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ABSTRACT

PREVENTIVE STEPS FOR PASTORAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:
A SEMINAR FOR BRAZILIAN PASTORS IN THE
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

by

Samuel Ramos

Adviser: H. Peter Swanson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PREVENTIVE STEPS FOR PASTORAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:
A SEMINAR FOR BRAZILIAN PASTORS IN THE NORTH AMERICAN
DIVISION

Name of researcher: Samuel Ramos

Name and degree of faculty adviser: H. Peter Swanson, Ph.D.

Date completed: February 2004

Problem

In recent years sexual misconduct among clergyman has received an unprecedented public profile as victims have become increasingly willing to speak up and the media has disseminated the stories of clergy abuse. An increasing number of people have been willing to risk their personal reputation and go public with their stories. Effective ministry occurs only within a climate of trust and credibility; however, the ministry is increasingly losing its credibility in society. The goal of this study was to prepare, present, and evaluate a seminar

for Brazilian pastors in the North American Division, discussing the main reasons for a pastor's fall into sexual misconduct and the strategies to keep him from falling.

Method

This seminar deals with clergy sexual misconduct involving male pastors and female parishioners. This narrow focus does not exhaust the variety of misconduct currently present within the church, although all available statistics indicate that in the majority of cases males tend to be the perpetrators. The seminar was presented May 22-24, 2002, during the Brazilian pastors' meeting at Pine Springs Ranch, California. This seminar was attended by twenty-seven pastors and their wives.

Results

All pastors were shocked by the new understanding of this subject. They realized that people are twice as likely to be sexually exploited by the clergy than by secular therapists, and that between 20 and 39 percent of surveyed clergy reported sexual contact with parishioners. They strongly agreed that pastors must be very careful to avoid using pastoral power to take advantage of parishioners and that it is the pastor's responsibility to be alert to the likelihood that certain parishioners will be attracted to him. He must manage such situations in ways to protect the parishioners. They also recognized that extraordinary safeguards should be kept in place if pastors ever have to practice long-term, cross-gender counseling. Finally, the pastors recognized how important it is for every Seventh-day Adventist pastor to conform to the highest standards of moral conduct as a symbol of the Christian faith for people in the church and in the community at large.

Conclusions

In the light of responses from Seminar participants and in view of the findings in the literature, the following conclusions have been drawn. Colleges and seminaries should provide a course in ministerial ethics that includes a clear focus for understanding the dynamics of sexual misconduct. The church must be more proactive in addressing the issues of clergy sexual misconduct because the ministerial role places a pastor in a sexually vulnerable position. The pastor who does not understand his vulnerability is either naive or consciously courting danger. Finally, the church leaders should make efforts to train and prepare godly women to counsel women, as is advised in Ellen G. White's writings.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

PREVENTIVE STEPS FOR PASTORAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
A SEMINAR FOR BRAZILIAN PASTORS IN THE
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Samuel Ramos

February 2004

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A SEMINAR FOR BRAZILIAN PASTORS IN THE
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To Leila,
My faithful wife of thirty years,
whose excellence is beyond any human
treasure I possess, and whose heart
I completely trust (Prov 31:10-11)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Pastors are under great stress. Although Christians often have victory over sin and evil, difficulties do exist, and there are many wounded pastors. Pastors need to talk to each other about the problems in their lives. Some of them prefer not to talk about their weaknesses and personal struggles, but this is not the best solution. They need to open their hearts to seek healing for their wounds. No one can understand pastors' secret battles better than other pastors. But often open discussion is the last thing they are willing to try. Those who always help others often bury their own anxiety within their souls. Pastors sometimes fail because they would rather withdraw into themselves, than seek counsel from someone else. The ministry needs to pay attention to matters that are devastating church leaders. "The pastor who has a 'soul friend' is indeed blessed. . . . Pastors best understand the pastoral world and are the best human resource for support, correction, accountability, and encouragement to one another. Our competitiveness and isolation can prevent us from doing this, however."¹

¹Kenneth L. Swetland, *The Hidden World of the Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 12-13.

Statement of the Problem

Studies indicate that some 13 percent of North American pastors become involved in sexual misconduct.¹ In a survey of readers, sponsored by *Christianity Today*, of the 300 pastors who responded to a confidential survey, 23 percent said that while they had been in the local church ministry they had done something with someone other than their spouse that they felt was sexually inappropriate. Twelve percent of male clergy admitted that they had sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse and 18 percent of male clergy admitted that they had participated in other forms of sexual contact with someone other than their spouse, i.e., passionate kissing, fondling or mutual masturbation. Of this total, only 4 percent said they were found out.²

In 1990, Lloyd Rediger found that “approximately 10 percent of clergy (mostly male) have been or are engaged in sexual malfeasance. Another 15 percent are on the verge, waiting for an opportunity.”³ Based on the statistics provided, on the topic, one may conclude that between 20 and 39 percent of all the clergy in North America have been involved in some kind of sexual misconduct.⁴ The survey of pastors in *Leadership*

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Minister's Manual* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 54.

²Donald L. Totten, “Factors Related to Clergy Sexual Misconduct” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996), 3.

³G. Lloyd Rediger, *Ministry and Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 2.

⁴Jorge E. Rico, “A Seminar on the Dynamics, Prevention, and Legal Implications of Clergy Sexual Misconduct” (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 1997), 25.

magazine found that more than two-thirds of the pastors who were guilty of sexual misconduct had become involved with people from their congregation.¹

This study prepared a seminar on clergy sexual misconduct (CSM) for all Brazilian pastors in the North American Division (NAD). This seminar considered some of the practical ways in which the church and the pastor can take preventive steps regarding sexual misconduct. The main intent in this work was to let those who are trying to carry a burden alone know that God wants them to share their concern, and also to give hope and comfort for those who have fallen and to suggest how a pastor can protect his ministry from an affair. This study was primarily directed to ministers, but leaders of the local churches can also benefit from reading it because they are involved in the same ministry. Paul wrote:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. (2 Cor 1:3-7)

Justification for the Dissertation

Although no one seriously doubts that sexual sins have always been a problem for some pastors, current revelations about the extent of the problem has made it clear that it is a major, fast-spreading, and painful problem in the body of Christ.

¹John H. Armstrong, *Can Fallen Pastors Be Restored? The Church Response to Sexual Misconduct* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 20.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has an urgent imperative to help and to save fallen pastors as well as to train pastors how to avoid sexual misconduct.

Pastors are taught to help other people, but often they have no one to minister to their own inner struggles and they bury their burdens within their own souls. A seminar dealing with the sexual misconduct issue is a great opportunity for pastors to learn about the prevention of sexual misconduct and at the same time express their opinion about the problem through an anonymous questionnaire.

Fellow pastors may be the best human resource for support, correction, accountability, and encouragement to one another. This seminar intends to discover how pastors can help each other to avoid sexual misconduct.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation is limited to the study of the problem of clergy sexual misconduct among male pastors working within the confines of the United States of America. Its main concern is prevention within the context of Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist pastors working or studying in the North American Division. Many aspects of CSM may be difficult to study because the incident took place years ago and the circumstances have changed or because the pastor's personality or character may have changed. Sometimes pastors prefer to conceal their past life and they may decline to talk about CSM.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 states the problem, the

justification for the dissertation, the definition of terms, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. Chapter 3 presents the teachings of the Bible and of Ellen G. White on CSM. Chapter 4 discusses possible reasons for misconduct as presented in current literature. Chapter 5 describes the presentation of the seminar, “Preventive Steps for Pastoral Sexual Misconduct.” Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CLERGY MISCONDUCT

There is a considerable amount of literature on CSM. The authors have provided different descriptions of persons who have participated in sexual misconduct. The literature review presents many of the factors suggested by different authors as related to CSM. They review many characteristics from inside the pastor and many factors that act from outside the pastor to bring about sexual misconduct. These factors have been organized into three main divisions: Internal, Church, and Sociocultural.

Internal Factors

Early Life Trauma

N. Friberg and M. Laaser found that the etiology of CSM is complex, including early life trauma or neglect.

Often people have focused on the problem of clergy sexual misconduct as a matter of ethical boundary violations. We feel that offenders, particularly, come from families where their own sense of individual identity, and therefore their ability to respect their own personal boundaries and those of others, have been significantly impaired. . . . The developmental damage to an individual created by early life trauma creates an inability to experience love and nurture. Those who commit sexual misconduct are often starved for love. . . . Our experience with numerous male sex addicts would suggest that the act of soliciting prostitutes is often a desperate search for "the mother." Likewise, numerous conversations with female sex addicts would indicate that the affairs that they have had are a desperate search for "the father." One particular female addict claimed to us that in every one of the five hundred affairs she

had, she was hoping that she would find in a man the love and nurture that her father did not give her.¹

When Jesus talked to the woman at the well (John 4) he confronted a woman who had been involved with a number of men. He knew that this involvement was about a thirst for love.² He used this thirst to introduce her to “living water.” Friberg and Laaser say that it is an inherent part of human nature to search for love and connection with others. Our psychological development from infancy is built around that characteristic.³

P. Carnes, a well-known addictionologist, who specializes in sexual issues, has identified sex addicts as often coming from extreme family types, either those that neglect the emotional needs of the child, on the one hand, or invade the space and privacy of the child, on the other. Through a survey of 289 sexual addicts he discovered that 78 percent of them identified their families of origin as rigid. These families put high priority on doing things right, being judgmental, and disapproving of anything sexual. They were also disengaged (87 percent), with little care taken for the feelings of the child, easily developing a conditional love that fostered a strong sense of toxic shame and unworthiness.⁴ He notes that “these families operate with detachment and distance, with

¹Nils C. Friberg and Mark Laaser, *Before the Fall* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 32.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Patrick Carnes, *Don't Call It Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction* (New York: Bantam, 1991), 101.

low affirmation and approval, and with high levels of criticism and disapproval.”¹

In his doctoral research for Boston University, G. Benson found that all the subjects in his sample of clergy sexual offenders told stories of being emotionally abandoned by a parent or parent surrogate.²

The Need for Approval

The literature reveals that a struggle with self-esteem may have a strong influence on CSM. Grenz and Bell state that

The residue of a dysfunctional family of origin is most evident in the emotional scars, especially the low self-esteem or lack of self-worth. . . . These scars produce a lingering need for the attention, affection and approval denied in childhood.” These powerful, unmet needs affect how a pastor from a dysfunctional background deals with conflict, both in the church and in his personal and family life.³

Trull and Carter point out that “ministers are people before they are ministers. A positive self-concept and appropriate self-esteem are essential for a healthy, effective minister.”⁴ Many of Benson’s subjects had “feelings of abandonment during childhood, significant parental inattention, and other types of injuries to their self-esteem.”⁵ J. Balswick and J. Thoburn found that low self-esteem may correlate with the struggle that

¹Ibid.

²G. Benson, “Sexual Misconduct by Male Clergy with Adult Female Counselees: Systemic and Situational Themes”, (Ph. D. dissertation, Boston University, 1993), 91.

³Stanley J. Grenz and Roy D. Bell, *Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 49.

⁴Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Being a Good Minister in a Not-so-Good World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1993), 68.

⁵Benson, 91.

some pastors have with sexual misconduct.¹ Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith remind their readers that “persons called to the clergy profession live always in tension between two realities: their humanity, who they are and what they are, their best and their worst, their gifts and their limits, and the special demands of their calling.”² That tension can work on one’s self-esteem if it is not handled properly.

The Desire to Rescue

Robert Hemfelt, Frank Minirth, and Paul Meier state that two kinds of people enter caring services such as medicine, law enforcement, clergy, counseling, and social work: “those who are called by God and conscience to the work, and those who are driven by the hidden whip of codependency.”³ Being a codependent professional, however, carries a liability: one becomes a rescuer. “It may lead to the overwork and overinvolvement that characterize many pastors.”⁴ Hemfelt, Minirth, and Meier describe the situation: “The rescuer, encouraged to noble sacrifice at every hand, can struggle and work, care always about others, never be selfish. The rescuer is praised for rescuing.”⁵ But the downside of this is that rescuers never take a good look at what is going on inside

¹J. Balswick and J. Thoburn, “How Ministers Deal with Sexual Temptation,” *Pastoral Psychology* 39 (1991): 277-286.

²Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith, *Ethics in Ministry* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 97.

³Robert Hemfelt, Frank Minirth, and Paul Meier, *Love Is a Choice* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 165.

⁴Grenz and Bell, 50.

⁵Hemfelt, Minirth, and Meier, 165.

their own lives. According to Hemfelt, Minirth, and Meier the rescuer in effect is saying, ““By keeping my focus firmly on others I need not look, let alone focus, upon myself and my needs.’ Unmet needs, denial, pain, in short, the personal things that are unpleasant to deal with, get buried. Unfortunately, they do not fade. They fester.”¹

The Quest for Sexual Healing

P. L. Steinke suggests that unresolved childhood issues such as feelings of self-worth and the wounds of an emotionally distant, unavailable, unaffirming father can contribute to relationship problems.² Rutter says that the men who are the healers in forbidden-zone relationships often have as much a need to be healed through them as do their protégées. “I believe the search to heal a wounded sense of self is what underlies most destructive sexual behavior in men.”³

Sexual Addiction

Addiction and its attending corollary, sexual fantasy, are factors that lead a pastor to transgress the boundary of the forbidden zone. Fantasies are a common phenomenon and have a good role to play in human life, but there are several reasons to be concerned about fantasy. Rutter defines sexual fantasies as scenarios of a sexual

¹Ibid.

²P. L. Steinke, “Clergy Affairs,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 8 (1989): 56-62.

³Peter Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power-Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers, and Others-Betray Women’s Trust* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989), 61.

nature that we play and replay in our imaginations. Sexual fantasies represent what is going on in our inner world. "While having fantasies is completely natural, it is critically important for us to manage our sexual fantasies in ways that do not lead us to impose them upon others."¹ Rutter says that a person should not be condemned simply for having fantasies. In fact, he suggests that fantasy is such a central element in the psychological life of men in the American culture that it often "captures the man's interest more than the real woman who stands before him."² K. Lebacqz and R. G. Barton present several warning signals about sexual fantasies.

When I begin to think of that person as a potential sexual partner, not just a very dear friend, then that boundary has been crossed. When that person is in my thoughts inappropriately in intimacy with spouse or in daydream. If I sense heightened energy levels within. If I am seeking the parishioner out. Another warning indication is the desire to do more and see more of a parishioner than is actually necessary. If it begins to occupy/preoccupy me too much. When I find myself inclined toward making suggestive comments. If I am tempted to ask questions of a female counselee which would encourage her to give more sexually explicit details. The direction of their *thoughts* not simply physical response, is a warning signal for some pastors.³

Rutter says, "The wounds of men remain hidden behind a vast cloud of masculine erotic fantasy and their quest for healing usually takes the form of seeking sexual contact."⁴ Fantasy is an ambiguous practice. "At its best, it is a poor substitute for a healthy sexual relationship. At its worst, it can be destructive to marital sex and may

¹Peter Rutter, *Sex, Power, and Boundaries* (New York: Bantam, 1996), 16.

²Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 92.

³Karen Lebacqz and Ronald G. Barton, *Sex in the Parish* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1991), 58.

⁴Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 105.

open the door to unwholesome behavior, even sexual addiction.”¹ The ambiguity of fantasy should cause pastors to be cautious about their own involvement in this activity. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. *Christianity Today* reports that ministers apparently are more prone than their congregants to fantasize about having sex with someone other than their spouse. The survey of readers revealed that 38 percent of pastors fantasize once a month or more often, whereas 26 percent of laypersons engage in this activity.²

Midlife Crisis

Steinke found the majority of pastors involved in CSM were in the 35-50 age bracket.³ Brodsky affirms that the modal therapist, sexually involved with a patient, is middle-aged, and is typically about sixteen years older than the patient.⁴ Barnhouse cites some factors as contributors that may intensify the midlife crisis for clergymen: vocational confusion, stress and burnout, feelings that he is underpaid and under-appreciated, and the belief that the marriage which is being injured has long been seen as

¹Grenz and Bell, 58.

²Tim Stafford, “Great Sex: Reclaiming a Christian Sexual Ethic,” *Christianity Today*, October 2, 1987, 26.

³Steinke, 56-62.

⁴A. M. Brodsky, “Sex Between Patient and Therapist: Psychology’s Data and Response”, in *Sexual Exploitation in Professional Relationships*, ed. G. O. Gabbard (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1989), 15-25.

a miserable mistake.¹ L. H. Strasburger, L. Jorgenson, and P. Sutherland describe the perpetrator as older, narcissistic, in marital difficulty, disappointed in his career, and in the midst of a midlife crisis. "Lonely and vulnerable, he finds himself gradually sliding into overinvolvement with a patient. There is an illusion of relief and respite from life's problems."²

E. Goode describes the perpetrator:

This is what she does not know: The therapist has problems of his own. He is lonely, his children have left home, and in his eyes his wife is old and unappealing. To make matters worse, he is bored with his work, there are medical problems, and he is losing his sense of professional boundaries, but he doesn't know it yet.³

Although the midlife crisis has not been considered a normal event for all male pastors, there are many pastors that do experience a midlife crisis.⁴

Church and Professional Factors

Naivete

Naivete can come from a lack of training or a lack of experience. Pastors are usually trained in preaching and leadership, but, as Wayne Oates states, ministers, whatever their training, do not enjoy the privilege of deciding whether to counsel with

¹R. T. Barnhouse, *Clergy and the Sexual Revolution* (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1987), 34.

²L. H. Strasburger, L. Jorgenson, and P. Sutherland, "The Prevention of Psychoterapist Sexual Misconduct: Avoiding the Slippery Slope," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 46 (1992): 544-555.

³E. E. Goode, "The Ultimate Betrayal: When Sex Enters the Equation, Psychotherapy Is Over", *U.S. News and World Report* 108 (1990): 63.

⁴Totten, 64.

people or not. Their “choice is not between counseling and not counseling, but between counseling in a disciplined and skilled way and counseling in an undisciplined and unskilled way.”¹ Trull and Carter say that “whenever people come to you [the pastor] for help, you are in a counseling situation. Inevitably, people will bring their problems to their pastors for personal guidance and care.”² Most counselors are given training in understanding transference and countertransference. Ministers generally do not receive training in those areas, thus they are more vulnerable to them.³ J. Edelwich and A. Brodsky feel that insufficient training and experience constitute a major factor in the pastor’s vulnerability.⁴ G. Lloyd Rediger says that some pastors are not aware that certain overt or covert practices can contribute to a problem with sexual misconduct.⁵ Sustained work or counseling relationships create a common pattern of vulnerability. Some pastors believe that if they remain inspired, affairs will cease to occur, but spirituality alone cannot keep pastors from having affairs. Rediger says that pastors can set themselves up for affairs in many ways.

Most frequent are these: not investing in their primary intimate relationship; arranging house calls, meetings, and activities that set up or ignore sexual

¹Wayne Oates, “Editor’s Preface,” in *An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Broadman, 1959), vi.

²Trull and Carter, 111.

³Ibid., 83.

⁴J. Edelwich and A. Brodsky, “Sexual Dynamics of the Client-Counselor Relationship”, *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 1 (1984): 99-117.

⁵G. Lloyd Rediger, *Ministry and Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 46.

possibilities; allowing themselves to become exhausted or bored; paying inordinate attention to pornography; allowing themselves to develop and expand sexual fantasies; forgetting or ignoring spiritual and professional accountability and integrity; believing that if they love a person other than a spouse, they have no power to control this passion; believing that discovery, pain, and punishment for affairs happen only to other clergy; and believing that they are entitled to sexual gratification no matter how they have to get it.¹

Style

G. R. Schoener and J. Gonsiorek suggest a pastor's personal style may be faulty. They say that touch or self-disclosure may be consciously or unconsciously self-serving or used as a seductive technique in pastoral counseling.² Self-disclosure or hugs are often used with serious consequences.³ Edelwich and Brodsky reveal that warmth and caring may be rationalizations for CSM.⁴ C. M. Bates and A. Brodsky found that "therapists most likely to be involved with their patients sexually, treat patients differentially on the basis of age, sex, and attractiveness."⁵ Benson's research found pastors who believed their sexual behavior with clients was salvific or redemptive for them. The pastors

¹Ibid.

²G. R. Schoener and J. Gonsiorek, "Assessment and Development of Rehabilitation Plans for Counselors Who Have Sexually Exploited Their Clients," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 67 (1988): 227-232.

³Donald L. Totten, "Factors Related to Clergy Sexual Misconduct" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996), 27.

⁴Edelwich and Brodsky, 99-117.

⁵C. M. Bates and A. Brodsky, *Sex in the Therapy Hour: A Case of Professional Incest* (New York: Guilford, 1989), 134.

involved did not refer to the sexual misconduct as sin.¹ R. S. Schwartz stated:

“Therapists who have sex with patients feel that they do so in the best interest of the patient, to provide her (and it is usually a her) with a critical experience essential to development.”²

Pastoral Caring

The literature review indicated that clergy who touch are more likely to be involved in sexual activity. R. M. Gula argues: “How do we distinguish a good touch from a confusing and/ or bad touch? . . . In pastoral ministry, many find warrant for touching in the ministry of Jesus. Touching was the signature of his healing ministry.”³ The Bible gives support for the “laying on of hands” (Mark 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18), but pastors must discern between a confusing or bad touch and a therapeutic touch, and use discernment to interpret what is being communicated by touch given or received.⁴ Gula explains, “Just because Jesus touched does not mean that we have to do likewise. Jesus lived in a different era and culture. Each culture forms its own rules about ways to express ourselves.”⁵

¹Benson, 91.

²R. S. Schwartz, “A Psychiatrist’s View of Transference and Countertransference in the Pastoral Relationship,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 43 (1989): 45.

³Richard M. Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* (New York: Paulist, 1996), 96, 97.

⁴Totten, 29, 30.

⁵Gula, 97.

C. Smith suggests that the pastor's actions communicate to people what God is like. If pastors are "cold and unresponsive," people will think God is cold and unresponsive.¹ Gula declares:

I have talked with many pastoral ministers who are quite clear about how easy it is to cross from the good touch of pastoral caring, that is received as affirming and supportive, to a confusing touch that makes the receiver feel in conflict and uncomfortable, or to a bad touch, which is experienced as manipulative, coercive, and frightening. But when I press for some guideline that helps them to determine when to hug or not to hug, they are less clear. They rely on common sense, or pastoral instinct. But I must remind them that common sense is not so common and not everyone's pastoral instinct may be as sharp as theirs. We need a principle which expresses the wisdom in their instinct and practice. . . . The principle is this, in relationships of unequal power, preference must be given to the perspective and judgement of the less powerful.²

Studies regarding touch reveal that touch has power implications of which the counselor must be aware.³ E. Fitzpatrick and C. Cornish declare that male counselors have no idea of the effect that physical contact can have on a woman. "If what I hear from my counselees is any indication of the general reaction to such physical contact, the impact is usually harmful to the emotional state of the woman being counseled"⁴

¹C. Smith, "Treating Casualties of the Revolution," *Leadership* 4 (1988):135.

²Gula, 101.

³B. G. Willison and R. L. Masson, "The Role of Touch in Therapy: An Adjunct to Communication," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 64 (1986): 497-500.

⁴Elyse Fitzpatrick and Carol Cornish, *Women Helping Women* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997), 93.

The Minister's Counseling

Another important counseling issue has to do with counseling persons of the opposite sex. Trull and Carter suggest that many ministers without specialized training or clinical experience will not feel comfortable with long-term counseling and should refer persons needing counseling. The minister's counseling should be confined to the area of relationships.¹

G. R. Schoener² and J. Marmor³ suggest long-term counseling is more likely to become sexual. L. Mowday observes,

To assume that all is well because a man and women are not touching each other physically can be overly simplistic. . . . Because we tend to say that nothing is going on when there is no physical contact, we may feel safe because we think we are still walking the road of obedience — when we are really not walking obediently at all.⁴

Fitzpatrick and Cornish suggest that instead of working at the very edge of where right meets wrong, we need to be asking ourselves the following:

Is cross-gender, long-term individual counseling wise? The Scriptures give no commands either positive or negative concerning cross-gender counseling in and of itself. On that basis, some people say there is nothing inherently wrong with it. But

¹Trull and Carter, 111.

²G. R. Schoener, "Supervision of Therapists Who Have Sexually Exploited Clients," in *Psychotherapists' Sexual Involvement With Clients* (Minneapolis: Walk In Counseling Center, 1988), 435-446.

³J. Marmor, "Sexual Acting-Out in Psychotherapy," *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 32 (1972): 3-8.

⁴Lois Mowday, *The Snare: Avoiding Emotional and Sexual Entanglements* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 99-100.

to defend this kind of counseling by saying there is nothing wrong with it ignores the crucial question: Is it wise?¹

Transference and Self-Disclosure

Another reason for frequent sexual problems is that many pastors who counsel people do not understand the concept of transference and how to deal with it. R. A. Blackmon and A. D. Hart define transference as "the process in which people project their own needs onto an idealized figure. Such transference can be 'positive' (affection, warmth, and so on) or 'negative' (anger, rejections, and so on)."² Transference often involves dependency, romantic feelings, hostility feelings, and ambivalence about authority. These feelings occur because of the role, not because of the personal attractiveness or qualities of the minister.³

In pastoral counseling countertransference can also occur. Blackmon and Hart explain as follows:

This is the tendency for the minister to project his or her own unmet needs on someone else, which can contribute to acting out sexual feelings. While marital dissatisfaction does not always explain ministerial sexual impropriety, it does make the minister more susceptible.⁴

The point where transference or countertransference occurs becomes a critical time for the counselee. From this point, the transference or countertransference can either

¹Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 94.

²Richard A. Blackmon and Archibald D. Hart, *Clergy Assessment and Career Development* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 40.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

be interpreted and used to promote health or it can be abused and lead to sexual misconduct.¹

The Forbidden Fruit

The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence and some people always seem to want what they do not have. Sex can be incredibly intense and exciting when it is decidedly forbidden. For men, sexuality is often most intense when it is most forbidden. Rutter says that men may experience an intoxication when a forbidden woman's sexuality becomes available.²

The Lack of Good Supervision

Benson's study found that fallen pastors had few if any friends or supervisors with whom they could share feelings.³ Totten says that "proper supervision gives clergy a chance to express their emotions, temptations, and techniques, in confidence, to someone they respect, who knows the pitfalls, and who will lovingly correct errors and give good guidance."⁴

Men's Envy of Forbidden Sex

Rutter says, "As I discovered through my own experiences with my former

¹Totten, 31.

²Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 21.

³Totten, 40.

⁴Ibid.

mentor, a key element in the perpetuation of sexual abuse by professional men is the public silence of their colleagues.”¹ Rutter concludes that “(1) public silence by men about their colleagues’ sexual misconduct amounts to tacit approval of this misconduct, and (2) the silence is based on the widespread envy that is aroused in men when they hear of their colleagues’ sexual exploits.”²

The Pastor’s Power

Rutter found that 96 percent of sexual exploitation by professionals occurs between a man in power and a woman under his care. A pastor’s power of influence is linked to the role of a spiritual professional.³ Grenz and Bell say: “A minister has the ability to affect the attitudes and behavior of others without the use of overt physical force. This special power of influence is invested in pastors by those to whom they minister.”⁴ Cooper-White suggests that CSM is not primarily a matter of sex or sexuality but of power and control.⁵ Totten adds that many clergy enter into an intimate relationship because of the power differential and use sex to reinforce and heighten the intensity of that power.⁶

¹Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 62.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 20.

⁴Grenz and Bell, 88.

⁵Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church’s Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 126-131.

⁶Totten, 74-81.

In no aspect of human existence are we more vulnerable than in the sexual dimension. Grenz and Bell declare:

It is in sexual relationships that our fragility, insecurity and need to feel accepted, which often lie buried deep within ourselves, come to the surface. In a nurturing relationship, our vulnerability, including its sexual dimension, can open the way for God to foster growth within us. However, when someone to whom we entrusted our vulnerability takes advantage of his power over us for personal gain, we receive wounds that go deep into our being.¹

Rutter declares in no uncertain terms that

any sexual behavior by a man in power within what I define as the forbidden zone is inherently exploitative of a woman's trust. Because he is the keeper of that trust, it is the man's responsibility, no matter what the level of provocation or apparent consent by the woman, to assure that sexual behavior does not take place.²

Pastoral Freedom

Pastors are permitted a kind of intimacy that those in other roles might not be. Many pastors think that the role of pastor gives them more access and more freedom in relating to parishioners than they would otherwise have. Lebacqz and Barton agree that part of the pastoral role fosters a kind of intimacy between pastor and parishioner.³ Marie M. Fortune puts it, "The pastoral role by its very nature gives the pastor access to people's lives on a very immediate and intimate level."⁴

This intimacy in some ways means more freedom for pastors, more access to

¹Grenz and Bell, 90.

²Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 21.

³Lebacqz and Barton, 100.

⁴Marie M. Fortune, *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 42.

people, an ability to hug or kiss or provide friendly physical gestures, to incarnate and symbolize their caring.¹ Rediger defines closeness as “being able to see, touch, and experience each other’s presence.”² If intimacy means closeness, then the pastoral role is intended to permit deep intimacy, for the pastor has access to the core of the other person, his or her soul.³ This very access to intimacy creates problems and can be easily abused. Dangers are perceived from both sides: “On the one hand, the pastor can easily abuse the intimate setting. . . . On the other hand, the parishioner may misread pastoral signals and think that an offer of human caring is an offer of sexual interest.”⁴

Sexual Contact and Mutual Consent

Contemporary authors deny that mutual consent is possible in a relationship involving a minister and a congregant. They say that the pastor-congregant role excludes the possibility of mutual consent because of its inherent inequality.⁵ Fortune explains that meaningful consent “requires full knowledge and the power to say ‘no’.”⁶ Mutual consent necessitates that the two persons meet in a situation of equality. “But given the inherent and ascribed power of the pastorate and the congregant’s state of vulnerability,

¹Lebacqz and Barton, 100-101.

²Rediger, *Ministry and Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care*, 138.

³Lebacqz and Barton, 101.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Grenz and Bell, 93.

⁶Marie M. Fortune, *Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin* (New York: Pilgrim, 1983), 110.

the pastor-congregant relationship entails an imbalance of power.”¹

Education

Cooper-White says that the training of seminarians in professional ethics has been woefully lacking in most ministers’ educations. Only recently has the issue of professional boundaries been included in the training of clergy in most institutions, or in books for the clergy.² “Most mentions of sexual ethics have focused exclusively on sexual morality, not power and responsibility. In some cases, training has emphasized overcoming temptation and learning to resist feminine wiles.”³ Lack of training has been, in some cases, compounded by confusion in recent decades about sexual norms.

Burnout

Balswick and Thoburn feel hard-driving clergy seem to be particularly prone to affairs.⁴ These hard working pastors are described as working late and avoiding going home, keeping unpredictable hours, not taking days off, not including their spouse in activities, and counseling more than ten hours a week.⁵ All pastors need to alert themselves to the possibility of clergy burnout and find ways not only to avoid it but to

¹Grenz and Bell, 93.

²Cooper-White, 136.

³Ibid.

⁴Balswick and Thoburn, 277-286.

⁵R. T. Brock and H. C. Lukens, “Affair Prevention in the Ministry,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 8 (1989): 44-45.

enrich their living and ministry. Rediger gives the Burnout Formula: "Living beyond your limits. When there is a sustained energy deficit, burnout is possible." The Burnout Slogan is: "Try harder."¹

The Church as the Family of God

The church is frequently referred to as the family of God. Jesus referred to his followers as his brothers and to God as his parent. Fortune notes:

This image suggests the positive parallels of trust, intimacy, caring, commitment, and respect, which should be the bases of human family life. . . . The pastor's role is clearly defined in terms of responsibility to provide for the needs of the congregation; this role carries with it the assumption of trustworthiness. Clergy, whether they like or not, are in a role of authority in relation to the laity, just as the parent is in a role of authority in relation to the child. This is not to suggest that clergy are to play a parental figure to the childlike laity, but rather to acknowledge that the clergy-lay relationship in the church is not a peer relationship. Either role of parent or pastor can be misused. Like a parent with children, the pastor may experience sexual attraction to members of the congregation or to counselees, or may be approached by a member who is attracted to him or her. The responsible pastor does not respond to these attractions by engaging in sexual activity with the parishioner, but instead seeks to guide and direct with the best interest of the parishioner in mind. When the irresponsible pastor does engage in sexual activity with parishioners, the result is incest in the church family; the parallels to incestuous abuse are disturbing.²

Fortune explains that none of the women of the First Church would have become involved with their pastor had he not been their minister. Their guard was down and he used that to his advantage.³ Pastors are definitely different from other professionals. The pastor has a different work situation. Totten says:

¹G. Lloyd Rediger, *Coping with Clergy Burnout* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1982), 11.

²Fortune, *Is Nothing Sacred?* 103.

³Ibid., 103, 104.

Clergy are unique in that they are expected to abstain from sexual misconduct for both ethical and spiritual reasons. When pastors fall, some feel it represents a loss in spiritual warfare, Satan's constant attempt to discredit the church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Second, while secular therapists work with people's psyches, the pastor works with the spirit of the person, with what is closest to the person's core.¹

The social situation for ministers is different from that of therapists. Totten explains that pastors see their flock in many different situations, in church, at home, in bedrooms, in the hospital, at funeral homes. "People may attempt to gain favor and act differently because, while they go alone to see other professionals, they are often in groups when they meet the pastor."² Lebacqz and Barton talk about a pastor who noted that some social activities such as "flirting" and a kind of "courting" behavior are common in church. People usually dress their best, try to look their best, and tend to be on their best behavior. Thus, he was aware of sexual dynamics in the church, but was unsure how to classify them.³

Sociocultural and Marriage Factors

Sociocultural Beliefs

Cultural beliefs are important as an environmental dimension because of the way they define attitudes about men, women, relationships, roles, power, and sexuality. These attitudes will affect the way the people behave toward each other, including respecting each other's integrity and boundaries. Friberg and Laaser explain:

¹Totten, 82.

²Ibid., 83.

³Lebacqz and Barton, 23.

Culturally and theologically defined attitudes and beliefs will also affect how people symbolize love, sex and power. A pastor, for example, might admit to having a "mutual affair" with a member of his congregation and that this included "making love" to her. This pastor may seek to justify the relationship by believing he really cared for the woman. However, current ethical and legal understanding is that this pastor used his superior emotional and spiritual power to sexually exploit this woman.¹

Theorists are becoming increasingly aware that socialization patterns are partly to blame for the epidemic of sexual misconduct in our society. Such patterns are important because our sexuality is not merely a given; it is also a construct that comes with the development of personhood.² John Theis affirms that our sense of sexual identity is the culmination of an interaction between our internal physical or biological makeup and external social or cultural influences.³ Grenz and Bell affirm that

traditionally our culture has entrusted females with the task of setting boundaries while encouraging males to push against these same boundaries. . . . We are socialized to believe that in any sexual relation one person (the male) must be dominant and the other (the female) subordinate. This erroneous idea promotes coercion and manipulation, and it inculturates both men and women to link sexual activity and violence.⁴

As Cooper-White notes, "All young men are socialized to some degree to see women as prey, seductresses who will say No and mean Yes."⁵ Factors which we often

¹Nils C. Friberg and Mark Laaser, *Before the Fall* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 44.

²Grenz and Bell, 63

³John Theis, "Power and Sexual Abuse in the Roman Catholic Church," *Grail* 8 (December 1992): 48.

⁴Grenz and Bell, 63.

⁵Pamela Cooper-White, "Soul Stealing: Power and Relations in Pastoral Sexual Abuse," *The Christian Century* 108 (February 1991): 199.

take to be personal or biological are also socially constructed. They are at least in part determined by cultural and social forms. Schaef, speaking of the cultural addictive process to which most helping professionals are prone, says "it is of utmost importance to be aware that this underlying addictive process is culturally based and learned."¹

Barnhouse states, "American culture tends to prematurely or altogether inappropriately sexualize practically everything. Any closeness, let alone real intimacy, is assumed to have a sexual base."² He also notes: "The whole culture has been pathologically hypersexualized, and the concept of friendship has been seriously eroded."³ Rediger notes that parents who had affairs, peers having affairs, easy opportunities, loss of moral certitude, and unhappiness in marriage are factors that may contribute to the problem of CSM:

Controls have all been somewhat eroded in recent generations. In this past generation the sexual revolution, clergy divorces, constant sexual stimulation from the media, the glamorizing of celebrities such as televangelists, the heightened intensity of life, the loss of family controls, and the breakdown of denominational disciplines have produced a volatile experience that tends to loosen restrictions around genital expression.⁴

¹Anne Wilson Schaef, *Escape from Intimacy* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 1.

²R. T. Barnhouse, *Clergy and the Sexual Revolution* (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1987), 34.

³Ibid., 3.

⁴Rediger, *Ministry and Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care*, 16.

Marriage Stress

According to Balswick and Thoburn, "No one factor in and of itself can be identified as the reason why a given minister succumbs to a sexual temptation. In most cases a combination of factors contributes to their behavior."¹ Marital stress leaves some pastors tired, lonely, and needy. Sexual distance and infrequency may obviously be a part of the marital problem. When one combines this factor with the access a pastor has to the lives of people in the congregation whose marriages may also be poor, there is an easy opportunity for sexual misconduct. There are usually many in congregations who are willing to give the pastor more love than what they perceive the pastor's spouse is doing. R. Carlson says, "Having a good marriage is a very important factor in maintaining appropriate sexual behavior in one's professional relationships."² Many pastors agree with Carlson and readily recognize that the loving relationship they enjoy with their spouse is the single most important factor contributing to the success of their ministry. Balswick and Thoburn found that "over one fourth of the pastors cite their relationship with their wife as the most important reason for sexual fidelity."³

¹Balswick and Thoburn, 285.

²Robert J. Carlson, "Battling Sexual Indiscretion," *Ministry*, January 1987, 5.

³Balswick and Thoburn, 280.

At the same time, they say: "Marital dissatisfaction coupled with work boredom is the kind of situation that has been conducive to the most fantasy and openness to actual liaisons."¹ Grenz and Bell explain:

A good marriage contributes to sexual fidelity by providing a wholesome, God-ordained context for physical sexual expression. But beyond this obvious role, the marriage relationship offers the pastor a foundational, permanent support system. In fact, marriage is the most consistent, long-term source of support many pastors experience. Marriage functions as a support system as it facilitates honest communication. An open relationship with a loving spouse provides a wounded pastor with a sympathetic ear to whom he can voice his experiences of self-discovery. The wise wife will even welcome her husband's acknowledgments of sexual attraction to a congregant, without feeling threatened by them. . . . While acknowledging the importance of a healthy marriage, we ought not to overstate its potential. A mutually satisfying marriage cannot by itself guarantee sexual fidelity.²

¹Ibid., 270.

²Grenz and Bell, 136.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE AND ELLEN G. WHITE ON CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Bible

Most Christians accept the Bible as correct, truthful, and relevant. It is the Word of God. The Scripture is not relegated to the periphery of a believer's life. Biblical counselors believe that the Bible speaks comprehensively to every relational issue.¹ What exactly does the Bible teach on the issue of CSM? What the Bible says regarding CSM carries the weight of authority for many Christians.

Old Testament Times

The Principle of Holiness

God is holy and holiness is defined with reference to him.² For Israel "holiness was an ethical attribute of the divine character which had to be reflected in their own lives and behavior, since they were bound by covenant to the God of Sinai."³ The priesthood

¹Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 17.

²Roy Gane, *The Shadow and the Shekinah* (Berrien Springs, MI : Andrews University Theological Seminary, 1998), 22.

³Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Leviticus: An introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980), 111.

was to represent God's character to his people. "The Jewish priests were required to be, in person, all that was symmetrical and well-proportioned, that they might reflect a great truth: 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.'"¹ "The Lord required not only a well-proportioned mind and symmetrical body of the ministry in holy office, but he also required pure and uncorrupted minds."²

If God overlooked the priest's behavior, the whole Hebrew community could fall apart. Even when the issue was not CSM, God had to punish them to protect the rest of his people from following their example. The story of Nadab and Abihu provides one biblical example of such (Lev 10:1-2). God said to Moses: "Through those who are near me I will show myself holy, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev 10:3). Priests had the privilege of seeing a manifestation of God himself (Exod 24:1, 9, 10). When God seems to react harshly it is because the priesthood misrepresented God's character and chose to do things its own way. The same Bible that contains the privileges of God's people, and his promises to them, also contains the sacred duties and the solemn obligations he requires of the shepherd who has charge of the flock of God.³

In the sanctuary, the Lord was enthroned above the ark in the inner apartment, called the "holy of holies" (Exod 25-28; 30-31; Lev 16). This was the holiest area, closest to him. The outer sanctum, called the "holy" was the next area. Less holy was the

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce* (Silver Spring, MD : The Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 82.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

court outside the sacred tent. So the closer the priest got to the Presence of the Lord, the holier he should be. The more holy the area, the more valuable the materials. Fabrics connected with the most holy place were most intricately woven (Exod 26:31; 36:35; 26:1; 36:8). Inside the sacred tent, the items of furniture were of gold (Exod 25). Outside in the court, the outer altar and the laver were of bronze (Exod 30). The more holy the priest, the more elaborate and valuable his garment (Exod 28 and 39:1-31).

The principle that holiness is defined by closeness to God, which is exemplified in physical terms in the sanctuary, also operates in the moral sphere. God calls the priesthood to become holy in character as he is holy (Lev 19:2). There are degrees of going away from God, just as there are degrees of coming close to him.¹

The Bible reveals that not all sins are equal. For example, inadvertent sins are not as serious as “high-handed” sins or rebellious sins (Num 15:27-31). Some sins are more damaging than others precisely because of who commits them. “The greater the knowledge of God’s will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it.”² Adultery by priests was an even greater sin than adultery in general because of their position. Their influence was more extended than if they were ordinary men. Their family life was imitated throughout Israel.³ This observation is both logical and biblical because the principle of holiness is defined by closeness to God. The priest’s teaching, in both

¹Gane, 25, 26.

²Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Phoenix, AZ : Inspiration, 1975), 495.

³Ibid., 490.

doctrine and life, affects so many others. "Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible."¹

All sin leads to destruction, unless repented of and forgiven, but not all sin is equally wicked, either before God or man. The penalty for violating the seventh commandment and several other sins was death (Lev 20), therefore, acts of sexual immorality are very severe in consequence. And when the sin is committed by one who aligns himself with God the magnitude is not less, but greater.

Satan is not aiming especially at the lower and less important marks, but he makes use of his snares through those whom he can enlist as his agents to allure or attract men to take liberties which are condemned in the law of God.

Example of CSM from the Old Testament: Hophni and Phinehas

The Old Testament reports that God rejected the sons of the priest Eli because they misrepresented God's character. They misused their position to engage in sexual misconduct with "the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting" (1 Sam 2:22). Hophni and Phinehas were placed as priests in the sanctuary to minister before God (1 Sam 2:12-14). The sons of Eli, instead of realizing the solemnity of this symbolic service, thought only how they could make it a means of self-indulgence. These unfaithful priests transgressed the seventh commandment of God's law and dishonored their sacred office by their vile and promiscuous lifestyle.

Many of the people, filled with indignation at the corrupt course of Hophni and Phinehas, ceased to come up to the appointed place of worship. Thus the service

¹Ibid., 491.

which God had ordained was despised and neglected because it was associated with the sins of wicked priests, while those whose hearts were inclined to evil were emboldened in sin.¹

The Bible says, “Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (1 Sam 2:22). “This irreverence on the part of the priests soon robbed the service of its holy and solemn significance, and the people ‘abhorred the offerings of the Lord.’”² “The Lord would slay them” (1 Sam 2:25).

New Testament Times

The theological equivalent of the Old Testament priesthood is found in our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone fulfills the type by being in himself “without blemish” (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 8:1; 9:7, 11; 10:11, 21); it is true, however, that Christ, as a result of his redemptive work, gives men to serve his flock (Eph 4:7-12), and these men must be qualified to model the gospel. The apostle Paul declares that certain individuals have been set apart for the church by Christ’s priestly sacrifice and labor (Eph 4:11). Under the Old Testament, God declared that he would give to Israel pastors (Jer 3:15). Those pastors would be enabled to speak with earnestness and unction. God called those men “watchmen” (Jer 23:4). If the lives of New Testament pastors do not measure up to a standard of moral purity that consistently “gives no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Cor 10:32), then the people will see in these men

¹Ibid., 488.

²Ibid.

a model that compromises the purity of the Savior. Under the New Covenant, God, who is the same holy being, is exercised about his people having holy examples, shepherds, watchmen, men of God “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:1), who reflect his purity and his holiness.

Adultery: An Even Greater Sin

Many Christians believe that sexual immorality and adultery are no different from other sins. They minimize the heinousness of adultery rationalizing that there are no gradations of sins, and that one sin is as bad as another. They misinterpret Jas 2:10 when the apostle writes: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point he has become guilty of all.”

The apostle Paul was explicit in his condemnation of adultery. He wrote to the Corinthians, who lived in the most celebrated center of prostitution in the Mediterranean world.¹ Corinth well merited the title given to it by Barnes, “the Paris of antiquity”.²

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, ‘The two shall become one.’ But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Cor 6:15-20)

¹Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant* (Berrien Springs, MI : Biblical Perspectives, 1991), 82.

² “1 Corinthians,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953-57), 6:656.

This represents a rather curious extension of the Old Testament concept of “one flesh,” rendered in the Greek as *henosis*. The apostle here indicates that any union of two bodies in the sexual embrace, no matter how casual or commercial, establishes the state of one flesh. Sexual relationships affect the union between a man and a woman wherein they become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24). As a covenantal relationship, marriage is the act of becoming one flesh, according to Adam, who called Eve “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23).

When Paul set out on his mission to the Gentiles, one of the conditions the Jerusalem community made for the inclusion of these converts in the Christian Church was that they should abstain from all *porneia*. The New Testament is perfectly plain in its condemnation of what the Greek calls *porneia*, which is translated variously as “fornication” or “whoredom”, “a general term for all forms of illicit sexual intercourse.”¹ (Acts 15:19-20, 29; 21:25; Matt 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor 5:1; 6:13, 18; 7:2; 1 Thess 4:3). Whatever the controversy over circumcision, there was no disagreement between Paul and Jerusalem about unchastity. He regarded it as seriously as they did.

The author of Hebrews warns about the judgment of God as he describes the marriage relationship: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb 13:4).

Paul saw that a sexual relationship represents a depth of personal existence which is unique. It is the most intimate of all interpersonal relationships, expressing the essence

¹Ibid., 703.

of one's attitudes toward another. Whatever he does in this area affects what he is, and what he is in turn affects what he does sexually.¹ Thus Paul argued vehemently against those who claimed that sex was purely a physical appetite to be satisfied without respect to the circumstances. "Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body" (1 Cor 6:18).

Adultery is a greater sin because it attacks the very essence of marriage and allows the party who has been sinned against to pursue divorce, if he or she so chooses (Matt 19:9). . . . The act of adultery breaks the God-given covenant and the pledge of loyalty that is inherent in it. An oath made to God and another person is violated.²

When Paul says that "the immoral man sins against his own body," he makes a distinction between sexual immorality and other sins. John Calvin, the Protestant reformer, wrote:

Having set before us honorable conduct, [Paul] now shows how much we ought to abhor fornication, setting before us the enormity of its wickedness and baseness. Now he shows its greatness by comparison — that this sin alone, of all sins, puts a brand of disgrace upon the body. The body, it is true, is defiled also by theft, and murder, and drunkenness. . . . Hence some, in order to avoid this inconsistency, understand the words rendered against his own body, as meaning against us, as being connected with Christ; but this appears to me to be more ingenious than solid. Besides, they do not escape even in this way, because the same thing, too, might be affirmed of idolatry, equally with fornication. For he who prostrates himself before an idol, sins against connection with Christ. Hence I explain it in this way, that he does not altogether deny that there are other vices, in like manner, by which our body is dishonored and disgraced, but that his meaning is simply this — that defilement does not attach itself to our body from other sins in the same way as it does from fornication. My hand, it is true, is defiled by theft or murder, my tongue by evil speaking, or perjury, and the whole body by drunkenness; but fornication leaves a

¹Bacchiocchi, 83.

²John H. Armstrong, *Can Fallen Pastors Be Restored? The Church's Response to Sexual Misconduct* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1995), 53, 56.

stain impressed upon the body, such as in not impressed upon it from other sins. According to this comparison, or, in other words, in the sense of less and more, other sins are said to be without the body — not, however, as though they do not at all affect the body, viewing each one by itself.¹

C. K. Barrett observes that “fornication is a sin not only against God, and not only against the other person involved, but against the fornicator’s own body, which is designed to belong not to a harlot, but to the Lord (verse 13), and is wronged if devoted to any other end.”² Thomas C. Edwards comments on Paul’s concern about sexual immorality by saying, “The meaning is that fornication institutes a relation which affects the sinner’s personality.”³ Paul’s concern is that sexual sin defiles the temple of God, for as the apostle writes, “Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (1 Cor 6:19).

In 1 Cor 5:1, Paul began addressing the problem of sexual misconduct in the Corinthian church, and then prepared the ground for his argument in this particular verse. R.C.H. Lenski says that Paul really states the major premise of a syllogism: “Fornication, as does no other sin, violates the body. The minor premise will follow: The Christian’s body is the Spirit’s sanctuary. And then the conclusion of this syllogism is

¹John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 219-220.

²C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 150-151.

³Thomas C. Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1885), 149.

plain: Fornication, as does no other sin, desecrates the very sanctuary of God.”¹

The New Testament and CSM

Armstrong argues that adultery by pastors is an even greater sin than adultery in general, and then he explains that “some sins are more damaging than others precisely because of who it is that commits them. This observation is both logical and biblical.”² He cites Jas 3:1: “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” James argues that pastors shall receive stricter judgment. This seems to be precisely why Paul counsels Timothy: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. . . . Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim 4:12, 16).

The New Testament church experienced many troubles with false teachers. One of the sins often associated with false teachers was sexual misconduct. Peter warns the church about these false teachers:

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. (2 Pet 2:1-2)

¹R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1937), 267-268.

²*Ibid.*, 68.

Peter describes these troublemakers of the church as

springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (2 Pet 2:17-19)

Peter connects sensuality, or immoral ways and dissolute conduct, with the work of false teaching. In vss. 6, 7, and 18, Peter connected their behavior to Sodom and Gomorrah:

If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men. . . . For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. (2 Pet 2:6, 7, 18)

These false teachers are described as being men who have “eyes full of adultery, eyes such as cannot cease from sin” (2 Pet 2:14). “There is very plainly a relationship that exists between false teaching and sexual loose living.”¹

A Proper Standard

When Paul sets forth requirements for the office of pastor he stresses the personal integrity, proven character, and moral qualities in the sexual area:

An overseer [i.e. pastor], then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages

¹Ibid., 112.

his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall under the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (1 Tim 3:2-7)

In a parallel manner the apostle gives to Titus similar personal requirements for the one who would be a pastor or elder:

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5-9)

Armstrong explains that these two passages are the locus classicus of the New Testament on pastoral qualification.¹ The important qualifications regarding the man's sexual purity are found in three phrases. These are: 1. "above reproach and blameless;" 2. "the husband of one wife;" 3. "a good reputation with those outside the church." We need to carefully consider each of these important qualifying requirements for pastoral ministry.

"Above reproach and blameless." The requirement that the minister be "above reproach and blameless" is clearly concerned with moral purity. The phrase "above reproach" comes from a compound Greek word that means "unimpeachable" or "unassailable." The word "blameless" comes from another word that seems to have a

¹Ibid., 80.

similar meaning in Paul's use in both 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:7.¹ It describes a person of such character that no one can properly bring against him a charge of unfitness.² In 1 Tim 6:14 the term "above reproach" is used with a Greek word which means "spotless" or "without blemish" in telling Timothy to "keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."³ A pastor must have an unassailable moral reputation. "The eligibility of a man to continue in pastoral ministry, having once been placed in office after careful examination and proper qualification, must ultimately hinge upon the written Scripture."⁴

"The husband of one wife." This phrase has had several interpretations, but the *New American Commentary* puts this phrase in the proper biblical light when it says that Paul indicates that the pastor "must be a one-woman man."

It is better to see Paul having demanded that the church leader be faithful to his one wife. The Greek describes the overseer literally as a "one-woman kind of a man" (cf. "faithful to his one wife," NEB). Lenski suggests that the term describes a man "who cannot be taken hold of on the score of sexual promiscuity or laxity."⁵

William Hendriksen confirms the same meaning when he writes:

The meaning of [the] present passage is simply this, that an overseer or elder must be a man of unquestioned morality, one who is entirely true and faithful to his one and

¹Ibid.

²Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy and Titus, New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman/Holman, 1992), 107.

³Armstrong, 81.

⁴Ibid., 80.

⁵Lea and Griffin, 107.

only wife; one who, being married, does not in pagan fashion enter into an immoral relationship with another woman.¹

“A good reputation with those outside.” Commenting on this requirement Lea and Griffin say: “The mention of the leader’s name should not cause derision among the opponents of the gospel. The behavior of the leader should provide an example of integrity and commitment to the gospel he professes.”² “And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Tim 3:7). As Lea and Griffin note in the *New American*

Commentary:

Christians must realize that unbelievers scrutinize their actions with a searchlight of fault-finding investigation. Paul’s implied appeal is that church leaders give no opportunity for unbelievers genuinely to find fault. . . . In this verse Paul presented Satan as a hunter who lays out traps into which the careless, short-sighted Christian can fall.³

Martin Luther was profoundly concerned about the ministry of the gospel in the local church. Commenting on 1 Tim 3:2-7, he wrote:

Before God no one is above reproach, but before men the bishop is to be so, that he may not be a fornicator, an adulterer, a greedy man, a foul-mouthed person, a drunkard, a gambler, a slanderer. If he is falsely accused, no harm; he is still above reproach; no law can accuse him before men. . . . To live this way, that you do not harm your neighbor by theft or adultery, means that no man can accuse you of anything or say: “You have stolen from me; you have raped my wife”.⁴

¹William Hendriksen, *1 Timothy, New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1957), 121.

²Lea and Griffin, 114.

³Ibid.

⁴Armstrong, 118, 119.

When Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica, he gives the church pointed instruction regarding their sexual conduct. Paul's counsel does not treat sexual misconduct as one of many sins. He declares:

For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God. (1 Thess 4:2-5)

Charles Bridges, in his classic on the work of the pastor, summarizes the New Testament standard to pastoral ministry this way:

The Scripture justly insists that Ministers should be "holy" in a peculiar sense men of God, men taught of God; men consecrated to God by a daily surrender of their time and talents to his service; men of singleness and purpose, living in their work; living altogether but for one end. . . . It is evident, however, that this Ministerial standard pre-supposes a deep tone of experimental and devotional character, habitually exercised in self-denial, prominently marked by love to the Savior, and to the soul of sinners; and practically exhibited in a blameless consistency of conduct.¹

The New Testament is given not as detailed codes of conduct but as principles or precepts which seek primarily to set a standard for the kind of life pleasing to God.

Ellen G. White on Clergy Sexual Misconduct

The apostle Paul argues that adultery and fornication are greater sins (1 Cor 6:18-20), and the Bible says that the penalty for violating the seventh commandment and several sexual sins was death in Old Testament times (Lev 2:10-16). Ellen G. White understands that adultery by pastors is an even greater sin than adultery in general. "The

¹Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 26-27.

greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it."¹ She does say that adulterous ministers are more guilty than Belshazzar.

It is a truth which should make every one of us weep that those living in these last days, upon whom the ends of the world are come, *are far more guilty than was Belshazzar*. This is possible in many ways. When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to the sacred service of God; when they occupy the position of expositors of Bible truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and the angels are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body, and spirit to God's service, then shall these men who minister in a most holy office desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes? Shall the sacred vessel, whom God is to use for a high and holy work, be dragged from its lofty, controlling sphere to administer to debasing lust?²

God has not altered or changed (Mal 3:6). He is a jealous God, and "will not look upon sin now with any more allowance than He did among ancient Israel. Sin is sin. Sins have not been held forth in their sinfulness, but it has been made to appear as though sins have been lightly regarded by God."³ Ellen G. White sees adultery as an enormous and great sin, even when church members commit it:

This sin is awful in these last days, but the church has brought God's frown and curse upon them by regarding the sin so lightly. I saw it was an enormous sin and there have not been as vigilant efforts made as there should have been to satisfy the displeasure of God and remove His frown by taking a strict, thorough course with the offender. It has had an awful, corrupting influence upon the young. They see how lightly the sin of breaking the seventh commandment is regarded, and the one who commits this horrid sin thinks that all he has to do is to confess that he was wrong and is sorry, and he is then to have all the privileges of the house of God and be held in [the] embrace or fellowship of the church. They have thought it was not so great a sin, but have lightly esteemed the breaking of the seventh commandment. *This has*

¹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 495.

²White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 238, italics mine.

³Ibid., 248.

*been sufficient to remove the ark of God from the camp, if there were no other sins to cause the ark to be taken away and weaken Israel.*¹

This sin is not a sin of ignorance. It is a deliberate sin. Ellen G. White talks about adultery as being a high-handed sin.

Never was this sin regarded by God as being so exceedingly sinful as at the present time. Why? Because God is purifying unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. . . . *They sin with a high hand*, give way to all the loose passions of the carnal heart, gratify their animal propensities, disgrace the cause of God, and then confess they have sinned and are sorry! . . . Those who anciently committed these sins were taken without the camp and stoned to death. Temporal and eternal death was their doom; and because the penalty of stoning to death is abolished, this sin is indulged in beyond measure and is thought to be a small offense.²

Contributing Factors to CSM Revealed in Ellen G. White's Writings

Ellen G. White presented, more than one hundred years ago, almost the same contributing factors to CSM, as found by other modern authors. Some of these factors have to do with the role of the pastor in the church. This specific point attracted the attention of Kenneth Stackhouse, professor of literature at Virginia Commonwealth University, who read these Ellen G. White quotations, and realized that, among dozens of other renowned authors quoted in this study, she was a noticeably different writer than the others. He wrote a note: "Ellen G. White should be required reading for all men in positions of authority."³

¹Ibid., italics mine.

²Ibid., 249, italics mine.

³Kenneth Stackhouse, Professor of Literature at Virginia Commonwealth University. He wrote this note in my dissertation, before I told him who Ellen G. White was. He asked me: "Who is this author, Ellen G. White?" Then, I explained him that she was a Seventh-Day Adventist prophet. He said that "Ellen G. White should be required

The Authority of the Pastorate

The pastor's role carries a great deal of power and influence, therefore Satan is making strong attempts to corrupt pastors.

I was shown that Satan would make his temptations strong to corrupt the ministers who are teaching the binding claims of the law of God. If he can tarnish the virtue, confuse the sense of purity and holiness, if he can insinuate himself into their thoughts, suggest and plan for them to sin in thought and deed against God, then their defense is gone. They have separated themselves from God; they have not the power and Spirit of God with them, and the sacred message of truth they bear to the people is not blessed of God; the seed is not watered, and the increase is not realized. . . . There are some of our ministers who are engaged in active service who have some sense of the importance of the work, but there is a large number who are handling sacred truth about as they would engage in any common business. They have not been refined, ennobled, sanctified by the truth. They have not advanced step by step, growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.¹

Those who labor in word and doctrine should be men of God, pure in heart and life.

Impropriety of Deportment

Ellen G. White states that "of all men, those who have been trusted and honored by the Lord, those who have been given special services to perform, should be circumspect in word and deed."² Pastors should keep the subject of purity and propriety of deportment before them constantly.

reading for all men in position of authority." He passed away six months later, in April of 2001.

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 195, 196.

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

The subject of purity and propriety of deportment is one to which we must give heed. We must guard against the sins of this degenerate age. Let not Christ's ambassadors descend to trifling conversation, to familiarity with women, married or single. Let them keep their proper place with becoming dignity; yet at the same time they may be sociable, kind, and courteous to all. They must stand aloof from everything that savors of commonness and familiarity. This is forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet. Every word, every act, should tend to elevate, to refine, to ennoble. There is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters.¹

Mrs. White comments, in the context of the experience of Israel with Balaam, that near the close of this earth's history,

Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before entering the land of promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls, and to take God's professed people upon their weakest points. Those who have not brought the lower passions into subjection to the higher powers of their being, those who have allowed their minds to flow in a channel of carnal indulgence of the baser passions, Satan is determined to destroy with his temptations, to pollute their souls with licentiousness. . . . *And men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God's law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid, over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work, and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character. . . .* If he be a messenger of righteousness, and has had great light, or if the Lord has used him as His special worker in the cause of truth, then how great is the triumph of Satan! How he exults! How God is dishonored!²

Mrs. White points out that the rulers and the leading men of Israel were among the first to transgress and these leaders were then followed by the people.³

¹Ibid., 125.

²White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce*, 84-85, italics mine.

³White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 377.

The Church's Failure

The church is responsible and guilty unless it shows a determined effort to eradicate the evil and dismiss the pastors who commit adultery.

Angels of heaven are looking on with shame and grief and disgust. . . . How can they bring heavenly light into the assemblies where such ministers are advocating the law of God, but breaking that law whenever a favorable opportunity presents itself, living a lie, pursuing an underhanded course, working in secret, nursing their polluted thoughts and inflaming their passions, and then taking advantage of women or men who are tempted, like themselves, to break down all barriers and debase their bodies and pollute their souls? How can they do this thing? How can they have any fear of God before them? . . . *Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with. Fornication is in our ranks. I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. There is much we will never know, but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it. . . . I have no real ground of hope for those who have stood as shepherds to the flock, and have for years been borne with by the merciful God, following them with reproof, with warnings, with entreaties, but who have hid their evil ways, and continued in them, thus defying the laws of the God of heaven by practicing fornication. We may leave them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, after all has been done to reform them, but in no case entrust to them the guardianship of souls. False shepherds!*¹

Ellen G. White argues that when one who is entrusted with great responsibilities betrays his sacred trust and gives himself into the hands of Satan as an instrument of unrighteousness to sow the seeds of evil, "he is a traitor of the worst type."² She notes that under these circumstances a second trial would be useless.

A second trial would be of no avail to those whose moral sense is so perverted that they cannot see their danger. If after they have long held the truth, [if] its sanctifying power has not established the character in piety, virtue, and purity, let them be

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 236, 237, italics mine.

²*Ibid.*, 244.

disconnected from the missions without delay, *for through these Satan will insinuate the same lax sentiments in the minds of those who ought to have an example of virtue and moral dignity.* Anything that approaches love-sick sentimentalism, any imitation of commonness, should be decidedly rebuked.¹

The Lack of Firm Principle

A factor that is affecting the ministry is the lack of firm guidelines to govern the practice of pastors. Ellen G. White says that those who are true ministers of God must have deep-rooted principles which will not be moved by temptations:

If men placed at the head of a mission have not firmness of principle that will preserve them from every vestige of commonness and unbecoming familiarity with young girls and women, after the light which has been so plainly given, let them be discharged without a second trial. There is a depravity of the soul which leads to these careless habits and practices, which will far overbalance all the good such persons can do. We are living in an age of moral debasement; the world is as a second Sodom. . . . Those who do not maintain purity and holiness are not accepted of God. The true children of God have deep-rooted principles which will not be moved by temptations, because Christ is abiding in their hearts by faith.²

Mrs. White is very clear when talking about the necessity of firm principles.

You show young girls attention and thus win their love, for if you choose, your manner can be very gracious and attractive. As these things have passed before me, I have felt indignant. I cannot, will not, keep silent on these matters. I determined that you should be unveiled as an unprincipled man. Your ideas of what a Christian should be are so much unlike the principles laid down in the Word of God that no responsibility in connection with the cause of God should be given you.³

¹Ibid., 245, italics mine.

²Ibid., 244, 245, italics mine.

³Ibid., 214.

The Lack of Definition of Moral Wrong

The messenger of the Lord says that some leaders who have indulged in this trifling familiarity excuse themselves claiming that they have done no moral wrong.

What is moral wrong? If there is no broad, firm definition about moral wrong, then this could also be a contributing factor on CSM. Ellen G. White explains what moral wrong is.

No moral wrong. This has been the excuse made by everyone reproved for similar conduct. What is moral wrong? . . . If truth is brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul, it will create a pure moral taste. Then all these objectionable, demoralizing practices will be seen to be a positive denial of Christ, a sin which will pollute the soul. . . . *All trifling, jesting, joking, and flattery spoken to young girls or women, boys or men, are thorn berries, and that which produces them is a thornbush, for the tree is known by its fruits. Let not those who profess the religion of Christ descend to trifling conversation, to unbecoming familiarity with women of any class, married or single.* They should keep their proper places with all dignity.¹

Characteristics of Offenders

Ellen G. White presents certain characteristics found in offending ministers.

Some of these characteristics might have been with them before they felt the calling to be a pastor or may have developed later in the ministry. These characteristics are quoted by other authors in the next chapter.

Improper Attentions

Ellen G. White wrote a letter to Elder T., describing the process by which he

¹Ibid., 246, italics mine.

started giving special attentions to other women besides his wife. Then she expressed how terrible sexual misconduct looks in a pastor.

Your case with many others has been before me. Several years ago I was shown that your danger was very great on account of your attentions to other women besides your wife. You have indulged your own inclination in this direction, and you stand guilty before God. The root of the whole matter is unchaste thoughts [that] are entertained which lead to improper attentions and advances, then to improper actions. All this is bad enough in men who have only a common work to do, but it is a hundredfold worse in those who have accepted sacred positions of trust. I have in your presence dwelt particularly upon the importance of abstaining from the very appearance of evil. . . . I have written especially upon the dangers of young men and also of married men showing special attention to young ladies and to other men's wives. When crossing the ocean on my way to Europe, I was mightily stirred and wrote out special warnings. This was in your behalf as well as for others. It was to stop your downward course, that you should in the strength of Israel's God arise and be a man, not a plaything for the devil.¹

Then Mrs. White concludes advising him: "Do not attempt to teach the people until you are a changed man, until you have in humble penitence sought the Lord with true contrition of soul, and have a new heart. . . . Cease at once from attempting to teach the truth until you know that in the strength of God you can overcome lust."²

The responsibility of stopping such improper attention rests upon the ministers.

They should show a distaste for such attention; and if they take the course which God would have them, they will not long be troubled. They should shun every appearance of evil; and when young women are very sociable, it is the ministers' duty to let them know that this is not pleasing. They must repulse forwardness, even if they are thought to be rude, in order to save the cause from reproach. Young women who have been converted to the truth and to God, will listen to reproof, and will be reformed.³

¹Ibid., 193-194.

²Ibid., 195.

³White, *Gospel Workers*, 129.

Sexual Fantasies

There was a minister who was fantasizing regarding a woman, not his wife, with whom he was sentimentally involved. He thought of living with this woman and having children by her in heaven. God showed his case to Ellen G. White, and she wrote him a letter describing Satan's devices.

I have much to say to you. You have been represented to me as being in great peril. Satan is on your track, and at times he has whispered to you pleasing fables, and has shown you charming pictures of one whom he represents as a more suitable companion for you than the wife of your youth, the mother of your children. Satan is working stealthily, untiringly, to effect your downfall through his specious temptations. He is determined to become your teacher, and you need now to place yourself where you can get strength to resist him. He hopes to lead you into the maze of spiritualism. He hopes to wean your affections from your wife, and to fix them upon another woman. He desires that you shall allow your mind to dwell upon this woman until through unholy affection she becomes your god. The enemy of souls has gained much when he can lead the imagination of one of Jehovah's chosen watchmen to dwell upon the possibilities of association in the world to come, with some woman whom he loves, and of there raising up a family. We need no such pleasing pictures. All such views originate in the mind of the tempter. . . . It is represented to me that spiritual fables are taking many captive. Their minds are sensual, and, unless a change comes, this will prove their ruin. To all who are indulging in these unholy fancies I would say, Stop, for Christ's sake, stop right where you are. You are on forbidden ground. . . . To married men I am instructed to say, "It is to your wives, the mothers of your children, that your respect and affection are due. Your attentions are to be given to them, and your thoughts are to dwell upon plans for their happiness. . . . My brother U, remember that the woman who receives the least manifestation of affection from a man who is the husband of another woman, shows herself to be in need of repentance and conversion. And the man who allows his wife to occupy the second place in his affections is dishonoring himself and his God. This thing is one of the signs of the last days. But surely you do not desire to fulfill this sign. This is the part that the wicked are to act. . . . My brother, your wife has her faults, but so have you. She is your wife still. She is the mother of your children, and you are to respect, cherish, and love her. Guard yourself carefully, that impurity may not abide in mind or heart. . . . You need not ask God to bless you in pursuing this course. In

this matter your mind has been worked by the enemy who stands ready to control those who give place to spiritualistic affection.¹

The Single Pastor

The following public reproof was written to Elder Y, a young unmarried minister who was preaching and at the same time running after the ladies.

We have some hard labor to do here. There was a spirit of lightness [on the ground]. The young men were mating [pairing] up [with] the young girls, and when reproved, were, some of them, defiant, hardhearted, reckless. We had to get this cleared away before we could get the spirit of freedom into our meeting. But by Sabbath everything seemed to break away. Elder Y, who has been preaching, has been running after the girls, married women, and widows, and this seemed to be his inclination out of the desk from State to State. Sunday morning I called him out by name and told him and all present we had no use for any such men, for they would only make the work of the burden-bearing laborers double what it is now. . . . He has made no confession yet. Do not know as he will do so. But light came into our meetings, and the young who had been following his example came out decidedly and confessed their wrong course of action.²

The Appearance of Evil

W. F. C. and Fannie Y were employees of Ellen G. White, first at Melbourne, and later at Cooranbong, New South Wales. In 1895, Mrs. White and her staff were living and working in tents while Sunnyside, the permanent residence, was being built. That is the context in which she wrote the following letter.

This morning as I came from the school ground I saw your horse fastened to a tree before the tent occupied by Fannie Y. After a while I went to the tent. A lady from Newcastle and Jessie Israel were visiting Fannie. You were sitting down, writing on the typewriter. Why did you not take the typewriter at once into the dining tent? What impression can such a course make upon the mind of the young girl visiting at

¹Ibid., 199, 200, 201.

²Ibid., 202.

the school? It made an impression that was anything but favorable. Your freedom with young women is improper, but it is so natural and common to you that you think nothing of it. The word of God has told you that you are to abstain from the very appearance of evil; but do you? You are a married man, with a wife and two boys, whom you have left in America, and this fact should be sufficient, without any further prompting, to lead you to cultivate sobriety and carefulness in your association with others. . . . Placing yourself in the society of Fannie as much as you did while at Melbourne had not only the appearance of evil, but was evil. . . . I am now going to Tasmania, and you and Fannie will remain at Avondale. After my absence, you will feel inclined to associate together more freely, because I am not present to hold the fort. I fear you will dishonor the truth by your familiarity. I decidedly protest against this. Keep yourself out of Fannie's tent, or else a scandal will be created.¹

Abuse of Pastoral Power

Elder Z is an unrepentant minister who told Ellen G. White that he had gained the victory to resist impure desires and imaginings, but he told her a falsehood. Note her statement.

Your past life had been presented before me as one who had no internal strength to resist evil if it put on an inviting aspect. You have obtained the confidence of women in you as a man of piety and righteousness, then you have taken advantage of this confidence to take liberties with them — kissing them, and going just as far with them in seductive, lustful practices as they would allow you to go, not only with Sister X but with others. And I am pained to the heart when I consider that you have tainted and polluted more than one or two or three or four with your insinuations and your fawning and caressing which have led souls to dissipation and vice. And you a watchman, you a shepherd! You have made evil and lustful practices appear harmless, and some have been led away with their own lust and enticed because they had not moral courage to rebuke you, a minister, for your iniquitous practices. There have been not a few who have sacrificed conscience, peace of mind, and the favor of God, because a man whom the people have set as a watchman on the walls of Zion has been their tempter — a wolf in sheep's clothing. You have by your course of action debased sacred things to the level of the common. Many have come near being

¹Ibid., 206, 207.

ruined who have, as it were, been plucked as a brand from the burning; but the performance of yours to break down the barriers which preserve the sanctity of the family relation between husband and wife, the arranged plans to make the wife communicate to you the secrets of her married life, induce those who are yielding in disposition, who have become captivated with you, to open their heart to you as to a Catholic confessor; and you encourage in them the thought that they have made a mistake in the married life. . . . The man who should watch for souls in order to save them, watches for opportunities and occasions to ruin them.¹

The pastoral role carries a great deal of power in and of itself. For a trusting member of the church who looks to the pastor for spiritual guidance, he carries the ultimate spiritual authority. It is, therefore, important for pastors to act ethically when dealing with members of the opposite sex. Ellen G. White says,

When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to the sacred service of God; when they occupy the position of expositors of the Bible truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and angels are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body and spirit to God's service, then shall these men who minister in a most holy office desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes? Shall the sacred vessel, whom God is to use for a high and holy work, be dragged from its lofty, controlling sphere to administer to debasing lust? Is not this idol worship of the most degrading kind?²

The Unconsciousness That CSM Is a Crime

Many pastors have little sense of what sexual misconduct means in the sight of God. They have no sense of the aggravated character of sexual sin.

The perversion of our gifts, or their degradation to unworthy ends, is a crime in the sight of God; and yet this is constantly prevailing. The man who has capabilities for usefulness, and employs all that is winning and attractive to destroy others, to lead them astray, to bring them to a brackish, poison fountain to quench their thirst, rather than bringing them to Christ, is doing the devil's work. There are many who profess

¹Ibid., 204, 205, 206.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1949), 434-435.

to believe the truth who are corrupt in morals and who tarnish the purity in thoughts and impulses of others, who ruin souls under the pretense of saving souls. . . . For all such there is a terrible retribution. They will reap that which they have sown. It is terrible thing to use God's entrusted gifts, lent to bless the world, and perverted in their use, leaving a blight, a woe, a curse, instead of a blessing.¹

Praise and Flattery

E. G. White insists that a pastor who has Christ abiding in his heart will not find pleasure in the flattery of women.

I am pained when I see men praised, flattered, and petted. God has revealed to me the fact that some who receive these attentions are unworthy to take His name upon their lips; yet they are exalted to heaven in the estimation of finite beings, who read only from outward appearance. My sisters, never pet and flatter poor, fallible, erring men, either young or old, married or unmarried. You know not their weaknesses, and you know not but that these very attentions and this profuse praise may prove their ruin. . . . Men who are doing God's work . . . will not find pleasure in the flattery of women or in being petted by them. *Let men, both single and married, say: "Hands off! I will never give the least occasion that my good should be evil spoken of. My good name is capital of far more value to me than gold or silver."* . . . Allow no one to praise or flatter you, or to cling to your hand as if loath to let it go. Be afraid of every such demonstration. . . . Those who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ and who are walking with God will have no unholy pining for sympathy. They have a companionship that satisfies every desire of the mind and heart. Married men who accept the attention, the praise and petting, of women should be assured that the love and sympathy of this class are not worth the obtaining.²

Familiarities with the Opposite Sex

Ellen G. White says that every thought, every word, and every action of the pastors should be of an elevated character.

When one who claims to be teaching the truth is inclined to be much in the company

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 197, 198.

²White, *Testimony Treasures*, 3 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949), 2:236, 237.

of young or even married women, when he familiarly lays his hand upon them, or is often conversing with them in a familiar manner, be afraid of him; the pure principles of truth are not inwrought in his soul. Such are not in Christ, and Christ is not abiding in them. They need a thorough conversion before God can accept their labors. The truth of heavenly origin never degrades the receiver, never leads him to the least approach to undue familiarity. . . . We must stand aloof from everything that savors of undue familiarity. God condemns it. It is a forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet.¹

Ellen G. White explains that sometime it is necessary that men and women work together in the mission fields, but if this is the case, “they cannot be too circumspect. Let married men be reserved and guarded, that no evil may truthfully be said of them.”² If the workers begin to place their affections upon one another, giving special attention to favorites and using flattering words, “God will withdraw His Spirit.”³ Ellen G. White advises pastors how to behave when talking with someone of the opposite sex.

If a woman lingeringly holds your hand, quickly withdraw it and save her from sin. If she manifests undue affection and mourns that her husband does not love her and sympathize with her, do not try to supply this lack. . . . The heart that thus seeks human sympathy and accepts forbidden attentions from any one is not pure and faultless before God.⁴

Counseling

Some of the dangerous situations that pastors face today in counseling sessions were noted by Ellen G. White many years ago. She does not use modern terms such as

¹Ibid., 234.

²Ibid., 235.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 239.

“transference,”¹ “countertransference,”² “self-disclosure,”³ and others, but she is talking about the same subject.

Transference, Countertransference, and Self-disclosure

There was an evangelist who was strong to move crowds, but weak to manage himself. He conducted several series of meetings in one area, then moved away to the next while his wife remained to carry on with the interest and to follow up with Bible studies. This situation was far from ideal. He finally fell into the sin of adultery and even rejected the advice of E. G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference. A few years before his death he repented and returned to the Lord. Ellen G. White gave him much advice trying to save him, but finally she speaks strongly against him by saying that his work was not acceptable to God. In 1871 Mrs. White wrote him:

“Be careful how you are enticed to make women your confidants or to allow them to make you their confidant. Keep aloof from the society of women as much as you can. You will be in danger.”⁴

In 1876 Mrs. White wrote another letter describing her vision in his case:

In the last vision given me your case was presented before me. I have been waiting to see if you had a tender, sensitive, or a seared, conscience. . . . You have made girls

¹It is the process in which people project their own needs onto an idealized figure.

²It is the tendency of the counselor to project his or her unmet needs onto someone else.

³It refers to different things that are discussed in the counseling session and may include personal and sexual feelings and personal and family problems.

⁴White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 167.

and women the theme of thought, rather than the Word of God. Your mind has been restless and dissatisfied if it could not be occupied with girls and women. . . you are a transgressor of the seventh commandment. . . . You love the society of girls and women. During a series of meetings you have allowed your mind to plan and contrive how you can get into the society of young girls or women and not betray your true feelings. . . . Your trouble with the sisters has come in consequence of your drawing upon their sympathies. *You relate your trials and enlist their pity for you whom they think a great sufferer. You then yield to your feelings, put on an appearance as though you were enduring almost martyrdom. You lead them out to give you care and attention which is not really proper, and bring yourself in a position where you are easily tempted. You should have learned by your trials in the past to shun anything which has the least appearance of familiarity with the sisters, married or unmarried. Let your affections center upon God. Rely upon Him for support rather than on human sympathy.*¹

I would like to refer to two letters written by Ellen G. White to a Brother N. and a Brother R. In both letters she describes the same problem of self-disclosure. Brother N. was married to a woman who had not embraced the truth. He had associated himself with a woman who professed great sympathy for him, and poured into her ears that which should have been entrusted alone to his wife. The case of Brother R. is that he was married to a shy woman who lacked order and neatness at home. His mistake was that he allowed himself to be a confessor to some sentimental woman who desired sympathy and wished to lean upon others.²

Cross-Gender Counseling

Those who support cross-gender long-term counseling should pay attention

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, italics mine.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 2:302.

to the advice that comes from Ellen G. White. What does she say about who should counsel whom?

It is not safe to permit the least departure from the strictest integrity. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess 5:22). When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. *If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.*¹

Mrs. White suggests that these counseling relationships should be gender-specific, man to man and woman to woman. She agrees with the apostle Paul that calls for same-gender discipleship for issues that often arise in counseling men and women. If we understand counseling to be a specialized form of discipleship, then we will find help in Titus 2. What does Paul say about who should disciple/counsel whom?

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live . . . then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. (Titus 2:3-5)

Ellen G. White and the Second Chance

Although Ellen G. White was insistent that pastors who were guilty of moral corruption should be removed from office, there were some instances that called for different treatment. In a letter to Elder George I. Butler, president of the General

¹Ibid., italics mine.

Conference of SDA from 1871 to 1874 and from 1880 to 1888, she revealed her opinion concerning several ministers in the United States who had transgressed the seventh commandment. In it she suggested that one of these ministers should have been sent to England to work for the Lord. His name was John V.

The counsel that I gave him I think was safe, and if my good brethren had acted in concert with that counsel, that he should go to England to labor, I think they would have done that which was pleasing to the Lord. . . . I have not changed my mind in his case. . . . He proposed to prove himself, on his own responsibility, without expenses to the conference, and he should have had his chance.¹

But, instead of going to England, the Conference leaders entrusted him with greater responsibilities which had a tendency to elevate him, putting him in a bad position to labor for the Lord. She explains, "And it may be that he is not in as good a condition to go forth to labor in some far-off field as he was months ago."² This counsel shows clearly that Ellen G. White had in mind to give him a second chance.

There is a second case, involving a minister, Elder H., in which Ellen G. White speaks about giving a fallen minister a second chance. She wrote him two letters describing his sins with a married woman by the name of Georgie S. "My brother, you have had the respect of the church, old and young. . . . You, a gray-haired man, lying at full length with your head in the lap of Georgie S.; had I done my duty, I would have rebuked you there. Many saw this and made remarks about it."³ Elder H. had another affair with another man's wife: "Now look, my brother, at the years you have been living

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 239, 240.

²Ibid., 239.

³Ibid., 182.

in unlawful sympathy and love with another man's wife."¹ In this case, Elder H. was living in an unlawful relationship with a married woman for years, and Ellen G. White begged him to stop sinning: "There are but few who know to what extent this intimacy has gone, and God forbid it shall be known and your influence lost to God's cause and your soul lost."² She did not speak of leaving the ministry, but she insisted to him that he stops his sinful course. He admitted to her statements and said he was praying over the matter and felt that this course was wrong, but did not say he would desist forever. Finally she wrote a letter to Elder George I. Butler suggesting that the General Conference should not renew Elder H's ministerial credentials, but Ellen G. White also directly addressed the same letter to Elder H, the guilty minister.

The time is close at hand when the General Conference will have to decide the points whether or not to renew his credentials. If the Conference does this, they will be saying virtually, "We have confidence in you as a man whom God recognize as His messenger; one to whom He entrusted the sacred responsibilities of caring for the sheep of the Lord's pasture; one who will be in all things a faithful shepherd, a representative of Christ." But can we do this? Have we not seen the workings of an unsanctified heart?³

The above statement gives the idea that Ellen G. White had an open mind about giving fallen ministers a second chance, unless the minister continued in the wrong course. She also wrote about an encouraging dream that she had regarding Elder H.

I think he should have a chance for his life. If the man is willing and desirous of coming to Europe on his own responsibility, perhaps that would be wisdom. He will never recover himself where he is under present circumstances. I did have a dream

¹Ibid., 183.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 185, 186.

many months ago, which showed him restored with the blessing of God resting upon him, but he was not brought to this position by the help of yourself or Elder Haskell, but would have as far as you both were concerned, the attitude you assumed toward him, ever remained in the dark, and his light would have gone out in darkness.¹

Ellen G. White did not recommend the second chance for everyone, but she presented a third case, Brother R, in which she also talks about giving a second chance.

God in His great mercy gave you opportunity to redeem the past. When you had shown repentance He pitied you. . . . You were placed in a good field of labor, and had you conducted yourself as a Christian should, you might then have had that repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

You were, for a time, humble and thankful, but your heart had so long been given up to perversity and to self-indulgence, that you could not see and sense your past course as so very offensive to God. . . .

After God had borne so long with your perversity, while you were professing to be a shepherd of the flock, you were granted another trial in answer to our sorrowful petitions in your behalf. The Lord opened the way before you. We felt very sad for you; and when we saw how the matter resulted, we felt worse than before.

I was shown that your labors as a minister would be no longer accepted of God.²

In all three cases in which Ellen G. White asked for a second chance, there was no true repentance and humiliation; there was no permanent restoration to the ministry. She said about Brother R:

God gave you another trial. Oh, that you could have appreciated it, and offered earnest, heartfelt prayer with true penitence and living faith to grasp the precious promise. . . . If you can save your own soul by a humble, penitent life, that is the greatest work you can do. God is merciful, but you should not attempt to teach others. You have lost the power of God to teach. Your work is not acceptable to God.³

Elder W. C. White presents Mrs. White's counsel on CSM in a letter:

¹Ibid., 240.

²Ibid., 173, 174.

³Ibid., 180, 181.

Mother does not wish to take large responsibility in this matter, but she says regarding Elder E as she has said regarding other men in a somewhat similar position, if they have thoroughly repented, if they are living such lives as convince their brethren that they are thoroughly in earnest, do not cut them off from fellowship, do not forbid their working for Christ in a humble capacity, *but do not elevate them to position of responsibility. From this I would understand that it would be unwise to renew his credential and send him from place to place among the people. . . .* At the close of this letter Ellen White personally inscribed the following words of endorsement: "This is correct advice in such cases. Let him walk humbly before God. *I see no light in giving him responsibilities.*"¹

This statement reflects the most balanced decision of the church in those times when dealing with cases of CSM.

Conclusion

The principle of holiness is defined with reference to God. Holiness was an ethical attribute of the divine character which had to be reflected in the priest's life and behavior. God requires no less of pastors today. "The great light and privileges bestowed, require returns of virtue and holiness corresponding to the light given."²

The Old Testament presents just one case of CSM regarding the sons of Eli. Because of their position, their influence was more extensive than if they were ordinary men. They incurred the Lord's displeasure. Eli and his sons were tested, and the Lord found them wholly unworthy of the exalted position of priests in his service. Ellen G. White says that "we are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if the acts had been our own."³ Eli did not

¹Ibid., 230, 231, italics mine.

²White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 289.

³Ibid., 490.

manage his household according to God's rules for family government. His family life was imitated throughout Israel. Finally, God fulfilled what he said: "And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you, they will both die on the same day" (1 Sam 2:34). In God's reproof to Eli and his sons are words of solemn and fearful import, words that all who minister in sacred things would do well to ponder. In the accounts of the New Testament there is no example of a sexually fallen pastor; no text plainly forbids all sexually fallen pastors from ever, under any circumstances, re-entering the office of pastor, but this does not mean that God left his people in the dark.

Christianity, in its primary texts and early development, did not tolerate sexual immorality, fornication, and adultery among church members and leaders. At Jerusalem, the first Christian Council took its first public step toward holding aloft high moral standards by a specific rule laid down not only for its members to follow, but also for the leaders and pastors. "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:20). In the New Testament, adultery, fornication, and sexual immoralities are not simply an error but a massive, deliberate rebellion. This is part of what is behind Paul's counsel: 1 Thess 4:3-6; Heb 13:4; 1 Cor 6:18-20; 1 Cor 5:1; 1 Cor 6:9-11. Sexual immorality is not an unpardonable sin, but is a great sin because it is uniquely a sin against one's own body, and thus it is a sin with profound emotional, spiritual implications. Paul's conclusion to this problem is summarized in 1 Cor 6:18-20. He urges believers to take every precaution to flee from all sexual immorality. Adultery by pastors is an even greater sin than

adultery in general because of who commits it. In Jas 3:1 the apostle argues that pastors will receive stricter judgment.

Ellen G. White wrote many letters addressed to errant ministerial laborers. No two situations are exactly alike. She presents different contributing factors for CSM and then she gives wise advice which all who minister in sacred things would do well to ponder. Mrs. White was very balanced. Three times she made sorrowful petitions on behalf of fallen pastors, but at the same time she spoke clearly in this matter.

CHAPTER IV

REASONS FOR MISCONDUCT AS PRESENTED IN CURRENT LITERATURE

This chapter shows a close similarity between the contributing factors to CSM quoted by Ellen G. White, and the factors noted by modern authors. The factors that make a pastor more vulnerable are organized into three groups: Pastoral Issues, Personal Problems, and Sexual Temptation.

Pastoral Issues

Sex in the Forbidden Zone

Peter Rutter describes sex in the “forbidden zone” as any sexual contact that occurs within a professional relationship of trust. He estimates that 96 percent of forbidden zone sex occurs between a man in power and a woman under his care.¹ Rutter finds that women in power exploiting men, or men and women engaging in homosexual exploitation represents a very small percentage of forbidden zone sex. Given the sexism in our society, sexual boundary violations are predominantly a problem of men in power over women.² The relationship between the pastor and parishioners of the opposite sex

¹Rutter, *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, 11, 20.

²Ibid., 20.

occurs within a professional relationship of trust, in which the pastor is the man in power and the parishioners are women under his care. This should be considered a forbidden zone. Rutter says,

My position is that any sexual behavior by a man in power within what I define as the forbidden zone is inherently exploitative of a woman's trust. Because he is the keeper of that trust, it is the man's responsibility, no matter what the level of provocation or apparent consent by the woman, to assure that sexual behavior does not take place. Because for men sexuality is often most intense when it is most forbidden, the fact that a man holds a position of trust in itself offers no protection from the possibility that he will push toward sexual contact. The ordinary man, with an inclination to cross over forbidden boundaries, emerges from beneath the professional role.¹

Considering that the Hendricks survey shows that over 80 percent of the fallen pastors became sexually involved with another woman as the result of counseling sessions, it would be wise to consider the forbidden zone as the most dangerous place for pastors. The counseling relationship touches the emotions of both counselor and counselee deeply. They develop an intimacy that includes a tendency toward sexual contact.

Cross-Gender, Long-Term Individual Counseling

"It is naive to think in a cross-gender, long-term individual counseling context deep attraction to the counselor is not a common temptation for the counselee."² One

¹Ibid., 21, 22.

²Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 102, 103.

reason for the increase in lawsuits against the clergy is alleged malpractice involving sexual misconduct.¹ Similarly, Jeffrey Kottler notes that

malpractice suits against therapists for sexual misconduct are skyrocketing. In spite of the haughty indignity from a number of professionals who justifiably condemn such client abuse, it is so easy to see how it could happen, *especially since 87 percent of practicing therapists admit to feeling sexually attracted to their clients.*²

When Tony Campolo was a young pastor, he was surprised that the women he was counseling were falling in love with him. They were coming to him with marriage problems; they were lonely because their husbands did not take the time to really listen to them. There he was, spending time alone with them on a regular basis and listening intently to what they had to say. Campolo says, "We always fall in love with someone who will listen intently and spend time with us."³

Transference and Countertransference

Another reason for frequent sexual problems is that many pastors who counsel people do not understand the concept of transference and how to deal with it. Transference has been defined as "the process in which people project their own (often unmet) needs onto an idealized figure."⁴ Much of the attraction that parishioners of the opposite sex feel for the pastor is attributed to transference. Hopkins states,

¹Fortune, *Is Nothing Sacred?*, 107.

²Jeffrey A. Kottler, *On Being a Therapist* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher, 1990), 49, italics mine.

³Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 99.

⁴Trull and Carter, 83.

“Transference is probably a major reason why people become sexual victims of clergy.”¹

Transference often involves dependency and romantic feelings. These feelings occur because of the role, not because of the personal attractiveness or qualities of the pastor.

In pastoral counseling, countertransference can also occur. Countertransference “is the tendency for the minister to project his or her own unmet needs on someone else which can contribute to acting out sexual feelings.”² Most counselors are given training in understanding transference and countertransference. Pastors generally do not receive training in those areas, thus they are more vulnerable to them.

The Pedestal Complex

There is among Christians the tendency to exalt the church stars and leaders and to put them on pedestals. This tendency may be properly labeled idolatry. The pastor becomes so obsessed with his image as a Christian leader that he does not want to let anyone see his weaknesses. So, as his marriage becomes increasingly conflicted, he refuses to go to a marriage counselor. He is afraid someone might see him, and then his reputation would be harmed.³

Wounded Clergy

The factor with the most predictive power for clergy sexual abuse is the

¹Totten, 31.

²Trull and Carter, 83.

³Patrick Means, *Mens's Secret Wars* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1996), 170.

woundedness of the clergy. In view of the findings approximately 60¹ to 80² percent of pastors do not cross sexual boundaries with parishioners. Internal factors, then, must also be considered. A number of mental health problems have been cited in cases of clergy abuse, from chronic depression and dependency, compulsive/addictive personality, narcissism, to sociopathy and, in rare instances, psychosis.³ Cooper-White sees a strong thread of narcissistic problems running through out clergy offenders. She says,

Narcissism has its origin in the first years of life, and is therefore very difficult to heal. It impairs a minister's professional judgment in a way that puts him particularly at risk for crossing boundaries, because it damages his capacity for empathy and causes him to seek gratification of his own needs first, regardless of the cost to others. Even a "wanderer" or "neurotic" pastor may show narcissistic wounding through manipulative behaviors, externalization of blame, and a tendency to use others especially in times of stress to meet personal needs.⁴

The narcissistically wounded pastor tends to conceal his insecurity and cravings for attention under a behavioral style of specialness. It combines with the power of the pastoral role and a social climate of masculine privilege. "This helps to explain why clergy sexual abuse is, at its foundation, an abuse of power and not sex."⁵

¹John D. Vogelsang, "From Denial to Hope: A Systemic Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse," *Journal of Religion and Health* 32 (Fall 1993): 197.

²Means, 254.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 138.

Lack of Training

Referring to the increase in sexual misconduct among clergy, the lack of training is usually considered to be one of the causes.

The training of seminarians in professional ethics has been woefully lacking in most ministers' educations. Only recently has the issue of professional boundaries been included in clergy training in most institutions, or in books for clergy. Most mentions of sexual ethics have focused exclusively on sexual morality, not power and responsibility.¹

In some cases, training has emphasized overcoming temptation and learning to resist feminine wiles.² Issues of the clergy's own power and professional responsibility are missing.³ Edelwich and Brodsky feel that insufficient training and experience constitute a major factor in the pastor's vulnerability. They believe counselors who lack formal training are more likely to dwell on their clients' appearance and behavior. The implication is that they will miss the issues germane to the problem.⁴ When pastors are attempting to do counseling for which they are not prepared, either their lack of knowledge or the stress involved can contribute to sexual misconduct.⁵

Physical Contact

Pastors have more freedom to hug, to kiss, and to touch than any other

¹Ibid., 136.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Edelwich and Brodsky, 99-117.

⁵Ibid.

professionals. Whether a touch is good, confusing, or bad, depends not on the pastor's intention, or even on how it appears in public. It depends, rather, on how it is received. Pastors cannot control that. Not being able to control how another receives a pastor's words and touches makes one especially vulnerable to accusations of misconduct even if one's behavior is not abuse, exploitation, or harassment. People who seek pastoral services, especially at times of crisis, are very vulnerable, and they can easily be led on.¹

Studies regarding touch have revealed that those pastors who touch are more likely to be involved in sexual misconduct. Touching may be a technique used by abusers to initiate sexual activity.² Touch has powerful implications of which the pastor must be aware.

Other Causes

Pastors are taught, usually, to be attentive, empathic, responsive listeners, and gentle. But, the very qualities and attitudes that make them successful pastors may make them more attractive and, consequently, more vulnerable to members of the opposite sex.

Self-Confidence

When a person feels good about himself, others are more likely to feel good about him as well. Not all pastors feel self-confident, of course, but they generally appear

¹Gula, 101.

²Totten, 29

confident, especially to lay people. Regardless of how he feels inside, the pastor is perceived as being self-confident.¹

Powerful Person

People are attracted not only to power but also to powerful people. Persons in positions of power, regardless of their physical attractiveness, frequently find members of the opposite sex attracted to them. The pastor is usually a powerful person, at least within his church or organization. He is a leader, the authority figure. A pastor is also seen as a powerful person because he speaks with authority, the authority that derives from the Word of God. The pastor may not see himself as powerful, but again, it is the perception of others that matters.²

Public Recognition

Public recognition can turn even repulsive persons into romantically attractive ones. Pastors also have recognition. They enjoy celebrity status among their parishioners. Fame can be an aphrodisiac.³

Other attitudes can lead to a moral fall are: pride, resistance to accountability, anger, the press for success, the drive to fulfill goals, and work, work, work. These are

¹Stephen Grunlan, "Pastor, I Love You," *Ministry*, November 1983, 16.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

the values that corrode a pastor's moral life.¹ Philip Hiroshima, who practices law in Sacramento, California, has represented church entities over the past twenty years in many cases involving illicit sexual relationships between ministers and parishioners. He identifies some of the common factors which lead pastors to become involved in sexual misconduct:

1. The minister is feeling neglected by his spouse, possibly due to some change in his family or his home. . . .
2. The parishioner is seeking counseling from the minister . . . the liaison generally begins, mentally, if not physically, in the privacy of the minister's office.
3. The parishioner confides in the minister about a private matter.
4. If the parishioner is married, there is a marital difficulty that requires discussion in order to better understand the parishioner's presenting problem.
5. The parishioner has emotional difficulties due in part to poor self-esteem, often exacerbated by stress within their marriage.
6. The parishioner may have been sexually unfaithful to her spouse and desires correction of this problem, both from a social and religious perspective.
7. The parishioner feels she is not appreciated by her spouse or friends. . .
8. Although the counseling pastor may understand that his role as counselor creates a dependency, affection, and allurements in the parishioner that give rise to the transference phenomenon, he does not feel the full gravity of the phenomenon in the situation in which he finds himself.
9. The pastor is generally over the age of 40.
10. The parishioner possesses above average or high intelligence.
11. The pastor is charismatic and well-liked by the parishioners of the church.²

¹Tim LaHaye, *If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 36-56.

²Philip Hiroshima, "Sexual Involvement with Parishioners," *Ministry*, November 1999, 27.

Personal Problems

Untreated Pain

More women than men seek healing for physical pain.¹ What is true of physical pain is doubly true of emotional pain. Men are strongly conditioned not to acknowledge or seek treatment for their inner pain, but the most important principle to remember is this: pain that is unacknowledged and untreated does not go away. "Time heals all wounds" may look nice on a wall plaque, but in most cases it simply does not work.²

Non-Intimate Marriage

The presence of a highly conflicted, non-intimate marriage creates a classic checkmate situation. The husband feels it is not safe to talk about his pain to his wife. He has no close male friends, so he ends up talking to no one at all. In some marriages, the level of conflict and resentment is so high that needs and deep feelings such as fear are no longer shared with one another.³

Lust and Gluttony

Lust and gluttony may seem outside our discussion, but people overcome by lust become what they never wished to become. Robert Schnase explains:

When we submit to lust or gluttony, we isolate our actions into discrete parts without seeing their relation to the larger picture. People on diets may see something they

¹Means, 171.

²Ibid., 172.

³Ibid., 169-173.

want and rationalize, 'one bite won't hurt'; then later they justify another bite with the same excuse; and later again, the same. This humorous example demonstrates the ancient Greek philosophical weakness of 'acrasia', the way we deceive ourselves by focusing on the harmless individual parts, while ignoring the larger direction in which our small actions take us. We slip into things one step at a time. Preferring immediate pleasure, we fail to see how each consecutive action, which seems so innocent, leads us in the larger, more painful direction. That is the story of gluttony, the painful pattern of addiction.¹

That is also the story of imagination, which leads to the friendly flirting that leads to infidelity and failed marriages. That is the story of greedy self-assertion, step by step leading pastors toward a ministry void of integrity. Lust and gluttony are physical symptoms of spiritual disease, born of the ambition to have what people want when they want it, stemming from the tendency to put temporary pleasure above lasting values.²

Sexual Temptation

C. L. Rassieur says that sexual attraction may occur in almost any of the varied circumstances in which a pastor sees or works with women as part of his usual pastoral routine.³ Nathaniel S. Lehrman, a psychiatrist writing in a journal for pastors, said:

Whenever two people work very closely together toward a common goal with at least fair success, as a minister does with his parishioner, or a doctor with his patient, feelings of camaraderie and warmth almost inevitably arise between them. When the

¹Robert C. Schnase, *Ambition in Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 56, 57.

²*Ibid.*, 57.

³Charles L. Rassieur, *The Problem Clergymen Don't Talk About* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 19, 20.

two people are of the opposite sex and not too disparate in background, these warm feelings will almost always assume a sexual cast.¹

This process of sexual attraction must be understood as unrelated to the degree of satisfaction a pastor feels about his own marriage. The experiences of many pastors are reflected by the comments of one in particular:

My relationship with my wife was good at the time. In the last year our marriage has grown a great deal. Our sexual relationship by all means has been the best in the last year. So I wasn't running away from any bad situation at home. To explain how I felt, the thing I would have to go back to would be the physical characteristics of this woman, or any woman, that are just attractive.²

The sexual attraction that a counselor has to a particular counselee has at least three major reasons. If a counseling session deals with sexual matters, the counselor and perhaps also the counselee may find this arousing. David R. Mace, prominent marriage counselor, writes, "It should be recognized that discussion of sexual marital situations often stirs strong emotions, in the client and sometimes in the counselor as well."³ A second way counselors may be sexually aroused in a counseling situation is through the counselor's perception that he is helping to satisfy some of the woman's important needs.⁴ An equally important way counselors are sexually aroused is their perception that the woman is sexually available to any man, or to the pastor in particular.⁵

¹Ibid., 20.

²Ibid., 22.

³Ibid., 23.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 22-24.

Billy Graham, in a *Time* magazine article, said that Satan attacks God's servants in the three areas of "sex, money, and pride."¹ R. H. Whittington, longtime religion professor at Louisiana College, repeatedly warned his students: "Boys, pay your bills and keep your zippers up."² Richard Foster identified a triple ethical threat to Christian discipleship: "money, sex, and power."³

The temptations, usually, come packaged in varied shapes, sizes, and colors, but most of them fall into of three categories: material temptation (this is lust for things, possessions); personal temptation (this is lust for status, power); and sexual temptation (this is lust for another person, pleasure),⁴ but the worst of these three is sexual temptation. Of all temptations none can destroy a pastor's ministry faster than sexual immorality.

Conclusion

The contributing factors to CSM are many and varied, however, the three groups above mentioned included the most relevant factors related to CSM.

In conclusion, the most dangerous and subtle pitfall for the pastor is one that

¹Trull and Carter, 68.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Charles R. Swindoll, *Man to Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 96.

includes all the reasons mentioned above. It could be called the most compromising reason: "cross-gender, long-term individual counseling." People are more likely to fall in love with someone who is a good listener, gentle, and, at the same time, willing to spend time with them.

CHAPTER V

THE SEMINAR

In this chapter I discuss the background to the seminar entitled “Preventive Steps for Pastoral Sexual Misconduct. A Seminar for Brazilian Pastors in the North American Division.”

Preparation

In 1996 I heard from the General Conference pastors something that really scared me. They told us that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was losing around three hundred pastors world wide each year, almost one a day, because of sexual misconduct. From that time on, my desire to help pastors deepened within my heart regarding the need to study this issue in view of its relevance for the Seventh-day Adventist ministry, especially for the Brazilian pastors working in the North American Division and for the Christian community at large. For three years I read extensively from sources dealing with clergy sexual misconduct, and I realized that the research on CSM would surely give me the opportunity for professional growth, and also provide a significant contribution to the whole ministry and its world mission. With that in mind I prepared this seminar on the causes and the prevention of CSM.

The next step was to find a place where I could present this seminar and verify its

effectiveness. So in December of 2001 the NAD Portuguese Advisory invited me to present the seminar during the Brazilian pastors' meeting, in May 22-24, 2002, at Pine Springs Ranch, California. I presented the seminar to the whole group of the Brazilian pastors working in the North American Division.

Outline of the Seminar

Devotional

The devotional was titled "The Ministry: One of the Most Perilous Professions," and the biblical texts that I presented were 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Through this devotional I emphasized that the calling to be a pastor is holy. It is time for us to realize who we are. Pastors and those they lead are supposed to be the Bride who stands beside Jesus. That means that the standard will never be lowered for ministry. God wants to use pastors today to restore respect for the ministry. My purpose through this seminar was to encourage pastors to be authentic models of Christlikeness in the midst of an integrity crisis.

This section discussed the most devastating sin in the ministry, that of sexual immorality, and presented alarming statistics. I concluded this section by appealing to all pastors to keep an unaltered and high standard for those in ministry.

Pre-Test

A pre-test was administered following the devotional. This questionnaire was totally anonymous and the answers have been kept in total confidence. The main objective of this pre-test was to know Brazilian pastoral concerns regarding to CSM.

Video Presentation

An important part of the seminar was the screening of a video entitled "Not In My Church," first-place Gold Camera Award US Industrial Film and Video Festival, Chicago. After the video presentation, opportunity was provided to discuss the video content.

CSM, God's Forgiveness and Restoration

In this section I considered how the Bible deals with this vexing problem of CSM. The Old Testament leaders who were analyzed are Hophni and Phinehas. Seventh-day Adventists consider Ellen G. White as a messenger of God, and her advice is accepted as being inspired by God. What she says and what she thinks about CSM is very relevant to our study. She wrote many letters addressed to errant ministerial laborers. What did she say about the second chance?

Causes of CSM and Strategies to Avoid Falling

This was a relevant part of the seminar because this section facilitated a wider discussion of the main reasons why pastors have failed to resist temptation. Cross-gender, long-term individual counseling was specially discussed, then, I analyzed the best strategies to keep pastors from falling. During this section the pastors were divided into groups for discussion. Pastors reported that they felt safer discussing clergy sexual misconduct in an appropriate setting and in a more open way.

Post-Test

At the end of the seminar all the pastors received the second questionnaire.

Presentation**Participants**

Twenty-seven pastors and their wives attended the seminar which was conducted in five sections, from Wednesday to Friday (May 22-24, 2002), at Pine Springs Ranch, California.

Pre-Test and Procedure

I administered the pre-test very early in the seminar immediately following the devotional. All the pastors completed it. The analysis of the pre-test gave me a good idea about what they thought about clergy sexual misconduct. The results of this questionnaire are reported later in this chapter. The pre-test is found in appendix B.

This was my first presentation and I was worried about the reactions of the pastors and their participation. During the devotional time, the pastors seemed to be just observing me, trying to understand what was going to happen. But, they started feeling more comfortable following the video presentation "Not In My Church," and some of them shared personal experiences. The interest and participation were so good that the pastors gave me an additional hour to finish the presentation. At the end, ten or more pastors came up to me to express their appreciation for the seminar. Some of them told me that if they had attended such a seminar at the beginning of their ministry, many mistakes could have been avoided. However, they were very grateful for the new

knowledge. Many pastors asked me for a copy of the material covered. Some pastors asked me about the possibility of doing the same seminar for the pastors working in Brazil. I am sure that this seminar is going to be a blessing.

Evaluation

The results from the two questionnaires are reported and analyzed below. The percentages are based on all twenty seven pastors who attended the seminar who answered both questionnaires.

Results of the Pre-Test: A Brief Pastoral Survey

A modified version of: A Brief Pastoral Survey¹ was administered to participants. Each pastor received a paper with five personal questions, with instructions how to answer it. They were to respond to the questions with yes or no and were instructed not to write their name or anything else on the survey. There was a note in the paper saying: "Be sure that no one is able to see your responses while you are completing the survey, and remember to fold this sheet before you turn it in." The questions and the pastors' responses are presented below.

For question 1, "Do you regularly spend personal time with the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, at least three times a week?" 23 (or 85%) of the pastors responded that they do. Only 4 (15%) responded in the negative.

For question 2, "Are there one or more men with whom you have built a friendship based on trust, openness, confidentiality, and accountability, who will confront

¹Survey adapted from Hendricks; see Farrar, *Finishing Strong*.

you when you are in danger of doing something wrong?" only 11 (or 41%) pastors responded that they have such a friend. Sixteen (59%) pastors responded in the negative.

For question 3, "Are you currently spending significant time with any attractive woman who is not your wife?" only 1 (4%) pastor responded in the positive. Twenty six (96%) pastors responded in the negative.

For question 4, "Are you absolutely sure that you will never have a romantic or emotional affair outside of marriage?" 17 (or 63%) of the pastors responded "yes". Ten pastors (or 37%) responded "no".

For question 5, "Are you absolutely sure that you will never have any kind of sexual involvement with someone who is not your spouse?" 22 (or 82%) of the pastors responded "yes". Only 5 (18%) responded in the negative.

According Dr. Hendricks, the correct answer for the two first questions should be: YES, and the correct answer for the last three questions should be: NO. Dr. Hendricks says that when the pastor believes that "it will never happen to me," he is at risk.

Results of the Post-Test: Seminar Evaluation

A post-test was administered at the end of the seminar. Its goal was to measure the effectiveness of the seminar. Twenty-seven pastors answered the questions on the seminar evaluation which was administered at the end of the seminar. They were instructed to circle one response in the "Before" column"and one response in the "After" column for questions 1 and 2.¹

¹See appendix D.

The answers to questions 1 and 2 revealed that 22 pastors (80%) had changes in attitudes or understanding on this subject. They realized that people are twice as likely to be sexually exploited by the clergy than by secular therapists, and that between 20 and 39 percent of the surveyed clergy reported sexual contact with parishioners.

The answers to question 3 revealed that 25 pastors (92%) consider CSM as a very serious problem.

Regarding question 4, 22 pastors (82%) recognize that every SDA pastor is at risk of becoming involved in clergy sexual misconduct.

Regarding question 5, 25 pastors (92%) had changes in understanding on this subject, and they recognize how important it is for every SDA pastor to conform to the highest standards of moral conduct.

Pastors' responses to question 6, revealed nine patterns of pastoral practice that increase risk of CSM: accept flattery, 20 pastors (76%); give or receive improper touches, 18 pastors (68%); visit alone with members of opposite sex, 19 pastors (70%); long-term cross-gender counseling, 21 pastors (78%); countertransference, 2 pastors (8%); not maintaining strong relationship with wife, one pastor (4%); self-confidence, one pastor (4%); lack of communion with God, one pastor (4%); to give a ride to women, one pastor (4%).

The answers to question 7 revealed that all 27 pastors (100%) strongly agree that pastors must be very careful to avoid using the pastoral power to take advantage of parishioners.

Regarding question 8, all 27 pastors (100%) strongly agree that it is the pastor's

responsibility to be alert to the likelihood that certain parishioners will be attracted to him and that he must manage such situations in ways that protect the parishioners from hurt and harm.

Regarding question 9, all 27 pastors (100%) strongly agree that extraordinary safeguards should be kept in place if pastors ever have to practice long-term, cross-gender counseling.

The answers to question 10 revealed that all 27 pastors (100%) strongly affirm that the likelihood of CSM can be reduced if a pastor invests time and effort in maintaining strong relationship with his spouse, his God, and his accountability partners.

The evaluation gave me some very important and interesting results. The evaluation questions were formulated to measure how helpful the seminar was in order to change and to broaden the pastors' concepts on CSM. The majority of the pastors felt that the seminar was very useful for their ministry.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to prepare a seminar on clergy sexual misconduct for all Brazilian pastors in the North American Division. The seminar was structured and considered practical ways in which the pastor can take preventive steps to avoid sexual misconduct. Based on the results obtained from the evaluation, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. The pre-test, A Brief Pastoral Survey, applied at the beginning of the seminar showed me that most of the pastors, 82 percent, were very self-confident about themselves. They answered “yes” to the question: “Are you absolutely sure that you will never have any kind of sexual involvement with someone other than your spouse?” However, they changed their mind after the seminar. A pastor cannot assume he is unsinkable. He cannot keep steaming on straight ahead like an arrogant Titanic. If a pastor desires to avoid sexual sin, he must take active personal responsibility for his life and decisions. He is in grave danger already if he takes for granted the fact that he will never have any kind of sexual misconduct. This type of arrogant thinking can lead him to believe, falsely, that he is safe. A pastor who shows wisdom regarding his sexuality knows that he could enter into a relationship with a woman that is quite sexual, without

ever touching her or entering into an obviously illicit relationship. Just because he is not touching a woman, or simply because he is not envisioning specific erotic encounters, does not mean he is not becoming sexually involved.

2. All the pastors recognized that they should be aware of the probability that certain members of the opposite sex will be attracted to them, and that it is the pastor's responsibility to avoid it or to manage such situations. The pastor must be especially careful not to allow any situation to arise that will cause gossip, rumor, or innuendo, avoiding even the appearance of evil. In the light of the high incidence of pastoral adultery I think this cannot be overemphasized. The development from a warm relationship into one with sexual overtones can be very subtle, which makes it all the more dangerous.

3. All the pastors became aware that long-term, cross-gender counseling is the highest risk factor related to CSM. The pastor should be extremely careful where, when, and how he sees women in his ministry. The pastor needs to decide how and when he will meet with women for counseling. It is commonly agreed that counseling women in a long-term relationship is detrimental for both the pastor and the woman involved.

4. All the pastors recognized that they can reduce the risk of falling into sexual misconduct if they constantly make an effort to strengthen their communion with God, their relationship with their respective spouses, and the relationship with their accountability friends. Those ministers whom I have known to have been unfaithful had no peer support group to which they were accountable in a personal way. If difficult situations arise in the normal routines of ministry, the pastor should immediately inform

his wife and probably one or two fellow leaders in the church. By keeping these individuals informed the pastor protects himself and gains the safety of “multitude of counselors” (Prov 11:14).

5. All the pastors agree that pastoral power may not be used to take advantage of vulnerable parishioners. When the pastor sins, he uses the very power of his office to abuse the parishioner he has become sexually involved with. The pastor must be especially careful to guard himself when he detects the first indication that a woman may have feelings that are beyond those of a healthy and pure relationship.

Recommendations

The following preventive steps, while not exhaustive, may serve as guidelines to local churches, Conference workers and leaders in working to prevent the incidence of sexual misconduct.

1. Seminaries and other training institutions should provide a course in ministerial ethics in general and the dynamics of sexual misconduct in particular. It is the church’s responsibility to help in establishing a healthier environment for a successful ministry. The church needs to become more proactive in addressing the issues that can help to prevent clergy sexual misconduct.

2. Church leaders are also urged to train and utilize godly men and women to counsel persons of their own gender. This will free the pastor from much potential danger. Ellen G. White says,

When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the

wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.¹

3. This study is primarily directed to ministers, but lay people could also benefit from this seminar. All lay leaders of the local churches should read and discuss the sexual misconduct issue as a way of understanding the world of pastoring and also to offer reasoned support and godly counsel to their own pastors. The need to talk honestly about the real issues facing Christian men today has never been greater.

I would like to conclude by saying that “ministry is totally a matter of character. It demands trust and confidence in the ability of the shepherd to guide and nurture through the teaching of the Word of God. The flock must be able to see that what the pastor teaches is true in his own life.”²

¹White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:306.

²Armstrong, 200.

APPENDIX A

PREVENTIVE STEPS FOR PASTORAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT: A SEMINAR

LECTURE NOTES

SECTION 1

THE MINISTRY: ONE OF THE MOST PERILOUS PROFESSIONS

“The ministry” said A. W. Tozer, “is one of the most perilous professions. . . . Satan knows that the downfall of a prophet of God is a strategic victory for him, so he rests not day or night devising hidden snares and pit-falls for the ministry.”¹

Charles R. Swindoll wrote about his long-time friend in these words:

I have a friend I have known and loved for thirty years. During that period of time we have been inseparable. Our friendship has deepened as my appreciation for this friend has intensified. In recent years my friend has come upon hard times. We have continued to get along beautifully, but others have begun to misunderstand and malign. It has hurt me to hear all the ugly things being said. Even though my friend has done nothing wrong and has taken the brunt of unfair, exaggerated, and sarcastic remarks — not to mention all the unfounded and caustic accusations — there seems to be no letup. It has gotten so bad on occasions I’ve wondered if there can be a full recovery. In spite of all that has been said against my dear friend, our commitment has remained firm and true for thirty-five years. My friend is the ministry.²

The ministry has been dragged into a sleazy back water, kicked, punched, assaulted, raped, and robbed of respect. There are indeed some very real dangers, but the deadliest perils have been those of sexual immorality. That is the most devastating sin in

¹A. W. Tozer, *God Tells the Man Who Cares* (Harrisburg, PA: Christians Publications, 1970), 76.

²Charles R. Swindoll, *The Bride* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 185.

the ministry. Of all things that can crush a pastor spiritually, emotionally, and physically, none can do it faster or more completely than sexual immorality. Most Christian pastors are persons of integrity who behave ethically with regard to sexual matters, but the problem of the sexual misconduct of the clergy is no stranger to church life. One of the most influential clergymen of the nineteenth century, Henry Ward Beecher, tainted his name and reputation by an episode of sexual misconduct.¹

Today, the situation has grown among Catholics, mainline Protestant, evangelical and charismatic churches. The list of perpetrators of misconduct could be widened to include the pedophile, the promiscuous homosexual pastor, but the most devastating and common incidents involve a male pastor and a female congregant, and involve pastors in differing situations, single or married, young or old, the recently ordained or the pastor of long experience.

Alarming Statistics

Richard Sipe "maintains that about 20 percent of priests vowed to celibacy . . . are at one time involved either in a more or less stable sexual relationship with a woman."²

The incidence of sexual misconduct by pastors among Protestant churches also has reached horrific proportions. Bob Harvey declared that, "*women are more likely to get sexually harassed in the church than in the workplace Clergy were sexually*

¹Grenz and Bell, 20.

²Ibid., 21.

exploiting their parishioners at twice the rate of secular therapists."¹ Richard Blackman, in 1984 conducted a survey among three hundred pastors in the United States, 39 percent reported sexual contact and 12.7 percent actual sexual intercourse with a congregant. In addition, 76.5 percent indicated that they knew of a pastor who they believed had engaged in sexual intercourse with a female parishioner.²

Some of the strongest and finest men these days have fallen because they failed to bring this area of their lives under God's control. And even those pastors who never fell physically, sometimes fall mentally. Some very successful preachers have lost their ministry over their sexual misconduct. Husbands have sacrificed their marriages for sex. Obviously, every man has experienced sexual temptations on some level. As Tony Evans says, "If you have never been touched by it, you may want to check your pulse!"³

A recent, carefully controlled study of nearly thirty-five hundred men and women provide some insight to the thinking of a number of conservative Christian men. The findings were shockingly eye-opening. Researchers divided respondents into three categories of attitudes toward sex: traditional, relational, and recreational. The traditional group said that religious belief always guides their sexual behavior and that premarital, extramarital, and homosexual sex is wrong. The relational group believed sex should be a part of a loving relationship but should not necessarily be restricted to marriage. The

¹Bob Harvey, "Sexual Harassment," *Vancouver Sun*, March 31, 1992, A14, italics mine.

²John D. Vogelsang, "From Denial to Hope: A Systemic Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse," *Journal of Religion and Health* 32 (Fall 1993): 197.

³Tony Evans, *No More Excuses* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 52.

final group, the recreational proponents, believed sex should be enjoyed for its own sake and did not necessarily have anything to do with love. Now here is the bombshell. Only 50.5 percent of conservative Protestants fall into the traditional category. That means that half of evangelical Christians believe that sex does not necessarily have to be restricted to marriage. According to the statistics, one out of every two men who claim to be Christians believe extra-marital sex is not necessarily wrong.¹ Unfortunately, the membership, usually reflects church leadership. Even though the great majority in the ministry continue to defend and uphold the highest standards, the ministry itself has been severely crippled.

A number of years ago, a national conference for church youth directors was held at a major hotel in a city in the Midwest. Youth pastors by the hundreds flooded into that hotel and took nearly every room. At the conclusion of the conference, the hotel manager told the conference administrator that the number of guests who tuned into the adult movie channel broke the previous record, far and away outdoing any other convention in the history of the hotel.²

Albert Einstein once observed that the first step in discovering the solution to a problem is to identify the problem.³ CSM is a real problem. Moral failures in the ministry are all too common today. Chaucer asked, "If gold rust, what shall poor iron

¹Steve Farrar, *Finishing Strong* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1995), 58, 59.

²Ibid., 60.

³Bob Beltz, *The Solomon Syndrome* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1995), 53.

do?" Obviously, it also rusts. Perhaps more rapidly. "For if the priest be foul, in whom we trust," continued the author of *Canterbury Tales*, "What wonder if a layman yield to lust?"¹ A study of the dismissal of Southern Baptist pastors by Norris Smith, a Southern Baptist Sunday School Board specialist in the area of forced terminations, revealed "immorality" as a leading cause of their dismissal.²

Hendricks' Survey

Dr. Howard Hendricks conducted a study of 246 full-time pastors who were involved in sexual misconduct within a two-year period. That is roughly ten per month for two years. Hendricks was able to interview each of the 246 pastors, and then he discovered four correlations running through the experiences of the entire 246 who fell:

1. None were involved in any kind of personal accountability group.
2. Each had ceased to invest in a daily personal time of prayer, Scripture reading, and worship.
3. Over 80 percent of them became sexually involved with another woman as the result of counseling the woman. In other words, they were spending significant portions of their schedules with women other than their wives.
4. Without exception, each of the 246 had been convinced that moral failure "will never happen to me".³

Each one of the 246 men who became involved in sexual misconduct answered these four simple questions prepared by Hendricks:

¹Trull and Carter, 10.

²Joy Jordan-Lake, "Conduct Unbecoming a Preacher," *Christianity Today*, February 10, 1992, 26.

³Farrar, 7, 27, 28.

1. Do you spend personal time with the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture at least three times a week?
2. Are there at least one or two men in your life with whom you have built a friendship based on trust, confidentiality, and accountability? In others words, do you have a buddy who is close enough (that means you can't con him) and loves you enough to get in your face if he needs to?
3. Are you currently spending significant time with any attractive woman other than your wife (a woman you work with, a woman you are counseling, etc.)?
4. Are you absolutely sure that you will finish strong?¹

The correct answers should be: 1 and 2 (yes) 3 and 4 (no), but each of the 246 men had four wrong answers. If someone has one wrong answer, one is at risk. If someone has two wrong answers, one is a moderate risk. If someone has three wrong answers, that person is a bad risk. If someone has four wrong answers, that person is sure to fail.²

Unaltered Standard

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. (1 Tim 3:1-7)

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he referred to a "man of God" who is "equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17). This raises an important question. How do we recognize a "man of God"? What does he look like? These are not new questions; they

¹Farrar, 28.

²Ibid., 29.

were also going through Timothy's mind when Paul left him in Ephesus to establish the church. While he was in Ephesus, Timothy had to deal with men who wanted to be elders and spiritual leaders. Paul commended these men in Ephesus "It is a fine work he desires to do" he wrote to Timothy (1Tim 3:1), but he cautioned Timothy to make sure that each man who wanted to serve in a leadership role was a certain kind of man.

Titus faced the same challenge in his ministry. Paul left him in Crete to "appoint elders in every city" (Titus 1:5). Again, Paul cautioned Titus to make sure that men who emerged as leaders measured up to certain qualifications.

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refuse those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5-9)

Apparently, Titus faced problems in Crete that were more difficult to resolve than those Timothy faced in Ephesus (Titus 1:11).

In the New Testament culture it was common for affluent men particularly to have at least three women in their lives, including their wives. One woman might be a slave girl who lived in the same house who was always available to her master for sexual pleasure. Another woman might be a prostitute down at the pagan temple, which was considered a religious rite in the various pagan religions. The other woman would be the man's wife, the one who would help carry on the family name by giving birth to children and taking the primary responsibility for rearing them.

This is the kind of culture in which the apostle Paul preached the gospel. And it was in this kind of culture that men came to Christ. And for the first time in their lives, these new Christians heard God's message regarding moral purity: God's plan for them was to have only one woman in their lives, their wives. Paul told Timothy that a spiritual leader must be "the husband of one wife," or more literally, "a man of one woman."

A Higher Standard Still

Christian morality extends its boundaries beyond the physical act of sexual intercourse. Jesus spoke directly to this issue: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt 5:27, 28). To be tempted is not a sin, however, temptation can quickly lead to sin. Any man who deliberately enjoys and pursues an illegitimate sexual relationship with a woman in his mind has, in God's sight, already committed an immoral act.

Joseph's character displays integrity and moral purity. Joseph, while the trusted house servant of Potiphar, was the target of Mrs. Potiphar's seduction (Gen 39). Scripture presents in vivid color her lurid and frequent attempts to get Joseph into her bed. But the most beautiful part of the story is Joseph's integrity. Joseph literally ran from her arms. He refused even to flirt with the idea of yielding. He gave her no come on signals, not even subtle ones. From the way the story reads, the only reason Joseph refused to sin, was his love for God. The moral purity and integrity are not a human

natural gift, it comes from God. "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9).

Ministry is a character profession. God's divine calling places it into a distinct category with a stricter standard than all others. If someone questions that, read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and try to imagine its applying to any other calling than the ministry. The actual percentage of those in ministry who fall is quite small if we compare it with those thousands upon thousands who remain faithful, diligent, pure messengers of God. The vast majority of those who promised years ago to serve the Lord and model His truth are still doing so today. When we start to believe we are all alone in the battle, the adversary takes advantage of our vulnerability.

The Elijah syndrome was reproved by God. Without hesitation God interrupted Elijah's self-pity and informed him there were seven thousand others, like him, who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kgs 19). It did something to the lonely, burnt-out prophet when he realized the percentage of the faithless in ministry was really quite slight. It will help us to keep that in mind when a few of our pastors fail and fall. A few may be guilty of gross sins, but most have not come close to bowing the knee to Baal.

The calling . . . is high and holy. The requirements are exacting. The expectations almost unrealistic. I am of the opinion that not even the president of our country or the highest-paid person in the most responsible profession on earth is of greater significance than those called into the gospel ministry. It is time for us to realize who we are. . . . We, and those we lead, are the church, the Bride who stands beside Christ. He wants to 'present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless' (Eph 5:27). The bar, the standard, will never be lowered for ministry.¹

¹Swindoll, *The Bride*, 197, 198.

SECTION 2

CSM, GOD'S FORGIVENESS, AND RESTORATION

Sexual Sin

Are all the sins really the same? Usually the common answer is: Sin is sin, what real difference does it make? Ellen G. White says: "But however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God."¹ At first sight, this text seems to say that all sins are the same in the sight of God, but in the same page Ellen G. White says: "God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man."² Many believe that sexual sins are no different than other sins, but in this section we will see that sexual sins have serious and lasting consequences that its reproach never fully departs in this life.

"But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away" (Prov 6:32-33). "Job calls adultery a "heinous crime" (Job 31:11). Every failing is not a crime; and every crime is not a heinous crime; but adultery is a flagitium, "a heinous crime."³ In

¹Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1977), 17.

²Ibid.

³Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965), 153.

adultery “there is contriving the sin in the mind, then consent in the will, and then the sin is put forth into act.”¹ The adultery is not simply a shortcoming or simple fall of the moment. It is committed with mature deliberation. Watson says: “Wounds of reputation no physician can heal. When the adulterer dies, his shame lives. When his body rots underground, his name rots above ground.”²

God is quite specific about His hatred for sexual sins. Leviticus 20:10-16 says that the penalty for violating the seventh commandment and several sexual sins was death in Old Testament times, and Hebrews 13:4 repeats the injunction against the adultery: “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

“Adultery is a greater sin because it attacks the very essence of marriage and allows the party who has been sinned against to pursue divorce, if he or she so chooses (Matt 19:9).”³

In 1 Cor 6:18-20 Paul argues about the sexual sin and shows why adultery is an even greater sin than many other sins.

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

When Paul wrote that “the immoral man sins against his own body,” the apostle

¹Ibid., 154.

²Ibid., 156.

³Armstrong, 53.

made a distinction between sexual immorality and other sins. Sexual relationships affect the union between a man and a woman wherein they become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24). Commentators are agreed that the essential meaning of this “one flesh” idea is sexual union. This physical union is a consummation of the covenant between the man and his wife. When a person chooses sexual immorality over covenantal loyalty he chooses to attack and undermine both the God of the covenant and the person he pledged to love and protect, and he sins further against his own body.

In fornicating with a prostitute a man removes his body (which is the temple of the Spirit, purchased by God and destined for resurrection) from union with Christ and makes it a member of her body, thereby putting it under her mastery . . . Every other sin is apart from (i.e., not ‘in’) the body in this singular sense.¹

Sexual union is the joining of all that one person is, in both body and soul, with all that another person is. It involves the commitment of one body to another in a way no other sin does.

Pastoral Adultery: An Even Greater Sin

Clergy sexual misconduct is an even greater sin than adultery in general. Why? Some sins are more damaging than others precisely because of who it is that commits them. Jas 3:1 argues that “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” Pastors shall receive stricter judgment. Why?

Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible. . . . The example of those who minister in holy things should be such as to impress the people with reverence for God, and with fear to offend him. When men, standing

¹Ibid., 63.

‘in Christ’s stead’ (2 Cor 5:20), to speak to the people God’s message of mercy and reconciliation, use their sacred calling as a cloak for selfish or sensual gratification, they make themselves the most effective agents of Satan. Like Hophni and Phinehas, they cause men to ‘abhor the offering of the Lord.’ They may pursue their evil course in secret for a time; but when at last their true character is exposed, the faith of the people receives a shock that often results in destroying their confidence in religion. There is left upon the mind a distrust of all who profess to teach the word of God. The message of the true servant of Christ is doubtfully received. The question constantly arises, ‘Will not this man prove to be like the one we thought so holy, and found so corrupt?’ Thus the word of God loses its power upon the souls of men.¹

Hophni and Phinehas, misused their position to engage in sexual misconduct with “the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting” (1 Sam 2:22). Their guilt was as much greater than that of others as their position was more responsible. Ellen G. White mentioned this same principle when she wrote to Elder W, saying: “your guilt will be as much greater than that of the common sinner as your advantages of light and influence have been greater.”²

*Pastors who commit adultery put their own bodies into an illicit sexual union that compromises their past ordination (i.e., ‘the laying on of hands’) before the church body, makes their vows to be faithful to their ministry meaningless, and scandalizes their entire congregation, especially those new and weak in the faith.*³

God’s Forgiveness

Is sexual sin, the unpardonable sin? No. The same apostle Paul wrote in the same chapter of 1 Corinthians, words of great comfort for all who have sinned:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

¹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 491, 492.

²White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce*, 190.

³Armstrong, 69, italics mine.

homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11)

No, this is not the unpardonable sin. No matter how grievous our sins, we are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, there is the argument that since God forgives all sin upon repentance, then we must forgive and this means restoration to office. That God forgives is not the issue. He does forgive genuinely repentant sinners who trust Him. But what is seriously in question is restoration to the ministry, from which the fallen pastor was removed due to his violation of the trust established between him and the flock of Jesus.

Restoration to Pastoral Ministry

The restoration of Peter (John 21:15-22), is often cited as an argument that favors restoring a sexually fallen pastor to the ministry. However, Peter was not guilty of sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18), so his case does not specifically line up with our present concern.

The Bible does not give any example of people who once occupied places of high-visibility leadership in ministry who, after moral failure, were later placed back on the same pinnacle and experienced the same or greater success in their ministry. I have searched for years and have not found one biblical example. Even those fallen ministers that Ellen G. White recommended should have a second chance, did not gain a full and final victory over their sins.¹

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 182-190.

From the Bible, David is the only one who comes close. But if we do a careful study of that man's life, we will see that his successful leadership declines after his sin with Bathsheba. Prior to the adulterous affair, David was at the zenith of his career. Afterwards, everything goes down. Defeat on the battlefield. Trouble at home. His son rapes a half-sister, Tamar. Another son leads a rebellion against him. David ultimately dies heartbroken, his family in disarray and his successor, Solomon, was primed for an even greater fall.

David was allowed to remain a king, not a spiritual office, not a priest, but his authority and the public's respect were never as great. If David were a priest, like Eli and his sons, I am sure that God would have done with David the same that He did with Eli and his sons. God is constant. God "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Ellen G. White says that "The greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it."¹

The principle that comes from God is neither popular nor easy to apply, but I believe it with my whole heart. In God's sight, to be a king is not the same as being a priest or a pastor. If someone questions that, read Leviticus 10:1-11. The priests of Jehovah sometimes lost their sense of divine holiness and became profane. Because of priest's position in the Old Testament, or pastor's position in the New Testament, their influence is more extended than if they were ordinary men. "Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible."² God forgives the

¹Ibid., 495.

²Ibid., 491.

grossest sin, but in this case, forgiveness is not the issue; the sexual misconduct of a minister is; forgiveness is not the issue; to reappoint the fallen pastor back at the same high-level place of authority is of great concern. If someone thinks that Peter could be a model of a fallen pastor who returned to the full blessing of God and the respect of the people, remember that Peter did not fall morally. Peter did not have a sexual failure. We should take seriously the following verse: "The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out" (Prov 6:32-33).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a man of enormous grace, held strict convictions on this subject:

I hold very stern opinions with regard to Christian men who have fallen into gross sin; I rejoice that they may be truly converted, and may be with mingled hope and caution received into the church; but I question, gravely question whether a man who has grossly sinned should be very readily restored to the pulpit.¹

We know that this tendency toward superficiality did not die with Nadab and Abihu, or Hophni and Phinehas. The problem still exists. It is time for the church to remember the value of integrity and moral purity in our relationship with Christ and in our walk with Him upon this earth. That means recommitting ourselves to a ministry anointed with power and godly purity.

The church can not solve the problem of a sexually fallen pastor by moving him to new assignments. Ellen G. White wrote to a minister who was trying to solve his problem of sexual misconduct by moving out of state to a new assignment: "Your leaving

¹Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1954), 13-14.

California does not give you a new heart. You are out of sight of the infatuating influence of your 'adorable charmer,' but this does not change the affections or impulse of the heart."¹

A second trial would be of no avail to those whose moral sense is so perverted that they cannot see their danger. If after they have long held the truth, [if] its sanctifying power has not established the character in piety, virtue, and purity, let them be disconnected from the missions without delay, for through these Satan will insinuate the same lax sentiments in the minds of those who ought to have an example of virtue and moral dignity. Anything that approaches love-sick sentimentalism, any imitation of commonness, should be decidedly rebuked.²

Let's make a firm statement to ministers, and let's remind ourselves that we are being entrusted with a high and holy privilege, which, if perverted, will result in our forfeiting the right to lead God's people. I am convinced if we know that going in, more and more pastors will walk in the fear of God. By His grace we will finish well. It is time to restore respect for the ministry.

Legal Implications of Clergy Sexual Misconduct

Historically, the practice has been to hide the problem by moving the minister to a new district. However, the media and the legal system are forcing the church to deal more openly and honestly with these issues. Fortunately, ministers must now face the legal consequences for professional negligence or intentional wrongdoing that are imposed upon other professional groups.

Sexual activity with a parishioner is no longer just a moment of weakness, but a

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce*, 189.

²Ibid., 245.

criminal act. By law, now, clergy will be held responsible for any sexual intimacy regardless of the person's willingness to participate or actual solicitation.

SECTION 3

CAUSES OF CSM AND THE STRATEGIES TO AVOID FALLING

Steven Farrar had a lunch conversation with a very successful, married church leader. He had just read his book *Point Man* and posed this question to him: “Why did you spend at least one hundred pages of your book discussing sexual temptations?” Farrar replied: “Because I think sexual temptation is the number one issue in the lives of most men, and I think it is the primary way that the enemy picks off Christian men.” “Do you really believe it is that serious a problem?” he asked. “Yes, I do. I think it is epidemic.”¹ Six months later, a prominent married woman from his church turned up pregnant by the man who had asked Farrar that question.

When a pastor does not realize that he is in a conflict it means only one thing, and it is that he is hopelessly defeated by the devil. Anyone who is not aware of a fight and a conflict in a spiritual sense is in a drugged and hazardous condition.

Pastors are not sexless people, “as an old story goes, when an elderly priest was asked by a seminarian when he would cease to be bothered by sexual temptation, the priest said, ‘I don’t think we can count on that until we are dead for at least three days!’”²

¹Farrar, 59.

²Gula, 91, 92.

This is hyperbole, of course, but the kernel of truth is that sexual dynamics are always at work in every human interaction. Freud went so far as to maintain that human motivation is rooted sexually. One may regard this position to be an exaggeration, but no one can deny that it contains some truth.

A Christian leader who interviewed a veteran missionary who was then in his eighties, asked him, "Tell me, when did you get beyond the problem with lust?" In candor, the godly gentleman answered, "It has not happened yet. The battle still goes on!"¹

Pastors work with some of the most intimate and fragile areas of people's lives, and if a pastor goes wrong on sex, the harm caused is devastating. God gives us our sexuality to draw us out of ourselves and into relationship with others, but though sexuality can be a blessing for the ministry, it can also be a curse.

Several years ago, Patrick Mean's world turned upside down. He was attending a ministry leadership in central Europe. In the middle of the night, the phone rang. Even half asleep, he could hear the strain in his supervisor's voice, "I need you to come to my room immediately. It's serious." The next four hours were the start of a nightmare, a confrontation over the discovery of his extramarital affair, immediate dismissal from the ministry in which he had served for almost twenty years, and the beginning of a wilderness period that eventually included divorce and the loss of his family.

Since then, Patrick has worked with many pastors and Christian laymen, but a different kind of work, a ministry to help Christian men and pastors who are under fire on

¹Ibid., 93.

the front lines of spiritual warfare. He has taken a Men's Confidential Survey during the retreats and workshops, and the results are sobering. He says that serious burnout affects one in five, and two-thirds struggle with secret sexual sins. Twenty-five percent of the married men admit to having had an extramarital affair since they have become Christians.¹

Leadership magazine's 1992 national survey of pastors showed that 20 percent of the 356 responding pastors acknowledge having had intercourse or inappropriate sexual contact outside of marriage.²

Strategies to Keep from Falling

What could be done to prevent pastors and church leaders from falling? No one in his or her right mind wakes up and says, "Today looks like a great day to commit adultery and destroy my marriage." It is infinitely more subtle than that.

The Men's Confidential Survey polled 350 men from more than a dozen evangelical denominations. Ten percent of the respondents were pastors. Of the 90 percent who were laymen, the majority held leadership responsibilities in their churches: deacons, elders, and men's ministry leaders. The survey results reveal the extent to which Christian men, even church leaders, struggle with their sexuality:

Sixty-four percent struggle with sexual addiction or sexual compulsion, including but not limited to use of pornography, compulsive masturbation, or other secret sexual activity. Twenty-five percent admit to having had sexual intercourse with someone other than their wife, while married, since becoming a Christian. Another fourteen

¹Means, 9-10.

²Ibid., 254.

percent acknowledge having had sexual contact short of intercourse outside of their marriage since becoming a Christian.¹

The sum of those having had sexual intercourse outside marriage, sexual contact short of intercourse, and emotional affairs reveals that more than half of the most committed laymen and pastors have had some kind of inappropriate involvement with women outside marriage. These findings are confirmed by previously referenced surveys. The journey that ends in adultery or addiction to pornography most often began long ago.

The Pastor's Role to Protect Himself

1. Understanding the Nature of Sexual Attraction

If the propensity to fall into sexual misconduct were sufficient to exclude a pastor from the ministry, who would be worthy of it? Indeed, a good pastor is not one who never senses the pull of temptation, but rather one whose commitment to Jesus and reliance on the Holy Spirit's power lead him or her to live and minister with moral integrity. The first step in launching an offensive against the temptation of adultery is to equip pastors in its prevention. The ability to live in accordance with biblical morality and to keep from falling is enhanced by self-awareness of who we are. Sexual feelings are common to every man and woman. God made us sexual beings, but sexual feelings must be guided to find their proper expression.

No one, not even a dedicated pastor, is automatically exempt from the pull of sexual attraction. If a man does not think that he struggles with sexual attraction and that this issue does not apply to him, then it certainly does apply to him. Being a pastor does

¹Means, 132-133.

not elevate a person beyond such feelings. On the contrary, most ministers will find themselves from time to time sexually attracted to a parishioner. Alcorn says, "Just because I am not touching a woman, or just because I am not envisioning specific erotic encounters, does not mean I am not becoming sexually involved with her."¹

If the pastor wants to keep himself from falling, he must have a comprehensive plan for protecting himself. Armstrong wrote that the pastor must take precautions in two areas, in traveling and in counseling.² When traveling and being alone in a hotel room or in developing a relationship with counselees, the pastor must realize how easily emotional bonding can occur. In his efforts to empathize with those who hurt, the pastor can enter into a warm and satisfying relationship that is very dangerous. What the pastor perceives as awakened sexual feelings in a parishioner may be just an expression of her deeper longings and needs. Cooper-White offers this warning: "If a parishioner acts out sexually, the minister should recognize it as a clear cry for help. The last thing he should do is read it as a valid invitation."³ The reason is simple. Thirty to 70 percent of women who seek psychological treatment report a history of sexual abuse.⁴ The woman who acts provocatively must be resisted. The pastor must be careful of the flirtatious look from the

¹Randy Alcorn, "Strategies to Keep from Falling," *Leadership* 9 (Winter 1988): 49.

²Armstrong, 186.

³Cooper-White, "Soul Stealing," 197.

⁴James DeBoe, "Personality-Splitting Trauma," *Perspectives* 7 (September 1992): 14.

woman who unduly seeks his attention. Solomon could be addressing pastors when he writes of the provocative woman:

To keep you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her catch you with her eyelids. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals, and his feet not be scorched? So the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished. (Prov 6: 24-25, 27-9)

The pastor must be careful to protect himself when he realizes the first signals that indicate a woman may have feelings that are beyond those of a pure relationship.

J. Andrew Cole points out the forces at work in all such counselor-counselee relationships:

Erotic feelings can easily arise in a therapeutic relationship, where two people meet alone and discuss the most intimate details of life. The patient may view the clinician as the most kindhearted, stable, wise, reasonable and calming presence he or she has ever met. Naturally, under these circumstances, the clinician becomes important to the patient and erotic experience can unavoidably become a part of the situation.¹

Louis McBurney stresses that a woman may act in different ways to get the pastor's attention. The pastor should recognize these. McBurney includes in his list the excessive praise, words expressing her loneliness, and the need for sessions with the pastor only, and even attempts to initiate physical contact. He says that signals within the

¹J. Andrew Cole, "Eroticized Psychotherapy and Its Management: A Clinical Illustration," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 12 (1993): 263.

pastor's life include his keeping her alive in his mind, making excuses to see her, and a willingness to share his own marital secrets with her.¹

2. Understanding God's Advice - The Analogy of the Body

God speaks through Solomon using the analogy of the body. Solomon emphasizes four specific areas: the Mind, the Mouth, the Eyes, and the Feet. Sexuality is a gift that comes from God and it contains a powerful potential for both pleasure and pain, and God, knowing this, gave solid advice to His children:

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put devious lips far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead, and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil. (Prov 4:23-27)

The Mind

The Bible uses the word "heart" and "mind" interchangeably. The most powerful sex organ given to a human being is the mind and God's instruction starts here. The pastor should watch over his heart, which means monitoring his mind. The predominant thoughts determine the inevitable actions. What he thinks in his heart is what he eventually does. God's advice includes watching over his thoughts, his sexual fantasies, his preoccupation with women and their approval of him. The pastor needs to resist sexual fantasies if he would remain pure. When sexual fantasies intrude into the pastor's

¹Louis McBurney, "Avoiding the Scarlet Letter," *Leadership* 6 (Summer 1985): 48-50.

thoughts he has two choices: he can reinforce them, in which case they may eventually become an obsession; or he can sidetrack them by engaging in devotion, meditation, and prayer (Phil 4:8). The *Leadership* survey found that 39 percent of responding pastors regarded sexual fantasies as harmless.¹ God says that the battle over lust is won or lost in the mind. Paul's words in Rom 12:1-2 are the key:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:1-2)

If the body is to be a living sacrifice to God, everyone must start by being transformed by the renewing of the mind. Physical sexual sin is the result of allowing sinful thoughts to take root in the mind and heart. How many pastors have nourished thoughts of sexual unfaithfulness in their fantasies, only to later find them difficult to resist? If the pastor surrounds himself with titillating images, pornography, and other suggestive media, he will find it impossible to practice sexual purity. If he controls what goes into his mind, purity will be much easier.

Ellen G. White advises how someone can keep himself from falling:

Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenue of the soul; *they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts*. The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. "Gird up the loins of your mind," says the apostle Peter, "be sober, . . . not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living." Says Paul, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if

¹Armstrong, 188.

there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” This will require earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness. We must be aided by the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit, which will attract the mind upward, and habituate it to dwell on pure and holy things.¹

The mind controlled by lust has an infinite capacity for rationalization. It thinks, for example, that “God’s will for me is to be happy; certainly, He would not deny me anything which is essential to my happiness, and this is it,” and “My marriage was never God’s will in the first place,” and “The question here is one of love, and I am acting in love, the highest love,” or “This is one way I can help her, no one will get hurt. This is not lust, this is love. God knows that.” In the light of Matt 5:27-30, how can rationalization and sexual fantasies be considered as harmless? The minister must guard his mind by staying away from rationalization and explicitly erotic material as well as movies and television programs that fuel the fires of lust. “Immorality is the cumulative product of small mental indulgences and minuscule compromises, the immediate consequences of which were, at the time, indiscernible. Our thoughts are the fabric with which we weave our character and destiny.”² Sometimes people under the Christian umbrella simply do not buy what is said in regard to purity. They consider such teaching to be Victorian and puritanical. Victorian it is not. It is supremely biblical. The most explicit call for sexual purity is that of the apostle Paul,

It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter

¹Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publication Association, 1974), 285, 286, italics mine.

²Alcorn, 49.

no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thess 4:3-8)

There are two steps in the battle over lust. The first step, according to Paul, is to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). That means not tolerating them, pushing them forcibly out of our minds. The second step is to replace the impure thoughts with pure and holy things. Meditating on Phil 4:8 will be of great help in this regard.

The Mouth

The usual sexually explicit conversation among men, coarse humor, and laughter at things which ought to make us blush are other deadly agents. Jesus said, “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt 12:34). Paul is more specific: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Eph 5:3-4). There must be no sexual humor, urbane vulgarities, and coarseness, as so many Christians are so prone to do to prove they are not out of touch with the world. The pastor should refrain from verbal intimacy with women other than his spouse. Intimacy is a great need in most people’s lives, and talking about personal matters, especially one’s problems, can fill another’s need for intimacy, awakening a desire for more.

Ellen G. White makes an intimate relationship between the mouth and the mind, that is, between eating and thinking. The point is, if someone wants to have a pure mind

and pure thoughts, he must also have proper eating and drinking habits:

Irregularity in eating and drinking . . . deprave the mind and corrupt the heart, and bring the noble attributes of the soul in slavery to the animal passions. . . . Wrong habits of eating and drinking lead to errors in thought and action. Indulgence of appetite strengthens the animal propensities, giving them the ascendancy over the mental and spiritual powers.¹

“If the stomach is not properly cared for, the formation of an upright, moral character will be hindered. The brain and nerves are in sympathy with the stomach. Erroneous eating and drinking result in erroneous thinking and acting.”² Pastors, much more than other people, cannot disregard the light and warnings that God has given against the indulgence of perverted appetite.

God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is author of the moral law. His law is written with His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty, which has been entrusted to man. . . . It is as truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the ten commandments. . . . Those who transgress the law of God in their physical organism, will be inclined to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai.³

That is the reason why God says, “Put away from you the deceitful mouth” (Prov 4:24), because the “deceitful mouth” involves more than words of sexual humor or urbane vulgarities; it also involves wrong eating and drinking.

When the Bible talks about the “deceitful mouth,” it would be wise as well to ponder on those who usually lie to themselves, telling themselves that they do not really have a problem and hide the truth from others. Being honest about our weaknesses and

¹Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), 62.

²Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1951), 134.

³White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 17.

struggles, first with ourselves and then with another person, is one of the keys to winning the battle. The apostle James exhorts: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (Jas 5:16). Every pastor needs some relationship where he is mutually accountable for his actions and relationships with others. In a survey taken among pastors, one writes, "To survive, a minister needs accountability." Another one comments, "Those ministers I have known to have been unfaithful had no peer group to which they were accountable in a personal way."¹ It is important, however, that the person the pastor chooses as a confidant be someone he trusts. If no one else seems safe enough, he should meet with a counselor.

The Eyes

The Bible regularly presents the discipline of the mind as a discipline of the eyes. It is impossible to maintain a pure mind if there is indiscriminate television-watching. No man who allows the rottenness of HBO, R-rated videos, and the various soft-core pornography magazines to flow through his house and mind will escape sensuality. Pastors should consider an "eye covenant" to protect themselves from sexual misconduct. Job made a commitment, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl" (Job 31:1). How would Job live in the modern culture of today? He understood the wisdom of Proverbs: "Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?" (Prov 6:27). Job's covenant forbids a second look. It means treating all women with dignity, looking at them with the eyes of Jesus. If their dress is distracting, look

¹Armstrong, 192.

them in the eyes, and nowhere else, and get away as quickly as possible. The same commitment today involves all kinds of magazines and movies that the pastor allows in his home. It is the “legal” sensualities, the culturally acceptable indulgences, which will take pastors down. It is the long hours of indiscriminate TV watching, which is not only a cultural cachet but is expected of men, which will take them down. When someone is recovering from pornography addiction or fighting against it, even lingerie catalogs should be avoided, because they present a temptation. As Alcorn notes, “A battering ram may hit a fortress a thousand times, and no one time seems to have an effect, yet finally the gate caves in.”¹ For most men, the thoughts are readily influenced by images, for men are visually oriented. The eyes work like an antenna pointing toward women.

When a pastor’s eyes come to noticing women in public, when the signal comes to his mind telling him that an attractive woman is in his vicinity, he should make a conscious attempt not to respond to the signal, but instead he should “look directly ahead”(Prov 4:25), and he should pray to God, asking him to let feelings of Jesus be in him, giving him the mind of Jesus in such a way that he might love people as Jesus did. Paul says, “Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had” (Phil 2:5). He should try to relate to women in exactly the same way he relates to men, with no more charm, warmth, or niceness than with men. The pastor must understand that “charm” is just another word for flirting.

¹Armstrong, 188, 189.

The Feet

“Watch the path of your feet . . . turn your foot from evil” (Prov 4:26, 27). What does Solomon mean when he says “feet”? Solomon warns about where we go, the places and situations we choose to put ourselves in. Each minister should know his own weaknesses. Prevention of sexual failure requires self-awareness, because it can protect the minister from many serious pitfalls. The pastor who wants to minister with moral integrity must come to grips with his own susceptibility in its various dimensions. Means says that the pastor must be acquainted with his own “fault lines,” the cracks and weaknesses in his foundation. He says that is wise to know where those weaknesses lie and to draw a firm boundary around them.¹

3. A Healthy Marriage Relationship

If the pastor wants to be a winner, he must understand that he needs to work with a combination of several things. If the devil can persuade the pastor to put all his eggs in only one basket, then he has most likely already won the battle. First, he needs to admit that he cannot overcome this problem in his own strength. Second, he needs to tell another person about his struggle. Third, he needs to know himself, where his weaknesses lie, and then to avoid putting himself in tempting situations. And fourth, he needs consciously to work on sharing his vulnerability with his wife. The best defense against a sexual affair is to be in love with one's wife. Pastors can publicize their home life, talk lovingly of their wives, and surround themselves with pictures and reminders of

¹Means, 139.

their marriage. It is good for the pastors and it is good for others; it lets them know they cherish their mates. Pastors must guard against intimacy with anyone other than their mates. The secrets of the heart, the deepest hurts and longings, are reserved for them alone. A word of caution is in order here. It is not recommended that every man confess every detail of every sexual sin to his wife. That can be more harmful than helpful. Any decision about confessing a sexual sin, or sexual temptation to one's wife, should be made wisely, without unnecessary details.

The greatest mistake the pastor can make is to share his inner conflict and marital disappointment with someone of the opposite sex. For most men, a non-intimate marriage creates a classic checkmate situation. God says that men must enjoy their wives.

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer, may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? (Prov 5:15-20, NIV)

When the pastor does not have a healthy and intimate relationship with his wife, even if he memorizes the whole Bible, it will not keep him from temptation. Memorizing the Bible by itself does not work. The pastor must meet his needs for sex and intimacy with his wife. Unhappy marriages are viewed as an opportunity for nurturing thoughts of something better. Pastors are in terrible danger whether they are young or old, single or married. They are fools if they think they cannot fall. The safety does not lie in keeping oneself safe, but in putting oneself in God's hands for safekeeping.

C. T. Studd is a revered name in the Christian heritage. Studd felt called to go to Africa, and he went by himself. Studd did not see his wife again for seventeen years.¹ That is unbelievable. This kind of thing sounds strange, especially when Paul makes it so clear in 1 Cor 9:5 that the apostles who were married did take their wives with them as they ministered: “Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?”

If the apostles took their wives, the brothers of Jesus took their wives, and Peter took his wife with him, then how could the actual apostles of Jesus stay away from home for so long time? Some of them say with a kind of pride, “I am far away from home for one month.” Sometime ago I heard from a pastor that he was going to meet his wife only twice a year because both of them are traveling all the time. Could this be God’s desire for the pastors? It sounds more like Satan’s trap. Some would say that the sacrifice these men make should be held up as an ideal for the ministry; but I am sure that this is not the plan of God for his ministry. If the pastor loves Jesus, he cannot neglect his family.

Does Christ give a pastor a wife and children and then ask him to neglect them? Everyone knows that sometimes a missionary must stay away from home, but that should not be the rule, that should be a rare exception. There are good examples of missionaries who understood God’s plan for the pastor’s families: “William Carey left England in 1793 to go to India to preach the gospel. He took his wife with him. Adoniram Judson went from America to Burma in 1814. He took his wife with him. Robert Morrison was

¹Farrar, 34.

the first Protestant missionary to go to China. He took his wife with him.”¹ Here is what D.L. Moody had to say about all of this: “I believe the family was established long before the church, and that my duty is to my family first. I am not to neglect my family.”²

The Bible teaches that “if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8). Every pastor can handle his schedule and itinerary, always keeping his family in mind. Pastors might be intimidated by expectations of the church, but the family should be always the first concern of the pastor. The importance of a healthy marriage relationship is emphasized by Grenz and Bell. They suggest the following:

A good marriage contributes to sexual fidelity by providing a wholesome, God-ordained context for physical sexual expression. But beyond this obvious role, the marriage relationship offers the pastor a foundational, permanent support system. In fact, marriage is the most consistent, long-term source of support many pastors experience. . . . The wise wife will even welcome her husband’s acknowledgments of sexual attraction to a congregant, without feeling threatened by them.³

4. Accountability

No substitute exists for personal accountability with other godly men. The hot word right now in Christian circles is “accountability.” The pastor must stay close to a friend he cannot deceive. He needs to surround himself with a few men who are close friends and eager to follow Jesus. Then they can learn together, hold one another accountable to a godly standard, and confess their sins to one another. They pray with

¹Ibid., 34-35.

²Ibid., 37.

³Grenz and Bell, 136.

and for each other. They talk openly and honestly about their struggles, weaknesses, temptations, and trials. In addition to these general things, they should look one another in the eye and ask and answer these specific questions:

1. Have you been with a woman this week in such a way that was inappropriate?
2. Have you been completely above reproach in all your financial dealings this week?
3. Have you exposed yourself to any explicit material this week?
4. Have you spent time daily in prayer and in the Scriptures this week?
5. Have you fulfilled the mandate of your calling this week?
6. Have you taken time off to be with your family this week?
7. Have you just lied to me?¹

This kind of relationship could be called “accountability.” Secret sins have much more power and usually last much longer than those we acknowledge to our brothers. Without question, when someone looks at spiritual leaders who have fallen into immorality, the one thing they all have in common is that somewhere in their lives they have brushed aside any accountability to brothers in Christ. The pastor needs a few same-gender friends who love him enough to tell him when he is making terrible mistakes, a friend who will never violate a confidence, a friend on whom the pastor can unload his darkest secrets, who will not flinch when he hears the sordid stuff of his mind, who will keep a confidence, who will hold him accountable, who will ask him the tough questions and then ask, “Did you lie?” It is easy to mentally agree with the concept of accountability, but it takes determination to follow through and to do something about it. The challenge is to take the first step by writing down the names of Christian friends who might be willing to meet us regularly on a long-term basis for this very purpose. One of the primary ways that Satan keeps a pastor from victory is isolation. Instead of being

¹Swindoll, *The Bride*, 181-182.

close to someone, he becomes distant. Dr. James Houston says:

Sin always tends to make us blind to our own faults. We need a friend to stop us from deceiving ourselves that what we are doing is not so bad after all. We need a friend to help us overcome our low self-image, inflated self-importance, selfishness, pride, our deceitful nature, our dangerous fantasies and so much else.¹

Every pastor needs this kind of friendship; it is a necessity. God's advice to everyone is this: "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb 3:12-13). If the pastor thinks, "I don't have a friend," then he should ask God to give him one.

Satan loves to isolate the pastor, but the pastor needs a few good friends who care about him enough to tell him when he is going to fall. Several years ago, a pastor in Denver told his congregation the following true story. A lady from his church was flying back to Denver, and as the meal was served, she noticed the woman sitting next to her did not take a meal. To make conversation, the Christian woman asked, "Are you on a diet?" "No," came the reply, "I am a member of the church of Satan, and we are fasting for the destruction of the families of pastors and Christian leaders."²

Pastors are at risk because they are the church's leaders. If Satan can get them, the church of Jesus will be crippled. The job of being a pastor is enormously difficult and is made even more so because the church's members are not praying for him. Pastors

¹James Houston, "The Sex of America's Christians," *Leadership* (Summer 1995): 31.

²Dale Schlafer, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family, 1994), 137.

need prayer. They need to know that there is a group of friends praying for them.

The overwhelming majority of pastors feel unprayed for and isolated in their ministries. Satan loves to isolate the pastor and lead him to think that “nobody in my church cares about me.” It is wise to remember that such kind of accountability should start with one’s wife. When I was just starting my ministry, I once asked my wife, “Are you praying for me?” She looked at me and said, “You are the pastor and I confess that I am not praying for you.” Then I asked her for her prayers because I was also a weak person. From that day on, she has been praying for me every day. Most of the time, the pastor’s wife looks at him as the strong and powerful man, but she does not realize that the main concern of Satan is to destroy her husband and his ministry. If the pastor does not have this kind of a friendship, he should certainly have one. A wife knows her husband like a book. If not, he should let her see his heart. A woman who is allowed to see inside her husband’s heart is a woman who will become a friend for life.

5. It Is Not Embarrassing to Run from Sin

Pastors must run from any threat to sexual purity. It is a fail-proof strategy for avoiding sexual sin. God knows that the power of immoral sex can destroy the ministry if pastors do not treat it like a mortal enemy. The Bible says about Joseph that “he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house” (Gen 39:12). Because Joseph was a man of leadership, some would say he had a right to the spoils that came with the job. Joseph remained calm in the face of sexual danger by focusing on the fact that there was a silent observer of the situation and he did not want to sin against him (God). The Bible

describes Joseph as “well-built and handsome” (Gen 39:6), but most of us go through life feeling rather poorly built, profoundly unhandsome, and little noticed, but suddenly something happens. Even though the pastor does not do anything to attract her attention, a woman in the office or at church looks at him with a different kind of look. That is always how it starts, a look, then a returned look, followed by a word or two, and a long conversation. New feelings begin to overtake him. If this happens, if he has entertained more than an initial tempting thought, he has gone too far, but it is not too late to cut out the lustful attraction.

Joseph ran. The pastor needs to run. The apostle Paul advises, “Flee from sexual immorality” (1 Cor 6:18). Do not engage in conversation. Do not look back. Run! As Proverbs warns, though “the lips of an adulteress drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil; [make no mistake,] in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave” (Prov 5:3-5). Adultery is suicide and the victim is the soul. Years ago, a pastor who had been involved in an affair and whose marriage had crumbled wrote this note: “I have to live the rest of my life now without the person I truly love and who used to love me, with no chance to undo the wrong I have committed. I lost the best thing that ever happened to me — my best friend.”¹

There is another story. Let’s call this man Frank. He found himself being drawn emotionally to a woman he worked with. Nothing ever happened between Frank and this

¹David Roper, *A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 1996), 205.

woman. He never touched her or expressed anything inappropriate to her. But due to the daily closeness of their working conditions, Frank began to realize he was being drawn to this woman. And he realized that his emotions were beginning to come into play. He knew that before a man ever falls sexually, he first falls emotionally. Frank realized that this was happening to him. So what did he do? The first thing he did was to tell his wife. He loved her and the kids, but he wanted her to know that he was dealing with an emotional attraction to this Christian woman who was a friend to both of them. He did not keep steaming on straight ahead like an arrogant Titanic. He did not assume he was unsinkable. In fact, he shared the situation with his wife because he wanted her to know what was going on in his heart. And then together, they prayed that the Lord would help him to overcome this attraction that he was facing at work every day. Several weeks went by, however, and he was still struggling. The undertow was still strong. After consulting again with his wife, he decided to take the next appropriate step. He decided to look for another job. Frank had a excellent position, but he found himself losing focus on his job and his family because of the emotional attraction that he was fighting off every day. So he decided that the best thing to do was to get another job.

Joseph fled and left his garment. Frank fled and left his job. But they both kept their purity. He did not want to risk the sanctity of his marriage by staying in a situation that was becoming too hot for him to handle. Men change jobs all the time. Some will change for a promotion. Some will change for power. Few have the courage to change for purity.¹

¹Farrar, 188-190.

Every time the subject of sensual lust is discussed in the New Testament, there is one invariable command: RUN! We are told to get out, to flee, to run. It is impossible to yield to temptation while running in the opposite direction.

God has many ways to make a leader, a pastor, but it seems that his preferred method is through resistance. The greater the resistance, the greater the growth. Disappointment, loss, criticism, failure, humiliation, temptation, depression, loneliness, and moral failure become the means by which God makes his children grow strong. God wastes nothing, not even sin.

Oswald Chambers said that “God’s preparation is definite, drastic, and destructive.”¹ The experience of Joseph was all of that. One mark of maturity is the capacity to ignore secondary causes. The main thing is to see God “working out his wonderful plan of love in everything that comes our way. Whether our circumstances come from human beings or some devil, all creatures are under God’s control. They are holding to our lips the cup which the Father’s hand has mixed.”²

Oswald Chambers was a young pastor who was having a significant ministry in a small English village many years ago. People were coming from miles around to hear him teach the Scriptures. One day, a young woman came forward and claimed that he had tried to force himself upon her sexually. The charges spread like wildfire. He was finished. The sentiments of the people were with the young girl. His reputation was in a shambles. And it was, like Joseph’s charge, all a lie. Chambers struggled deeply with the

¹Roper, 16.

²Ibid., 17.

betrayal of the young woman whom he had legitimately tried to help. But she had turned on him and was in the process of ruining his ministry for life. He thought he would never recover. Bitterness just about overwhelmed him. But with God's help, he refused to allow that bitterness to take root in his heart. God enabled him to conquer the bitterness just as Joseph had conquered it. The falsely accused young man thought that he would never again be used by God, but there are millions of people who can vouch for the fact that Oswald Chambers was greatly used of God before it was all over. Today his book *My Utmost for His Highest* tops the Christian bestseller list.¹

God allows us to be hurt because it is part of the process to make us what he intends us to be. The hurting makes us sweeter, more mellow. Hostility and accusation teach us to pray. It is a powerful instrument to develop our relationship with God. It moves us closer to him and makes us more susceptible to his shaping.

6. Avoiding the Appearance of Evil

Millie Dienert has worked with the Billy Graham team for forty years. Her comments on the ethics of Mr. Graham and the rest of the male members of the team make the point:

I have always appreciated, from a moral point of view, how the men have been in their attitude toward the secretaries. The doors are always left open. There is a high regard for the lack of any kind of privacy where a boss and his secretary are involved. At times, I thought they were going a little too far, that it wasn't necessary, but I'm glad they did it, especially today. They have kept everything above reproach. When you are working on a long-term basis with the same person, constantly, in hotels, where the wife is not there and the secretary is, that is a highly explosive situation.

¹Ibid., 193-194.

You have to take precautions. I have always respected the way they have handled that. It has been beautifully done.¹

Ellen G. White says that pastors should avoid any situations that could be misunderstood or that could give the appearance of evil:

They should shun every appearance of evil; and when young women are very sociable, it is the minister's duty to let them know that this is not pleasing. They must repulse forwardness, even if they are thought to be rude, in order to save the cause from reproach. Young women who have been converted to the truth and to God, will listen to reproof, and will be reformed.²

Ministers must find ways to protect themselves from the powerful emotions associated with their ministry. There are some occupations in which there is low emotional involvement either with the work or the people who are being served, but pastoral ministry involves accepting the pain of the persons to whom the pastor ministers. Compassion is an important force in the ministry. At the same time, the professional relationship cannot function effectively unless a certain distance is maintained. Distance between counselor and counselee is the necessary partner of pastoral professional commitment. To avoid the appearance of evil, compassion and distance should be the mark of pastoral character. Without distance, compassion is corrupted.

A mature minister does not see compassion as constrained by distance. Psychological distance actually gives room for the labors of compassion and protects both counselee and the pastor from forces that threaten to falsify professional service. A

¹Farrar, 29.

²White, *Gospel Workers*, 129.

mature pastor possesses the ability to project concern that unites compassion with appropriate distance.

7. Unconsciousness of Pastoral Vulnerability

Clearly the ministerial role places a pastor in a sexually vulnerable position. The pastor who does not understand his vulnerability is either naive or consciously courting a fall. Peter L. Steinke says that without exception, the clergy involved in sexual affairs underestimated the power of attachment needs and emotional forces; they overestimated their power to disentangle themselves.¹

Paul's warning is clear: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Cor 10:12). Every pastor should pay attention to the Hendricks survey that shows that without exception, each of the 246 fallen pastors had been convinced that adultery would never happen to them. They felt confident that it would never be a problem for them. It reveals that anyone who is unaware of his weaknesses is in peril. When that is the case, it may be helpful for the pastor to ponder some questions. How comfortable is he about his own sexuality? Does he leave his sexuality at home when he walks into his church office? Has he maintained any illusions about never having any problems in this area out of a need to feel competent and on top of his counseling?

The plight of the Titanic may be the most famous shipwreck in all of history. The ship was so carefully structured and engineered that it was billed as "the ship that God could not sink." But, she carried only twenty lifeboats for the 2200 passengers on board.

¹Grenz and Bell, 56.

This great ship, whose size was greater than any other, whose integrity of construction and whose engines and equipment were the best that money could buy, sailed the seas for only five days. Despite her grand send-off, she hit an iceberg and sank in just two hours and forty minutes. A total of 1523 people lost their lives in the greatest shipwreck of modern history.

But the Titanic wrecked days before she ever hit the iceberg. The Titanic sealed her own fate because she was billed as the ship that even God could not sink. For almost her entire voyage, Titanic had been advised repeatedly of ice conditions at or near the position. Throughout the day of April 14, 1912, her wireless operators received at least six messages which described field ice and icebergs on her course directly ahead.

One message, from the ship Athinai via the ship Baltic, was not posted until more than five hours after it had been received. Another message at 7:30 P.M., Californian to Antillian, was not shown to the captain, since to do so would interrupt his dinner. Yet another message from Mesaba was never taken to the bridge as the wireless operator was working alone and could not leave his equipment. The receipt of a final, crucial message from Californian was interrupted and never completed when Titanic's operator impatiently cut it off so that he might continue his own commercial traffic.

There had even been a visual warning at 10:30 P.M. from the Rappahannock, whose Morse lamp message about the heavy field ice directly ahead was briefly acknowledged from the Titanic's bridge. There is no evidence that this vital information

was ever heeded; nor was it ever given to Captain Smith, now dozing in his quarters.¹

The Titanic wrecked before it ever hit that iceberg. A pastor sets the course for his own shipwreck the moment he is convinced that moral failure would never happen to him.

Robert Carlson argues that ministers, among all the helping professions, are perhaps especially vulnerable to sexual involvement with their congregants.² The loneliness of clergy, the close relationships they enter, the fact that they have intimate access to people's homes and bedrooms, the privacy and isolation of their own office settings, all these factors can contribute to the temptation to act on sexual desire. Pastors are permitted a kind of intimacy that those in other roles might not be. A ninety-six-year-old in the parish told that her pastor is the only person who kisses her.³ But this very access and intimacy makes the pastor more vulnerable. Several pastors consider the amount of intimacy permitted those in the pastoral role to be a danger. The pastoral role gives a reason or excuse to be together, and talk about personal, intimate things. This can be easily abused. For the pastor there are more situations, more opportunities to act out sexually. A poll conducted by the research department of Christianity Today found that 23 percent of clergy, or nearly one-fourth, said they had engaged in some form of sexual

¹John P. Eaton and Charles A. Haas, *Titanic: Destination Disaster* (New York: Norton and Co., 1987), 19.

²Lebacqz and Barton, 45.

³*Ibid.*, 100.

behavior that they considered inappropriate.¹ All these facts confirm that ministers are vulnerable to sexual misconduct.

8. The Vulnerability of Parishioners and the Abuse of Power

Recent studies of the phenomenon of clergy sexual misconduct point out that because sexual liaisons between pastor and parishioner involve power, they also constitute an abuse of power. In fact, a growing tide of opinion views clergy sexual misconduct chiefly as a violation of power, rather than a transgression of sexual norms. John Vogelsang declares that the problem "is less about sex and more about power. It has less to do with sexual misconduct such as adultery, and more to do with exploiting one's professional position for personal gain."² Similarly Pamela Cooper-White writes, "We need nothing less than a total paradigm shift: we need to stop treating the problem as only one of sexual morality . . . and address the power dynamics of these mostly hidden abuses."³

I maintain that the two aspects are linked: Clergy sexual misconduct is simultaneously a sexual transgression and an abuse of power. It is a betrayal of trust both in the dimension of human sexuality and in the clergy-congregant relationship. A pastor has the ability to affect the attitudes and behavior of others without the use of overt physical force. This special power is invested in pastors by those to whom they minister.

¹Ibid., 45-46.

²Vogelsang, 197.

³Cooper-White, "Soul Stealing", 199.

Because they trust their pastor, many congregants are willing to invest in him a degree of power they deny to others. They believe that a minister will use this power and influence only for their good. These congregants assume that their pastor will always view the power they entrust to him as a sacred trust.

Because of the nature of pastoral office, from time to time, such as when they encounter the loss of a loved one or seek counseling from him, they enter into a special intimacy with their minister. This is not the natural intimacy connected with the bond between child and parent, nor the voluntary intimacy shared between friends or spouses. It is similar instead to the intimacy a client gives to a professional practitioner for the purpose of securing some benefit such as physical health, in the case of a medical doctor. Congregants who turn to their pastor for spiritual comfort or direction step into the realm of one-sided intimacy with him. They become vulnerable, entrusting to the minister the power of influence, with the anticipation that he will become an agent of God's provision for their need. Every situation of vulnerability involves risk. The possession of power can lead to the abuse of power. So also a pastor can use his influence over others and the vulnerability of his congregants to promote selfish ends. If a pastor exploits the power and privilege of this office to gain personal advantage, he abuses the power of the ordained position. It is very easy to cross the boundary from being pastorally caring and intimate into sexual intimacy. People are so vulnerable in crisis situations and can be easily led.

When the parishioner is in crisis or despair or grief, she is vulnerable, her guard is down, and it is easy for pastors to step over appropriate limits. Moreover, the very

vulnerability of a female parishioner may itself be arousing to a male pastor. As Peter Rutter puts it, "I discovered at first hand just how passionate and dissolving the erotic atmosphere can become in relations in which the man holds power and the woman places hope and trust in him."¹

A pastor who moves the congregant relationship into the sexual sphere may be motivated by his own needs. He may hope to find his own personal healing through the act. Whatever his motivation, through sexual contact he has in fact exploited her vulnerability. This is a betrayal of trust.

The pastor's role makes the pastor, in the public's eye, the model and example of the faith, therefore, the pastor must be consciously circumspect and cautious about stepping over appropriate sexual boundaries. What lies at the heart of these perceptions and expectations is the recognition that the pastor has power, and the parishioner is vulnerable. The very freedom of access to parishioners' lives means that pastors are dealing with people who are often extremely vulnerable. The core of professional ethics lies in the recognition of this power imbalance between the pastor and the parishioner. It is the pastor's responsibility to set limits so as not to take advantage of the vulnerability of the parishioner and so as not to destroy the precious trust of the relationship.

9. The Best Strategy to Keep Pastors from Falling

Peter Rutter says that 80 percent of the women he spoke with had stories to tell about sexual approaches by doctors, therapists, pastors, lawyers, or teachers. He

¹Rutter, 5.

concludes that sexual violation in professional relationships of trust is an epidemic, mainstream problem.¹ Rutter says that 96 percent of sexual exploitation by professionals occurs between a man in power and a woman under his care.² We are talking about the most dangerous factor related to CSM, that is, cross-gender, long-term individual counseling. It is easy to see how CSM can happen, especially since research suggests that 87 percent of practicing therapists admit to feeling sexually attracted to their clients.³

Some unwise counselors seem to think that they can handle cross-gender counseling simply because they are ordained ministers, or they participate in a discipline of regular Bible study and prayer. But if the person who is doing the studying and praying is sure that he can handle cross-gender, long-term counseling, then this person, despite his Bible reading and prayer, is vulnerable. When pastors discuss the risk of encountering temptation when counseling women, they usually encourage one another to proceed with the counseling as long as the counselor is exercising self-control. One experienced pastor was both candid and wise when he said about himself: "I will admit that women counselees who are attractive to me get more attention than those who are not attractive to me."⁴

Are we to conclude, then, that if the counselor is not troubled by temptation, then all potential problems have been resolved? Is the counselor the only one who should be

¹Rutter, 11, 2.

²Ibid., 20.

³Elyse Fitzpatrick and Carol Cornish, 97.

⁴Rassieur, 97.

protected? Or is it equally important to protect the counselee from unnecessary exposure to temptation? The means for protecting the counselor are helpful, but they do not necessarily address what may go on within the counselee. Female counselees report having had fantasies involving male counselors. Some women have gone beyond fantasy to actual sexual sin with their counselor. Going off to see their counselors has for them a measure of exclusiveness and intimacy somewhat akin to a tryst. Lois Mowday says, "to assume that all is well because a man and woman are not touching each other physically can be overly simplistic. . . . A man and woman can touch each other in very meaningful ways without ever being physically close."¹

Sinclair Ferguson says,

God made men and women to be attracted to each other, to need each other, and to enter into relationships with each other that have physical, spiritual, and mental dimensions. . . . We must guard our heart and our actions, gestures and looks. . . . We will not play with our own emotions, and we will be scrupulous about the emotions of others.²

I advocate that, when long-term individual counseling is needed, men should counsel men and women should counsel women. In Titus 2:1-5, the apostle Paul calls for same-gender discipling. As Christians we usually take for granted the idea that a discipling relationship will be same-gender. If we understand counseling to be a specialized form of discipleship, then we will find help in Titus 2.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and

¹Mowday, 100.

²Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 86.

pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. (Titus 2:3-5)

Titus was not instructed by Paul to teach the young women, instead, he was to find mature women to whom he could teach sound doctrine. He should teach or direct the women leaders so that they can lead other women. These older women, in turn, were to teach the young women how to live godly lives. In his commentary on Titus, Hendriksen says, "One understands immediately that no one, not even Titus, is better able to train a young woman than an experienced, older woman."¹ While the Bible does not talk about a distinct process called counseling, it does couch counseling-type issues within discussions about ministry and discipling and body life within the church. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that these principles from Titus still apply today in terms of who should disciple/counsel whom. Mature men are to counsel men, and mature women are to counsel women. Carol Cornish says that "in any situation where teaching, counseling, or discipling is being done on a long-term basis one-to-one, the biblical pattern is for such ministry to be same-gender."²

The Ellen G. White statement calls for same-gender counseling: "Be careful how you are enticed to make women your confidants or to allow them to make you their confidant. Keep aloof from the society of women as much as you can."³

In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. It is not safe to permit the least departure from

¹Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 88.

²Ibid., 88, 89.

³White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce*, 167.

the strictest integrity. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." *When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.*¹

Sometimes men may justify counseling women because the woman counselee refuses to be referred to a woman counselor. Perhaps we should think about why she does not want to be counseled by a woman. Naomi Wright accurately points out that a same-gender counselor often has insight into a person of the same sex that a cross-gender counselor is not likely to possess. Women counselees who are simply looking for sympathy will want to avoid women who possess keen insight. They want the special, exclusive attention from their male counselors that they may be lacking in their other relationships.² This is a prescription for trouble. Why not give her a choice? Either she meets with a woman counselor, or she is team counseled by a man and a woman; preferably the male counselor's wife.

The reason for raising these gender issues is that I have seen firsthand the great damage done to people and to the cause of Christ because of the unwise and sinful actions of both counselors and counselees in cross-gender counseling situations. Tony Campolo says that when he was a young pastor, he was surprised that the women he was counseling

¹Ibid., 306, italics mine.

²Naomi T. Wright, "Let's Let Women Counsel Women," *Moody*, November 1980, 41-42.

were falling in love with him. He says that the women were coming to him with marriage problems; they were lonely because their husbands did not take the time to really listen to them. There he was, spending time alone with them on a regular basis and listening intently to what they had to say. He admits that the dynamics in this kind of situation are dangerous.¹

The vulnerability of the cross-gender individual during the counseling process has led some to conclude that male pastors should restrict their counseling to male parishioners and leave the counseling of females to other females. Maxine Glaz, for example, calls for a "reevaluation of the male psychological norms of most pastoral training."² However, most male pastors simply cannot avoid counseling congregants of the opposite sex, because when a person dies, the pastor is inevitably involved in grief counseling, however brief it may be. When the family has serious problems, the pastor is often the person to whom the people will turn. Even if the male pastor refers a female parishioner to another counselor, he has initiated a counseling relationship. Counseling across gender lines is an inevitable part of the pastor's role. The pastor needs to decide how and when he will meet with women for counseling. John Armstrong counsels pastors regarding cross-gender, long-term individual counseling:

It is commonly agreed that counseling women in long-term relationships is detrimental for both the pastor and the woman involved. I have found it best over many years of pastoral ministry to never meet a woman alone in her home, and never in my office unless others are present. Generally, I ask for the husband's presence.

¹Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 99.

²Maxine Glaz, "Reconstructing the Pastoral Care of Women," *Second Opinion* 17 (1991): 98.

More times than not I meet a woman in my own home with my wife present.¹

Some pastors seem to think that they can handle cross-gender counseling simply because they are committed Christians and then they will never fall into immorality. To say, as some do, that because Christians have the Holy Spirit they are enabled to counsel those of the opposite sex alone and resist temptation may be to advocate testing God.

Schoener and Marmor suggest that long-term therapy is more likely to become sexual.²

Dennis Rainey says that

people commit emotional adultery before they commit physical adultery. Emotional adultery is unfaithfulness of the heart. It starts when two people of the opposite sex begin talking with each other about intimate struggles, doubts, or feelings. They start sharing their souls in a way that God intended exclusively for the marriage relationship. Emotional adultery is friendship with the opposite sex that goes too far.³

When biblical counselors discuss the risks of cross-gender individual counseling, they usually encourage one another to proceed with the counseling as long as the counselor is exercising self-control. Are the pastors to conclude, then, that if the pastor is not troubled by temptation, then all problems have been resolved? Is protecting the pastor the whole story? Or is it equally important to protect the counselee from unnecessary exposure to temptation? Sinclair Ferguson makes this observation:

God made men and women to be attracted to each other, to need each other, and to enter into relationships with each other that have physical, spiritual, and mental dimensions. . . . [Therefore] we must guard our heart and our actions, gestures and

¹Armstrong, 190-191.

²Totten, 30.

³Dennis Rainey, *Lonely Husbands, Lonely Wives* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 81.

looks. . . . We will not play with our own emotions, and we will be scrupulous about the emotions of others.¹

Ferguson's comment suggests that when long-term individual counseling is needed, male counselors should counsel men and female counselors should counsel women. "Individual" counseling refers to situations in which someone comes alone for help. Every long-term counseling relationship should be gender-specific, man to man and woman to woman. It is commonly agreed that male pastors should never meet a woman alone in her home, and never in his office unless others are present. It is a wise attitude to ask the husband's presence or the pastor's wife's presence. All godly women will understand and respect this approach. Paul makes a suggestion, "Make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Rom 12:14). St. Francis de Sales said,

We must be on guard against deception in friendships, especially when they are contracted between persons of different sexes, no matter what the pretext may be. Satan often tricks those [who] begin with virtuous love. If they are not very prudent, fond love will first be injected, next sensual love, and then carnal love. . . . [Satan] does this subtly and tries to introduce impurity by insensible degrees.²

Pastors should not treat women with the casual affection they extend to the females in their family. How many tragedies have begun with brotherly or fatherly touches and then sympathetic shoulders! Pastors may even have to run the risk of being wrongly considered "distant" or "cold" by some women. Usually, men who indignantly thunder that they are beyond such sin are those who will certainly fall soonest.

¹Sinclair Ferguson, *Kingdom Life in a Fallen World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1986), 120, 121, 122.

²Quoted in Roper, 204.

Counsels from the Scriptures and Ellen G. White

Jesus counseled the woman at the well (John 4), and Abigail spoke to David to counsel him against acting in a rash manner (1 Sam 25), but in both of those cases, the one-to-one counseling was limited to one meeting. Even so, David fell in love with Abigail. In situations in which long-term individual counseling is needed, the Scripture presents same-gender counseling.

In Titus 2:1-5, the apostle Paul calls for same gender counseling:

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. (Titus 2:1-5)

Titus was not instructed by Paul to teach the young women. Instead, he was to find mature women to whom he could teach sound doctrine. "As Christians, we usually take for granted the idea that a discipling relationship will be same-gender. If we understand counseling to be a specialized form of discipleship, then we will find help in Titus 2."¹ In any situation where teaching, counseling, or discipling is being done on a long-term basis one-to-one, the biblical pattern is for such ministry to be same-gender. In biblical times, none would find a private room behind a closed door where a man and a woman, not married to each other, would meet repeatedly to discuss matters that promote a high degree of intimacy. Same gender counseling is preferable for two reasons: "More

¹Fitzpatrick and Cornish, 87.

potential exists for a base of similar experience, and less potential exists for sinful outcomes or needless struggles with temptation.”¹ Sometimes women refuse to be referred to a woman counselor. Why does she not want to be counseled by a woman? A woman counselor may recognize when women may be part of their own problems. Carol W. Cornish says that when a woman refuses to be referred to a woman counselor, she usually wants the special, exclusive attention from the male counselor that she may be lacking in her other relationships.² This is an invitation for temptation.

It would be wise to consider and ponder on a policy that a pastor developed together with his church board regarding a counseling policy for the pastoral staff. Every pastor should take these concerns to heart, just as Paul encouraged Titus to do so. Part of the policy states:

No pastoral staff member will enter into extended sessions (more than one) of counseling with a woman. It is understood that this kind of a policy will necessitate the building up of other individuals within the local assembly for the purposes of counseling. This fits the biblical model of Ephesians 4 (equipping other saints for work and ministry). It also fits Titus 2, where the older women [are instructed to] teach the younger women.³

Individual counseling for marriage problems, for concerns of singles, or for divorce matters are circumstances in which long-term cross-gender counseling has significant potential to promote a high degree of intimacy and to nurture strong relational bonds. Such kinds of relationships are particularly unwise.

¹Ibid., 92.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 104, 105.

One day, a pastor was driving home from the church office. He had spent the afternoon in counseling sessions. As he was driving home, he suddenly realized something about the woman he had just met with for the third time. He realized that, if he were a single man and were introduced to her, he would probably ask her out. But he was not single. He was married. And he wanted to stay married to the woman he loved very much. So here is what he did. He went home and told his wife what he had realized. She knew this woman. And then he told his wife that he thought it would be best for him not to counsel with that woman again. This is also when he came up with his own personal policy of counseling a woman only once and then referring her. Now, why did he decide to refer that woman to another counselor? Did anything wrong happen in those three sessions? No. Was anything said or done that was inappropriate? No. Did he question the motives of the woman who had come in for counseling? Absolutely not. She was genuinely trying to get some advice on her marriage. So why did he never meet with her again? Because some things are more important than life itself, like removing oneself from situations where one could possibly be tempted, like taking steps to protect his relationship with his wife. And there is one other reason he no longer would continue in that counseling situation. He wants to finish strong.¹ If the pastor is going to finish strong, he cannot go on through life without thinking. He must stay alert to the schemes of the enemy.

Ellen G. White gives wise advice regarding cross-gender counseling:

¹Farrar, 61.

“Be careful how you are enticed to make women your confidants or to allow them to make you their confidant. Keep aloof from the society of women as much as you can.

You will be in danger. Remember, we are living amid the perils of the last days. Almost everything is rotten and corrupt.”¹ This pastor finally fell into the sin of adultery and lost his credentials. Here are two more wise observations from Ellen G. White about cross-gender relationships:

In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. It is not safe to permit the least departure from the strictest integrity. ‘Abstain from all appearance of evil.’ When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.²

When one who claims to be teaching the truth is inclined to be much in the company of young or even married women, when he familiarly lays his hand upon them, or is often conversing with them in a familiar manner, be afraid of him; the pure principles of truth are not inwrought in his soul. Such are not in Christ, and Christ is not abiding in them. . . . The truth of heavenly origin never degrades the receiver, It leads him to regard the apostle Paul’s injunction to abstain from even the appearance of evil. . . . If a woman lingeringly holds your [pastor’s] hand, quickly withdraw it and save her from sin. If she manifests undue affection and mourns that her husband does not love her and sympathize with her, do not try to supply this lack. Your only safe and wise course in such a case is to keep your sympathy to yourself. Such cases are numerous.³

¹White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior*, 167.

²White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:306.

³White, *Testimonies Treasures*, 2:234, 239.

Conclusion

John Armstrong counsels pastors to take precaution as they minister. He says,

The pastor needs to decide how and when he will meet with women for counseling. It is commonly agreed that counseling women in long-term relationships is detrimental for both the pastor and the woman involved. I have found it best over many years of pastoral ministry to never meet a woman alone in her home, and never in my office unless others are present. Generally, I ask for the husband's presence. More times than not I meet a woman in my own home with my wife present. I find that godly women both understand and respect this approach. Paul counsels us to "make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Rom 12:14).¹

As we can see, then, God's Word and Ellen G. White, and other authors give us a framework for a counseling ministry. Long-term individual counseling should be same-gender, man to man and woman to woman. Although the Bible does not directly forbid one-to-one cross-gender counseling, it does promote same-gender discipleship. My suggestion is a call for prudence and wisdom in situations where a man and a woman, who are not married to each other, spend hours and hours together talking about matters that promote a high degree of intimacy, and that nurture strong relational bonds.

The following considerations are very relevant for this research conclusion:

1. The Hendrick's survey revealed that over 80 percent of the 246 pastors interviewed fell into sexual immorality as the result of cross-gender individual counseling.²

2. The Men's Confidential Survey polled 350 men: 10 percent of them are pastors, and 90 percent are deacons, elders, and men's ministry leaders. The survey

¹Armstrong, 190-191.

²Farrar, 27.

results reveal the extent to which pastors, elders, and Christian leaders struggle with their sexuality. Sixty-four percent struggle with sexual addiction; 25 percent admit to having had sexual intercourse with someone other than their wife, while married, since becoming a Christian; and 14 percent acknowledge having had sexual contact short of intercourse outside of their marriage since becoming a Christian.¹

3. Eighty-seven percent of practicing therapists admit to feeling sexually attracted to their clients.²

4. Shoener and Marmor's study suggests that cross-gender long-term therapy is more likely to become sexual.³

5. People typically commit emotional adultery before they commit physical adultery, and it starts when two people of the opposite sex begin talking with each other about intimate struggles, or feelings, in a way that God intended exclusively for marriage relationship.⁴

6. The *Leadership* survey found that 39 percent of responding pastors regarded sexual fantasies as harmless.⁵

¹Means, 132-133.

²3ottler, 49.

³Totten, 30.

⁴Rainey, 81.

⁵Armstrong, 188.

7. Ellen G. White advises against hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.¹

8. Ellen G. White gives counsel about cross-gender counseling:

When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. . . . If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants.²

Taking all these considerations into account, this study comes to the final conclusion that courses should be provided in the areas of sexual ethics in the ministry and specifically about the deadliest perils that exist in cross-gender long-term counseling. The church, colleges, and seminaries should work together in order to include in their curriculums courses to train pastors in this area.

Let me conclude this chapter by asking: How could pastors be protected from falling? How can one avoid being a casualty? How can one stop this tragic loss to the ministry? The following are in fact, a summary, and at the same time, suggestions that may help the pastor to have a Christian and professional behavior with a member of the opposite sex.

1. Be passionately in love with your spouse. A solid marriage is one of the greatest safeguards against sexual misconduct. A pastor must have such a kind of

¹White, *Messages to Young People*, 285.

²White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:306.

relationship with his wife that includes not only a satisfying sex life but also mutual affection. No other success compensates for failure in the home. That husband-wife bond must be stable and strong before the ministry can be stable and strong. When a minister's marriage does not demonstrate the warmth and tenderness of human love at its best, that becomes a tragedy and in many cases a fatal tragedy. Other church members could justifiably say, "If his religion doesn't work in this closest of all human relationships, how can we be sure that it is going to work in our own marriage?" Talk to your wife intimately daily. Plan to spend quality time with your wife, at least fifteen minutes daily.

2. Do not counsel women without someone else present. Preferably one's wife should be present. Keep your office door open. Encourage women's ministries to start a peer-counseling program for women.

3. Understand the nature of sexual attraction. Just remember that according to Prov 6:27-29, you are going to be burned if you play with fire. Remember that among fallen pastors, there is always a thought such as this: "It could never happen to me." The truth of the matter is that it can and does, and it might happen for everyone, even if one is over the age of 50 or 60. Do not allow lingering eye contact. This is the beginning of bonding. Never go anywhere alone with a woman. Never touch a woman if you find yourself alone with her. The attention of an attractive woman is so pleasant that one can easily and simply let things happen.

4. Be perceptive. Most naive pastors are young, but pastors of any age can be naive. Some pastors may innocently find themselves in serious trouble. They may

inadvertently become involved with situations they cannot handle. They suspect nothing until it blows up in their face and they yield to a sudden temptation. Had they seen it coming, they would have been better able to handle it. Maintain a balanced awareness both of what is going on and of your own vulnerability. Do not keep appreciation notes from women to read when life gets tough. Have your wife write you a few so that your thoughts go to her for comfort and not to another.

5. Be cautious. Do not meet a woman outside regular business hours when you are unaccompanied by a visitation pastor. Do not visit her home without your wife. Pastors have more freedom to visit people at home, to hug, to kiss, and to extend other friendly gestures of touch than any other profession. Remember, however, the very ready access to intimate parts of women's lives and the freedom to touch them create problems. Women who seek pastoral counseling are very vulnerable. They can easily be led on. It is amazing how trusting people are in their vulnerability. They give the pastor incredible power over them. The pastor has to be very careful with himself and sensitive to them. Prudence is the much needed virtue in the counseling process.

6. Never disclose private details about your life or marriage. Much of the attraction that parishioners feel for a pastor is attributed to transference that has been defined as the process in which people project their own unmet needs onto an idealized figure. Countertransference can also occur when the pastor projects his or her unmet needs on someone else which can contribute to acting out sexual feelings. Be alert to the effect of signals you may be unwittingly projecting.

7. Establish an accountability group. Share honestly any questionable behavior and take their counsel.

8. Keep your spiritual resistance high. In handling spiritual things regularly, ministers can easily become too familiar with the holy. What they teach to others by way of spiritual disciplines and exercises becomes perfunctory to them. No matter how often the pastor has preached a sermon, or offered a prayer, the event must never simply become a repetitious act with no heart in it. To follow the command of Christ, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48), and the admonition of Peter, “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18), the minister must continue to be a true disciple of Jesus, a student of the Word of God, and a practitioner of the disciplines of the Christian life. For the preacher, the Bible should not become simply the source of sermons. Spiritual growth comes from the regular practice of prayer, Bible study, worship, and Christian service. A healthy relationship with God surely will help one to say like Joseph: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen 39:9).

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRES

A Brief Pastoral Survey¹

Please circle the response that is correct for you, but do not write your name or anything else on this survey. Be sure that no one is able to see your responses while you are completing the survey, and remember to fold this sheet before you turn it in.

1. Do you regularly spend personal time with the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, at least three times a week? a. Yes b. No
2. Are there one or more men with whom you have built a friendship based on trust, openness, confidentiality, and accountability, who will confront you when you are in danger of doing something wrong? a. Yes b. No
3. Are you currently spending significant time with any attractive woman who is not your wife? a. Yes b. No c. I am not married
4. Are you absolutely sure that you will never have a romantic or emotional affair outside of marriage? a. Yes b. No
5. Are you absolutely sure that you will never have any kind of sexual involvement with someone who is not your spouse? a. Yes b. No

¹Survey adapted from Hendricks, see Farrar 1995.

Seminar Evaluation

Circle one response in the "Before" column, and one response in the "After" column for items # 1 & 2.

1. <u>Before</u> the seminar I thought that: a. "people are more likely to be sexually exploited by secular therapists than by clergy" b. "people are as likely to be sexually exploited by clergy as by secular therapists" c. "people are more likely to be sexually exploited by clergy than by secular therapists"	<u>After</u> the seminar I realize that: d. "people are more likely to be sexually exploited by secular therapists than by clergy" e. "people are as likely to be sexually exploited by clergy as by secular therapists" f. "people are twice as likely to be sexually exploited by clergy as by secular therapists"
2. <u>Before</u> the seminar I thought that: a. fewer than 10% of surveyed clergy report having had sexual contact with parishioners b. fewer than 20% of surveyed clergy report having had sexual contact with parishioners c. more than 30% of surveyed clergy report having had sexual contact with parishioners	<u>After</u> the seminar I realize that: d. between 10% and 20% of surveyed clergy reported sexual contact with parishioners e. between 20% and 30% of surveyed clergy reported sexual contact with parishioners f. between 20% and 39% of surveyed clergy reported sexual contact with parishioners

Circle one number that most accurately represents your opinion for the following statements.

3. After attending this seminar I view clergy sexual misconduct as

not a serious problem 0 1 2 3 4 5 a very serious problem

4. After attending this seminar I recognize that every SDA pastor is at risk of becoming involved in clergy sexual misconduct

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

5. This seminar has helped me to recognize how important it is for every SDA pastor to conform to the highest standards of moral practice

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

6. After attending this seminar I can identify the following patterns of pastoral practice that increase the risk of clergy sexual misconduct:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

7. After attending this seminar I recognize that pastors must be very careful to avoid using the power that comes with their position, to take advantage of vulnerable parishioners

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

8. After attending this seminar I recognize that pastors should be alert to the likelihood that certain parishioners will be attracted to them emotionally or romantically, and that it is the pastor's responsibility to wisely manage such situations in ways that protect the parishioners from hurt and harm

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

9. After attending this seminar I recognize that, because long-term, cross-gender counseling is the highest risk factor related to clergy sexual misconduct, extraordinary safeguards should be kept in place if ever pastors practice this form of counseling

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

10. After attending this seminar I recognize that pastors can reduce the likelihood that they will become involved in clergy sexual misconduct if they diligently invest time and effort in maintaining strong relationships with their spouse, their God, and their accountability partners

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

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VITA

Samuel Ramos was born to Salviano Ramos Nogueira and Zulmira Souza Ramos on April 24, 1951, in Salto do Itararé, Paraná, Brazil. In February 1971, he started his ministerial training in São Paulo, at School of Adventist Theology of Adventist Institute of Education. In January 29, 1973, he married Leila Regina Torres Ramos in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. While studying at Adventist Institute of Education their first child Anderson T. Ramos was born in May 1974. After graduation, in December 1974, they returned to Curitiba, as a minister in the Paranaense Conference. While serving as a pastor in Curitiba their second child Evellyn T. Ramos was born in June 1976.

In March 1979 Samuel was ordained to the gospel ministry. After serving as a pastor in the Paranaense Conference for nine years he was transferred to the Central Amazon Mission, in Manaus city. He worked there as a pastor for five years, and two years as a Adult Ministries Director, and during this time he also worked on his Master of Theology program. He finished his Master's program in February 1989. In 1991 he was transferred to the Brazilian North Union where he served as a Director of Adult Ministries. In January 1992, he was transferred to North Coast Mission, in Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, where he served as a field president. He worked there for six years. In May 1997 the family moved to Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to work on the Doctor of Ministry program. After he finished his

classes in 1998, he moved to Richmond, VA, with his family to plant a new Seventh-day Adventist Brazilian Church. He and his wife currently pastor a Brazilian Church in Richmond with 130 members. They are very happy to serve the Lord in this ministry and they hope to keep serving Him until He comes again.