

1 **Justice Making: The Church Responds to Clergy Misconduct**

2 A Companion Piece to

3 *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure*

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6 **1. Introduction**

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8 A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership guides the work of conferences in granting  
9 credentials, and describes appropriate behavior for pastors. The Polity recognizes the  
10 complimentary roles of conference and congregation, the former in granting credentials, the latter  
11 as the employer responsible for job descriptions, hiring and termination. Both conferences and  
12 congregations have had to deal with the trauma of clergy misconduct. The church learned from  
13 experience and so, policies and procedures were adopted to deal with this issue.

14  
15 In 2000, a new procedural document, *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure*  
16 (“Misconduct Procedure”) was adopted by the denomination to replace the earlier document  
17 *Guidelines for Discipline*. However, unlike the earlier document, the *Misconduct Procedure*  
18 focused solely on a procedure for determining guilt or acquittal. This companion piece addresses  
19 support, accountability, discipline (at times referred to as sanction or sanctions), and other issues  
20 not addressed fully in the Misconduct Procedure.

21  
22 This companion piece complements the Misconduct Procedure by giving direction and counsel to  
23 Ministerial Leadership Committees and congregations as they deal with misconduct issues. Its  
24 goal is to provide justice-making for everyone concerned.

25  
26 **2. Why special policies and procedures are needed**

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28 Matthew 18:15-20 illustrates ways that an aggrieved person may be heard within the church.  
29 Depending on circumstances, some complaints against a credentialed leader may be raised and  
30 resolved with the relative informality of the procedure described in Matthew 18.

31  
32 Sometimes, however, a minister is accused of misconduct that calls into question the ability of the  
33 minister to lead with integrity. Then the Ministerial Leadership Committee that credentials the  
34 accused must learn the facts and take action, if warranted.

35  
36 The action of a Ministerial Leadership Committee is guided by the policy adopted by the  
37 denomination, namely:

38 *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy:* A minister shall not enter  
39 into sexualized behavior with a person with whom the minister  
40 has a professional relationship. A minister is always responsible  
41 to prevent such behavior. The conference sanctions (disciplines)  
42 ministers who engage in such misconduct.

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44 A further suggested Code of Sexual Ethics for Ministers is shown in Attachment 1.

45  
46 A serious offense occurs when a minister engages in sexualized behavior with one with whom the  
47 minister has a professional relationship. This offence is more than just a sexual offense. A  
48 minister’s credentials confer authority and access. Persons seek the counsel of ministers in times  
49 of stress or crisis. A minister who engages in sexualized behavior within a professional  
50 relationship abuses the minister’s power and access. Examples of actions that a minister must  
51 avoid are shown in Attachment 2.

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A complainant should not be expected to go alone to an accused minister to complain of sexual misconduct, since the alleged misconduct also involves an abuse of power. A complainant who proceeds alone or without a more formal procedure could be at risk of further abuse. In Matthew 25:31-46, the church is commissioned to hear cries of the powerless. The church is called to hear complainants in a setting that affords safety.

The church also must provide accused ministers with a safe place for facts to be determined when an allegation is made. Justice and compassion are due both a complainant and an accused. The church has struggled especially with fact finding about complaints of ministerial sexual misconduct. Therefore the Misconduct Procedure provides for these steps to address a complaint: (See Procedure document for more detail.)

- *Investigation* and report to Ministerial Leadership Committee.
- *Ministerial Leadership Committee may bring charge of misconduct.*
- *Response* by accused.
- *Fact-finding meeting* conducted by Ministerial Leadership Committee’s investigators.
- *Fact-finding report* to Ministerial Leadership Committee.
- *Judgment* by Ministerial Leadership Committee.
- *Sanctions/Disciplines* (if guilty) by Ministerial Leadership Committee.

Because the Misconduct Procedure addresses complaints against ministers, it may need to be adapted for complaints against other leaders (see below). In all cases, those who are responsible for fact-finding must determine whether the accused is serving an organization with a grievance procedure or some other procedure that must or could be followed to respond to a complaint.

Use of the Misconduct Procedure is not limited, however, to complaints that allege sexual misconduct. The Misconduct Procedure may provide a helpful framework for any complaint of ministerial misconduct that may be too complex to resolve through the more informal steps described in Matthew 18.

When a complaint of misconduct is raised, the church must resist the temptation to avoid negative publicity. Confronting an accused minister with a complaint and with disciplinary action, when warranted, is a pastoral act of the church. If wrongdoing has occurred, confronting it may avoid a recurrence. Confronting wrongdoing also allows for the possibility of repentance and God’s healing gift, both for the guilty as well as any possible victims. In working for God’s justice the church shares God’s grace.

102 **3. Definitions (See Misconduct Policy for fuller list of definitions)**  
103

104 *Finding:* A determination of whether it is more likely than not that a pastor engaged in alleged  
105 misconduct. This factual determination is the basis for the Ministerial Leadership Committee's  
106 determination of guilt or acquittal of the accused.  
107

108 *Support person:* A person appointed by the Ministerial Leadership Committee, in consultation  
109 with the complainant or the accused, to make sure that person understands the process and is kept  
110 informed and treated fairly in the process. The support person is not an advocate to argue on  
111 behalf of anyone.  
112

113 *Accountability group:* A group formed by the Ministerial Leadership Committee to walk with a  
114 person found guilty of misconduct, monitoring compliance with disciplines.  
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116  
117 **4. Support: During and After the Process**  
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119 When misconduct is alleged, families, congregations, and others may need support. Leaders of  
120 the conference and congregation should insure that assistance and support are provided. Do not  
121 assume that assistance is not needed if not asked for. Congregations particularly, may not ask for  
122 the assistance they need.  
123

124 *Complainant & Family:* Take steps to insure that practical, emotional counseling and pastoral  
125 support is available. A special support group might be formed to meet with the complainant  
126 while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. If persons who otherwise would provide pastoral  
127 care cannot do so, offer alternative pastoral support. Encourage personal counseling or therapy  
128 when that may be helpful. Assist in identifying competent counseling resources and obtaining  
129 financial assistance for counseling when needed. Listen to the spouse and family, and provide the  
130 love and compassion of the church.  
131

132 *Accused & Family:* While the reaction of the accused and the accused's family may vary greatly,  
133 it is important that supports be offered. If an accused denies the charges, the family may rally in  
134 denial as well. In such cases support may be refused. Or the family may turn against the  
135 accused, in which case supports for all may be needed. Whatever the response, appropriate steps  
136 should be taken to offer support systems for the accused and their family. This might include  
137 counseling resources, support groups, etc. Those involved should know that they are not  
138 abandoned by the church, even if they refuse help.  
139

140 *The Congregation:* The conference should assist a congregation in providing pastoral leadership  
141 and care when a minister is accused of misconduct. While a complaint is being investigated, it  
142 may be advisable for the governing body of the congregation (or other employer) to grant the  
143 accused a non-disciplinary leave of absence from all responsibilities as minister, without  
144 prejudice and with pay. This is particularly true if the allegations are of a sexual nature.  
145

146 A representative of the conference should explain to the congregation how the Misconduct  
147 Procedure is used to conduct an investigation, determine facts, impose disciplines when  
148 warranted, and permit appeal by the accused. It is important to keep the congregation informed  
149 of the relevant facts, in order to help preclude rumors.  
150

151 After a determination of guilt or acquittal has been made, a conference representative should meet  
152 with the leadership bodies of the congregation (and in most cases, with the congregation) to listen

153 to concerns and to describe next steps. Some individuals may support a guilty minister and call  
154 for Christian forgiveness so that life promptly can move on. Others may support a complainant  
155 and call for condemnation. Many may be angry because of what the congregation is  
156 experiencing. In this environment, conference representatives are called to exercise good  
157 judgment, and encourage others to do likewise. Outside facilitators, beyond the conference may  
158 also be helpful, since conference can also be seen as part of the issue.

159  
160 The effects of clergy misconduct on a congregation are deep and far-reaching. It is important that  
161 the conference provides appropriate ongoing care for a congregation, and recognizes the role that  
162 an “after-pastor” plays. Use of an intentional interim, and care in placing the next pastor, are  
163 important in the ongoing healing of a congregation following a case of clergy misconduct.

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## 166 **5. Dealing with Judgements**

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### 168 A. If the Judgement is Acquittal

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170 If a minister is acquitted of misconduct, the Ministerial Leadership Committee must recognize its  
171 responsibility to explain its action, and continue to offer support to all parties. The complainant,  
172 accused, and congregation should all be informed of the action taken, along with reasonable  
173 explanation. Ongoing support for the accused pastor and for the congregation may be necessary  
174 in order for fruitful ministry to be restored. Sensitivity to feelings, and ongoing communication  
175 with the complainant are also important.

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### 177 B. If the Judgement is Guilty

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179 If a minister is found guilty of misconduct, the credentialing conference may discipline by  
180 reprimand, probation, suspension of privileges and duties, withdrawal of credentials, or other  
181 disciplinary action. These actions are described below. Before the Ministerial Leadership  
182 Committee imposes disciplines, a representative of the committee may need to consult with the  
183 congregation or other employer of the accused, since such disciplines may affect continuing  
184 employment. However, job continuation should not be a deciding factor in discipline.

185

186 1. *Reprimand.* Reprimand is a serious reproof of a minister. It follows a judgment  
187 of guilt of wrongdoing and the Ministerial Leadership Committee’s  
188 determination that the minister has accepted responsibility for the violation. The  
189 committee will need to determine if a reprimand is made public.

190

191 2. *Probation.* When the Ministerial Leadership Committee imposes probation, it  
192 identifies specific expectations and time limits. The committee may revise these  
193 expectations and time limits during the probationary period. During the  
194 probationary period, the committee may require restitution and may require the  
195 minister to undergo counseling, therapy, supervision and accountability to a  
196 group. Because of a conference minister’s broader responsibilities, a conference  
197 minister or other conference overseer shall not serve on an accountability group  
198 to which the minister is responsible. Before probation is terminated, the  
199 Ministerial Leadership Committee shall review the minister’s compliance and  
200 evaluate whether any other action should be taken regarding the minister’s  
201 credentials or service.

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When a conference Ministerial Leadership Committee has placed a minister on probation, the conference shall note such action in the ministerial registration records of the individual. The notation shall be “ordained probationary” or “OPR.” This notation shall be removed only if the Ministerial Leadership Committee specifically authorizes.

3. *Suspension.* Credentials may be suspended if the Ministerial Leadership Committee determines that a minister has not taken appropriate responsibility for wrongdoing or believes that the minister should make restitution or take other action before functioning as a minister. During suspension, a minister may be required to participate in counseling, therapy, accountability to a group, and professional psychological assessment. When the committee deems it appropriate, suspension shall not end until the committee has received reports that the committee deems satisfactory from a counselor or therapist and from an accountability group. Suspension causes the ministerial credential to be inactive and a minister is not “ordained in good standing” while a suspension is in effect.

Only when the Ministerial Leadership Committee informs a minister that a period of suspension has ended may the minister again function as a credentialed minister.

During suspension, a minister shall be granted a leave of absence from all ministerial positions. While suspended, a minister shall not engage in any ministerial action representing any congregation or the broader Mennonite Church. The minister shall not preach, teach, lead events such as baptism, serve the Lord’s supper or provide pastoral care while suspended.

Suspension shall not last longer than two years. At the conclusion of suspension, credentials shall be reinstated or withdrawn by the Ministerial Leadership Committee.

When the Ministerial Leadership Committee has suspended a minister, the committee shall note such action on the ministerial registration records of the individual. The notation shall be “ordained suspended” or “OSU.” This notation shall be removed only if the Ministerial Leadership Committee specifically authorizes.

4. *Withdrawal of credentials.* The Ministerial Leadership Committee may withdraw credentials if it determines that a guilty individual is not suitable to function as a minister. Such withdrawal requires termination of ministerial employment. If the minister had a role in the broader church beyond the conference, the committee shall describe what are acceptable and unacceptable activities and responsibilities for the individual in the future.

A minister whose credentials are withdrawn shall not engage in any ministerial actions involving a local congregation or the broader church. Such an individual shall not preach, teach, lead in events such as baptism or the Lord’s supper or provide pastoral care. Such an individual continues to be subject to the authority of the Ministerial Leadership Committee.

253 When ministerial credentials are withdrawn, such action shall be noted on the  
254 ministerial registration records of the individual. The notation shall be  
255 “ordained/withdrawn” or “OWI.” This notation shall never be removed from the  
256 ministerial registration record of the individual. Only a new ordination could  
257 grant ministerial credentials to a person from whom ministerial credentials have  
258 been withdrawn.

259  
260 5. *Prohibition from acting as a minister in the conference.* If the credentials of a  
261 guilty minister were not granted or authorized by the conference of the  
262 Ministerial Leadership Committee, the committee may, nevertheless, prohibit the  
263 minister from engaging in any ministerial activities within the conference. This  
264 could be the case if credentials are held by another denomination or credentialing  
265 body.

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267 6. *Other disciplinary action.* When appropriate, the Ministerial Leadership  
268 Committee may impose disciplines not described above. In such cases, the  
269 committee shall explain to the minister why a particular discipline was chosen.

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## 271 **6. Accountability**

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273 If a minister is found guilty of misconduct, the conference generally should appoint an  
274 Accountability Committee. This committee should carry the ongoing task of monitoring  
275 compliance with the terms as laid out by the Ministerial Leadership Committee, to which it is  
276 responsible. Some of the possible requirements might be:

277

278 *Psychological evaluation.* Choose a therapist or counselor to meet with the minister,  
279 provide a psychological evaluation, and advise the accountability committee. Obtain  
280 the minister’s written consent to meet with this professional and authorize release to  
281 the accountability committee of all past and future evaluation and therapy reports.  
282 Reflect on whether the professional’s advice is consistent with the church’s  
283 disciplinary goals.

284

285 *Rehabilitation.* Rehabilitation may include treatment, steps to prevent relapse,  
286 relationship to the congregation, and (in some cases) relationship to complainants.

287

288 *Restitution.* Restitution to the victims might include payment for counseling, written  
289 statements, etc. This should be agreed upon in conversation with the victim, whether  
290 individuals or congregations.

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292 *Costs.* Determine how the church’s costs for legal counsel, psychological evaluation  
293 and therapy shall be handled.

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295 The Accountability Committee should meet with the minister at least monthly to monitor the  
296 minister’s compliance with discipline and to further understand the ongoing rehabilitation. The  
297 Accountability Committee should make periodic reports to the Ministerial Leadership Committee  
298 and make a final report stating whether and on what terms the Accountability Committee believes  
299 the minister is capable of effectively representing the church.

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304 **7. Communication**

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306 Since the church confers authority by credentialing ministers, it is also important that the church  
307 give appropriate information when discipline takes place. The Ministerial Leadership Committee  
308 shall be the sole entity responsible to give notice:

- 309  
310 A. To the accused, in writing by personal delivery, (if personal delivery is not possible  
311 then by certified mail, return receipt requested) informing of a judgement of guilt or  
312 acquittal, and of any disciplines, whether disciplines apply for a stated period or until  
313 further notice, when and how the minister shall report regarding compliance, and any  
314 other requirements imposed by the committee;  
315  
316 B. To the complainant, in writing by personal delivery (unless the complainant has  
317 waived the right of personal delivery, whereupon notice shall be given by certified  
318 mail, return receipt requested), informing of a judgement of guilt or acquittal;  
319  
320 C. To the congregation (or other employer) in writing to the leadership board, and by  
321 arranging for a representative of the Ministerial Leadership Committee to meet with  
322 the congregation promptly after the accused and the complainant have been  
323 informed;  
324  
325 D. To the Ministerial Leadership Office of Mennonite Church USA and/or Mennonite  
326 Church Canada, in case of guilt when disciplines have been imposed, by letter so  
327 stating, including a description of the nature of the misconduct. This should be in  
328 addition to the appropriate notation in the database.  
329  
330 E. To the broader church and public in a manner consistent with the “Meetinghouse  
331 Guidelines for Reporting Sexual Misconduct and Other Sensitive News Stories”  
332 developed by the editors of Mennonite periodicals. The Ministerial Leadership  
333 Committee should be thoroughly familiar with these Guidelines. The following  
334 should also be kept in mind.  
335  
336 1. Endeavor to protect the identity of the complainant, when requested  
337 2. Public statements should not be made to the congregation or the media unless  
338 specifically approved by an authorized representative of the Ministerial  
339 Leadership Committee  
340 3. Discourage parties directly involved from participating in media interviews.  
341 4. Limit disclosure of the details of alleged or determined misconduct, and  
342 report instead the findings of acquittal or guilt, including when guilty the  
343 nature of the misconduct.  
344

345 **8. Forgiveness and restoration to fellowship are goals.**

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347 Forgiveness and restoration to the fellowship of the church are always goals. Restoration to a  
348 ministerial leadership office in the church calls for additional discernment and does not  
349 necessarily follow confession and forgiveness. Furthermore, forgiveness will not always lead to a  
350 minister’s restored fellowship in the congregation where misconduct occurred.

351  
352 Restoration to a position of leadership should only be considered after a person has complied with  
353 the terms of their accountability plan. Even then, restoration should not be assumed or

354 guaranteed. Only if the Ministerial Leadership Committee has some assurance that behaviors will  
355 not be repeated should restoration to leadership be considered.

356  
357 If restoration to a leadership position is allowed, the Ministerial Leadership Committee may wish  
358 to set up additional accountability and support structures for a time in order to help the person's  
359 reentry into ministry, and to provide safeguards for all involved. These should be reviewed on a  
360 regular basis, and may be continued as needed and appropriate.

361  
362 **9. Record Keeping**

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364 Any actions taken in regards to discipline, and restoration, should be recorded in a minister's  
365 permanent file and noted in the database. While forgiveness and restoration are the goals, those  
366 actions do not negate the misconduct having taken place. If restored to ministry, a minister  
367 should disclose such disciplinary actions to any future employer. This is important for the  
368 ongoing integrity and accountability of all persons involved.

369  
370 In addition, a Secure Personnel File related to a specific case of misconduct should be assembled  
371 and kept in a secure place, either in the Conference office, the office of the Conference lawyer, or  
372 at the Ministerial Leadership Offices of Mennonite Church USA or Canada. This file should  
373 contain all relevant documents related to the investigation and judgement of the case and should  
374 be kept separate from general files. This file should be kept at least during the minister's lifetime  
375 and can only be accessed by request of a conference Ministerial Leadership Committee, or  
376 designated representative, if the case is reopened or if the minister involved faces other  
377 allegations of misconduct. Any other copies of information or documents not considered relevant  
378 should be destroyed.

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381 **10. Non-Sexual Misconduct**

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383 Misconduct can be alleged for other than sexual behaviors. A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial  
384 Leadership lists numerous other items that could be grounds for misconduct charges (Pg. 125).  
385 Since complainants in these cases may not be directly involved in the misconduct, it may be  
386 necessary to modify the procedures outlined in the Misconduct Procedure. A possible procedure  
387 is outlined below, recognizing that each case may provide different needs.

388  
389 A. *Investigation* and report to Ministerial Leadership Committee. Either the Ministerial  
390 Leadership Committee or an appointed group will determine if there is enough evidence  
391 to bring a formal charge.

392  
393 B. A *Charge* of misconduct may be brought by the Ministerial Leadership Committee.  
394 This charge should be specific and reference documents of the church that prohibit such  
395 actions. The charge should be presented to the accused in writing.

396  
397 C. *Response* by accused, in writing.

398  
399 D. *Fact-finding* conducted by Ministerial Leadership Committee or their appointed  
400 investigators. It is important to have clear documentation and rationale for the decisions  
401 made.

402  
403 E. *Fact-finding report* to Ministerial Leadership Committee.

404

405 F. *Judgement* by Ministerial Leadership Committee of either guilt or acquittal.

406

407 G. *Sanctions/Disciplines* (if guilty) by Ministerial Leadership Committee.

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409 In all this process, notification procedures and safeguards for fairness noted in the Misconduct  
410 Procedure should be followed as appropriate.

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### 413 **11. Non-Credentialed Leaders**

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415 We know that other leaders in the church are also capable of misconduct. Anyone in a position of  
416 authority, such as a SS teacher, deacon, or elder can misuse power to abuse someone. The  
417 procedures of Matthew 18 may serve to address certain issues, but when the misconduct involves  
418 misuse of power, such procedures may only serve to re-victimize the offended.

419

420 The process outlined here, and in the Misconduct Procedure document, can guide a congregation  
421 in dealing with such a case. However, most congregations will not have the experience or  
422 expertise to handle such cases on their own, and should call on conference representatives or  
423 other qualified outside persons to help in the process. Obviously it is important to follow clear  
424 procedures. While disciplines may be different for non-credentialed persons, clear guidelines for  
425 behavior and safeguards for potential victims must be in effect, particularly if the offense is of a  
426 sexual nature. If sexual abuse against children is involved, the church has a moral obligation, and  
427 possibly a legal obligation, to inform the proper authorities.

428

### 429 **12. Prevention**

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431 While it will be impossible to prevent all cases of misconduct, the church is becoming  
432 increasingly aware of steps to lessen the possibility of it occurring. Such steps are also important  
433 to lessen the likelihood of liability when such cases do occur.

434

435 A. *Policies and Procedures*: Just as it is important for denominations and conferences to  
436 have policies and procedures in place for dealing with misconduct, so congregations are  
437 increasingly realizing the importance of policies and procedures related to abuse issues.  
438 These serve as clear guidelines for staff and volunteers, and inform people of what to do  
439 if abuse is suspected.

440

441 B. *Assessment and Hiring*: It is becoming far more common for congregations and  
442 conferences to require screening processes. This is true for pastors, other hired staff, and  
443 even volunteers, particularly those working with children. These screening processes can  
444 include interviews, references, criminal record checks, and fingerprinting

445

446 C. *Training and Education*: All pastors should have some training regarding the issues  
447 of clergy misconduct. Some insurance companies are calling for such training, for all  
448 staff and volunteers, before they will issue liability insurance to cover misconduct or  
449 abuse. Likewise congregations will do well to be informed of the issues of abuse and  
450 systematically offer education to their members. Insurance companies and organizations  
451 listed in the bibliography are good sources of materials for education.

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454 **13. Bibliography and Resources**

455

456 While this is not an exhaustive list, the resources cited here have been helpful in preparing this  
457 document, or are helpful resources for dealing with issues raised.

458

459 **A. Resources**

460

461 Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence (CPSDV), 2400 North 45<sup>th</sup> St., Suite  
462 10, Seattle, WA [www.cpsdv.org](http://www.cpsdv.org)

463

464 Ed Kauffman, Conference Minister, Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Freeman, SD Ed has  
465 training from CPSDV to lead workshops on prevention of clergy misconduct, and is  
466 knowledgeable about other resources available.

467

468 Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute, St. Johns Abbey and University, Collegeville, MN 56321  
469 [www.osb.org/isti](http://www.osb.org/isti)

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471 Ministerial Leadership Offices, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada The  
472 denominational leadership offices have resources and can direct you to persons or material related  
473 to issues of abuse.

474

475 Numerous Insurance Companies, such as Guide One, offer materials related to abuse. Check  
476 with your liability carrier for information.

477

478 The Alban Institute, Suite 1250 west, 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814-3211  
479 [www.Alban.org](http://www.Alban.org)

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482 **B. Books & Periodicals**

483

484 Cooper-White, Pamela *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and The Church's Response*  
485 Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN

486

487 Fortune, Rev. Dr. Marie, ed. *Journal of Religion and Abuse*, Haworth Press, Binghamton, NY

488

489 Hammar, Richard R, Steven W. Klipowicz and James F. Cobble, Jr. *Reducing the Risk of Child*  
490 *Sexual Abuse in Your Church* Christian Ministry Resources, Matthews, NC 1993 Available in  
491 book, video and audiocassette.

492

493 Hopkins, Nancy Myer and Mark Laaser, ed. *Restoring the Soul of a Church* Alban Institute,  
494 Bethesda, MD 1995 A comprehensive look at issues surrounding clergy misconduct

495

496 Mennonite Central Committee has produced several packets of material related to issues of abuse  
497 and misconduct. Contact your regional office or the national office for more information.

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499 Swagman, Beth *Preventing Child Abuse: A Guide for Churches* CRC Publications, Grand  
500 Rapids, MI 1997 A practical guide from the Christian Reformed Church

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**Attachment 1**

**CODE OF SEXUAL ETHICS FOR MINISTERS**

1. Ministers are representatives of God and the church, and as such are to be agents of healing and redemption. They are aware that a minister’s sexual exploitation or abuse is an abuse of trust, an abuse of power and an abuse of the authority of a pastoral position. They accept their responsibility to define and maintain appropriate boundaries within their ministerial relationships.
2. Ministers are aware that their personal relationships and lives must also reflect healthy morals and sexuality. Spouse or child abuse, use of pornography, or other forms of immorality may also lead to discipline.
3. Ministers are aware that discipline for sexual misconduct and immorality involves both their ministerial credentials and their vocational status.
4. Ministers are aware of and willing to abide by church policies and disciplinary procedures to address sexual misconduct.
5. Ministers accept responsibility to call each other to account and to exercise biblical responsibility to confront colleagues concerning perceptions of inappropriate sexual relationships.
6. Ministers are aware of their calling as servants of God under the lordship of Jesus Christ, and from that they accept their responsibility for and accountability to people entrusted to their care.
7. Ministers accept the obligation to disclose information regarding previous sexual misconduct for which they have been called to account prior to formal candidacy for a new ministry position.

**As a minister of Jesus Christ and as a representative of the church within its office of ministry, I accept and subscribe to these affirmations.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

For a boarder treatment of Ethics in Ministry, refer to A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership, Section V., page 106ff.

## Attachment 2

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In 1995 the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church adopted a *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. In 1996 those denominations also published *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*. Refer to those documents for a description of the church's current ethical guidelines regarding sexuality.

A minister who engages in sexualized behavior within a professional relationship abuses the minister's power and authority. Within a professional relationship, a minister shall not permit sexualized behavior that includes actions such as the following.

- Unusual attention from a minister, including such things as gifts, frequent social telephone calls, letters, private visits or the maintenance of a special "spiritualized" partnership.
- Flirtatious propositions, talk or innuendo.
- Graphic or degrading comments about another person's appearance, dress or anatomy.
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
- Sexual jokes or offensive gestures.
- Intrusive sexual or other questions about the person's personal life.
- Explicit descriptions of a minister's own sexual experiences.
- Abuse of familiarities or diminutives such as "honey," "baby" or "dear."
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact such as touching, hugging, pinching, patting or kissing.
- Whistling or catcalls.
- Leering.