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January 2021

Dear License School for Local Pastors Student,

Welcome to our approaching time of study, worship, and laughter together at The United Methodist Center in Springfield. We will have the opportunity to learn the basic skills needed to offer effective pastoral care in the context of local church ministry while investing in the important ministry of presence, pastoral care.

Guidelines for Successful Completion of Pastoral Care:

- Please read all of the texts listed in the course syllabus and have completed all of the assignments indicated (and mailed to me by the deadlines listed) before coming to Springfield.
  - E-mailed assignments are acceptable and the date of sending will be used to determine if it is on time. I will send an email reply. If you have not received a reply, do not consider your assignment turned in.
- Carefully read the instructions, including format guidelines for assignments. It is important in the administrative aspect of ministry to be able to follow instructions to the letter, including deadlines. Failure to do so will impact your grade in the class.
- I encourage you to contact me with your questions about the reading and the assignments by telephone or e-mail. I pray that your preparations will go smoothly.
- For our first-class session together, please bring your Bible and the handout booklet of additional reading materials. You do not have to bring your textbooks to the class sessions unless you have questions to ask. Please keep them in your hotel room for reference.

I am lifting you in my prayers! God has great things in store for us as we journey the road of faith together!

Faithfully,

Rev. Dr. Beverly L. Wilkes-Null  
revdrladi@gmail.com  
Instructor for Pastoral Care  
License School for Local Pastors 2021

Format for Assignments and Booklist  
**PASTORAL CARE CLASS 2021**  
License Local Pastors School  
Instructor - Rev. Dr. Beverly L. Wilkes-Null

**Order your textbooks immediately.** The books are available through Cokesbury, Barnes and Noble, and Amazon.com.

**INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMAT**

- Carefully read this outline.
- Email assignments to [revdrladi@gmail.com](mailto:revdrladi@gmail.com) as word documents
- For mailed assignments: DO NOT send by overnight/express mail --- regular mail with the postmark indicating that of your deadline date or sooner is acceptable.
- Call me (618-444-2569) with your questions (or use e-mail at [revdrladi@gmail.com](mailto:revdrladi@gmail.com)). My Sabbath Day is Friday.
- All assignments should use 12-point font, single space between lines.
  - You may choose to double-space if you wish, but you will also need to double the page count.
- Your name and assignment title should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the first page each assignment. This applies even if your assignment is sent in digital form.
- Multi-page assignments should be stapled together. Please check your spelling and grammar.

**CLASS PURPOSE & TOPICS:** The Pastoral Care Class introduces the ministry of pastoral care. Issues addressed include: Pastoral Care Theology and its Biblical roots; Stress & Support; Empathetic Listening; Ministry to the Sick, Dying, & Bereaved; Premarital Counseling; Clergy Ethics in Ministry; Care of the Self for Ministry; and Pastoral Care through Worship. Role-play will be used as a learning tool, and students will reflect on their own experience as a resource for ministry. Emphasis is on the practical matters for the local pastor.

## PASTORAL CARE BOOKLIST

The Hospital Visit: A Pastor's Guide by Michael L. Kirkindoll, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Good Grief by Granger E. Westberg, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1986. *A sub-title and publication year may vary and that is okay; this is a classic in grief ministry that has been published several times so choose whatever edition is most available to you.*

Read the booklet of additional reading materials that can be downloaded from the [igrc.org](http://igrc.org) website for License School for Local Pastors under the information for The Pastoral Care Class.

### **RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED:**

Just Because You're in a Storm Doesn't Mean the Storm Has to be in You: A Meditation for Trying Times by Kirk Byron Jones.

## ASSIGNMENTS DUE PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN SPRINGFIELD

### ASSIGNMENT #1 (“Verbatim Reflection”):

- Read *The Hospital Visit: A Pastor’s Guide*.
- Schedule a hospital or nursing home visit. When you go on the visit, plan to have some time to yourself immediately after the visit.
  - Please DO NOT use a visit to a family member or a close friend for this assignment.
  - Please DO NOT accompany another pastor on this visit (you are to be the sole pastoral caregiver during this visit).
- Once the visit is finished, write a 2-page verbatim of your dialogue with the patient and any other visitors in the room at the time of the visit. Label who is speaking. Write it in the format of a movie or television script on paper.
  - When you are writing please change names of the patient and his/her visitors to protect confidentiality.
- Write one additional page reflecting on this experience (what went well during the visit and what did not). I will be looking for you to incorporate some of your learnings from the reading in this page.
- Plan to bring two printouts of this assignment with you to the first day of class.
- This assignment is due no later than **July 12, 2021**.

### ASSIGNMENT #2 (“Grief Process Reflection”):

- Read *Good Grief*.
- You have likely suffered some grief or traumatic loss --- death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a friend, loss of a job, victim of a crime, etc. Please write a full 2page reflection on your experience describing the grief process for you.
  - This is a reflection and does not need to be a detail filled narration. Reflect on your process of grief and use the language from *Good Grief* to interpret your experience. What/who was helpful during the grief process, and what/who was not helpful during the grief process?
- This paper will be read only by the instructor and will not be used in class. Your confidentiality will be protected.
- This assignment is due no later than **July 19, 2021**.

## SYLLABUS FOR PASTORAL CARE CLASS

**SESSION ONE** Prepare by reading pages 1-15 in Handout Booklet before class.

- Biblical foundations of Pastoral Care.
- Prayer and Pastoral Care.
- What is pastoral care?
- Listening skills.
- PASTORAL CARE IN WORSHIP: The power of naming in prayer.
- Role Play Exercise – using your Verbatim assignments:
  - **BRING YOUR TWO COPIES OF ASSIGNMENT #1 TO CLASS (I will return a graded copy with feedback, so you will have three copies for the exercise).**
- PASTORAL CARE IN WORSHIP: Addressing a communal crisis in worship (Attack on our Nation’s Capital, 9/11, war, community tragedy, etc.).
- Life stages and critical needs and ministry.

**Homework after Session one: ASSIGNMENT #3 (“Verbatim Role Play Feedback”):** In teams of 3, take turns role playing each of your verbatims. You may need to meet outside of class later in order to cover the role playing of all of your small group members.

- Make sure you roleplay your verbatim TWO TIMES with your group. Once where you are playing yourself, and once while you are playing the care receiver. Write a full 1-page reflection on your team members’ feedback on your verbatim and your reflection on the perspective of receiving the care that was offered by you. There is ALWAYS room for improvement. Your insights on your visit and the observations of your small group members MUST include what you can improve on in the future. Due at the beginning of Session Two (turn in this assignment with a copy of the original verbatim).

**SESSION TWO** Assignment #3 is due at the beginning of class.

- Ministry to the sick.
- Ministry to the bereaved.
- Role play of a visit to a bereaved family.
- The nature of grief.
- Basic needs of the bereaved.
- Basic needs for those in transition.

**Homework after session two: Assignment #4 (“Bereavement Role Play)**

**Reflection”):** Write a full one-page reflection on how the “visit” to a bereaved family went and the needs that arose out of the visit for future pastoral care. Share insights that were NOT reflected upon by the class debriefing. Due at the beginning of SESSION THREE.

**SESSION THREE** Prepare by reading the rest of the Handout Booklet, page 16 to the end.

- Premarital counseling. Expectations and Issues. Connecting the couple to the Body of Christ.
- PASTORAL CARE THROUGH WORSHIP: Opening a pastoral care relationship through preaching.
- PASTORAL CARE THROUGH WORSHIP: Preventative Pastoral Care through Word, Scripture, Confession, Praise, and the Pastoral Prayer.
- Maintaining confidentiality and boundaries.
- Ministry to nursing home residents.

#### **SESSION FOUR**

- Pastoral care special issues:
  - Domestic violence
  - Suicide
  - Substance abuse
  - Sensitivity to gender, racial, and age issues
  - The pastor’s resource of professional referrals
  - PASTORAL CARE IN WORSHIP: All Saints’ Day, Blue Christmas
  - Clergy ethics in pastoral care
  - The Illinois Great Rivers Conference policy on Clergy Sexual Ethics
  - Arranging for your pastoral care network
  - Pastoral care for the parsonage family.
  - Your questions on specific pastoral care special circumstances
  - Resources for the future
  - Tying it all together
  - The sacramental life.

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION PASTORAL CARE CLASS**

Tips for successful completion of assignments: Start early, don't work at the last minute. Follow the directions for the assignments to the letter. Twelve-point type, single-spaced, or double space and double pages are required. Put your name and assignment title in the upper right-hand corner. Complete the assigned number of pages (FULL pages), and issues to be addressed, etc. Assignments are due ON TIME. This may seem arbitrary, however, in ministry, you will have instructions to follow, deadlines to meet, and expectations to face from church members and your district superintendent. One still has to have a sermon prepared for Sunday morning even if you have had multiple unexpected pastoral care situations to address the preceding week. **Late work in this class will lose points and affect your grade:** 2 points per day late for assignments 1 and 2, and 50% of the points for assignments 3 and 4 if they are not turned in on time. If you are having problems with an assignment, contact me as early as possible.

**Tips for class participation:** Everyone is expected to contribute to the discussion in class. Lack of participation AND domination of the discussion are to be avoided. Ministry is a team effort --- do not let your team down!

Pastoral Care is subjective. The goal I have for you the student is to equip you for faithful ministry. Licensing School does measure your preparation for ministry. In order to put the subjective into a measurable realm, I have assigned points to each of the assignments and class participation to give you feedback. Each student has the opportunity to earn 100 points in pastoral care as follows:

- 20 Verbatim on a pastoral care visit
- 20 Reflection on an Experience of Grief
- 15 Reflection on Verbatim Feedback
- 15 Reflection on the Bereavement Role Play
- 30 Class Participation

Your cumulative point total determines the final grade in Pastoral Care as follows:

P+	[Pass Plus]	94 – 100
P	[Pass]	75 – 93
P-	[Pass Minus]	65 – 74
U	[Unsatisfactory]	0 – 64

I will be available in Springfield outside of class anytime you wish to make another appointment to listen, support, encourage, comfort, and brainstorm!

## Guidelines for Effective Listening

**A few pointers:** Experience points out that there are some basic rules of procedure that may be helpful, the rest of which will come to you as we go along. Here, however, are a few tips that may be of value.

1. Pray, make every listening and every visit an act of prayer. You will find that this can help you to be non-anxious, calm, and understanding. Be compassionate but try to never sound or look shocked at anything you are told.
2. Rephrase what you have heard. Summarize several of the important things the person has told you and state them back to him/her. Listen for both what they say --- content, and for what they mean --- emotion.
3. Questions are extremely helpful if they provide clarity, or clear away some of the confusion. You are not an investigative reporter, however, only the relevant details are important.
4. If necessary, focus on what decisions have to be made today.
5. Remember that by calling on you or opening up to you, this person has already shown a willingness to be helped. Some trust + some anxiety = some sharing + some relief.
6. Relax and play “listener”. You do not have to solve things. Do not encourage undue dependency or take over their lives.
7. Do not rush to solutions too quickly! First, hear and evaluate all the information. Even then, they must choose options.
8. Always remember there are at least two sides to every story.
9. Avoid judging or moralizing or deciding who is guilty and who is innocent. Let God do that.
10. It will not always be apparent that a person is in real trouble. Most people are not used to baring their soul to a “stranger”. Go slowly.
11. Do not try to convert a hurting person to your specific religious views. Pain and Loss are not great times for deep theology even though they are times for relying on God. Try to understand how they see things from their faith perspective and work with that. Help them connect with God, and with the church from where they are.
12. Instead of getting into a philosophical argument with a seriously depressed person, try to see things as they see them. Then try to help them discover alternatives. “What has helped you in the past?”
13. Anyone who is seriously contemplating suicide needs referral to a professional counselor. The best way that you can help them is to put them in touch with someone with more training. If someone implies that they are thinking about suicide, you have permission to ask if they are --- do so very gently.

14. People will often signal that they need some help following a sermon or some time when they catch you alone. “I need to talk to you” is a common signal.
15. Most people have a need to make sense out of life. Sometimes we will repeat stories over and over again until we make sense out of them. Be patient.
16. It is not about you, your stories, your life experience, or getting to know you. Know that there is a difference between friends (mutuality) and spiritual guidance (pastor-parishioner). You can make a brief reference to your own experience, but then always turn the focus back to them with a question.
17. Avoid clichés and platitudes: “I know just how you feel!” “Don’t worry, everything is going to turn out just fine!” “You just have to give it to the Lord!”
18. **Attending to the speaker** shows respect and reinforces sharing.
- Face them as squarely as possible.
  - Maintain good eye contact.
  - Have an open posture --- do not cross arms or legs.
  - Lean a little toward them.
  - Be relaxed and intent.
19. Be mindful of the ways that you show others you are listening to them, make sure that you respond/reply in a way that lets people know you are listening.
20. Try to assess the problems and the resources the person has to deal with their problems.
21. Do not claim more professional skills than you have earned, nor apologize for offering what you can offer. Do not be embarrassed to stop them if they want to go deeper than your comfort can sustain. Remember other potential resources, such as professional helpers, another pastor, their family, etc. Always remember the power of God is available to help those who are in need!

## LISTENING SKILLS FOR MINISTRY

from John Savage's Listening and Caring Skills in Ministry, Abingdon Press, 1996.

1. **PARAPHRASE** - The act of saying back to the speaker in your own words what you heard the person say.
2. **PRODUCTIVE QUESTIONS** - The ability to ask questions based on: free information (ideas or feelings), deleted information, distortions, and responses to other questions you have asked.
3. **PERCEPTION CHECK** - Checking out your guess at another person's emotional state.
4. **EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS** - Naming your own inner emotions.
5. **FOGGING** - Naming the truth in another person's critical statements.
6. **NEGATIVE INQUIRY** - Coaching your critic to criticize you in specifics, rather than generalities.
7. **BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION** - Describing another person's behavior without being judgmental or accusatory.
8. **STORY LISTENING** - Listening for the unconscious meaning in a person's story, told through themes and metaphors.
9. **STORY POLARIZATION LISTENING** - Listening and responding to the polarities (opposites) in a person's story.
10. **LIFE COMMANDMENTS** - Listening to the deep belief systems that drive a person's behavior.
11. **THE LINGUISTIC BRIDGE** - The ability to match the speaker's linguistic structure by using the same kinesthetic, auditory, or visual language used by the speaker. Mirroring.

## **BASIC SKILLS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

1. PARAPHRASE State in your own way what the other's remark says to you.  
Example: "Is this an accurate understanding of your ideas? . . . (then state what you heard)  
"Would this be an example of your point? . . . (then state a specific example)
2. PERCEPTION CHECK Describe what you perceive to be how your partner is feeling in order to check out if you do understand.  
Example: "You looked like you felt hurt by my comment. Did you?"  
"I get the impression that you would like to change the subject. Is that accurate?" "You seem to be feeling more at home now. Is that right?"
3. BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION Report specific, observable actions of others without making accusations or generalizations about their motives, personality, or character traits.  
Example: "That's the third time you have said you agreed with a statement of mine and then added 'but' and expressed agreement with the opposite." "Mom and Dad have done nearly all the talking and the two of us have said very little."
4. DESCRIPTION OF FEELINGS Specify or identify the feelings by name, simile, figure of speech, or action urge.  
Example: "I feel embarrassed." (naming)  
"I feel like a tiny frog in a huge pond." (simile)  
"I feel like hugging you." (action urge)  
"I'm sitting on top of the world!" (figure of speech)  
"I feel very sad for having hurt you." (naming)

### **TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER AS A PERSON:**

Check to make sure you understand their ideas, information, and suggestions (skill: paraphrase).

Check to make sure you really understand what they feel in their inner state. (skill: perception check).

### **TO HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND YOU AS A PERSON:**

Describe what others did that affects you personally (skill: behavior description).

Let others know as clearly as possible what you are feeling (skill: describe your own feelings).

# PARAPHRASING

## A Basic Communication Skill for Improving Interpersonal Relationships

### The problem

Tell someone your phone number and most people will usually repeat it to make sure it was heard correctly. However, if you make a complicated statement, most people will express agreement or disagreement without trying to ensure that they heard what you intended. Most people seem to assume that what they understand from a statement is what the other intended.

How do you check to make sure that you understand one another, the person's ideas, information, or questions as they intended? How do you know the remark means the same to you as it does to them?

Of course, you can get the other person to clarify a remark by asking, "What do you mean?" or, "Tell me more." or "I don't understand." However, after they have elaborated, you still face the same question. "Am I understanding the idea as it was intended to be understood?" Your feeling of certainty is no evidence that you do in fact understand.

### The skill

If you state in your own way what a remark conveys to you, the other can begin to determine whether the message is coming through as intended. Then, if they think you misunderstand, they can speak directly to it. The term "paraphrase" can be used for any means of showing the other person what their idea or suggestion means to you.

Paraphrasing then, is any way of revealing your understanding of the other person's comment in order to test your understanding.

An additional benefit of paraphrasing is that it lets the other person know that you are interested. It is evidence that you do want to understand what they mean.

If you can satisfy the other that you really do understand their point, they will probably try to understand your views.

Paraphrasing is crucial in attempting to bridge the interpersonal gap. (1) It increases the accuracy of communication, and thus the degree of mutual or shared understanding. (2) The act of paraphrasing itself conveys feeling . . . your interest in the other, your concern to see how they view things.

### Learning to Paraphrase

People sometimes think of paraphrasing as merely putting the other person's ideas in another way. They try to say the same thing with different words. Such word-swapping may result merely in the illusion of mutual understanding.

Sarah: Jim should never have become a teacher.

Fred: You mean teaching isn't the right job for him?

Sarah: Exactly! Teaching is not the right job for Jim.

Instead of rewording Sarah's statement, Fred could ask himself, "What does Sarah's statement mean to me?" Make it more concrete.

Sarah: Jim should never have become a teacher.

Fred: You mean he is too harsh with the children . . . maybe even cruel?

Sarah: Oh no. I meant that he has such expensive tastes that he can't ever earn

enough as a teacher.

Fred: Oh, I see. You think he should have gone into a field that insured him a higher standard of living?

Sarah: Exactly! Teaching is not the right job for Jim.

Try this: A Newcomer: We should have never moved here!

If the statement was general, it may convey something specific.

Larry: I think this is a very poor textbook.

You: Poor? Do you mean it has too many inaccuracies?

Larry: No, the text is accurate, but the book comes apart too easily.

Try this: Worship Chair: I really don't like this new hymnal.

Possibly the other's comment suggests an example to you.

Laura: This text has too many omissions.

You: You mean, for example, that it contains nothing about women's roles in the development of America?

Laura: Yes, that is one example. It also lacks any discussion of the development of the arts in America.

Try this: Regarding back surgery, I am afraid of what might happen.

If the speaker's comment was very specific, it may convey a more general idea to you.

Ralph: Do you have 25 pencils I can borrow for my Sunday School Class?

You: Do you just want something for them to write with? I have about 15 pens and 10 or 11 pencils.

Ralph: Great! Anything that writes will do.

Sometimes the other's idea will suggest its inverse or opposite.

Stan: I think the UAW acts so irresponsibly because the management has ignored them so long.

You: Do you mean that the UAW would be less obstinate now if CAT had consulted with them in the past?

Stan: Certainly. I think the UAW is being forced to more and more desperate measures.

Try this: Mom: I think our kids get into trouble because their Dad is gone so much.

The next time someone is angry or critical, try paraphrasing until you can understand. What effect does this have?

--- based on a document by Dr. Don Houts,  
former Director of Pastoral Care &  
Counseling of the former Central Illinois &  
Southern Illinois Conferences

# MARRIAGE AND FAMILY MATTERS

## **Before You Meet with the Couple:**

### **1: Make sure you know what you believe and have been called to teach.**

Whether you are married or single, your beliefs regarding marriage will have a very significant effect on our role as pastor and counselor. It is vital that you be fluent with the Biblical teachings surrounding marriage and with the doctrine of the United Methodist Church as well. Any time you spend studying this, praying over the topic, and clarifying your point of view will improve your ability to counsel both married and single church members.

### **2: Guard Against Relationship Comparison.**

You enter into any marriage/pastoral counseling situation with your own list of relationship-experiences. You have past and previous relationships, friendships, family, your own marriage if you are currently married, and more.

There is a dangerous kind of assumption that can happen in pastoral counseling if you are not aware of it: A parishioner could present a marriage problem to you that sounds familiar. By that, I mean that there are some elements of the marriage you are hearing about that you recognize, that contain echoes of your own life experience (or of someone you know). Be careful in that situation NOT to assume the problem or challenge is exactly the same. These are two completely different people than you and your set of experiences. Allow them to be who they are, to have the problems they have, and do not assume that anything is exactly the same as something you have experienced, even if there are similarities.

Staying mindful of what thoughts surface in your mind as you listen, and guarding against comparison or “That’s just like...” will make you much more effective as a listener and pastor.

## **When You Meet with the Couple:**

- 1) Try to meet with both of them together whenever possible. Meeting with just one can cause a host of challenges, especially if you’re not a trained counselor.
  - a. There is an exception to this discussed later in the domestic abuse material, but outside of that exception invite couples to attend together.
- 2) Be honest about your training and experience/certifications (what you have and what don’t you have).
  - a. As their pastor you ARE called and qualified to help them walk through the spiritual aspects of their issue, and you are there to both represent and help reconnect with the presence of God.
- 3) Don’t take sides and be mindful of when you feel like you are.
- 4) Use the paraphrasing skill, it is extremely helpful in these particular kinds of meetings.
- 5) Have a set of resources ready to recommend. A list with examples will be shared in class, but the best resource will always be one that you have read/explored first, and can firmly recommend. You will be more effective if you have some or all of the following:
  - a. A resource to improve communication
  - b. A resource to assist with parenting challenges
  - c. A resource to assist with prayer (especially together)
  - d. A financial resource

- e. A resource on forgiveness
- f. A Bible Study that a couple could do together
- g. A Spiritual Gifts, Strengths, or Personality inventory/quiz that you have experience with
- h. Referrals (with name and contact info) should they want to see a professional marriage counselor
- i. Information on local Marriage Retreats (if any)

6) Remember your limits: You cannot save all marriages. Your idea of a good solution to the problem may be different from their ideas. You cannot make choices for them, nor can you make them take action. You cannot fix the marriage or change things in it. You cannot redo their past. You cannot be an effective counselor if you are also their close personal friend. You cannot be responsible for the choices they make.

7) Remember that you serve an amazing God who is capable of bringing light out of darkness, healing out of the deepest wounds, and resurrection where there was death. How well-connected people are to that God will have an effect on their marriages.

8) Even though you will likely be asked “what should we do” the answer to that is their answer, not yours. You are empowered to speak on behalf of scripture and the church, and you can be a helpful guide to help them talk through the ‘what if’ of each possible solution before them, but at the end of the day we do not tell people what to do or make decisions for people.

9) Remember the church and the many ways that the church can help:

- a. Healing Services
- b. Connecting the couple to deeper community
- c. Fellowship
- d. Are there resources to provide a financially strapped couple with one night out?
- e. Marriage Retreats
- f. Divorce Recovery Groups
- g. Singles Ministry

# CLERGY GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Theological statement: The Bible does not teach anywhere that people may abuse one another. God created us in “his own image.” We are God’s children and deserve to be treated accordingly. God commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves, a commandment that Jesus regarded as the second greatest, and our closest neighbors are our spouses and children. The apostle Paul taught that family members, out of devotion to Christ, should demonstrate mutual subjection, love, and respect.

## INTRODUCTION

A person may visit a pastor’s office and say that he/she and his/her children suffer physical abuse from a spouse or friend. Also, a person may phone and ask a pastor to come to a residence and speak to an abuser. Or a pastor may learn or suspect that a congregation member is being physically abused. How should the pastor proceed? The pastor should be prepared to make an appropriate response, and as a minimum, the preparation should include three elements:

- An awareness of the resources available for dealing with the situation. What domestic violence programs are available in the area? Where can the victim be referred for assistance? Where can the abuser be referred for serious counseling? \*
- An understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence --- will require more time and effort. Such an understanding could result in a new attitude and approach toward domestic violence, an attitude and approach that will not worsen a situation a pastor might encounter in the course of his/her ministry. \*\*
- A knowledge of biblical and church teachings about family violence --- knowledge that can be used to answer the victim’s religious questions. \*\*
- Assuming the pastor is prepared, the following guidelines are suggested.

## WHEN AN ABUSED PERSON VISITS THE PASTOR FOR ASSISTANCE

1. Affirm the victim’s courageous act --- that of coming to you for help. She/he will probably be fearful, depressed, discouraged, confused, and somewhat disorganized. Your affirmation could encourage the person to deal with her/his situation.
2. Be attentive and patient. Listen carefully. Observe non-verbal language.
3. Believe the victim. What is initially shared is probably an understatement of the violence.
4. If the victim reports that the abuser was under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the abuse, remember that research indicates, and experienced therapists believe that substance abuse does not cause violence, and that abusers generally plan the violence to maintain power over and control of the victim. Abusers need treatment for both violent and addictive behavior. (Substance abuse is present in half of domestic violence cases, and abusers who drink or drug generally commit more serious physical abuse.)
5. Don’t ask, “Did you say or do something to provoke the abuser’s anger?” Instead, assure the victim, “Whatever happened, the abuse is not your fault. You did not deserve to be hit.” For reassurance, repeat it, again and again.
6. Don’t make “holding the family together” your goal. Don’t advise the victim to return to the hell of a violent relationship. Don’t promise the victim that the abuser will change, or that the abuser’s promises not to do it again will be kept. Don’t be quick

to advise the victim to forgive the abuser. The abuser needs expert, long-term treatment, and if he/she successfully completes it and he/she and the victim want to salvage their marriage, then talk to them about marriage counseling and getting back together.

7. Make the health and safety of the victim your primary goal. Ask, "Are you in danger?" Learn the resources in your area that have a specific goal of providing a safe place for women and/or can help both men and women obtain an order of protection. If the victim decides to return home, advise her/him to contact your local resource, where a counselor can assist with safety planning for herself/himself and the children. Provide the phone number and offer the use of your telephone. \*\*\*
8. Acknowledge your limits. Remember that you can refer the victim to professionals experienced in family abuse can offer assistance.
9. Promise your continued support to the victim. Talk with her/him regularly, and answer religious and spiritual questions: "What did I ever do to deserve this? What does the Bible/church teach about spouse and child abuse, divorce?" Etc. If the victim is a woman, don't quote Ephesians 5:22, unless she asks about it. Then explain it in context.
10. Keep everything confidential --- between the two of you. Don't violate the victim's trust. Don't confront the abuser without the victim's permission. However, in your first session with the victim, advise her/him to contact your local resources for assistance with the preparation of a safety plan. \*\*\*
11. Don't interview a victim and an abuser as a couple.
12. Don't attempt to counsel a victim and an abuser together with the hope that it will result in stopping the violence. If there is current violence in the relationship, avoid conjoint counseling.

#### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

1. If a victim phones and asks you to come to a residence and speak to the abuser, play it safe. Ask to speak with the abuser on the phone. If that is possible, attempt to arrange a meeting with the abuser in a safe place. If that is not possible and you decide to go to the residence, consider taking a law enforcement officer with you.
2. If someone informs you or you suspect that a congregation member is being physically abused, make certain that person knows you are opposed to domestic violence and available for her/his support. One way to do this is to periodically address the issue of domestic violence in sermons and classes. Another is to provide a safe referral service to victims by placing posters throughout the church --- on bulletin boards and in restrooms --- that list the phone numbers of domestic violence programs.
3. Don't become emotionally or sexually intimate with the victim. She/he is needy and in the midst of a crisis and does not need to deal with your sexual feelings.
4. During the pre-marital counseling sessions, ask each person if there is a history of violence and/or addiction --- alcohol or drugs --- in his/her family. (Statistical studies have indicated that children of abusers and/or addicts are high risks for becoming abusers and/or addicts.)

## NOTES

- \* The Women's Crisis Center for Metro East in Belleville (235-0892) has a shelter for abused women and a walk-in program for abused men and women. Provident Counseling in Swansea (235-5656) has an abuser's treatment program for men.
  
- \*\* Marie M. Fortune's books, *Violence in the Family* (Pilgrim Press, 1991, \$19.95) and *Keeping the Faith* (Harper, 1987, \$4.75), which can be ordered from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 936 North 34th Street, Seattle, WA 98103. Her video, "Broken Promises: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence," can also be purchased there (\$147.00), or borrowed from some church media centers or the Women's Crisis Center of Metro East.
  
- \*\*\* *Striving to Be Violence Free . . . A Guidebook for Creating a Safety Plan* can be ordered from Perspectives Inc., 3381 Gorham Ave., St. Louis Park, MN 55426 (\$4.00).

This document was provided by Rev. Leah Pogemiller, who served as a District Superintendent for our conference. I have amended it for general use throughout Illinois, the original document recommends the Metro East center in Belleville as it was prepared for ministry in that area.

**SPIRITUAL CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY CLIENTS**  
**Having been victims of domestic violence**

*“Spiritual Concerns Expressed by Clients” contains actual responses of women in an Illinois shelter. It was provided by the Ministry on Church Response to Family Violence of the Illinois Council of Churches, Springfield, Illinois. Some clients chose not to answer the questionnaire, stating that the issue was still too painful to examine.*

**DURING THE PERIOD OF YOUR LIFE THAT YOU WERE ABUSED, DID YOU FEEL THAT YOU WERE BEING PUNISHED BY GOD?**

You always hear that God in His infinite wisdom knows what is best for you. For everything that happens to you in your life, there is a reason, kind of like it was meant for you to experience the situation.

At times, maybe not punished, but left by God.

**DID YOU SOMETIMES BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS HAPPENING TO YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT A GOOD PERSON?**

Yes, that I had failed in some way to live up to expectations imposed by myself and others (church).

**IF YOU DID NOT FEEL FREE TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WITH CLERGY, BRIEFLY DISCUSS WHY NOT.**

I believed no man would be able to understand and provide any suitable guidance to remove myself from the abusive relationship.

I believed that I might not be believed or be “scolded” for not being a “good enough” wife.

My case is too personal and private. I don’t want people I see all the time to know my history and problems.

Because he would tell me to stay with my husband. To pray to God.

I don’t think they will believe me.

Clergy told me to pick up my cross and bear it.

Divorce is my only option in my marriage now. I don’t believe in it from my religious upbringing and I am afraid of being ostracized spiritually and socially.

**DOES YOUR RELIGION TEACH YOU THAT MEN ARE SUPERIOR TO WOMEN?**

Very definitely as in “Wives be subject to your husbands” winning them into faith through love. They have spiritual authority over the household. Be silent, obey regardless.

Yes, otherwise why would there be no women priests?

Some take biblical sayings literally.

They infer that men are superior.

**DOES YOUR RELIGION HELP YOU TO HAVE HIGH SELF-ESTEEM?**

I believe God wants me to be fulfilled as a human and happy in my life. This is not always the feeling I get from clergy and congregation members.

No, all are sinners and unworthy ---- suffering is valued highly, allot of time is spent on “turning the other cheek.”

Any religion should help an individual to have faith in themselves in a positive manner.

#### WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD BEEN TOLD DIFFERENTLY BY YOUR CLERGY?

I wish I had been told during sermons that men who do this (abuse) are turning against God and all the church holds dear.

Clergy are not trained to effectively handle the social problems. Clergy should stick to the spiritual problems.

I wanted to be taken seriously.

It would be helpful if there were a feeling of understanding and acceptance, no matter what the problem is with referral to other organizations if church/clergy cannot deal with the problem.

I wanted help, not criticism. I feel they did not look enough into the situation and blamed me.

I would like to have been told that I am a good person. I had choices and I had a right to make them. A woman does not have to be a doormat. I wanted to be assured that I am loved.

#### SCRIPTURAL HELPS

The nature of God	Genesis 1:26-31 Psalm 118:5-9 Matthew 23:37 John 3:16 Matthew 10:29-31 Psalm 103:6-11 and 17a
Self-Worth	Ephesians 1:3-6 Galatians 5:1 Genesis 1:17-30 1 Corinthians 3:16 Psalm 8
Submission	Ephesians 5:21 - 6:4 1 Corinthians 13:1-7
Anger	Mark 11:15-17 Psalm 103:8-9
Forgiveness	Matthew 18:15-17 Matthew 6:9-14 Luke 23:34 Psalm 32

## **THE GRIEF PROCESS IN PASTORAL REASSIGNMENTS**

It has been said that ministers please everyone in the church at some time: half when they arrive and the other half when they leave.

Throughout life we encounter numerous transitions in which we move from one level of experience to another. Transitions in themselves are neither positive or negative --- these are values we give to the experiences.

However, transitions are always stressful. Transitions which most of us have in common include being born, a first date, a first job, marriage, illness, loss of faith, children leaving home for school or marriage, the first day of kindergarten, being called on in class, making new friends, death of a close friend or relative, and moving.

Life is a series of beginnings and endings, which affect not only ourselves but other persons who are either close to us or are involved in the stressful decisions. These persons may include a spouse, children, friends, pets, and parents; and in the case of the moving minister, it will include also the bishop, district superintendent, former church members, future church members, teachers, coaches and neighbors.

Moving involves various and complex emotions which operate on different levels of significance. One may be joyful about a move and at the same time experience deep sorrow over what is being left behind. And when this is combined with the emotions of the other significant persons who are involved, the true complexity begins to be evident.

Feelings of separation, loss, and anxiety usually accompany the experience of moving. The intensity of these feelings may vary, but the responses we identify with the grief process are almost always present. And when the move comes in mid-year, the effect is even more traumatic. Because of the United Methodist tradition of moving pastors July 1st, mid-year moves may be experienced as a sudden death with all of the disabling and disorienting effects.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and others have helped to make us sensitive to the stages of grief dying persons may go. Other studies have broadened this understanding to include how the family, friends, physicians, nurses, and ministers also participate in a grief process similar to that of the dying person. Knowing the stages of a grief process will not keep you from grief, but such knowledge may help you handle it better, and it will enable you to help others who are going through it.

At the outset, we need to understand that we may not proceed through the stages of grief in any set order or within any set time period. Nor are all stages experiences with the same intensity. It may seem that we even skip one or more of them, or experience

one or more at the same time. Indeed, we may seem to have finished with one set of feelings only to have it reappear at a later time without recognizing it.

Let me further preface these remarks by stating that rarely are United Methodist ministers moved against their will or the will of the congregation when things are going well both ways (although it has been known to happen). The minister who blames the “conference” for a move is projecting self-guilt to it in order to avoid confronting reality with the congregation and even perhaps with the self. Such avoidance not only increases dissatisfaction with the conference, but hinders the minister’s own acceptance of the move and puts up barriers in the congregation for the acceptance of the new pastor.

Let us look briefly at the grief process, which takes place in the congregation when a minister is moved --- realizing, of course, that the minister, minister’s family, and other significant persons also experience some of these feelings.

When the announcement is made that the minister is going to move to another church or another form of ministry, the grief process begins in the congregation. Along with the initial shock, there is often a denial on the part of those members who were close to the minister and/or family members or who appreciated the minister’s past leadership. These persons will often say: “Isn’t there some way that we can get you to stay?” “Would it help to get you to stay if we wrote to the bishop?” “If we raise your salary, will you stay?”

Denying that the decision to move has been made, these persons cannot believe what is happening. And their usually unspoken question is “What about us? What will happen to us?”

In the minister’s family, while the possibility of the move has been discussed over the dinner table, this announcement is generally greeted with the children and/or spouse saying in some form: “You can go, but I am staying here!”

For the minister, this denial can sometimes last for weeks after the move. One minister’s unconscious denial of the move as a grief event made him/her miserable for several weeks, and he/she began to think that he/she was not being accepted by the people of the new church --- when in fact, the minister’s denial was keeping the minister from accepting them and putting barriers between pastor and congregation. Both were finally in a position of denying each other.

For the minister and family there may be difficulty in making decisions and even carrying out normal activities. We may feel, and others may perceive, that we are depressed. We may feel extra tired, unable to sleep, irritable, and anxious. We may

develop aches and pains and even become ill.

Following closely on the heels of denial is the stage of guilt. “Did we do something wrong that made you decide to leave us?” “Don’t you like us anymore?” These comments are often covered with jest. Here the congregation begins saying all of those “if only” phrases. “If only we had cooperated more.” “If only we had raised the salary.” “If only we had made the parsonage family more comfortable.” “If only we had dealt more forcefully with those sore-heads in the congregation.” This stage is often where the congregation begins doing things for the new minister and family that should have been done long ago. Members also tend to say to the minister and family, “we always intended to have you over for a meal, but we just never got around to it.”

As clergy, we may begin having second thoughts about even thinking about moving. We might say: “I should have handled things differently, so that I would not have asked to be moved.” “What if the new congregation does not accept me?” Members of the minister’s family may feel that if only they had been more active in or more supportive of the minister’s work, they would not be moving.

A third stage is anger. This is directed at everyone in general. Everything and everyone is in question. Both pastor and congregation may become resentful of all sorts of things in their new setting. The congregation may resent “why things have to be so bad for us.” And the phrases to be heard may be: “Pastor, I don’t think you ever gave us a chance.” “We will make it hard on those who made our minister leave.” “Because of the pain of parting, we certainly will not get close to the next minister.” “After all we did for you and your family --- and this is how you say thanks!!”

Some may unconsciously say to themselves, “I’m not going to like the new minister.” It is rarely used up before the new pastor arrives. With her or his arrival, the feelings of anger may find expression in such statements as “We really liked Paul.” “It’s going to be very hard for you to fill the place of our last pastor.” “This is how things are done here, and if you don’t like it, you don’t need to finish unpacking!” “This is how Paul used to do it.”

Anger is also shown through cold silence or withdrawing. Members of the congregation who have been supportive may begin to put distance between themselves and the pastor because of being rejected. The members of the congregation may refuse to greet the new minister. This is also a time for persons to leave the church or resign from committees or offices.

Such anger is sometimes expressed in picking at trivial matters. “You haven’t done anything right since you’ve been here.” On the other hand, the anger against the former pastor may come out in greeting the new pastor with a false enthusiasm. But in all this,

real feelings are rarely discussed, and the result is that the opportunity to share one another's burdens, the opportunities to talk about grief as a natural life-event, is lost.

The minister and family may in their own ways begin to blame one another for uprooting the family. "I gave up a good job so that you could bring me HERE?" "It's all your fault that we had to move." Or the anger may be directed against the church: "You don't deserve a pastor!" "You never took the time to know our family." "Jesus himself could not minister in this congregation." Or the anger may be directed toward God: "How could God let such a thing happen to our family?" And, at this point there maybe even a loss of faith.

A fourth reaction is emotional release. The minister walks through the empty church for the last time and remembers all the life-changing things that have occurred in this place. In this moment the minister realizes that he or she will never again be here as the pastor to this congregation. All that the minister worked so hard to bring about may be changed and undone "in the twinkling of an eye." And anyway, the church will not be the same since every minister has different strengths and weaknesses, different ideas and strategies, different goals and purposes.

Members of the congregation may also think of how important the now absent minister was to them in special moments: weddings, baptisms, counseling, funerals, encouragements, friendships, etc.

And this emotional release usually leads to some level of experience of depression. This feeling usually sneaks up on us, and often takes the form of self-pity. This, in turn, produces a sense of isolation, and the minister and family members may be kept at arm's length by the congregation. It is almost always unintentional, but the isolation experienced for the new parsonage family is only increased when persons from the congregation say, "we're going to have you over sometime after you get settled in," but who never quite get around to issuing the actual invitation. On the other hand, there may be reluctance on the part of the parsonage family to accept an invitation because of the grief and pain they are experiencing.

For the congregation, this depression is just as real. "Things won't be the same without Rev. Jones." When depression sets in, things are seen in their worst light.

But then things finally begin to come together for both pastor and congregation. It may be only a matter of a couple months for them to both get to this point, or it may even take more than a year.

If the pastor and congregation never get to talk about this grieving process, the negative aspects of guilt, anger, and depression may even go deeper into one's unconscious to

the point where the new minister is never accepted, where the new congregation is never accepted. This is similar to the one who may grieve over the death of a mate for several years.

When things begin working together, the first step is in social sharing. The pastor and family begin writing letters to friends and begin getting involved in church and community affairs. The congregation begins including the minister and family in their activities. In some instances, an open house or some other less formal form of public acceptance is made.

Hope is also involved in the healing portion of the process. This comes and goes as new opportunities for service are seen and as we begin to take real pleasure in meeting the demand of these opportunities. Change is very difficult for all of us, but hope grows out of the strength of the gathered community of faith. And so we begin to hear people say: "I'm looking forward to working with the new minister." "I'm excited about the new possibilities for this congregation." "I'm ready to try some new things to help our congregation grow."

Hope may be reflected in making plans to give the new parsonage the stamp of the family's personality through trimming those ugly shrubs, redecorating, deciding who will get what room, etc.

A third step is that of integration. We take all that has happened to us --- both the positive and the negative --- and put it together and there catch a vision of what God can do in and through and for us in this different situation. We realize that mistakes will be made on all sides, but now those mistakes are seen as a part of the process of living together as the family of God. The mistakes are accepted and corrected in Christian love rather than in spite.

Having ministers move and receiving new ministers puts a stress on the emotional life of the congregation as well as the life of the minister and the minister's family. But with God's help, we can learn in this and all other grief situations that we are not in absolute control of our lives. We are not self-sufficient. We need each other. We are dependent on the love and goodwill of one another. And like a marriage, for better or for worse, God has blessed our union, will grant us fulfillment in it, and will issue a new form of witness through us.

As in any marriage, there will be times when we cry out that things in the relationship need to be readjusted. But we are confident that the Spirit of God leads us in all things as we seek to do God's will. Therefore, let us walk hand in hand into the new future that God is opening up to us in this new situation. Let us steadfastly believe that we have been called by God into this union.

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*This was prepared by Dr. Theodore M. Snider in 1981 with three revisions since, originally given as a sermon at Bushnell UMC.*

## CLERGY ETHICS “AT RISK” TEST

Rev. Charles E. Alexander and Rev. Rachel A. Julian

This test is to determine how close you are to blundering over the ethics edge and harming your parishioners. Of course, you must give honest answers to the items below. Add up your score and compare the total with the key at the end of the test.

1. Have you counseled or given spiritual guidance for more than 6-8 sessions with a parishioner?	No=0	Yes=1
2. Do you have counseling sessions that last two to three hours?	No=0	Yes=2
3. Do you see individuals alone for counseling in your study at home?	No=0	Yes=2
4. Have you shared with a parishioner that you are having sexual feelings toward them?	No=0	Yes=3
5. Do you have regular (at least once a month) consultation, supervision or spiritual direction?	No=1	Yes=0
6. Are you working more than 50 hours per week?	No=0	Yes=2
7. Is your social life almost exclusively connected with members of your congregation?	No=0	Yes=2
8. Do you regularly do business with, socialize with, and provide pastoral care to the same people?	No=0	Yes=1
9. Are you presently going through personal or family stresses beyond the ordinary?	No=0	Yes=2
10. Do you have difficulty saying no to parishioners?	No=0	Yes=2
11. Do you avoid meetings or small group gatherings of clergy or colleagues as much as possible?	No=0	Yes=2
12. Do you fantasize about kissing or touching a parishioner?	No=0	Yes=2
13. Have you asked out a parishioner or been tempted to do so?	No=0	Yes=3
14. Have you lost your vision for ministry?	No=0	Yes=3
15. Do you dress up for a parishioner?	No=0	Yes=3
16. Do you have one or two regular days off?	No=2	Yes=0
17. Are you a hugger?	No=0	Yes=1
18. Are jokes with a sexual content routine for you?	No=0	Yes=2
19. Have you had a course or seminar in Ministerial Ethics in the last three years?	No=2	Yes=0
20. Do you feel sexually attracted to one of your parishioners?	No=0	Yes=1
21. Do you conduct church business in the homes of parishioners alone?	No=0	Yes=2
22. At retreats and other places, do you give back rubs?	No=0	Yes=3
23. Do you ever conduct counseling sessions over a meal?	No=0	Yes=1
24. Have parishioners given you expensive gifts or frequently given you inexpensive gifts?	No=0	Yes=2
25. Have you wanted to talk to a colleague about a parishioner but feared doing so would demonstrate your weakness?	No=0	Yes=2
26. Do you comment to a parishioner how attractive he or she is or make positive remarks about his or her body?	No=0	Yes=2
27. Do you share confidential information about parishioners by name with your significant other or gossip about parishioners by name with colleagues?	No=0	Yes=3
28. Is viewing pornography a regular source of entertainment for you?	No=0	Yes=3
29. Do you regularly refer to parishioners of the opposite sex with terms like “honey”, “baby”, “dear”, etc.?	No=0	Yes=2
30. Do you often provide counseling for members of your staff?	No=0	Yes=2

- 0** Good, you are nearly risk free.
- 1-8** Review your behavior. Read and follow Discipline and Policies.
- 8-12** Review your behavior for problem areas. Consider needed changes.
- 12-15** Consult a mentor, colleague. You are nearly at risk.
- 15-18** You are at risk. Seek personal therapy and supervision.
- 18+** Probably you have already harmed parishioners. Seek therapy and supervision.

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ILLINOIS GREAT RIVERS CONFERENCE**

### **A. Introduction**

The pastoral office is a position of great trust, responsibility, and power. This trust and responsibility provide the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. Persons in pastoral roles sometimes violate the trust given to them by the abuse of their power. Sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust.

This Policy Statement of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference deals with the specific abuse of power by those in pastoral ministry who engage in sexual misconduct. The intent of this Policy Statement is to provide for the safety of parishioners and others, such as staff, to ensure a protective climate, protect the special covenantal relationship between pastors and those to whom they minister, and ensure the health and authenticity of clergy persons in pastoral ministries.

Therefore, The Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church declares that sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual abuse are sins against God and other persons and will not be tolerate or condone these behaviors.

The Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference is committed to providing a hospitable environment in which persons are treated with courtesy, respect, and dignity and in which people at all times know that their church is a safe place to go. It is our hope that the existence of this declaration, as well as procedures for handling allegations, will act as a deterrent against inappropriate behavior.

Ethically and legally, it is our responsibility to ensure that the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference has mechanisms to appropriately protect both the accuser and the accused in matters of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual abuse.

Therefore, the Bishop and the Cabinet of The Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference will adhere to the current Book of Discipline procedures for clergy, diaconal ministers, and laity, and will provide guidance for Annual Conference agencies, districts, and local churches in cases of sexual misconduct, and sexual abuse.

The Bishop and the Cabinet of The Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference are committed to assisting United Methodists to understand the issues of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual abuse by providing educational resources and opportunities.

Copies of this policy shall be made available in public areas of local churches, agencies and institutions of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Procedures followed by the Bishop and Cabinet can be found in the current Book of Discipline.

## **B. Theological Reflections**

Our relationship with and knowledge of God guides and illuminates our reflections on pastoral behavior and sexual misconduct. Some of these reflections are: God created us as embodied sexual beings, male and female; there is no dichotomy between body and spirit --- ourselves are not separate from our bodies (Genesis 2:18-25).

God calls us to honor the integrity of our neighbors, and their authority over their own personhood (Deuteronomy 22:25-27).

God calls us into covenant with each other within the family of God (Deuteronomy 14:1- 2; Ephesians 4:14-16). God, through the Church, calls pastors to witness to the preciousness of bodies, our own and others, and to declare that each person is unique and of divine worth (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

God's grace, freely given through Jesus Christ, calls us to be channels of grace, not exploitation, and to be agents of healing and redemption. In light of these understandings, when we honor the complete integrity of another, we honor and remember the Body of Christ.

United Methodists believe and proclaim that all persons are created equal by God. God values human life, intending all men, women, and children to have worth and dignity in all relationships with God and others.

We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the Church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. (*Paragraph 65.G., p.88, 1996 The Book of Discipline*).

Sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and/or sexual abuse are violations of an individual's integrity. In the creation stories and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we affirm that we are created in the image and likeness of God. To harass or abuse another person sexually is to deny that value. This is a sin against God and other persons.

The *1992 Book of Resolutions* states on pages 447-449 the United Methodist position of sexual harassment in the church: All human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. From the beginning, God intended us to live out our equality in relation with one another. Yet, in our human brokenness, we have given greater value and power to men than to women. Jesus was sent into this world that we might experience whole relationships with each other and God. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28, RSV). Still both the church and the society condone and ignore personal and institutional abuse of women.

Sexual harassment has been documented in United Methodist churches, agencies and institutions, including seminaries . . . . It is clear from currently available data that the Church suffers from the sin of sexual harassment in ways, which mirror the society . . . . The Christian community has a responsibility to deal resolutely with the issue of sexual harassment. It demeans and destroys the dignity of the victim.

Sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or sexual abuse are violations of the integrity of The Body of Christ. Scripture specifically states that we are one connected body in Christ, created equally. Where one part of the body is injured, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, the entire body is rendered less than God’s intended potential wholeness.

We believe in justice for all persons. Sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse are dehumanizing by lack of respect and the unjust use of status and power and are sinful behaviors that violate the teachings of the Church. These affirmations grow out of our life together within the covenant community.

### **C. Definition of Sexual Misconduct and Statute of Limitations**

1. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of power through sexual contact or activity, not limited to sexual intercourse, in which a clergy person violates the free choice, or abuses the vulnerability of a parishioner (adult or minor), client, church staff person, colleague, or any other person to whom the clergy person has a professional relationship in his or her ministry. Sexual misconduct may take several forms, including sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse.
2. Sexual harassment is any attempt in an employment setting by one staff person to coerce another staff person into a sexual relationship, or to subject a staff person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply. “It is described as any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, which is perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive.” (1988 Book of Resolutions, p. 375). Harassment may involve a wider

range of behaviors from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship in the workplace rather than as an exclusively sexual issue.

3. Gender harassment exists when the workplace environment is charged with sexual bias. Gender harassment may include the belittling discrediting of people through sexual jokes or ridicule, gestures, remarks, or other activities which create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive climate. This environment is also viewed as sexual discrimination.

4. Sexual abuse is a sexual invasion of the body and/or mind by force. Sexual abuse may be: rape, sexual assault, incest, indecent exposure, statutory rape, involuntary or voluntary sexual intercourse with a child, promotion of prostitution, pornography with children, indecent assault, and aggravated indent assault. Sexual abuse is also an internal assault, a deliberate violation of emotional integrity, and a hostile, degrading act of violence.

5. Sexual misconduct breaks the sacred trust inherent in Licensing and Ordination. Any such sexual misconduct by a clergyperson --- as well as child abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment --- is a chargeable offense. All clergypersons shall be responsible for their own behavior.

6. The statute of limitations is defined by the current Book of Discipline.

#### **D. Definition of “Complainant”, “Respondent”, and “Victim”**

1. Complainant: In this Policy statement a “complainant” is understood to be a person who submits a written and signed complaint.

2. Respondent: A clergyperson against whom a complaint of sexual misconduct has been filed shall be known as the “respondent”.

3. Victim: While the complainant may also be an alleged victim, the Policy does not assume that the complainant is the actual victim. The term “victim” will be used in cases where either the respondent makes confession of alleged sexual misconduct or where the respondent is proven guilty.

#### **E. Standards for Clergy Conduct**

The following are standards, which underline this Policy Statement and its definition of sexual misconduct by clergypersons:

1. Clergypersons are responsible for avoiding sexual misconduct by establishing and maintaining appropriate personal and social boundaries in all interpersonal relationships.
2. Clergypersons are responsible for their conduct regarding emotional, spiritual, and physical protection of all persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Breach of this protective relationship is unethical and abusive even when sexual activities are initiated by the person(s) to whom the pastor is ministering. Because of the imbalance of power and trust in such a relationship, the person(s) being ministered to by the clergy should be presumed to be unable to give meaningful consent to any sexual activity.
3. Because clergypersons often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or personally vulnerable, it is imperative that clergypersons:
  - a. be as psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy as possible at all times;
  - b. seek adequate preparation and education for helping those individuals under their care and making appropriate referrals; and
  - c. seek continued supervision to deal with the inherent risk caused by dependency and/or transference between the parties.

**F. Responsibility to the Victim(s)**

1. To be a victim of sexual misconduct is to experience a devastating betrayal of trust. The victim has trusted that the power and the authority given to a clergyperson will be used for the well-being of all persons. In turning to a clergyperson, persons become vulnerable and trust that their vulnerability will be respected and not abused. When a clergyperson uses power to abuse and disrespect the trust and vulnerability of persons, the effects are painfully traumatic.
2. When sexual misconduct occurs, there could be many victims: the person(s) who has been abused, the spouses and families of the abused person(s), the spouse and family of the respondent(s), and the congregations and the larger community surrounding them. While all these victims are not addressed by current disciplinary procedures of the United Methodist Church, many could be hurt when sexual misconduct occurs. The Committee on Response Teams to Sexual Misconduct of the Conference will be available to provide assistance for the complainant(s) as well as the appropriate intervention on behalf of the congregation(s) or the larger community (see Section 1.3).
3. When the allegations of sexual misconduct are made against a pastor, the conference shall attempt to be sensitive to the complainant(s) during the time of investigation and through the season of healing. By the same token justice for the respondent(s) will also be maintained.

## **G. Expectations of the Covenantal Relationship of Clergypersons**

All clergypersons are bound in a covenant of mutual respect and responsibility, including a call to exemplary living, which incarnates the Gospel:

1. Because of this covenant with the church, which pastors make upon their ordination or through licensing, clergy are called to remain faithful to the Church by not ignoring knowledge of sexual misconduct by other clergypersons:
  - a. “knowledge of sexual misconduct” is understood to be specific information, not suggestions, rumors, or innuendoes.
  - b. this Policy Statement shall not be understood as granting other clergypersons permission to go searching for such information.
2. The effects of sexual misconduct by a clergyperson are also felt by both pastoral colleagues and the laity within the Conference. Whenever someone acts in sexually inappropriate ways, all of us experience hurt and grief over the breaking of the special covenantal relationship between the clergy and parishioners.

**H. Expectations of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations** (see the current Book of Discipline).

**I. Suspension of Clergypersons Accused of Sexual Misconduct** (*see the current Book of Discipline*).

## **J. Breaking the Silence**

Breaking the silence when sexual misconduct has occurred or is alleged to have occurred has the power to release persons, from the bondage of secrecy, denial, and guilt that results from sexual misconduct. When bringing incidents of pastoral sexual misconduct to the attention of proper authorities, the greatest possible care shall be taken to assure that the least possible additional harm is done to the complainant(s) and/or victim(s), the respondent(s), and the congregation(s). Procedures will be followed strictly and carefully with respect for both the complainant(s) and the respondent. Breaking the silence of sexual misconduct will not jeopardize confidentiality.

## **K. Resolution and/or Reconciliation**

1. Reconciliation and Rehabilitation in Cases Where Sexual Misconduct Has Occurred.

Clergypersons, like members of any profession, must be subject to discipline if they have not adhered to the professional standards they are expected to follow. It is important in this regard to distinguish the concept of “discipline” from the concept of “forgiveness.” As the Body of Christ, the Church proclaims God’s forgiveness to all who have sinned and who ask for forgiveness. A clergyperson involved in sexual misconduct receives this forgiveness like

anyone else. However, the fact that a clergy person is forgiven does not mean that the clergy person can avoid the consequences of actions amounting to professional misconduct.

2. Role of the Bishop and Cabinet (see the current Book of Discipline).
3. At the Bishop's determination, the Sexual Misconduct Response Team of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference may serve as the trained, neutral team to provide support for all parties involved.

*Approved by the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference, June 10, 1997.  
For further information, contact the superintendent of your district.*

## Sabbath and Self-Care

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” -Mark 12:28-31-

Self-care is vital in order for any minister to be able to follow these two great commandments, and to lead others to do so. In order to do our best in following these greatest commandments we will need to have the following:

- A heart that is forgiven, refreshed, and ready to worship God
- A soul that is unburdened, strengthened and ready to serve God
- A mind that is renewed, and available to think on Godly things
- A healthy love and respect for ourselves, and our place in the ministry and kingdom of God
- The ability, energy, and time to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

When these things are absent, it is a challenge for us to be able to love God, to love neighbor, and/or to do ministry in any form. Proper self-care is vital to our ability to minister, and it sets a healthy standard for the congregation to follow.

Spiritual disciplines are a very important part of pastoral self-care. Any activity that brings us outside of ourselves and into the presence of God can be considered a spiritual discipline, and there is a wealth of writing on the topic.

Richard Foster writes a fantastic book titled *Celebration of Discipline* that walks the reader through 12 different spiritual disciplines: Prayer, Fasting, Meditation, Study, Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, Confession, Worship, Guidance, and Celebration. In our own tradition, John Wesley was a strong recommender of Bible Study and Fasting; and based on his writing and experience one could also argue adding Christian Conversation to the list.

No minister uses every spiritual discipline, but every minister should have one or two that they practice regularly. They will help us to do no harm, do good, and stay in connection with God; all are essential parts of our self-care.

A discipline that is strongly recommended by the conference is the discipline of Sabbath-Keeping. This takes its root from the fourth of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:8-11) and in its simplest form is a day with no work. Again, there is a wealth of writing here to explore. Also our connectional system provides you the opportunity to ask colleagues about the disciplines they practice or the Sabbath they keep. Here is what your class instructor does with his Sabbath day:

- I take my Sabbath on Saturday, because I have a family and we keep Sabbath together. Saturday is the one non-church day that everyone in my family has a consistent chance to be together.
- My definition of work is as follows:
  - Anything that has to do with the church
  - Anything that takes energy and exhausts, rather than something that gives energy and encourages/inspires.
  - Anything that my wife says is “work” for me, I trust her to help me in discerning what is and isn’t work.
  - Chores: we don’t usually do any cooking or housework on our Sabbath (which often means extra work the day before).
- This leaves me free to do quite a bit on my Sabbath, but it will always include the following things
  - A time of personal and family prayer and Scripture reading
  - Rest and recreation
  - Some dedicated family time
  - Some dedicated alone time
  - Connecting with either my extended family or a friend
  - Engaging in a hobby that I find fun/inspiring

God has called you into ministry, and that means taking good care of yourself. Find the spiritual discipline that helps you best connect with God. Keep a Sabbath. Take care of yourself physically. Be present for your family. Do these things and your heart, mind, and strength will be most ready to love God. Do these things and you will learn to care for and love the person who God made you to be, which will greatly inform how you love your neighbor. You will still find ample time to accomplish your ministry tasks, and your church will be blessed with a pastor who is healthy, and models good self-care. The Kingdom of Heaven will benefit from the work you put into self-care. Make it a priority and you will bless others through it.

## THE CONCLUSION

*From Anthony de Mello's Wellsprings. This is good as a guide in helping family members of the dying to address topics that are meaningful for the one dying as they talk.*

I imagine that today I am to die.

I ask for time to be alone and write down for my friends a sort of testament for which the points that follow could serve as chapter titles.

1. These things I have loved in life:  
Things I tasted,  
looked at,  
smelled,  
heard,  
touched.
2. These experiences I have cherished:
3. These ideas have brought me liberation:
4. These beliefs I have outgrown:
5. These convictions I have lived by:
6. These are the things I have lived for:
7. These insights I have gained in the school of life:  
insights into God,  
the world,  
human nature,  
Jesus Christ,  
love,  
religion,  
prayer.
8. These risks I took: these dangers I have courted:
9. These sufferings have seasoned me:
10. These lessons life has taught me:
11. These influences have shaped my life (persons, occupations, books, events):

12. These scripture texts have lit my path:
13. These things I regret about my life:
14. These are my life's achievements:
15. These persons are enshrined within my heart:
16. These are my unfulfilled desires:
17. I choose an ending for this document:  
a poem --- my own or someone else's;  
or a prayer;  
a sketch  
or a picture from a magazine;  
a scripture text;  
or anything that I judge would be an apt conclusion to my testament.