup>

There are some other responses from the congregation:<sup>4</sup>

1. Attempts to maintain normalcy at all costs
2. Attempts to avoid confrontation
3. Efforts to maintain a good image by not talking to outsiders about its needs and problems
4. Fear of the loss of members and/or legal liability
5. Feelings of helplessness, confusion, and/or disillusionment

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy, 9.

<sup>4</sup>These responses have been gathered from the following data: LaHaye, 31; Mundy, 2; Vogelsang, 199; The Minnesota Interfaith Committee on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy, 9; and, Trull and Carter, 86.

6. Denial, anger, and/or rage
7. Feelings of public embarrassment
8. Feelings of betrayal and abandonment
9. Loss of trust and confidence in church leadership
10. Reduced witness associated with the tarnished reputation of the church
11. Financial loss as members choose not to bring their tithes and offerings.

Although these responses may not all be present at the same time in a given congregation or situation, it is necessary for the church or denominational leadership to provide a program of pastoral care.<sup>1</sup> The church must be helped to work through its own crisis and move on with its mission. Healing must take place in order for the church to focus once again on its mission.

### **The Community**

The issue of clergy sexual misconduct also has its effects on the ministry at large and the work of the church in its community. Personally, I have found that people (non-members) tend to reject everything a church is and has when the minister fails. Moreover, as Tim LaHaye expresses it, "for those who seek an excuse to reject our Lord, the sexual misconduct of ministers provides one ready-made."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, this problem affects not only the local ministry, but the ministry in general. When a minister

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<sup>1</sup>Gaylord Noyce, Pastoral Ethics: Professional Responsibilities for the Clergy (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 103.

<sup>2</sup>LaHaye, 32.

fails, all ministers are hurt.<sup>1</sup> So the main element affecting the community would be the loss of trust and confidence in ministers and, possibly, in church.

Therefore, as ministers we must stay away from anything that may give any appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22). Every thought, word, and action of the ministers should be in harmony with the sacred truth they have been entrusted with (Phil 4:8). They should be clean and pure. I think Ron Wisbey's words are very timely at this moment: "Be aware of your fatigue. Notice when you begin to burn out. Watch where your eyes go. Learn the danger signs."<sup>2</sup> When ministers begin to place their affections on parishioners of the opposite sex; when they begin giving them special attention "God will withdraw His Spirit"<sup>3</sup> because "there is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters."<sup>4</sup>

Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be men of blameless reputation; their lives should be spotless, above everything that savors impurity. Do not place your reputation in jeopardy by going in the way of temptation.<sup>5</sup>

### **Can a Fallen Minister Be Restored into the Ministry?**

To this point it has been said that ministers ought to be moral examples in their communities, both Christian and non-Christian. However, it is still unfortunate to hear cases of ministers who get involved in inappropriate sexual relationships with their

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<sup>1</sup>Trull and Carter, 86.

<sup>2</sup>Wisbey, 3.

<sup>3</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 5: 594.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 593.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 598.



parishioners. This situation has created a divergence of opinion among Christian leaders.

Among those Christian leaders Tim LaHaye has identified three different groups:

One group has built a negative case with selected passages, insisting that a minister who betrays the sacred trust conferred by God and a loving congregation has lost the right ever to preach again. A second group, contending that no specific prohibition appears in Scripture, responds that there are no unpardonable sins with God. They believe the Scriptures teach that God is the God of the second chance. A third group believes that certain "falls" warrant an extended recovery period. They suggest that every fall should be considered individually to determine whether the leader should be restored to a similar ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists is very clear on this issue. When a Seventh-day Adventist minister gets involved in sexual misconduct he/she is disciplined without any possibility of restoration into the gospel ministry. This is clearly stated in its working policy: "In the case of a moral fall in violation of the seventh commandment, including those violations involving sexual perversions, the minister has, by that transgression, made void his/her calling and, where applicable, ordination to the sacred office of the ministry."<sup>2</sup> There are four aspects of the minister's relationship with the church that are affected when discipline is administered due to sexual misconduct: "His/her credential/license, his/her ordination, his/her church membership and his/her denominational employment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>LaHaye, 105.

<sup>2</sup>North American Division Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995-1996), 321.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The following is a description of how those four aspects of the minister's relationship with the church are affected:

1. The ministerial credential/license is withdrawn permanently by the employing committee.
2. The minister will be ineligible for future employment as a Seventh-day Adventist minister.
3. The unordained minister will not be eligible for future ordination.
4. The organization that has disciplined the minister, as described above, will inform the local church of which the offending minister is a member for appropriate action regarding his/her church membership.<sup>1</sup>

This variety of opinions raises some questions. Can a fallen minister be restored into the ministry? What does the Scripture say about restoration? It is not my intention to present a precise and definite answer concerning the restoration of fallen ministers. Nevertheless, one can gain some insights from some biblical passages and other sources. Of all the people God has used in history, some were fallen leaders and servants. They chose to sin by breaking one or more commandments. In some cases their fall was due to sexual sins. Yet in many cases, God still chose to work with and through them. The Lord even restored them after they sinned against Him. Among some of these leaders one may find Samson who got himself entangled in an adulterous relationship with a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 321, 322. Out of these four aspects of the minister's relationship with the church only one is given the possibility of restoration, namely, his/her church membership. This can be possible when the minister has given evidence of repentance, conversion, and reformation of life. Then he/she can rejoin the church through rebaptism.

Philistine prostitute and then with Delilah and for whom he betrayed his Nazarite vows (Judg 16:1, 4, 17).

After Samson came two kings: one was David and the other was his son. The case of king David was that he committed the double sin of sleeping with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then sentencing him to death in the battlefield (1 Kgs 11). The second one was David's son, Solomon. King Solomon, interestingly enough, was the son of Bathsheba, Uriah's wife. Although he started out as a king having a good relationship with the Lord, the Bible records that he had an unfortunate record figure of having seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines and they all turned his heart after other gods (1 Kgs 11:1-6). It is very possible that some of these unions were the result of political and cultural influences; nevertheless, these women influenced Solomon's spirituality. Yet, God forgave and used them according to His will.

When we come to the New Testament we do not find any reference of a church leader who had fallen into a sexual sin. We do, however, read the story of Peter's denial of Jesus. Yet, God forgave him and used him in the ministry of the preaching of the gospel. Just as God was willing to forgive and restore some of these fallen leaders, "we must become the instrument of God for the redemption and restoration of our fallen brother."<sup>1</sup> This may also include a fallen minister.

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<sup>1</sup>Exley, 100.

In a letter<sup>1</sup> written to Elder George I. Butler, Ellen G. White expressed her counsel concerning several ministers in the United States who had transgressed the seventh commandment. In it she said that one of these ministers should have been sent to England to labor for the Lord.<sup>2</sup> His name was John V. Initially, she wrote him a letter advising him to go to England to labor for the Lord. But, instead of going to England, the Conference leaders entrusted him with more responsibilities which, according to her, put him in bad shape to serve the Lord. Elder George I. Butler wrote a letter to Ellen G. White expressing his concerns and asking her for some words of wisdom. Her response was "I cannot answer further than I have done"<sup>3</sup> meaning that she still believed that her initial counsel of sending him to England was good. This counsel seems to speak clearly about giving fallen ministers a chance. She also wrote concerning Brother H. who was involved in an affair with a married lady by the name of Georgie S. White, first, wrote Elder H. two letters describing his sins: "You, a gray-haired man, lying at full length with your head in the lap of Georgie S."<sup>4</sup> She also reminded him of the years he has been living in "unlawful sympathy and love with another man's wife."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White to George I. Butler, 1887, Letter 16, Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce, 239.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 182.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 183.

The above statements indicate that this minister was living in an “unlawful” relationship with a married woman and that this relationship was not just starting, but was one that had been going on for “years.” In her two letters to him, Ellen G. White begs him to stop sinning so that his evil ministerial influence would not affect the church of God. Yet, she does not speak of leaving the ministry; she only speaks of stopping his sinful actions. He responded back to her with an acknowledgment of his sin, but did not express any decided effort to stop his adulterous relationship. It was not until then that White wrote her letter to Elder Butler. In that letter she clearly expressed that the General Conference should not renew Elder H’s ministerial credentials.<sup>1</sup> Then she added the following statement: “We do not want to connect Elder H with the work here *unless he has a connection with God.*”<sup>2</sup>

Again, this statement gives the impression that White has no problem with the restoration of a fallen minister unless he/she continues in his/her sinful life. Moreover, in that same letter she also included a dream she had about Elder H: “I did have a dream many months ago, which showed him *restored* with the blessings of God resting upon him.”<sup>3</sup>

So, in spite of his moral sins, God was willing to restore him and give him a chance to labor again for Him, but this time in England. Actually, his inability to stop

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 187, emphasis mine.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 240, emphasis mine.

sinning seemed to be connected to the fact that he was not confronted publicly. Others, including White, tried to help him by dealing with the problem in a quiet way. This approach only made him more stubborn in his sin.

I hear you [Elder H] are taking treatment at the sanitarium, acting as chaplain, speaking in the Tabernacle. Now, this does not look right for you to take such positions, *until* you have done all in your power to correct past evils. Our pity, our love, to save you from reproach, has hurt you."<sup>1</sup>

Based on the above discussion, it may be concluded that ministers may be restored to the gospel ministry. This is part of God's program for the church. The next question would then be: How can one determine which ministers may be restored and which not? What procedures can be followed in determining this? Once again, I would like to offer some suggestions based on my research. From the pen of Ellen G. White we gather a couple of elements.

God's claim is placed in one scale, and man's character in the other, and by the balances of the heavenly sanctuary every man's doom is fixed for eternity. The law demands perfect, unswerving obedience. In the latter scale is also placed the sin, the folly, the deception, the unclean thoughts, the unholy actions; *and the preponderance or the lightness of the weight determines the weal or woe of individuals.*<sup>2</sup>

It appears that God looks at two elements in the minister. On these two elements depend the restoration of the minister, namely, the character of the minister and the nature of the offense.<sup>3</sup> Tim LaHaye states that "every case must be evaluated individually. Any

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 189, emphasis mine.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies to Ministers, 439, 440.

<sup>3</sup>Tim LaHaye seems to agree with these two elements. He thinks that in considering the restoration of a fallen minister three things should be kept in

restoration to ministry must be based not just on the sex act alone but on what that act reveals about the minister's character."<sup>1</sup> For example, is this a one-time occurrence or a pattern of life?<sup>2</sup>

This principle of restoration teaches us that all fallen ministers need forgiveness and spiritual rebuilding, and the Christian church has a part in this process. However, although some ministers might be restored, not all ministers can be restored into the gospel ministry.<sup>3</sup> Sexual sin should not be dealt with lightly. Sexual immorality is a serious sin for a minister. It is a great betrayal of trust for it involves many people.

Overlooking the minister's involvement does not help the minister or the church. If a person gets away with it too easily the first time, he/she may use little restraint the next time. That is why LaHaye introduces the element of confronting the minister as a way to deal with this problem of sexual misconduct. LaHaye believes that "confrontation is restoration."<sup>4</sup> The restoration process, I believe, should begin by helping the minister

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consideration: (1) What is the minister's true character? (2) How long did the sexual sin go on? (3) How many people were involved? These three things were also mentioned to him by other leading ministers in North America whom he surveyed. See LaHaye, 123-154, 157-160.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>2</sup>Trull and Carter, 90.

<sup>3</sup>Among those who cannot be restored into the gospel ministry are the ones who have been involved in child molestation. The reason is that they are included in the area of sexual addiction which is a serious problem as described in my section of "sexuality" of this dissertation. This is not, however, the case of the "wanderer" offender, to use Marie Fortune's term again, who can and is willing to be helped.

<sup>4</sup>LaHaye, 164.

rebuild his spiritual life, his marriage and family, and his fellowship with the church. It may also include some professional treatment by psychiatrists or psychologists.<sup>1</sup> It is important that the minister experience psychological healing together with the spiritual. During this period of restoration it is recommended that the minister be suspended from performing all ministerial duties. Richard Exley points out the first reason for this recommendation by stating that "it is still in his best interest to require him to cease ministering for a time in order to rearrange his priorities."<sup>2</sup>

Another reason for asking the minister to cease ministering is that the pastor has placed himself in a position of distrust on the part of the church family and the community. They cannot follow a leader who has broken their trust.<sup>3</sup> Both the pastor and the church need to be helped in order to allow healing to take place and be able to fulfill their mission in the community. The minister should not only be suspended from performing all ministerial duties, but he should also refrain from accepting any invitation to minister in any way until the church leadership deems it appropriate to lift the restrictions. Don Baker believes that this principle of submission to the church and its leadership would play a significant part in the recovery process.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McMenamin and Kralovec, 156.

<sup>2</sup>Exley, 101.

<sup>3</sup>See my section on the effects of sexual misconduct in the church and the community, for a better understanding of this issue, on pp. 64-67.

<sup>4</sup>Don Baker, Beyond Forgiveness: The Healing Touch of Church Discipline (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1984), 77-79.



### **Getting Out of a Bad Situation**

The above study has given us a pretty good understanding of the dynamics involved in clergy sexual misconduct. It is not easy to remain loyal and faithful to the sacred trust bestowed upon ministers at ordination. Unfortunately, some end up entangled in an inappropriate relationship with a parishioner. For many honest pastors, this is a subtle process that leads them into this situation. Once in this situation, how can a pastor get out before is too late? Can this pastor be helped? It might be possible depending on some factors:<sup>1</sup>

1. How bad is the situation? How far has this pastor gone in this relationship? How much of this relationship has been made public? How late is too late?
2. What are some of the possible resulting consequences? Who and what have been affected by this relationship?
3. How willing is the other party to cooperate in this process?
4. Is the pastor a “wanderer” or a “sexual predator”?<sup>2</sup>

The answer to these questions may help us determine if there are any possibilities. The following are some suggestions for pastors who have found themselves

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<sup>1</sup>Most of the pastors who found themselves involved in sexual misconduct are honest pastors and not predators. Based on my research and the seminars conducted with the pastors of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, there are a number of pastors who believe in restoring a fellow minister and there are others who would not even consider it. However, my research has shown that there is a possibility of restoration depending on the factors mentioned below.

<sup>2</sup>Refer to the section entitled “personality” of this dissertation for a clarification of these two terms.

in a bad situation and want to get out before it is too late. However, a point of clarification is in order here. The following suggestions are for pastors who are classified “wanderers” because “sexual predators” will try to avoid them.<sup>1</sup>

1. First and foremost seek the Lord in prayer. Be honest with yourself. The Lord knows the heart and He can not only forgive but also provide guidance and direction.

2. Be willing to face the consequences. Do not run away or try to evade them. They will follow you wherever you go. Rather, accept responsibility and accountability.

3. Talk the situation over with someone you can trust and feel comfortable with. It could be a colleague in ministry, a professional caregiver, or a church leader/administrator. Secrecy is not the cure for a secret problem. These people may be able to provide some helpful suggestions.

4. If necessary, let the other party know about your decision. Refer her to someone else for help. Then eliminate all contact with her.

5. Get professional help. If possible, you might want to consider taking a leave of absence. This would give you the opportunity to reorganize your spiritual and emotional life, strengthen your marriage relationship, put your priorities in the right perspective and be better prepared for future ministry.

6. Consider direct confession to the spouse or to whomever you have wronged.

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<sup>1</sup>Marie Fortune uses these terms to classify offending pastors. See p. 42 for a clarification of these terms.

7. Consider, also, the possibility of choosing another occupation. Again, you need to be honest with yourself, especially when some of the elements mentioned in item 5 are not happening.

This is an area where more work needs to be done. However, there are some places that can be contacted for more information and help. See appendix 7 for a list of these places.

### **Recommendations for Prevention**

As presented early in this chapter, the phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct has received more recognition and awareness just in the last fifteen years. Therefore, there is still a need for more research that would help us understand its dynamics and learn more ways to help prevent it. Ron Wisbey believes that “we have waited till too late for too long. Now it’s time for assistance, encouragement, counseling, help and *prevention*.”<sup>1</sup> It is time to help pastors, both those who are already working in their ministerial capacities and those who are preparing for the ministry, to avoid falling on “forbidden ground”<sup>2</sup> or what Peter Rutter calls “sex in the forbidden zone.”<sup>3</sup> Pastors need to be part of the solution in a sinful world and not part of the problem. Therefore, it is important that we provide some preventive ways. It is my prayer that the following

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<sup>1</sup>Wisbey, 3, italics mine.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 200.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Rutter, Sex in the Forbidden Zone (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1989), 11. He describes it as “any sexual contact that occurred within the professional relationships of trust.”

recommendations for prevention may help pastors in their ministry and serve as a springboard for more and broader research.

### Build a Strong Spiritual Life

The first recommendation for prevention of clergy sexual misconduct is in the area of spirituality. Ministers need to build a strong spiritual life through an intimate relationship with the Lord. Prayer and personal Bible study are essentials ministers cannot afford to live without (see Luke 18:1; Rom 12:12; 1 Thess 5:17; 2 Pet 1:4). Unfortunately, some ministers get so busy in their work that they do not take time to develop a healthy relationship with the Lord. They just take it for granted. But, as Stephen Grunlan rightly stated, "in a world that views sexual promiscuity as lightly as does ours, some of the disease is bound to infect even the clergy unless we consciously inoculate ourselves with a strong faith and reliance on God."<sup>1</sup>

More than anything else, churches appreciate when their ministers are strong spiritual leaders. They can tolerate pastors who may be weak in certain areas of leadership or even when they make administrative mistakes. But, when church members see that their pastor is very spiritual, they will support him and try to supply his weaknesses. This has been my personal experience in my years of ministry. However, spirituality will never happen unless one becomes intentional about it. Time must be set aside to develop a personal program that would help the minister build and/or maintain a strong spiritual life. Strong spiritual pastors will be better prepared to repeat Joseph's

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<sup>1</sup>Grunlan, 17.

exclamation: "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9).<sup>1</sup>

### Build a Strong Marriage

The second recommendation for prevention of clergy sexual misconduct is to build up a strong family relationship with one's spouse.<sup>2</sup> Like any normal person, ministers have personal and intimate needs. These needs are so important in the lives of many that if they are not met through appropriate relationships, then they will be met through inappropriate ones.<sup>3</sup> And the marriage relationship is the most appropriate one.

In a survey conducted, Jack Balswick and John Thoburn found out that a good number of ministers cited their strong relationship with their spouse as "their greatest resource in overcoming sexual temptation."<sup>4</sup> An even greater number cited, specifically, the importance of a "good sexual relationship with their wives"<sup>5</sup> as their greatest resource. Several other ministers pointed to the "lack of sexual interest on the part of their wives"

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<sup>1</sup>The Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual encourages Adventist ministers to keep their spiritual resistance high and to see adultery as a sin, primarily, against God and then against others. The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 56.

<sup>2</sup>It was interesting to notice, throughout my research, that most every writer cited a solid marriage as "one of the greatest safeguards against indiscretions and infidelity." Grunlan, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Rediger, 121.

<sup>4</sup>Jack Balswick and John Thoburn, "How Ministers Deal with Sexual Temptation," Pastoral Psychology 39, no. 5 (May 1991): 280.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 281.

or “their own lack of attention to their wives”<sup>1</sup> as the reasons for their sexual temptations. It is, therefore, important that the ministerial family take a closer look at their total marriage experience when they sense that they are experiencing less than a satisfying marriage and sexual relationship.<sup>2</sup>

Alberta Mazat suggests that ministerial families must plan and safeguard this “unifying experience.”<sup>3</sup> Their intimacy needs to be protected against busy schedules that will reduce their time and transform their sexual relationship in a lifeless and monotonous encounter.<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Black calls this type of relationship “cheating.”<sup>5</sup> He believes that “if marriage is intended to depict the sexual relationship as an expression of intense companionship and intimacy, then any sexual expression, even in the context of marriage, that does not express such a union falls short of God’s design.”<sup>6</sup>

Let me conclude with a word of caution. Having a strong marriage is a very important safeguard against clergy sexual misconduct; yet, “it does not inoculate one

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 282.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Alberta Mazat, “El Sexo y el Pastor Casado” [Sex and the Married Pastor], Ministerio Adventista, July-August 1987, 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Jeffrey Black, “The Perversion of Intimacy,” Ministry, November, 1995, 13. For him “cheating” is present when there is “sex without intimacy” and not just when there is an adulterous relationship.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. He arrives at this conclusion based on his understanding of the following texts: Eph 4:1, 20, 21, 25, 29; 5:31-33; 1 Cor 7:3, 4.

against being attracted to, or falling in love with, another person.”<sup>1</sup> Lebacqz and Barton report that in a recent study published by the Alban Institute, Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger found that 68 percent, of 1,319 pastors studied, scored high on the feeling-oriented category. Also, 44 percent of the same group fell in both the feeling-oriented and intuitional-oriented categories.<sup>2</sup> The implications of these results may be significant because they depict clergy as individuals who “would tend to trust their ‘intuition’ or ‘instinct’ or ‘feelings’ to tell them when something is going wrong.”<sup>3</sup> And, of course, these are not the best methods to decide when boundaries are being crossed.

#### Education

Too much has already been invested in remedial recovery without making much or any progress at all. It has become almost imperative for congregations and denominations to reduce the human toll and the financial expenditures involved in the recovery process of clergy and victims, and related litigations.<sup>4</sup> What the church now needs is to move beyond that remedial recovery phase to emphasize prevention in every way possible.

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<sup>1</sup>Carlson, 2; Lebacqz and Barton, 49.

<sup>2</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 54.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Risk Management Services, “Pastoral Staff,” Sample Sexual Misconduct Guidelines, TMs, March 1991, 1, in my possession.

Here is where education plays an important role in the prevention process. This prevention process should begin during the pastor's preparation for ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, seminarians are not receiving adequate training in what Rediger calls "the subtleties and realities of their role and their intimate relationships with parishioners."<sup>2</sup> I personally believe that Bible schools, colleges, and seminaries should take a new look at their curriculums for possible adjustments and/or restructuring.

Courses should be provided, if not available, in the areas of sexual ethics in the ministry, counseling and personal relationships,<sup>3</sup> the nature of power and authority of the ministerial role and the responsibility that goes with it,<sup>4</sup> how to care for the minister's own emotional and sexual needs in healthy and appropriate ways,<sup>5</sup> development and maintenance of professional support systems,<sup>6</sup> understanding of current applicable

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<sup>1</sup>I could not agree more with Marie Fortune and Neil and Thea Ormerod in this concept. See Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? 106, and Ormerod and Ormerod, x.

<sup>2</sup>G. Lloyd Rediger, "Sexual Torment," Church Management--The Clergy Journal, April 1989, 61.

<sup>3</sup>McMillan, 6.

<sup>4</sup>Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred? 106.

<sup>5</sup>Milgrom and Schoener, 216.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Mosgofian and George Ohlschlager, "Child Sexual Abuse in Society and the Church," Ministry, November 1995, 24.



church/denomination employment policies/guidelines on this issue,<sup>1</sup> and, last but not least, awareness of the dynamics and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.<sup>2</sup>

But, it should not stop here. Besides ministerial students, the ministers who are already serving in various capacities also deserve information and clarification on all these issues. Therefore, churches and/or denominations should develop continuing educational programs as part of their continuing education and professional growth.<sup>3</sup>

I would also like to suggest that these continuing educational programs should be made available, at least partially or on a limited basis, to lay leaders. The knowledge and training that they acquire would enable them to help their respective congregations deal more effectively with the situation in the event of a problem of clergy sexual misconduct. Not so, however, for ministerial students and pastors in the field. I am persuaded, based on my research, that those Bible school, college, and seminary courses should be part of the student's core requirements for graduation; in the case of pastors already serving, I fully agree with Len McMillan that attendance to these continuing educational programs "could be required for ministerial license renewal."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Risk Management Services, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Appendix 1 for a suggested curriculum on a course on Sexual Ethics in the Ministry.

<sup>3</sup>See McMillan, 6; Mundy, 15; Rediger, "Sexual Torment," 61; and, Risk Management Services, 2, for more details. These programs may include seminars, workshops, retreats, etc.

<sup>4</sup>McMillan, 6. These programs should be available and even required for both new and experienced pastors, and especially for fallen ministers who have been restored into the ministry.

## Avoid the Appearance of Evil

The next recommendation for prevention has to do with the appearance of evil. Ministers should avoid situations conducive to sexual temptation regardless of how sincere and honorable the intentions are. Every appearance of evil should be shunned.<sup>1</sup> In order to shun the appearance of evil, ministers need to be able to recognize it and avoid it. The following list may provide some tips that would help ministers recognize the appearance of evil.

1. The extended look
2. Careful observation
3. Dreaming or fantasizing about a particular parishioner
4. Concerned about being well groomed in front of her
5. Suggestive behaviors or remarks
6. Looking for an opportunity.

Ministers would also do well by recognizing their sexual vulnerability<sup>2</sup> and knowing their limitations. "They must stay within the areas of their expertise and not venture into divergent areas."<sup>3</sup> Pastors should set limits on their time and energy. They should also establish priorities for relationships that are consistent with their calling.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>White, Gospel Workers, 129.

<sup>2</sup>Trull and Carter, 88. They believe that vulnerability makes restraint and responsible sexuality necessary.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond T. Brock and Horace C. Lukens, Jr., "Affair Prevention in the Ministry," Journal of Psychology and Christianity 8, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 52.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 53.

Honesty and openness to discuss and understand this issue will eventually pay its dividends. The following list provides some ideas to help pastors avoid the appearance of evil.

1. Maintain a strong devotional life with the Lord. A strong spiritual life will help the minister recognize and avoid the appearance of evil.<sup>1</sup>

2. Recognize one's vulnerability and the temptations and drives that come with it.<sup>2</sup> A pastor that seeks to safeguard morality throughout his ministry must be intentional about it also. Ask yourself the following questions:<sup>3</sup>

a. Am I so attracted to a specific person that I am unusually looking forward to that arranged meeting or visit?

b. Am I specially concerned to be well groomed and dressed for that visit or interview?

c. Do I invite the lingering eye contact?

d. Do I feel something different or special when greeting her with a handshake?

e. Do I try to convince myself that certain innuendos or comments are just jokes even when I feel a change in my pulse rhythm?

f. Am I dreaming or fantasizing about a particular parishioner?

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<sup>1</sup>Mazat, 5.

<sup>2</sup>Trull and Carter, 88. See also Stenbakken, 16.

<sup>3</sup>Mazat, 5.

If the answer is yes to any of the above questions, then there is a good possibility that an attraction is beginning to take place. If this is the case, then the minister would do well in doing the following:

- a. Confront yourself with your own feelings. Be honest and decisive.
  - b. Seek the help of a friend, colleague, or professional for accountability purposes. The spouse can also be a great help.
  - c. If involved in a counseling relationship, be willing to refer the individual to another minister or professional. Reduce the personal contact with the parishioner as much as possible.
3. Know your limitations. Be willing to refer the counselee to a professional as soon as you learn that the case is beyond your professional capacity and training.<sup>1</sup>
  4. Avoid spending long periods of time alone with parishioners of the opposite sex.<sup>2</sup>
  5. Arrange to visit ladies with the spouse or a local church leader, especially if they are within your peer age group (within ten years of age). Do not meet or visit with them at inappropriate hours such as late at night.

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<sup>1</sup>Hart, 29.

<sup>2</sup>McBurney, 266. He believes that spending long periods of time with parishioners of the opposite sex would not only raise suspicion, but can also leave the minister vulnerable to false accusations and temptations.

6. Do not ride in your car alone with parishioners of the opposite sex. This may also raise questions in the minds of some. The minister needs to “avoid situations conducive to sexual temptation.”<sup>1</sup>

7. Schedule your counseling hours during times when someone else is at church like the church secretary. Arrange to have a glass window put on the office door for more protection. Always keep a family picture visible at the office.

8. Bring the pastoral relationship into a more professional setting. Avoid familiarity with parishioners of the opposite sex. Ellen G. White states that “when young women are very sociable, it is the minister’s duty to let them know that this is not pleasing.”<sup>2</sup>

9. Treat parishioners of the opposite sex the same way you treat those of the same sex: with respect, dignity, and compassion.<sup>3</sup>

When it comes to the issue of the appearance of evil, pastors would benefit a lot by remembering the following words of wisdom:

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. (Prov 6:27-29)

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, 19.

<sup>2</sup>White, Gospel Workers, 129.

<sup>3</sup>Mazat, 5. She says that pastors need to avoid wrong interpretations in their relationships with parishioners of the opposite sex. This needs to be done at the same time they are transmitting an image of concern, care, and willingness to help.

### Be Professional

Ministers need to maintain a professional structure in their relationship with parishioners, especially those of the opposite sex. When the relationship is becoming quite informal to the point that it may be leading to a romantic or sexual affair, then pastors need to bring the relationship to a more professional setting. The following are suggestions that may help the pastor conduct himself professionally in a relationship with a parishioner of the opposite sex.

### Be Responsible

All ministers are responsible for the decisions they make and for the behavior they choose. In their relationships with church members of the opposite sex, pastors need to be alert to the potential misuse of power, influence, and status on their part. Some ways that would help the pastors be alert may be the following:

1. When the pastor is restricting the parishioner's capacity for voluntary action (The person needs to have freedom to consent or decide the course of action.)<sup>1</sup>
2. When the minister is manipulating the situation so that the parishioner ends up doing only what he says<sup>2</sup>
3. When clergy notice a sense of fear or uncomfortability in the pastoral/counseling relationship<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 119.

<sup>2</sup>The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

4. When the minister is using his position of authority to meet his own needs instead of acting in the best interest of the parishioner.<sup>1</sup>

It is here where clergy need to practice a responsible stewardship of power, influence, and status for the best interest and benefit of the parishioners. As Archibald D. Hart rightly expressed: "All of us need to maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and accept the consequences of our acts."<sup>2</sup>

### **Be Accountable**

Various pastors have cited accountability as "being the greatest help in overcoming sexual temptations."<sup>3</sup> Hart sees it as the only way "to safeguard against poor judgment, unconscious motivations and self-deception."<sup>4</sup> Rediger considers accountability as "another valuable tool for prevention"<sup>5</sup> of clergy sexual misconduct. Many pastors tend to become loners in ministry. This has also been my personal experience in ministry. When this happens certain professional and personal needs are not met, which may lead the pastor to find satisfaction in other ways.

However, I have found that when I have been able to have a network of friends and colleagues whom I can trust, I can really benefit from their input and fellowship.

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<sup>1</sup>Hart, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Balswick and Thoburn, 283.

<sup>4</sup>Hart, 28.

<sup>5</sup>Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality, 121.

Personally, I have seen the value of having a peer group or just a professional to be accountable to. Thus, I would like to suggest that ministers should arrange to have regular or periodic review with an individual or group of individuals they can trust and feel comfortable talking to.<sup>1</sup> The first step consists in becoming aware of one's own needs and vulnerability. Then the minister would need to look for an individual he can trust. Discuss the possibility of developing an accountability relationship between the two. Agree on the elements that would characterize this accountability relationship.

Remember, no one is an island. Everyone involved in the work of ministry should develop a "therapeutic relationship"<sup>2</sup> with another minister/professional or a group of ministers/professionals. "The person who functions isolated from others in ministry is susceptible to temptation and the resultant fall."<sup>3</sup>

### **Be Consistent**

I agree with Andre Bustanoby's remark that "there is no fail-safe way to protect yourself completely from allegations of impropriety, no matter how professional and careful you might be."<sup>4</sup> However, when ministers have developed a consistent pattern for

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<sup>1</sup>This is strongly encouraged by Brock and Lukens, 52; Carlson, 5; Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality, 120-121, 125; Hart, 28; and, Risk Management Services, 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Brock and Lukens, 52.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Andre Bustanoby, "Counseling the Seductive Female," Leadership (Winter 1988): 54.



pastoral care,<sup>1</sup> when they consistently treat female parishioners properly, with respect, professionalism, and genuine Christian concern, then lay leaders and members would be able to recognize that there is not a problem of impropriety on the part of ministers.<sup>2</sup> Although this may not be the only defense against an accusation of clergy sexual misconduct, it would surely help protect the minister in a better way.

### **Have a Personal Code of Ethics**

To have a personal code of ethics is the last, but not the least, recommendation for prevention.<sup>3</sup> Because ministry is not just considered a vocation, but also a profession, “the pastor must adhere to professional codes and be honorable in his or her dealings with the parishioner.”<sup>4</sup> This means that he would need to set some boundaries in his relationships with church members. A code of ethics will help the minister set clearly those boundaries, and make explicit the primary goals and values of his ministry.

James D. Berkley considers that those who do not believe in an ethical code for pastors are now in the minority.<sup>5</sup> Pastors need to develop a personal code of ethics that “both speaks to their needs and reflects their best understanding of what sound Christian

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<sup>1</sup>Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality, 120.

<sup>2</sup>Bustanoby, 54.

<sup>3</sup>Authors like Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality, 125; McMillan, 7; Hart, 29; and, Mundy, 3, suggest that ministers ought to have a personal code of ethics they can turn to and follow when facing a difficult situation.

<sup>4</sup>Lebacqz and Barton, 108.

<sup>5</sup>James D. Berkley, “Turning Points: Eight Ethical Choices,” Leadership (Spring 1988): 32.

ethics dictate.”<sup>1</sup> No one else can do this for us. Only we can chart our own ethical course and hold ourselves to it by the grace and power of God.<sup>2</sup> God’s grace and power are sufficient to sustain us. Notice the following statement: “The experiences and observations of others tell us where not to go, but the tiller is in each of our hands. How we steer makes the difference between the shipwreck and delivering the goods at the final destination.”<sup>3</sup>

Let me conclude this section by providing some suggestions to help ministers develop their own personal code of ethics.

1. Be clear about the nature of your ministry. Ask the Lord in prayer for light that would help you know clearly:
  - a. Why are you a minister?
  - b. What is your calling into the ministry? Are you called to be a pastor-teacher, pastor-counselor, etc.?
  - c. What are your needs?
  - d. What are the needs of your congregation and community?
2. Set some goals for your ministry. Ask yourself, what do I want to accomplish in my ministry?
3. Look for ways you can reach those goals.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Appendix 2 for a description of my personal code of ethics.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 41.

4. Read widely from literature that discusses the nature of your ministry. It can give you good ideas as to how you can best serve the needs of your congregation and community.
5. If available, get some ideas from other codes of ethics.
6. Write all the ideas on paper. Then, you may want to start creating your personal code of ethics.
7. You may want to address, in your code of ethics, areas such as your relationship with the Lord and your family, the dignity of the ministry, the dignity and welfare of the people you are working with, and the area of accountability.

### Conclusion

The ministry has never been and never will be a nine-to-five job. That is why ministers need to find, by the grace of God, ways that would help them relate properly, morally, and in a Christ-like manner with their parishioners. The church can no longer assign the subject of sexuality to the closet of unspeakable topics.<sup>1</sup> Nor can the church afford any more to solve the problem of clergy sexual misconduct by moving the offending ministers to new assignments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wisbey, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White wrote to a minister who was trying to solve his problem of sexual misconduct by moving out of state to a new assignment: "Your leaving California does not give you a new heart. You are out of sight of the infatuating influence of your 'adorable charmer,' but this does not change the affections or impulses of the heart." White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 189.

It is time for the church to switch gears from mopping up after the problem to place an emphasis on prevention. The above recommendations are provided only as guidelines; yet, they can serve as a springboard for more future research in this area.

“Through the grace of Christ, men may acquire moral stamina, strength of will, and stability of purpose. He who lives the principles of Bible religion, will not be found weak in moral power.”<sup>1</sup> “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13).

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<sup>1</sup>White, Gospel Workers, 127.

## CHAPTER V

### PRESENTATION OF THE SEMINAR

This chapter describes the presentation of the seminar to the pastors of the Oregon Conference during the fall of 1996. First, it presents the outline of the seminar which includes all the sections covered during its presentation. Then, it describes the materials used and handed out in the seminar, and explains how they were used. Finally, this chapter discusses briefly the questionnaires used in the seminar to measure its effectiveness.

#### **Outline of the Seminar**

##### Devotional

The seminar was started with a devotional. This devotional was entitled "Ministry in a Complex World" and was based on 2 Cor 6:3, 1 Tim 3:1-9, and Titus 1:6-9. Through this devotional I shared some thoughts concerning the sacred responsibility ministers have been entrusted with, the blessings people receive when their pastors work in their best interest, and how the devil is trying to discredit the ministry and the gospel.

Ministers need to see themselves as individuals with special and sacred responsibilities, and not just as individuals with special privileges. Therefore, my intention, through this seminar, was to help the ministers realize that we are living in a

complex world surrounded by a variety of influences and temptations that can undermine our spiritual relationship with the Lord. Thus, we need to remain pure and uphold the gospel through our ministry.

### Pre-Test

Following the devotional, I handed out the first questionnaire. As the pastors were receiving it, I explained to them what they were being asked to do and the reasons. I also made it clear that this questionnaire was totally anonymous and that their answers would be kept in total confidence. They did not seem to have a problem in doing it because no one refused to do it or expressed any complaints or concerns about answering the questionnaire. Some jokes, however, were uttered and laughs were heard as some pastors were reading and answering some questions. But everything else went very smoothly. When they finished the questionnaire the forms were returned to me.

### Nature of the Problem

The presentation then began with a few introductory remarks followed by a discussion of the nature of the problem Christianity is facing today. I thought it important to describe why it was crucial for these ministers to attend this seminar on clergy sexual misconduct. They needed to be aware of how this problem is affecting not just the Christian Church but also other religious communities.

Statistics and remarks from various sources on the nature of the problem were presented. This appeared to be an eye-opener for some. I also shared some of the legal implications related to this problem. A group of pastors reacted to the presentation of

those legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct. Some of those reactions included elements of surprise, amazement, and in a few cases denial. Some even went as far as expressing their ignorance on these legal implications by asking, "Have I been missing something these last few years?" The above reactions and comments helped me realize that the need is greater than what I thought it was. Some of the pastors were not even aware of the seriousness of this problem and the younger pastors, especially, were ignorant about its legal implications.

It really encouraged me to continue making this material available to many other ministers and religious leaders. Also, I was encouraged to pursue my research in this area. I want to be better prepared to help other ministers who might be facing a problem of clergy sexual misconduct in their ministry; I want to be able to help my church<sup>1</sup> more by making available to its leaders information and resources they can use to help local pastors in their ministry; and I would also like to make a contribution through the writing of articles and/or books in the area of clergy sexual misconduct. There is special need for Hispanic ministers, especially those who do not know the English language. It was sad to find out that very little has been written or produced in the Spanish language on this crucial subject. I am sure this may be the case for other non-English-speaking communities in North America.

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<sup>1</sup>The expression "my church" mentioned here refers to the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the Conference, Union, Division, and General levels. Of course, this help is also available to other Christian denominations or religious communities.

### Video Presentation

The next item in the outline of the seminar was the video presentation. The pastors were shown a video entitled "Once You Cross the Line" by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.<sup>1</sup> The discussion in the video was guided by a Christian minister and a Jewish Rabbi. Their discussion was also dramatized in three vignettes illustrating the same issues included in my seminar. Therefore, I found it very pertinent for this seminar. Throughout the video presentation I noticed that the pastors were very attentive and some were even making comments about some statements made in the video.

### Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

After the video presentation I took some time to discuss the dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct. The issues included in the presentation of the dynamics were the personality of the minister, the perceived power and authority of the minister, the sexuality of the minister, the self-disclosure of the minister, other common characteristics, and how to get out of a bad situation.

During the presentation of this section I took some time to divide the pastors into groups for a group discussion. The topic chosen was "how to get out of a bad situation." I thought the topic would be pretty interesting and I wanted to hear their reactions. Just

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<sup>1</sup>Initially I had planned to share the video entitled "Sexual Ethics in the Ministry" by the Health and Human Issues of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both of these videos are good. But I chose to use "Once You Cross the Line" because the information provided through the discussion and dramatizations were very fitting for my seminar.



as I thought, the opinions were divided. Some felt that once a minister crosses the border line, he/she should be honest enough to resign and get in a different line of work. Others felt that there might be some options to help this minister. However, all agreed that the minister needs to talk the problem over with someone he can trust. They all felt that the solution to a secret problem was not secrecy. Some of those options include:

1. Go directly to church leaders in order to deal with the problem openly and honestly to protect the other party from unnecessary pain and embarrassment.
2. Talk the situation over with trusted colleague(s) to outline helpful steps.
3. Eliminate all contact with the other person.
4. Involve competent and professional counsel.
5. Accept responsibility and accountability.
6. Step out of the ministry at least for a time.

#### Recommendations for Prevention

The last section of the seminar was the discussion on the recommendations for prevention. Since this was a very important section in my seminar I took more time to present it and to entertain some discussion. It indeed proved to be one the participating pastors wanted to talk about. I had more participation in this section alone than in the other three combined. It seemed like they wanted to have an opportunity to discuss this issue in a more open way. They felt safe throughout the seminar and used the opportunity to share some of their feelings about this problem of clergy sexual misconduct and how to prevent it. The items discussed in this section were:

1. Build a strong spiritual life
2. Build a strong marriage
3. Education
4. Avoid the appearance of evil
5. Be professional
  - a. Be responsible
  - b. Be accountable
  - c. Be consistent
  - d. Have a personal code of ethics.

According to the results of the questionnaires, which are presented in chapter 5, many pastors indicated that these recommendations were very helpful for their ministry.

#### Post-Test

At the end of my seminar, all the pastors were willing to stay a little bit longer to answer again the first questionnaire. They were also gracious enough to help me out by answering the second questionnaire without hesitation. I expressed my appreciation for all their help, participation, and cooperation throughout my seminar. They were a wonderful group of pastors. I thank the Lord for that.

Once they finished answering both questionnaires, I collected them and the Conference Ministerial Director closed the seminar with some final remarks. We then went to have lunch together.

### **Description of Materials Used in the Seminar**

The presentation of the seminar was done using three kinds of materials: visual aids, handouts, and an outline. These three kinds of materials really helped the presentation of my lecture. They illustrated the points I was presenting in a more graphic way; they made the lecture easy to follow and to comprehend; they facilitated the transition from one section to another; and they saved me time. Let me describe them individually.

#### **Visual Aids**

There were two kinds of visual aids used in the seminar. The first visual aid was the overhead projector. I prepared a total of twenty-three transparencies to illustrate my presentation.<sup>1</sup> They were designed to enable the participants to visualize most of the information provided in the seminar. As the transparencies were describing the items included in the outline, I would expound a little bit more on each of them to help the participants get the full picture. These transparencies made my presentation a lot easier, smoother, and clearer.

The second visual aid was the showing of the video entitled "Once You Cross the Line."<sup>2</sup> This video featured two religious leaders: one a female Christian minister and the other a Jewish Rabbi. During this presentation both ministers described the nature of

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<sup>1</sup>Refer to Appendix 4 for a full description of the transparencies.

<sup>2</sup>This video was produced by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence to be a training tool on preventing clergy sexual misconduct. It can be obtained writing to 936 N 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98103.

the clergy sexual misconduct problem and how it is affecting all religious communities and not just Christians. Then they discussed three issues involved in this problem:

1. Appropriate boundaries
2. Power and vulnerability
3. Justice-making.

Each of these issues is discussed in three separate segments. Each segment is introduced by a description of the issue, then it is followed by two dramatizations of the same issue. The first dramatization is designed to illustrate how the abuse takes place; then that same dramatization is presented again showing this time how the minister should have dealt with the issue in a proper, professional, and responsible way. Finally, the segment is concluded with an analysis of the whole issue and some recommendations for prevention.

This video was done in a careful and professional way, and I think it is a powerful means to get the message across to Christians and other religious communities to help them prevent the problem of clergy sexual misconduct. However, I did have a problem with a recommendation provided in the first segment of the video. This problem was also observed and discussed by the pastors in the seminar.

The first segment describes the case of a young single minister and a young divorced parishioner who were attracted to each other and got involved sexually. During the second dramatization the minister is depicted as looking for help to avoid getting entangled in an inappropriate relationship. He asks his colleague "How am I supposed to deal with my needs?" and the recommendation was, "How about outside the

congregation?" Speaking in the context of preventing clergy sexual misconduct, the above answer left me and the pastors with the impression that sexual involvement between a single minister and a single parishioner was okay as long as the parishioner is not attending the same congregation the minister is serving. If this is the case, then I do have a serious theological problem with that recommendation because sex outside the marriage relationship is wrong regardless of the context. Other than that, the video was very good.

### Handouts

The handout materials included a summary of the content of the seminar<sup>1</sup> and a sample copy of a personal code of ethics.<sup>2</sup> In the former I basically included a summary of the content of the seminar. I tried to write it as clearly and precisely as possible. The whole purpose of this summary was twofold: as a future reference tool and in case time would not allow me to present the entire material. It seemed like it was very helpful because some pastors came to me afterwards requesting additional copies for other friends.

The latter handout was a copy of my personal code of ethics. The reason for this handout was to provide all the participants with a sample that would illustrate how they can create their own code of ethics.

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 3 for a description of this handout material.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix 2 for a description of this material.

## Outline

The outline<sup>1</sup> of the seminar was developed to help me see what I was going to present and in what order. It was very helpful because it kept me focused on what I needed to present. It also helped me follow the transition from one item to another without overlooking something important.

## Questionnaires Design

Two questionnaires were designed for this seminar.<sup>2</sup> The first one was designed to measure three elements: attitude, knowledge, and strategy. The second one was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar. Let me discuss them separately.

### Questionnaire 1

This questionnaire included a total of fifteen questions. These questions were designed, as mentioned above, to measure attitude, knowledge, and strategy. In order to measure the effectiveness of the seminar, the pastors were asked to fill it out twice: Once at the beginning of the seminar as a pre-test, and once at the end of the seminar as a post-test. Some of the results were very interesting and significant. They are presented in chapter 5.

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 5 for a description of this material.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix 6 for a description of this material.

## Questionnaire 2

This questionnaire included a total of ten questions. These questions were designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar. The pastors were asked to fill it out once at the end of the seminar. Again some of their answers were also significant, and they are presented in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR

#### **Pre-Seminar Steps**

The idea of writing this dissertation in the area of clergy sexual misconduct came to me over two years ago. I followed a simple criteria in looking for a topic. I wanted a topic that would:

1. Give me the opportunity for professional growth in my ministry
2. Enable me to serve my church in a better and more significant way
3. Provide an opportunity to make a significant contribution to my church and its worldwide mission.

After doing some thinking and some research I came to the conclusion that the area of clergy sexual misconduct would meet the above criteria. I found that this problem was not only affecting all faiths and religious communities, but, also it was an area where a great deal of help was needed, because the resources available to help ministers understand and prevent this problem are still limited. Personally, I was able to see its devastating effects on the perpetrators, the victims, their families, and the congregations, not to mention the community. Four of my former classmates during my college ministerial training had to leave the ministry on this very issue. Unfortunately, one of



them is no longer in the church and his family was totally destroyed. Also, during my ministry I have had the opportunity to serve in two congregations that have been affected by this problem of clergy sexual misconduct. I have seen how entire families have been hurt and how difficult it has been to bring healing.

It was during this process of trying to bring healing to the second congregation affected by this problem that the idea of prevention came to me. I noticed that much work was being done in the area of solving the problem and very little in preventing the problem. Therefore, I thought that developing a seminar that would create more awareness of the problem and its consequences and that would provide some suggestions for prevention could be a real blessing to the church and the ministry in general. The result was the creation of a seminar on the dynamics, prevention, and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.

The next step was to have a place where I could present this seminar and test its effectiveness. So in July 1995, during camp meeting, I approached the Oregon Conference Ministerial Director to request an opportunity to present the seminar to the Oregon Conference pastors. He did not see any problem, but he could not give me an immediate answer. A week later he contacted me again confirming the possibility of presenting the seminar. But instead of doing it one time to the whole group of pastors, he asked me if I could do it four times to four groups of ministers. I was delighted because doing it four times would give me more opportunities to do better each time. After that, I made contact with him only to verify that plans for the seminar were still on schedule. Each time it was confirmed.

With that in mind, I did the research, trying to get as much material as possible that would help me be better prepared. My research included visiting a local college library, making a special trip to Michigan to do research at the James White Library (Andrews University) and the Notre Dame library. Then, I attended a seminar on clergy sexual misconduct presented by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, Washington. My intention, during my research, was to be as thorough as possible in the topic.

### **Participants**

Pastors from various backgrounds attended my four seminars conducted in four different areas of the Oregon Conference. Some were more mature and experienced pastors; others were young and recent graduates from both the seminary and college. A third smaller group included pastors with vast knowledge in the area of counseling. A few of them were either overseas missionaries or former Conference/Union administrators. I feel I had a good variety of backgrounds, which enriched the experience.

A total of fifty-seven pastors attended the four seminars. I was very grateful for this attendance because the weather conditions were not that good. The following is a breakdown of the attendance to the four seminars.

1. Seventeen pastors attended the Lent seminar.
2. Thirteen pastors attended the Meadow Glade seminar.
3. Ten pastors attended the Albany seminar.

4. Seventeen pastors attended the Valley View seminar.

### **Procedure**

As mentioned above, the seminar was presented four times to four different groups of ministers as follows:

1. The first seminar was presented on November 25, 1996, at the Lents Seventh-day Adventist Church for the Portland-area pastors.
2. The second seminar was presented on November 26, 1996, at the Meadow Glade Seventh-day Adventist Church for the Vancouver (Washington) area pastors.
3. The third seminar was presented on December 2, 1996, at the Albany Seventh-day Adventist Church for the central-Oregon-area pastors.
4. The fourth seminar was presented on December 3, 1996, at the Valley View Seventh-day Adventist Church for the southern-Oregon-area pastors.

### **Pre-Test**

The pre-test was administered very early in the seminar following the devotional. All the participants filled it out and returned it to me. Then, I saved all copies in separate folders according to each group. The answers were not studied and analyzed until after the last seminar was concluded and I was able to read them all. The analysis and percentages of the pre-test gave me a pretty good idea about where all the pastors stood at the beginning of the seminar. The results of this questionnaire are reported and analyzed later in this chapter.

## Presentation

The presentation made to each group of pastors offered a new and different experience. Although the content of the presentation was the same, I made several changes in the procedure. Here is a brief description of each individual presentation.

### **The Lents Seminar**

Because this was my first presentation, I felt quite nervous and a little bit uneasy. Initially, the pastors did not participate as much. They seemed to be merely observing what was going on in order to determine whether they would participate or not. However, they started feeling more comfortable in participating after my discussion on the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct and, definitely so, after the video presentation. Some of them shared personal experiences and others shared the experiences of friends and colleagues.

They jotted down additional notes on the handout given at the beginning of the seminar. A topic that was of particular interest was the issue of restoration of fallen ministers. Toward the end the pastors became so interested that they gave me an additional hour to continue the discussion and finish my presentation. This gave me the impression that this was an issue they wanted to discuss in an open and frank environment. At the end all the pastors expressed their appreciation for the seminar and the material covered. The transparencies, the video presentation, and the handout material made me feel more relaxed and comfortable throughout the presentation.

### **The Meadow Glade Seminar**

For this presentation I made a couple of changes in the dynamics of the seminar. The first change consisted in distributing the handout material at the end of the seminar, rather than at the beginning. The reason was that a number of pastors in the previous seminar were more interested in following the handout than paying attention to what I was presenting in the transparencies. The result was that all the pastors were following the presentation more closely. The second change consisted in creating groups for pastors to discuss the issue of "how a pastor can get out of a bad situation." They all enjoyed it and became very involved in the group discussion. When they all came back to the main group, they shared their thoughts and feelings about it.

A pastor who helps in the Family Life Department of the Conference made a couple of interesting remarks.

1. The Oregon Conference is leading the North American Division in litigations for sexual misconduct with \$3 million already paid for fees and settlements. Although he did not specify whether it was related to ministers, school teachers, or both, the impression I have is that he was referring mainly to teachers' sexual misconduct.

2. This pastor was very delighted to see that the Oregon Conference was giving me the opportunity to present this type of seminar. He felt it was needed.

At the end the pastors also expressed their appreciation for the material. After the seminar two pastors came to me to express how good and helpful this seminar was for them.

**The Albany Seminar**

At the Albany seminar the pastors were very receptive and participated a great deal. During the presentation one pastor questioned whether the church, historically, has tended to hide the problem by moving the minister to a new assignment. However, others believed that the church has done it. One pastor, a former missionary in South America, stated that this was also the practice there.

The interest level was so good during the seminar that the pastors gave me an additional hour to expand on the material. At the end, four pastors came up to me to express their appreciation for the seminar. One indicated that this was the best presentation on the subject he had ever heard. Another one asked me about the possibility of doing the same seminar some time next year for a group of about twenty pastors from different evangelical churches in the Dallas, Oregon, area. I am excited about that possibility.

**The Valley View Seminar**

This seminar also offered me a totally new experience. Initially, the participation was minimal, but after the group discussion the participation increased. Here, the vast majority of the pastors did not believe in the restoration of a fallen minister into the ministry. Neither did the pastors believe in helping a minister to get out of a bad situation. They did believe, however, that the pastor can be restored into the fellowship of the church, but he needs to get in a new line of work and not into the ministry.

Once again, at the end, all the pastors expressed their appreciation for the seminar and its content. One retired pastor, however, approached me individually to let me know that he did not learn much in the seminar because he has been doing family counseling throughout his ministry and has read books in the area. Nevertheless, he was happy to see that the Conference was sponsoring this kind of seminar for the pastors.

#### Post-Test

A post-test was administered at the end of the seminar. It was the same one as the pre-test and was intended to measure any changes in attitudes or understanding on this subject. Once again, I asked all the pastors to fill it out and return it to me. I saved the copies in different folders according to the groups. The results of this questionnaire did reflect some significant changes by the pastors and are reported later in this chapter.

#### Evaluation

Having finished answering the post-test, the pastors were asked to fill out a second questionnaire. I explained to them that this instrument was designed to help me evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar. This evaluation would also help me see some areas that might need improvement or adjustment. Out of fifty-seven participants only two did not answer this questionnaire. The results of this evaluation were very helpful and are reported later in this chapter.

## Results

The results from the two questionnaires and the evaluation of the seminar itself are reported and analyzed below. The percentages are based on a total of fifty seven pastors who answered both questionnaires

### The Pre-Test and Post-Test

Tables 1 to 15 present the results of the pre-test and post-test:

TABLE 1

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 1: "TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE MINISTER RELATE TO THE RISK OF FALLING INTO AN AFFAIR?"

	Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely Important
Pre-test		16 28%	7 12%	13 23%	17 30%	2 4%	
Post-test		13 23%	12 21%	11 19%	14 25%	6 11%	



TABLE 2

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 2: "TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS OF A MINISTER'S OWN MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP MAKES A MINISTER VULNERABLE WHEN MINISTERING TO PARISHIONERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?"

	Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely Important
Pre-test		1 2%	0	2 4%	14 25%	39 68%	
Post-test		1 2%	0	4 7%	6 11%	46 81%	

TABLE 3

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 3: "TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU SEE PASTORAL MINISTRY AS A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY AND A POSITION OF GREAT INFLUENCE?"

	Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	Most Definitely
Pre-test		0	0	0	1 2%	55 97%	
Post-test		0	0	0	0	57 100%	

TABLE 4

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 4: "TO WHAT DEGREE IS THERE A NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS AND/OR PROGRAMS THAT WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MINISTERS TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION AND CLARIFICATION ON SEXUAL ETHICS?"

	None	1	2	3	4	5	Great
Pre-test		0	2 4%	4 7%	21 37%	30 52%	
Post-test		0	0	1 2%	10 18%	46 80%	

TABLE 5

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 5: "TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE LACK OF PURITY AND MORALITY IN A MINISTER IS MORE HARMFUL AND DESTRUCTIVE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL THAN ANY OTHER FORM OF MISBEHAVIOR AMONG CHRISTIANS?"

	Not More Harmful	1	2	3	4	5	More Harmful
Pre-test		0	0	4 7%	16 28%	36 63%	
Post-test		0	1 2%	3 5%	12 21%	41 72%	

TABLE 6

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 6: "TO WHAT DEGREE DOES SEXUAL MISCONDUCT GENERALLY AFFECT PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE PERPETRATORS AND THE VICTIMS?"

	Very Little	1	2	3	4	5	A Lot
Pre-test		0	0	0	13 23%	44 78%	
Post-test		0	0	2 4%	6 11%	49 86%	

TABLE 7

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 7: "GENERALLY TO WHAT DEGREE IS IT ETHICAL TO ACCEPT PERSONAL GIFTS FROM SOMEONE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?"

	Never	1	2	3	4	5	No Problem
Pre-test		13 23%	20 35%	21 37%	3 5%	0	
Post-test		16 28%	17 30%	18 32%	5 9%	1 2%	

TABLE 8

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 8: "REGARDING WHAT ELEMENTS ARE INCLUDED IN CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT."

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Pre-test	0	0	0	3 5%	53 93%	0
Post-test	0	0	0	2 4%	54 95%	0

A. THE PHYSICAL CONTACT; B. WHEN THE MINISTER HAS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A PARISHIONER; C. VERBAL BEHAVIOR THAT WOULD SEXUALIZE THE MINISTERIAL RELATIONSHIP; D. INVITING THE PERSON TO INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS A HOT TUB, SWIM NAKED, ETC.; E. ALL OF THE ABOVE; F. NONE OF THE ABOVE.

TABLE 9

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 9: "TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ALREADY UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THE ISSUES OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?"

	Little	1	2	3	4	5	A Lot
Pre-test		1 2%	3 6%	9 16%	26 46%	17 30%	
Post-test		0	1 2%	3 6%	29 51%	24 42%	

TABLE 10

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 10: "COMPARED TO YOUR PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE HOW MUCH ADDITIONAL UNDERSTANDING DID YOU GAIN FROM THIS SEMINAR?"

	None	1	2	3	4	5	Great Amount
Pre-test		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Post-test		2 4%	10 18%	13 23%	21 37%	10 18%	

TABLE 11

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 11: "REGARDING WHETHER FALLEN MINISTERS SHOULD BE RESTORED TO THE MINISTRY."

	A	B	C	D	E
Pre-test	8 14%	29 51%	15 26%	0	2 4%
Post-test	20 35%	25 44%	11 19%	0	1 2%

A. NEVER; B. PROVIDING THAT CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS ARE MET; C. DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT; D. ALWAYS; E. AFTER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME.

TABLE 12

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 12: "NEW AND TRANSFERRING MINISTERS SHOULD GO THROUGH AN ORIENTATION PROCESS THAT WOULD INCLUDE OUTLINING ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT AND CURRENT APPLICABLE CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. YES? NO?"

	Yes	No
Pre-test	53 93%	1 2%
Post-test	55 96%	0

TABLE 13

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 13: "CONCERNING THOSE FACTORS INVOLVED IN CLERY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT."

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pre-test	0	0	1 2%	0	4 7%	50 88%	0
Post-test	0	0	0	0	2 4%	53 93%	0

A. THE PERSONALITY OF THE MINISTER; B. THE MINISTER IS AN AUTHORITATIVE FIGURE; C. CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISHIONERS; D. SEXUAL ADDICTION; E. INADEQUATE TRAINING CONCERNING THIS ISSUE; F. ALL OF THE ABOVE; G. NONE OF THE ABOVE.

TABLE 14

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 14: "MINISTERS SHOULD BE SCREENED BEFORE HIRING THEM. YES? NO?"

	Yes	No
Pre-test	49 86%	3 5%
Post-test	51 89%	2 4%

TABLE 15

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 15: "OUR COLLEGES AND/OR SEMINARY SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR CURRICULUM A CORE COURSE ON SEXUAL ETHICS IN THE MINISTRY FOR MINISTERIAL STUDENTS. YES? NO?"

	Yes	No
Pre-test	53 93%	2 4%
Post-test	53 93%	2 4%

Now, the analysis of the pre-test and post-test provided two kinds of results. The first one is that some questions had similar answers in both tests. The change in percentages was minimum and did not offer any significant changes. Although those minimum changes did not provide any significant results, they do provide important information about the pastors' attitudes and how they feel about the need to prevent the problem of clergy sexual misconduct.

The answer to question 3, in both tests, revealed that 100% of the pastors see the pastoral ministry as a sacred responsibility and a position of great influence. This result is important because it shows how meaningful the pastoral ministry is to them and how important it is, then, to prevent the problem of clergy sexual misconduct. The results for question 5 are significant because the great majority of the pastors see the lack of purity and morality in a minister more harmful and destructive for the church and the gospel than any other form of misbehavior.

The answers to question 6 are also important because in them we can see that the pastors see the problem of clergy sexual misconduct as affecting more people than just the perpetrators and the victims. Now, in the answers to question 12, most of the pastors indicated, in both tests, that new and transferring pastors should go through an orientation process that would include outlining acceptable and unacceptable conduct and current applicable employment policies and procedures related to the work of the ministry.

The answers to question 14, in both tests, show that most of the pastors believe that ministers should be screened before hiring them. And, in question 15, most pastors expressed that our colleges and/or seminary should include in their curriculum a core course on sexual ethics in the ministry for ministerial students. Personally, I believe this is a serious need that should be addressed as soon as possible.

Conversely, the second kind of results offered significant changes, in the percentages of both tests, that really helped to demonstrate the effectiveness of the seminar. The results of question 4 were the first ones to offer good changes in the percentages of both tests. In contrast to the pre-test, the vast majority of pastors



concluded that there is a need for educational seminars and/or programs that would provide an opportunity to ministers to receive more information and clarification on sexual ethics. The second one is question 9. The change in the percentages in the second test shows that a greater number of the pastors found the seminar helpful in getting a better understanding of the issues involved in clergy sexual misconduct than the one they previously had.

The results from question 10 are also significant to me because over one half of the pastors indicated, in the post-test, that they gained good additional understanding of this problem. The last significant results came from the answers to question 11. The post-test shows an increased percentage of pastors who do not believe in the restoration of fallen ministers. Nevertheless, the majority still feels that some pastors may be restored into the ministry providing that certain requirements are met.

#### Evaluation

Tables 16 to 24 present the results of the evaluation. The percentages are based on fifty-five pastors who answered the questionnaire.

TABLE 16

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 1: "TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE INFORMATION AND CLARIFICATION OF SEXUAL ETHICS ISSUES IN THE MINISTRY PRESENTED IN THIS SEMINAR BEEN HELPFUL FOR MY MINISTRY?"

None	1	2	3	4	5	A Great Help
	2	5	5	28	15	
	4%	9%	9%	51%	27%	

TABLE 17

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 2: "IS THE STANDARD OF MORALITY IN THE MINISTRY ENOUGH TO PROTECT A MINISTER FROM FALLING INTO TEMPTATION? YES? NO?"

Yes	No
6 11%	46 84%

TABLE 18

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 3: "TO WHAT DEGREE DID THIS SEMINAR PROVIDE A SETTING FOR SHARING AND FOR FRANK DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL ISSUES THAT ARE AFFECTING THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY TODAY?"

No Help	1	2	3	4	5	Total Freedom to Discuss
	0	6 11%	7 13%	20 36%	21 38%	

TABLE 19

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 4: "HOW IMPORTANT IS A PERSONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR PASTORS THAT WOULD BE TAILORED TO THEIR UNIQUE SITUATION?"

Unnecessary	1	2	3	4	5	Essential
	0	0	1 2%	11 20%	42 76%	

TABLE 20

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 5: "TO WHAT DEGREE WERE THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT MADE CLEAR IN THIS SEMINAR?"

Not Clear	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
	0	1 2%	8 15%	20 36%	26 47%	

TABLE 21

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 6: "TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU FEEL THAT A SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY WITH OTHER CLERGY AND/OR OTHER PROFESSIONALS IS NECESSARY IN THE MINISTRY?"

Not Necessary	1	2	3	4	5	Essential
	0	1 2%	1 2%	16 29%	36 66%	

TABLE 22

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 7: "TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU FEEL THAT CLEAR AND SPECIFIC ETHICAL GUIDELINES EXIST FOR PASTORS?"

No Guidelines	1	2	3	4	5	Clear Guidelines
	0	8 15%	16 29%	15 27%	15 27%	

TABLE 23

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 8: "TO WHAT DEGREE WERE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION PROVIDED IN THIS SEMINAR REALISTIC AND USEFUL FOR MY MINISTRY?"

Not Realistic and Useful	1	2	3	4	5	Realistic and Useful
	1	1	4	18	22	
	2%	2%	7%	32%	40%	

TABLE 24

RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTION 9: "TO WHAT DEGREE WAS THE MATERIAL PRESENTED IN THIS SEMINAR WELL STRUCTURED AND CLEARLY ARTICULATED?"

Not Very Well	1	2	3	4	5	Very Well
	0	1	1	17	26	
		2%	2%	31%	47%	

The last question in the evaluation was number 10. This question was designed to give the pastors an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, or ideas concerning the issue of helping a pastor get out of a bad situation. The following is the question and the answers that the pastors gave:

How can a pastor get out of a bad situation before it is made public/too late?

- a. Be decisive.

- b. Create a council of clergy and laity (not Conference administration) to deal with both parties in a reconciliatory way.
- c. Refer to professional counselors (counseling/therapy).
- d. Be honest.
- e. Clear and careful elimination of all contact with the other person.
- f. Involve competent counsel.
- g. Full disclosure to those affected.
- h. Establish a mechanism for counsel and guidance to help the minister gracefully.
- i. Talk situation over with trusted colleague(s) to outline helpful steps.
- j. Go directly to church leaders, deal with it openly, honestly, to protect the other party from unnecessary pain/embarrassment.
- k. Be willing to face the situation or consequences.
- l. The cure for a secret vice is not secrecy.
- m. Counsel with wife, colleague and/or ministerial director.
- n. Accept responsibility and accountability.
- o. Seek the Lord humbly for direction and forgiveness.
- p. Step out of the ministry for a time.
- q. A number of pastors recommended to resign, repent, confess, and make restitution.

The evaluation also provided some significant and interesting results. They basically helped me evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar. The answers gathered

from question 1 indicate that most of the pastors found the content of the seminar very helpful for their ministry. The results from question 3 are especially significant to me because one of my goals for the seminar was to provide a setting for sharing and frank discussion of sexual issues. The majority of the pastors felt comfortable throughout the seminar. The answers to question 5 show that the presentation on the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct was clearly presented. Another significant result came from the answers to question 8. For most of the pastors, the recommendations for prevention provided in my seminar were realistic and useful for their ministry. The last significant result is found in question 9. Again, the majority of the pastors felt that the material presented in this seminar was well structured and clearly articulated.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results obtained from both the pre-test and the post-test, and the evaluation, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. All the pastors believe that the pastoral ministry is a sacred responsibility and a position of great influence. It needs to be upheld and kept pure and clean from any source of unrighteousness and immorality. Anything less than this can be harmful and destructive to the church and the gospel.
2. Most of the pastors believe that new and transferring pastors should not only be screened before hiring them, but also should go through an orientation process that would create awareness about what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct and help them learn the current applicable employment policies and procedures related to the work of the ministry.
3. All our colleges and/or seminary should include in their ministerial training program a core course on sexual ethics in the ministry. Just as ministerial students are required to take classes on pastoral counseling, preaching, church leadership and administration, evangelism, church growth, etc., they should also be required to take a class on sexual ethics. This is a serious problem the church is facing today and

ministers have to deal with this issue continually. Here it is where the prevention of this problem begins.

4. Most of the pastors concluded that there is a need for educational seminars and/or programs that would provide an opportunity to ministers to receive more information and clarification on sexual ethics.

5. Most of the pastors feel that some pastors, who have fallen, may be given the opportunity to be restored into the ministry providing that certain requirements are met.

6. The Seminar on the Dynamics, Prevention, and Legal Implications of Clergy Sexual Misconduct was well structured and clearly presented. Its content was helpful to the pastors, and the recommendations for prevention were realistic and useful for their ministry. They learned a good deal from it and gained additional understanding of this problem.

These conclusions are not only important and significant, but they can also shed some light concerning the needs of the church in relation to the issue of clergy sexual misconduct. Moreover, they provide suggestions for future recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations can be provided for future study and possible implementation.

1. Church leaders from various levels should study the development and implementation of an instrument by which new and transferring pastors are screened before hiring them. The creation of such an instrument will help church administrators



greatly reduce or eliminate the hiring of pastors with previous unresolved problems of sexual misconduct.

2. Church leaders are also recommended to consider the implementation of an orientation process that would outline what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct and would help them learn the current applicable church policies and procedures related to the work of the ministry.

3. It is also recommended that our colleges and/or seminary look into the possibility of creating and incorporating a class on sexual ethics in the ministry. It is also suggested that some consideration be given to the possibility of making it a required course. Pastors are constantly exposed to this type of situation and they need more training in this area.<sup>1</sup>

4. Church leaders are also encouraged to develop and make available seminars/workshops to help ministers, who are already serving in various capacities, be better prepared to deal with this problem in a more Christian, professional, and responsible way. Pastors should be strongly encouraged to attend these seminars/workshops as the church deems necessary. This should be even more so for pastors who have come or are coming to serve in North America from other countries in the world. They are at a greater disadvantage because they are not familiar with the social and legal system in North America.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 1 for a suggested curriculum on a class on sexual ethics in the ministry.

<sup>2</sup>This is also suggested by Williams, 20.

5. Another recommendation would be in the area of restoration. More study and discussion should be done in this area looking for possible ways to create a system by which some pastors might be restored into the gospel ministry. "We must recognize that there are natural consequences which result from sin. We must balance this with the concept that 'where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.'"<sup>1</sup>

6. Finally, it is recommended that church leaders develop a recovery program for victims of clergy sexual misconduct, their relatives, and congregations. They all struggle with the same problem and some may not even recover for a number of years. I think more needs to be done to help them find healing in their lives and be able to bring their lives back into normality. When this takes place their sense of mission can be renewed and they will be able to fulfill their part in the mission of the church.

I would like to conclude with the following remarks. Clergy sexual misconduct is not the unpardonable sin. Therefore, it should not be treated as such. "Forgiveness, however, does not mean ignoring [the] problem but rather seeking for ways to address it and prevent its reoccurrence."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tibbetts, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

## APPENDIX 1

### SEXUAL ETHICS IN THE MINISTRY

#### Course Objectives

1. Create awareness about the nature of clergy sexual misconduct and its legal implications.
2. To raise consciousness about the dynamics of clergy sexual misconduct, the subtle temptations that come when working closely with others and their effects.
3. To face the complexity of ethical, theological, psychological and social values that may be in conflict in the pastoral work.
4. To offer a preventive approach to personal vulnerability by offering various options for facing this issue.
5. To provide a setting for frank discussion and earnest struggle of sexual misconduct problems with classmates/colleagues.

#### Course Outline<sup>1</sup>

- I. Definition of the Problem
- II. Nature of the Problem

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<sup>1</sup>This course outline can be adjusted or modified as needed.

- A. Statistics About the Problem
- B. Legal Implications of the Problem

### III. Theological Foundations

- A. The Minister and Moral Standards
- B. The Christian and the Law

### IV. Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

- A. Contributing Factors
  - 1. Role of Clergy in Church
  - 2. Role of Clergy in Society
- B. Progressive Steps
- C. Common Characteristics
  - 1. Personality
  - 2. Power and Authority
  - 3. Sexuality
  - 4. Self-disclosure
  - 5. Other Common Characteristics
- D. Restoration of Fallen Ministers
- E. Getting Out of a Bad Situation

### V. Effects of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

- A. The Minister
- B. The Parishioner
- C. The Respective Families
- D. The Church
- E. The Community

### VI. Recommendations for Prevention

- A. Build a Strong Spiritual Life
- B. Build a Strong Marriage
- C. Education
- D. Avoid the Appearance of Evil
- E. Be Professional
  - 1. Be Responsible
  - 2. Be Accountable
  - 3. Be Consistent
  - 4. Have a Code of Ethics

## APPENDIX 2

### PERSONAL CODE OF ETHICS

As a minister of the gospel and a caregiver:

1. I will maintain a meaningful devotional life for myself and my family.
2. I am aware of my sacred calling and the responsibility to the people entrusted to my care. I am an agent of healing and restoration. Sexual harassment, misconduct or exploitation of others is an abuse and a violation of the trust, power, and authority of my position.
3. I am committed to respect and uphold the dignity and worth of each individual. I accept and maintain, in my personal life, the highest ethical standards, but I do not judge others by those standards. I realize that the violation of any of these ethical standards on my part may be damaging to those involved directly or indirectly in such violation.
4. I will have an ethical concern for the integrity and welfare of the person(s) I am working with.
5. I will never disclose private details about my life or marriage.
6. I will adhere to the strictest standards of confidentiality of those who seek my help, except when withholding information that would directly cause harm to vulnerable people.
7. I will relate with propriety to those of the opposite sex. I am aware that sexual harassment, misconduct, or exploitation of the person I am called to serve is a sinful act against God, the person who has been victimized, the church, and the community.
8. I am aware of the denominational discipline policies concerning sexual harassment, misconduct, or exploitation. I will be willing to abide by them in facing the consequences of my actions when I have been sexually abusive.

9. I am aware that sexual harassment, misconduct, or exploitation are chargeable offenses under civil and/or moral laws, and that consent from the victim is not a defense. I alone will bear final responsibility for my actions.
10. I will safeguard my ministry by being accountable to certain friends and/or colleagues. I will seek the advice and counsel of professional caregivers when issues of sexual ethics arise in my ministry.

## APPENDIX 3

### SEMINAR HANDOUT

#### SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

##### **Definition of the Problem**

The following is a definition I found clear and precise:

Sexual abuse happens when someone in a ministerial role (clergy, religious, or lay) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, employee, student or counseling client in the ministerial relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual misconduct includes physical contact from the minister, such as:

1. Sexual touch and "accidental" touch of sexual areas of the body.
2. Tickling and playful aggression that seemed uncomfortable to the person.
3. A prolonged hug when a brief one is customary behavior.
4. Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate.
5. Pressing up against the body when hugging.
6. An inappropriate gift from the minister such as lingerie.

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<sup>1</sup>Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, "What You in the Congregation Need to Know About Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship," (1991).

7. Sexual intercourse with the minister.

Sexual misconduct can also include a verbal behavior that would sexualize the ministerial relationship. For example:

1. Sexual talk or innuendo.
2. Suggestive comments.
3. Tales of the minister's sexual exploits or experiences.
4. Questions about the intimate details of the person's relationships.
5. Looking for sympathy about the sexual inadequacies of the minister's spouse.
6. Inviting the person to inappropriate activities such as a hot tub, swim naked, etc.

### **Nature of the Problem**

The phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct has come under public scrutiny since the early and mid 1980s. It is considered "one of the major issues of the 1990s"<sup>1</sup> which seems to be on the rise.<sup>2</sup> David R. Williams calls it an "epidemic."<sup>3</sup> Although there are no official national statistics on clergy sexual misconduct available, some research has been done that can shed some light on the scope of this problem.

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<sup>1</sup>Neil and Thea Ormerod, When Ministers Sin: Sexual Abuse in the Churches (Alexandria, Australia: Millennium Books, 1995), ix.

<sup>2</sup>Perry C. Francis and Nancy R. Turner, "Sexual Misconduct Within the Christian Church: Who Are the Perpetrators and Those They Victimize?," Counseling and Values 39 (April 1995): 219.

<sup>3</sup>David R. Williams, "Why Does Sexual Abuse Occur?," Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 18.



1. In 1984 Richard Blackmon surveyed 300 ministers from different denominations. He found out that nearly 39 percent reported sexual contact and 12.7 percent reported having actual sexual intercourse with a parishioner. He also found out that 76.5 percent indicated that they knew of a minister who they believe had sexual intercourse with a church member.<sup>1</sup>
2. The research department of the journal *Christianity Today* conducted a survey with 300 evangelical ministers. The survey included the following question: "Since you've been in local church ministry have you ever done anything with someone (not your spouse) that you feel was sexually inappropriate?" The answer to this question revealed that 23 percent said yes; 12 percent acknowledged that they had sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse and 18 percent admitted that they had participated in other forms of sexual contact like passionate kissing and fondling/mutual masturbation. Only 4 percent said that they were found out.<sup>2</sup>
3. The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists established a Sexual Ethics Commission of twenty five members on March 8, 1993. This commission was asked to "develop guidelines, policies, procedures, and training programs to address these issues."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John D. Vogelsang, "From Denial to Hope: A Systematic Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse," Journal of Religion and Health 32, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 197.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Exley, Perils of Power (Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, 1988), 11.

<sup>3</sup>Rosa T. Banks, "How Should the Church Respond to Sexual Misconduct?," Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 5.

4. The Columbia Union of Seventh-day Adventists also established a committee of fourteen members to deal with the problem of clergy sexual misconduct. "Its goals are to develop guidelines for appropriate interventions and education addressing employee sexual misconduct."<sup>1</sup> This committee will function in advisory capacity to the Columbia Union Executive Committee.

The problem of clergy sexual misconduct is real and must be dealt with, painful though it may be. The moral health of the clergy is crucial to the moral health of the church. But there is hope. Johnson says that although "the problem is big enough to concern us all . . . there is grace enough for healing and for deliverance."<sup>2</sup>

### **Legal Implications of the Problem**

The days are gone when ministers used to be held sacrosanct and immune from legal actions. "Clergy must now face the legal consequences for professional negligence or intentional wrongdoing that are imposed upon other professional groups."<sup>3</sup> Sexual misconduct with a parishioner is no longer just a moment of weakness, but a criminal act<sup>4</sup> according to the legislation in the following states: Minnesota (1984), North Dakota

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<sup>1</sup>Dick Tibbetts, "Employee Sexual Misconduct," Broken Hearts, Broken Lives, 1993, 12.

<sup>2</sup>William G. Johnson, "Sins of the Family," Adventist Review, September 2, 1993, 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ronald K. Bullis and Cynthia S. Mazur, Legal Issues and Religious Counseling (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox press, 1993), 34.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Cordes, "Responses to Sexual Misconduct," Sexual Ethics Issues for Church Administrators in the 90's, July 1994, 16.

(1989), California (1990), Colorado (1990), South Dakota (1990), Wisconsin (1990), Florida (1991), Maine (1991), Georgia (1992), and Iowa (1992).<sup>1</sup>

Now, in states where sexual abuse or exploitation by clergy and those in the helping professions “does not hold any criminal penalties, the victims can file a civil suit against the professional and/or the employer, such as a hospital, university or church.”<sup>2</sup> This situation clearly shows that the problem is a serious one that demands our attention and requires immediate action.

### **Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct**

Ellen G. White comments, in the context of the experience of Israel with Balaam, that “near the close of this earth’s history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before entering the land of promise.”<sup>3</sup> What cause ministers to fall? What make them vulnerable to temptation? For Tim LaHaye “sexual sin is always the result of progressive steps, any one of which should have warned the pastor long before he jumped into bed with the wrong woman.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bullis and Mazur, 34. See also James A. Sparks, et al., “Sexual Misconduct in Ministry: What Clergy at Risk Are Doing About It,” Congregations - The Alban Journal, November/December 1992, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Sharon Foster, “The Consequences of Violating the Forbidden Zone,” Counseling Today, January 1996, 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce (Silver Spring, MD: The Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 84.

<sup>4</sup>Tim LaHaye, If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored? (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 35.

### Progressive Steps

1. Extended Look
2. Careful Observation
3. Fantasizing
4. Suggestive Statements or Movement
5. Seduction
6. Conscience Calls
7. Opportunity
8. The Act.<sup>1</sup>

### Contributing Factors

#### Role of Clergy in Church

1. The expectations placed on clergy. Ministers, among other things, are expected to work unending hours and to be available at all times to their congregants.
2. The lack of ethical guidelines. Many ministers who have fallen, have done it because they ignore their ethical boundaries.
3. The place of the minister's home in his life. Ministers are being required or invited to attend conferences, meetings, and continuing education events which keep them away from home frequently. Also more clergy spouses are involved in jobs and careers which also reduce the time they can spend together.

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<sup>1</sup>Len McMillan, "Sexual Ethics in Adventist Ministry," Broken Hearts, Broken Lives, 1993, 3.

4. Change in the image of the pastor. "The pedestal or halo effect is nearly gone. Few people now believe that clergy are closer to God than laypersons."<sup>1</sup>

### Role of Clergy in Society

Clergy used to operate as the center of society. City officials, civil authorities, and social policymakers would not make final decisions without consulting the minister(s). This is no longer the case.

### Common Characteristics

1. Personality. Clergy are spiritual, sensitive, caring, and giving persons. They are perceived to be bright, knowledgeable, and talented. They are leaders and, generally, dress well.
2. Power and Authority. People see the minister as a physical representation of the whole community of faith, tradition, way of understanding the meaning of life and of God. This physical representation puts the minister in a position of power and authority. People would come to the minister precisely because of the power and authority he has in relation to spiritual matters. They trust that the pastor will act in their best interest.
3. Sexuality. Ministers are also sexual beings. Research interviews with pastors have shown that they are not insulated against sexual attraction because of their holy office.

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<sup>1</sup>G. Lloyd Rediger, Ministry and Sexuality (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 2.

They also respond to beauty and charm just as any other man.<sup>1</sup> Notice the following factors that influence the sexuality of a pastor:

- a. Close Relationships
  - b. Stimulating Conversation
  - c. Sexual Availability
  - d. Sexual Addiction
  - e. Transference and Counter-Transference.
4. Self-Disclosure. As a person who is constantly with people, the pastor is deeply involved emotionally with them. Different things are discussed which may include personal and sexual feelings, and personal and family problems.
5. Other Common Characteristics.
- a. Self-confidence
  - b. Show Interest and Concern
  - c. Gentleness
  - d. Public Recognition
  - e. Accepting and Giving Gifts
  - f. Unresolved Issues
  - g. Inadequate Training.

Ministers are human beings dealing with people who are wounded and hurting.

They come to ministers for help and comfort; but, unfortunately, this situation can also

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<sup>1</sup>Charles L. Rassieur, The Problem Clergymen Don't Talk About (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1976), 20.

open some doors that would lead into sexual misconduct. Ellen G. White says that this problem will be Satan's greatest temptation to clergy in the time of the end.

Satan well knows the material with which he has to deal in the human heart. He knows--for he has studied with fiendish intensity for thousands of years--the points most easily assailed in every character; and through successive generations he has wrought to overthrow the strongest men, princes in Israel, by the same temptations that were so successful at Baalpeor. *As we approach the close of time*, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, *as of old*, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their souls, he can through them destroy many. *And he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago*. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, *he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment*.<sup>1</sup>

### **Recommendations for Prevention**

1. **Build a Strong Spiritual Life.** Ministers need to build a strong spiritual life through an intimate relationship with the Lord. Churches appreciate when their ministers are strong spiritual leaders. However spirituality will never happen unless one becomes intentional about it.
2. **Build a Strong Marriage.** Like any normal person, ministers have personal and intimate needs. These needs are so important in the lives of many that if they are not met through appropriate relationships, then they will be met through inappropriate ones. And the marriage relationship is the most appropriate one.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), 457-458. The italics are mine.

3. Education. The church needs to move beyond that remedial recovery phase to emphasize prevention in every way possible. This prevention process should begin during the pastor's preparation for ministry. Our colleges and seminaries should take a new look at their curriculums for possible adjustments and/or restructuring. Conversely, ministers who are already serving in various capacities also deserve information and clarification on this issue. Therefore, church leaders at various levels should develop continuing educational programs for pastors as part of their continuing education and professional growth. Finally, these continuing educational programs should also be made available, at least partially or on a limited basis, to lay leaders to enable them to help their respective congregations deal more effectively with the situation in the event of a sexual misconduct problem.
4. Avoid the Appearance of Evil. Every appearance of evil should be shunned.<sup>1</sup> The following list would help the pastor recognize it:
  - a. The extended look
  - b. Careful observation
  - c. Dreaming or fantasizing about a particular parishioner
  - d. Concerned about being well groomed in front of her
  - e. Suggestive behaviors or remarks
  - f. Looking for an opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1943), 129.



When it comes to the issue of the appearance of evil pastors would benefit a lot from the following words:

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. (Prov 6:27-29)

5. Be Professional.

- a. Be Responsible. All ministers are responsible for the decisions they make and for the behavior they choose.
- b. Be Accountable. Many pastors tend to become loners in ministry. When this happens certain professional and personal needs are not met which may lead the pastor to find satisfaction in other ways. Everyone involved in the work of ministry should develop a "therapeutic relationship"<sup>1</sup> with another minister/professional one can trust and feel comfortable talking to.
- c. Be Consistent. When ministers have developed a consistent pattern for pastoral care; when they consistently treat female parishioners properly, with respect, professionalism, and genuine concern, then lay leaders and members would be able to recognize that there is not a problem of impropriety on the part of ministers.
- d. Have a Personal Code of Ethics. Because ministry is not just considered a vocation, but also a profession, "the pastor must adhere to professional codes and

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond T. Brock and Horace C. Lukens, Jr., "Affair Prevention in the Ministry," Journal of Psychology and Christianity 8, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 52.

be honorable in his or her dealings with the parishioner."<sup>1</sup> A code of ethics will help the minister set clearly boundaries in the relationship with parishioners and make explicit the primary goals and values of the pastor's ministry.

### Conclusion

The ministry has never been and never will be a nine-to-five job. That is why, ministers need to find, by the grace of God, ways that would help them relate properly, morally and in a Christ-like manner with their parishioners. The above recommendations are provided only as guidelines; yet, they can serve as a springboard for more future research in this area.

Through the grace of Christ, men may acquire moral stamina, strength of will, and stability of purpose. He who lives the principles of Bible religion, will not be found weak in moral power.<sup>2</sup>

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:13)

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<sup>1</sup>Karen Lebacqz and Ronald G. Barton, Sex in the Parish (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 108.

<sup>2</sup>White, Gospel Workers, 127.

## APPENDIX 4

### SEMINAR VISUAL AIDS

# Definition of the Problem

“Sexual abuse happens when someone in a ministerial role (clergy, religious, or lay) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, employee, student or counseling client in the ministerial relationship.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Center for the Prevention of Sexual and domestic Violence, “What You in the Congregation Need to Know About Clergy Misconduct: Sexual Abuse in the Ministerial Relationship,” (1991).

## **Sexual Misconduct Includes Physical Contact from the Minister**

1. Sexual touch and “accidental” touch of sexual areas of the body.
2. Tickling and playful aggression that seemed uncomfortable to the person.
3. A prolonged hug when a brief one is customary behavior.
4. Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate.
5. Pressing up against the body when hugging.
6. An inappropriate gift from the minister such as lingerie.
7. Sexual intercourse with the minister.

## **Sexual Misconduct Includes Verbal Behavior that Would Sexualize the Ministerial Relationship**

1. Sexual talk or innuendo.
2. Suggestive comments.
3. Tales of the minister's sexual exploits or experiences.
4. Questions about the intimate details of the person's relationships.
5. Looking for sympathy about the sexual inadequacies of the minister's spouse.
6. Inviting the person to inappropriate activities such as a hot tub, swim naked, etc.

## **Nature of the Problem**

1. Clergy sexual misconduct has come under public scrutiny since the early and mid 1980s.
2. It is considered one of the major issues of the 1990s.
3. The incidence of clergy sexual misconduct seems to be on the rise.
4. Some even call it an “epidemic.”
5. There are no national statistics available.

## Some Surveys Can Shed Some Light

1. In 1984 Richard Blackmon surveyed 300 ministers from different denominations. He found out that nearly 39% reported sexual contact and 12.7% reported having actual sexual intercourse with a parishioner. He also found out that 76.5% indicated that they knew of a minister who they believed had sexual intercourse with a church member.
2. The research department of the journal *Christianity Today* conducted a survey with 300 evangelical ministers. It included the following question: *“Since you’ve been in local ministry have you ever done anything with someone (not your spouse) that you feel was sexually inappropriate?”* The answer revealed that 23% said yes; 12% acknowledged that they had sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse and 18% admitted that they had participated in other forms of sexual contact like passionate kissing and fondling/mutual masturbation. Only 4% said that they were found out.

## **Some SDA Responses**

1. The North American Division established a Sexual Ethics Commission to develop guidelines, policies, procedures, and training programs to address this issue. This Commission, consisting of 25 members, was to meet once a year starting on March 8, 1993.
2. Also in 1993 it was voted at the Year-end Meeting to include an appendix to the North American Division Working Policy on sexual misconduct. One of its purposes is to provide a guide for training persons in the prevention of sexual misconduct.
3. The Columbia Union also established a committee to deal with this issue. This committee, consisting of fourteen members, will function in advisory capacity to the Columbia Union Executive Committee. Its goals are to develop guidelines for appropriate interventions and education addressing employee sexual misconduct



## **Legal Implications of Clergy Sexual Misconduct**

1. Historically, the practice has been to hide the problem by moving the minister to a new district.
2. However, the media and the legal system are forcing us to deal more openly and honestly with these issues.
3. Unfortunately, ministers must now face the legal consequences for professional negligence or intentional wrongdoing that are imposed upon other professional groups.
4. Sexual activity with a parishioner is no longer just a moment of weakness, but a criminal act.
5. By law, now, clergy would always be held responsible for any sexual intimacy regardless of the person's willingness to participate or actual solicitation.

## **States Where Clergy Sexual Misconduct is a Crime**

1. North Dakota (1989)\*
2. California (1990)
3. Colorado (1990)
4. South Dakota (1990)
5. Wisconsin (1990)\*
6. Florida (1991)
7. Maine (1991)
8. Georgia (1992)
9. Iowa (1992)\*
10. Minnesota (1992)\*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The asterisk next to the state indicates that the statutes specifically include clergy. The others include clergy only by implication. In states where sexual misconduct does not hold any criminal penalties, the victims can file a civil suit against the professional

# **Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct**

## **Progressive Steps**

1. Extended Look.
2. Careful Observation.
3. Fantasizing.
4. Suggestive Statements or Movements.
5. Seduction.
6. Conscience Calls.
7. Opportunity.
8. The Act.

## Common Characteristics

1. Personality
  - a. The Wanderer
  - b. The Predator
2. Power and Authority
3. Sexuality
  - a. Close Relationships
  - b. Stimulating Conversation
  - c. Sexual Availability
  - d. Sexual Addiction
  - e. Transference and Counter-Transference
4. Self-Disclosure
5. Other Common Characteristics
  - a. Self-confidence
  - b. Show Interest and Concern
  - c. Gentleness
  - d. Public Recognition
  - e. Accept and Give Gifts
  - f. Unresolved Issues
  - g. Inadequate Training

## **Satan's Greatest Temptation to Clergy in the Time of the End**

“Satan well knows the material with which he has to deal in the human heart. He knows--for he has studied with fiendish intensity for thousands of years--the points most easily assailed in every character; and through successive generations he has wrought to overthrow the strongest men, princes in Israel, by the same temptations that were so successful at Baalpeor. *As we approach the close of time*, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, *as of old*, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their souls, he can through them destroy many. *And he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago*. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, *he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment*” (P.P. 457).

## **Recommendations for Prevention**

### **Build a Strong Spiritual Life**

1. Through an intimate relationship with the Lord.
2. Be intentional about it.

### **Build a Strong Marriage**

1. The ministerial family should take a closer look at their total marriage experience.
2. Plan and safeguard this unifying experience.

## Education

1. The church needs to move beyond the remedial recovery phase to emphasize prevention in every way possible.
2. Our colleges and seminary should take a new look at their curriculums for possible adjustments and/or restructuring.  
A course(s) should be offered that would include the following areas:
  - a. Sexual ethics in the ministry.
  - b. Counseling and personal relationships.
  - c. The nature of power and authority of the ministerial role and the responsibility that goes with it.
  - d. How to care for the minister's own emotional and sexual needs in healthy and appropriate ways.
  - e. Development and maintenance of professional support systems.
  - f. Understanding of current applicable denominational/local conference employment policies/guidelines on this issue.

- g. Awareness of the dynamics and legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct.
3. This course(s) should be part of the ministerial student's core requirement for graduation.
4. The church should develop continuing educational programs for ministers who are already serving in various capacities as part of their continuing education and professional growth. They also deserve information and clarification on this issue.
5. These continuing educational programs should also be made available, at least partially or on a limited basis, to lay leaders.



## Avoid the Appearance of Evil

Tips that would help ministers recognize the appearance of evil:

1. The extended look.
2. Careful Observation.
3. Dreaming or fantasizing about a particular parishioner.
4. Concerned about being well groomed in front of her.
5. Suggestive behaviors or remarks.
6. Looking for an opportunity.

“Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.” (Prov. 6:27-29 NIV)

## Be Professional

1. Be Responsible.
2. Be Accountable.
  - a. Do not be a loner.
  - b. Develop a network of friends and colleagues you can trust.
  - c. Arrange to have a “therapeutic relationship” with another minister(s)/professional(s) you can trust and feel comfortable talking to.
3. Be Consistent.
4. Have a Personal Code of Ethics.

## **Words of Encouragement**

“Through the grace of Christ, men may acquire moral stamina, strength of will, and stability of purpose. He who lives the principles of Bible religion, will not be found weak in moral power.” (G.W. 127)

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Phil. 4:13 NIV)

## **An Administrator's Concern**

**“I am concerned about the growing number of denominational employees, in and outside of our union, who have found themselves in trouble due to inappropriate sexual activities.”**

*“Near the close of this earth’s history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before entering the land of promise.” (TSB 84)*

## 2 Corinthians 6:1-4 (NIV)

“As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, ‘in the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. *We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.* Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way.”

## 1 Timothy 3:1, 2, 7 (NIV)

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. *Now the overseer must be above reproach. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.*”



## Titus 1:6-8 (NIV)

“An elder *must be blameless*. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, *he must be blameless . . . one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.*”

## APPENDIX 5

### SEMINAR OUTLINE

#### SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

##### **Outline**

1. Devotional:       *Ministry in a Complex World*
2. Do the Pretest
3. Nature of the Problem
  - Some Statistics and Remarks
  - Legal Implications
4. Video Presentation:       *Once You Cross the Line*
  - by
  - Center for the Prevention of Sexual
  - and Domestic Violence
  - Seattle-Washington
5. Dynamics of Clergy Sexual Misconduct
  - The Personality of the Minister
  - The Perceived Power and Authority of the Minister
  - The Sexuality of the Minister
  - The Self-disclosure of the Minister
  - Other Common Characteristics
  - How to Get Out of a Bad Situation
6. Recommendations for Prevention
  - Build a Strong Spiritual Life
  - Build a Strong Marriage

Education

Avoid the Appearance of Evil

Be Professional

Be Responsible

Be Accountable

Be Consistent

Have a Personal Code of Ethics

7. Do the Posttest (Ask the group to mail it back to me if necessary)

## APPENDIX 6

### SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRES

#### SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY MISCONDUCT

##### Questionnaire I

1. To what degree does the physical attractiveness of the minister relate to the risk of falling into an affair?

Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important

2. To what degree does the strength or weakness of a minister's own marriage relationship makes a minister vulnerable when ministering to parishioners of the opposite sex?

Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important

3. To what degree do you see pastoral ministry as a sacred responsibility and a position of great influence?

Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 Most Definitely

4. To what degree is there a need for educational seminars and/or programs that would provide an opportunity to ministers to receive more information and clarification on sexual ethics?

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great

5. To what degree do you believe that the lack of purity and morality in a minister is more harmful and destructive for the church and the gospel than any other form of misbehavior among Christians?

Not More Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 More Harmful

6. To what degree does sexual misconduct generally affect people other than the perpetrators and the victims?

Very Little 1 2 3 4 5 A Lot

7. Generally to what degree is it ethical to accept personal gifts from someone of the opposite sex?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 No Problem

8. Clergy sexual misconduct includes the following element(s):

- a. The physical contact
- b. When the minister has sexual intercourse with a parishioner
- c. Verbal behavior that would sexualize the ministerial relationship
- d. Inviting the person to inappropriate activities such as a hot tub, swim naked, etc.
- e. All of the above
- f. None of the above

9. To what degree do you feel that you already understand clearly the issues of clergy sexual misconduct?

Little 1 2 3 4 5 A Lot

10. Compared to your previous knowledge how much additional understanding did you gain from this seminar?

None 1 2 3 4 5 Great Amount

11. Should fallen ministers be restored into the ministry?

- a. Never
- b. Providing that certain requirements are met
- c. Depending on the nature of the sexual misconduct
- d. Always
- e. After a considerable period of time

12. New and transferring ministers should go through an orientation process that would include outlining acceptable and unacceptable conduct and current applicable conference employment policies and procedures related to the work of the ministry.

Yes No

13. Factors involved in clergy sexual misconduct:

- a. The personality of the minister
- b. The minister is an authoritative figure
- c. Close relationships with parishioners
- d. Sexual addiction
- e. Inadequate training concerning this issue
- f. All of the above
- g. None of the above

14. Ministers should be screened before hiring them.

Yes No

15. Our colleges and/or seminary should include in their curriculum a core course on Sexual Ethics in the Ministry for ministerial students.

Yes No

SEMINAR ON THE DYNAMICS, PREVENTION, AND LEGAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

**Questionnaire II**

1. To what degree has the information and clarification of sexual ethics issues in the ministry presented in this seminar been helpful for my ministry?

None 1 2 3 4 5 A Great Help

2. Is the standard of morality in the ministry enough to protect a minister from falling into temptation?

Yes No

3. To what degree did this seminar provide a setting for sharing and for frank discussion of sexual issues that are affecting the church and ministry today?

No Help 1 2 3 4 5 Total Freedom to Discuss

4. How important is a personal code of ethics for pastors that would be tailored to their unique situation?

Unnecessary 1 2 3 4 5 Essential

5. To what degree were the legal implications of clergy sexual misconduct made clear in this seminar?

Not Clear 1 2 3 4 5 Very Clear

6. To what degree do you feel that a system of accountability with other clergy and/or other professionals is necessary in the ministry?

Not necessary 1 2 3 4 5 Essential

7. To what degree do you feel that clear and specific ethical guidelines exist for pastors?

No Guidelines 1 2 3 4 5 Clear Guidelines

8. To what degree were the recommendations for prevention provided in this seminar realistic and useful for my ministry?

Not Realistic and Useful 1 2 3 4 5 Realistic and Useful

9. To what degree was the material presented in this seminar well structured and clearly articulated?

Not Very Well 1 2 3 4 5 Very Well

10. How can a pastor get out of a bad situation before it is made public/too late?



## APPENDIX 7

### RECOMMENDED SOURCES

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#### **Resources**

The last six places on this list can be contacted for treatment of sexual addiction.

1. Marie M. Fortune  
Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence  
936 N 34th Street, Suite 200  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 634-1903
2. James A. Sparks  
Health and Human Issues  
Division of Continuing Studies  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

315 Lowell Hall  
Madison, WI 53703-1195  
(800) 442-4617

3. Family Services of King County  
(206) 461-3883
4. Northwest Treatment Association  
(206) 283-8099
5. Dr. Thomas P. Ipes  
Licensed Psychotherapist  
Clinical Director--The Christian Counseling and Educational Center  
P.O. Box 336  
Plaza South Medical/Professional Building  
Newburg, IN 47630  
(812) 853-7007
6. Craig S. Montgomery, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist  
Behavioral Healthcare Northwest, P.C.  
1008 - B NE Division  
Gresham, OR 97030  
(503) 661-7733
7. John Caywood, MS.  
Mental Health Therapist  
Mid-Valley Counseling Center  
2659 Commercial St. SE, #200  
Salem, OR 97302  
(503) 364-6093  
(503) 378-2436 Messages only
8. Walk-In Counseling Center  
Minneapolis, MN.

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## VITA

I was born to Jorge E. Rico and María N. Muñoz on April 8, 1961, in Cali, Colombia. I attended Grammar and Junior High School in Colombia. Then, my father brought me to New Jersey in July 3, 1977, at the age of 16. There I attended Passaic High School from which I graduated in 1980. In the summer of the same year I started attending The Plaza School (a trade school) in Paramus, New Jersey, from which I graduated as a computer programmer. In June 7, 1981, I married Elizabeth Prado in Passaic, New Jersey. In January of 1982 both of us headed back to Colombia to attend the Colombia-Venezuela Union College to start my ministerial training.

Two years later we returned to New Jersey and decided to finish my ministerial training at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. After graduation, in June 1986, we returned to New Jersey as a minister in the New Jersey Conference. After serving there for several months the Conference sent us to Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to work on the Master of Divinity program. While at Michigan our first child Michelle E. was born to us in March 1987. In 1989, after graduation from Andrews University, we returned to the New Jersey Conference to serve as a three-church district pastor. While serving as a pastor in New Jersey our second child Jorge E. III was born to us in April 1989.

In June 1991 I was ordained to the gospel ministry and in 1993 we received an invitation to serve in Corrales, New Mexico (Texico Conference), as a pastor of the Sandia View Academy Church and Bible teacher in the academy. In 1995 we received an invitation to serve as a pastor in the Oregon Conference. We are happy to be in this part of the country. As a family we are very delighted to serve the Lord in the ministry, and we pray and look forward to serving Him wherever He leads until He comes back to take us to our heavenly home.