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ABSTRACT

FACILITATING APPROPRIATE CLERGY RESPONSES TO
ABUSE AMONG PARISHONERS IN THE WISCONSIN
CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

by

Nicholas S. Moore

Adviser: Ann-Marie Buchanan

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: FACILITATING APPROPRIATE CLERGY RESPONSES TO ABUSE AMONG
PARISHONERS IN THE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS

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Date completed: September 2024

Problem

Clergy are frequently the initial point of contact for parishioners seeking guidance and counseling on various life issues and challenges. In certain instances, these matters may be linked to physical and/or sexual abuse, either directly or indirectly. Many clergy have not had the opportunity to receive training on recognizing the signs, symptoms, prevalence, causes, and effects of abuse, or on how and when to refer individuals to specialists or law enforcement when abuse is suspected. This can lead to inadequate emotional and spiritual healing at best, and further psychological damage at worst, for parishioners, with effects that may last a lifetime or span generations. One contributing factor is the clergy's lack of access to education, identification methods, and tools.

Methodology

In May 2023, a six-hour training session was developed and conducted at the Wisconsin Conference with the aim of enhancing knowledge and understanding of the potential for physical and sexual abuse among church members within the conference. Thirty-one pastors and conference officials participated in the training, undertaking both pre- and post-tests to assess their understanding of issues related to physical and sexual abuse, as well as mandatory reporting laws pertaining to such abuse. The data was analyzed using a mixed-methods approach, which comprised multiple surveys incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, to evaluate the pastors' understanding of the complexities surrounding abuse.

Results

The training revealed that the majority of pastors had little to no experience in identifying potential victims of both physical and sexual abuse prior to the training. Few participants could recall receiving any previous training on these topics during their theological education. None of the attendees had received training regarding their roles as mandatory reporters during their theological studies. As a result of this lack of training, many were also unfamiliar with the laws governing proper reporting procedures in the state of Wisconsin. Comparing the pre- and post-training surveys, the data showed a significant improvement in knowledge acquisition regarding physical and sexual abuse, as well as the correct procedures for reporting.

Conclusion

Based on the pastors' test results, reflections on their learning, the training experience and its structured format, and engagement with the curriculum focused on abuse, their perceptions of the training ranged from being very informative to transformative in terms of their self-reported learning outcomes. As a result, it is recommended that all pastors undergo further exploration and training on physical and sexual abuse, as well as the relevant mandatory reporting laws.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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ABUSE AMONG PARISHONERS IN THE WISCONSIN
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A Professional Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One significant consequence of sin in the world is the deterioration of interpersonal relationships. This theme is evident early in Scripture. In Genesis chapter 3, mankind's rebellion against God's commands is evident. This rebellion not only brings curses upon nature itself but also disrupts the relational harmony and equality that previously existed between husband and wife. "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16). The consequences of sin and its effects on interpersonal relationships only become darker. The Bible takes us almost immediately to the story of Adam and Eve's progeny and their inability to conduct healthy relationships. From there, everyone who has ever lived reflects the darkness of disobedience that envelopes their character as a direct result of Adam and Eve's choices.

In modern society, some of the most egregious manifestations of interpersonal relationship breakdowns occur in the realms of physical and sexual abuse. These issues transcend nationalities, socio-economic levels, ethnicities, and ages. According to a comprehensive review of the literature, one in three women will experience some form of physical abuse in their lifetime (Breiding et al., 2014, p. 1), while in the United States alone, more than 3,000,000 children fall victim to child abuse annually, resulting in approximately 2,000 deaths each year (Babakhanlou & Beattie, 2019, p. 182). In addition, studies have revealed that one in six boys and one in four girls will experience

sexual abuse, and those who are abused before the age of 18 are 2 to 13 times more likely to be victimized as adults, elevating the ratio in adulthood to one in five men and one in two women (Doe, 2016, 4:50). Consequently, many church members are also statistically at risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse. However, the precise number of members affected remains unclear. Dr. Rene Drumm's groundbreaking 2009 study on abuse within the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists surveyed 1,431 individuals across 49 different churches, yielding statistics that were deeply alarming to many.

Rates of domestic violence in the study were nearly equal to the general population of the United States. Sixty-five percent of individuals had experienced controlling or demeaning behavior by an intimate partner, 46 percent had seen common couple violence, 29 percent had been sexually victimized, and 10 percent had endured severe physical abuse. (Aamodt, 2020, p. 2)

Drawing from my experiences in seminary, my tenure as a pastor, and my dialogues with fellow pastors and ministry leaders, I've come to believe that the Seventh-day Adventist church lacks consistent training for its pastors to identify, address, and report the often neglected and overlooked issues of abuse. Furthermore, I'm aware that Seventh-day Adventist pastors have a unique opportunity to offer support to individuals experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse, as they are frequently the first person a member confides in regarding their interpersonal challenges.

As highlighted in the 2021 docuseries titled "Domestic Violence & The Church (Part I)" presented by End It Now NAD, Dr. Steve Tracey emphasized that while some members may confide in their pastors about such incidents, many suffer in silence,

reluctant to report the abuse to anyone. Moreover, most pastors are not trained to identify potential victims of abuse, handle such situations appropriately, and are often ill-equipped to report incidents to the appropriate authorities. Throughout the docuseries, numerous professionals cite the correlation between a lack of trained pastors and inadequate emotional, psychological, and spiritual healing of members, which can have long-lasting effects spanning generations. Drawing from my own experience as a pastor (which I will elaborate on further in chap. 4), I am aware that other consequences may include a decline in trust towards conference employees and institutions, encompassing churches, colleges, academies, pastors, and teachers. In addition, inadequately trained pastors may lead to lawsuits and legal actions often initiated against conference institutions or individual employees who were mandated to report but failed to do so.

The introductory chapter will delineate the ministry context in which this challenge is situated. These challenges entail preparing pastors to ethically and legally address potential complaints from church members concerning physical and sexual abuse, as well as navigating the mandatory reporting laws pertaining to various forms of abuse. In addition, this initial chapter will furnish a concise statement of the problem, outline the statement of the task, specify the project's limitations, and offer a detailed description of the methodology. Furthermore, it will introduce definitions unique to this study and conclude with a summary of the chapter's contents.

Description of the Ministry Context

This project was conducted at the offices of the Wisconsin Seventh-day Adventist Conference in Fall River, Wisconsin. It consisted of a six-hour training session held in a classroom with 31 participants, primarily comprising pastors and other conference staff.

Pastors within the Wisconsin Conference are mandated to attend multiple training sessions annually, covering various topics aimed at preparing them for the challenges they may encounter in their ministry and for self-care. The Wisconsin Conference oversees churches exclusively within the state of Wisconsin. Established in 1863 as part of the Illinois-Wisconsin Conference, which initially included Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the Wisconsin Conference became an independent entity in 1928. Presently, the conference comprises 63 churches, 9 schools, employs 31 pastors, and has a total membership of 7,793 individuals. Notably, the state of Wisconsin has a total population of 5,795,486.

Statement of the Problem

Pastors frequently serve as the initial resource church members seek for guidance and counseling on various life issues and challenges, including those stemming from physical and sexual abuse. Numerous pastors lack training to identify the signs, symptoms, prevalence, causes, and effects of abuse, or to know when and how to refer individuals to specialists or law enforcement agencies when abuse is suspected. In 2018, the Nashville-based Lifeway Research Center conducted a phone survey of 1,000 senior pastors, inquiring about their awareness of the #MeToo movement and issues related to sexual and domestic violence.

Two-thirds of pastors say domestic or sexual violence occurs in the lives of people in their congregation. And many pastors believe the #MeToo movement has made their churches more aware of how common sexual and domestic violence are. More pastors say they are addressing these issues from the pulpit. Still, half say they lack training in how to address sexual and domestic violence. (Smietana, 2018, p. 1)

The consequence of pastoral lack of training can range from inadequate emotional and spiritual healing to further psychological harm for members, with potential effects lasting for lifetimes and or generations. Contributing factors include the absence of education, identification methods, and tools available to pastors.

Statement of the Task

The objective of this project is to equip pastors in the Wisconsin Conference with the skills to recognize and respond appropriately to abuse among their church members. This training occurred during a one-day seminar held at the conference office. The seminar's content was sourced from trained professionals such as doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, lawyers, and researchers. This diverse expertise was compiled to ensure the accuracy of the project's content and conclusions. Information gleaned from consultations with experts in various fields was supplemented with data from current peer-reviewed journals and articles. This compilation aimed to provide pastors with the tools to effectively address their congregants' complaints of abuse.

In addition to the primary goal of providing practical tools and knowledge, this project seeks to address the broader implications of inadequate training within pastoral care. By highlighting the consequences of insufficient preparedness, including potential legal repercussions and the erosion of trust within congregational settings, the project aims to underscore the urgent need for systemic change in training protocols. Furthermore, it aims to foster a culture of proactive intervention and support, enhancing both the immediate response to abuse and the long-term recovery and well-being of affected individuals. These expanded objectives not only aim to improve pastoral practice

but also to contribute to the establishment of a more robust framework for abuse prevention and response within the church community.

Delimitations of the Project

This project's scope is restricted to Seventh-day Adventist pastors currently employed by the Wisconsin Conference. Initially, the project aimed to involve clergy from all Christian denominations and all Seventh-day Adventist conference employees, including academy staff and teachers. However, logistical challenges for both the researcher and conference management led to the exclusion of these groups. Consequently, this project focused solely on training Seventh-day Adventist pastors who may encounter individuals experiencing or having experienced physical and sexual abuse. The project will solely assess pastors' self-reported knowledge about abuse and mandatory reporting before and after the training.

Description of the Project Process

The project process included fashioning a theological reflection, reviewing current literature, developing and implementing an intervention, and then evaluating and reporting the results.

Definition of Terms

While specialized terms are defined as they appear in the text, some frequently used terms with specialized meanings are defined in the outset of this section. These terms include physical abuse, child abuse, child maltreatment, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence and neglect.

Physical abuse is a term that means “any non-accidental act or behavior causing injury, trauma, or other physical suffering or bodily harm” (Giardino, 2008, p. 1). In this paper physical abuse is used in its context in relationship to children, adults, and the elderly.

Child Abuse is a “physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person” (California Penal Code 273d PC).

The definition of *Child Maltreatment* according to the World Health Organization is as follows: “Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (Babakhanlou & Beattie, 2019, p. 180).

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is defined as “any sexual activity that the child cannot understand or give consent to. It may include fondling, oral-genital contact, rape, genital or anal penetration, exhibitionism, voyeurism and exposure to pornography” (Babakhanlou & Beattie, 2019, p. 184).

The definition of *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)*, as given by Alvarez et al. (2017), is “behaviors such as physical aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse that occur within an intimate relationship and results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm” (p. 48). When citing a 2010 Center for Disease Control (CDC) definition, Hussain et al. (2015, p. 62) simply added the elaboration of “current or former partner or spouse” to their definition (p. 62), which is very similar to the idea of an “intimate relationship.”

Neglect, as defined by the researchers cited in this paper is “The persistent failure of the caregiver to provide for the child’s physical, emotional, educational and medical needs, which can result in developmental delay, physical and psychological harm.” (Babakhanlou & Beattie, 2019, p. 186).

Summary

This introduction has provided insight into the unmet challenges of training pastors in addressing abuse and complying with mandatory reporting laws within the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. While this project originates from a pastoral standpoint and maintains a focused perspective, its analysis is intended to share insights regarding the necessity for continuous education and training of pastoral staff. The aspiration is that this project will serve as a catalyst for other conferences, their academies, and possibly seminaries to adopt similar training initiatives for all their attendees and employees, including students, academy teaching staff, camp counselors, chaplains, and pastors.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Growing up in the 90's one of my favorite bands that I routinely listened to was a thrashy punk group known as "The Offspring." For one reason or another the lyrics of one of their songs has stayed fresh in my mind for nearly two decades. As you read the lyrics below, pay close attention as I will be referring back to them throughout the theological reflection of this thesis. The song is titled: "Way Down the Line." The following are the lyrics:

*Nothing changes cause it's all the same
The world you get's the one you give away
It all just happens again way down the line
There is a chain that's never broken
You know the story it's sad but true
An angry man gets drunk and beats his kids
The same old way his drunken father did*

Chorus

*What comes around well it goes around
Nothing changes cause it's all the same
The world you get's the one you give away
It all just happens again way down the line*

*17 Shannon is pregnant
Young as her mom when she had her
The kid is never gonna have a dad
The same old way that Shannon never had
What comes around well it goes around*

Chorus

*Nothing changes cause it's all the same
The world you get's the one you give away
It all just happens again way down the line
And all the things you learn when you're a kid
You'll f*** up just like your parents did
It all just happens again way down the line*

*And welfare moms have kids on welfare
And fat parents they have fat kids too
You know it's never gonna end
The same old cycle's gonna start again
What comes around well it goes around*

Chorus

*Nothing changes cause it's all the same
The world you get's the one you give away
It all just happens again way down the line
And all the things you learn when you're a kid
You'll f*** up just like your parents did
It all just happens again way down the line*

The Offspring (1997)

Being a thrashy punk rock band of the 90's, the mission of their lyrics is to slap you in the face with something real and offensive to get your attention (I toned down the lyrics slightly, as some of it may not be appropriate for a theological reflection). Like the lyrics or not, one has to admit the air of truth associated with the song's claims. The predominate theme throughout the song is "*The world you get is the one you give away, it all just happens again way down the line.*" Many in society know this to be true, we even teach it to our kids as "monkey see, monkey do." Modern psychology knows that to be true. Even the Bible presents this theme: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6 NKJ). Many people understand this as common sense yet, many of those who can tangibly understand the concept on a surface level rarely begin to understand its deep significance on the social, psychological,

and spiritual levels. Even if we do, many still fail to make adequate life adjustments so that negative life influences don't turn into consequences "*way down the line*" for future generations.

In this chapter, we will explore how the recurring themes of familial generational sin impacted certain Biblical characters across generations. This will establish the importance of a spiritual leader's ability to recognize and guide their members toward spiritual and emotional healing. Ideally, this will halt the cycle of generational sin in its tracks, preventing its continuation "*way down the line.*" As a former minister and current chaplain, I have witnessed this recurring theme of "*it all just happens again way down the line*" all too frequently. During my time in seminary years ago, I volunteered at a state prison in Indiana. During my time there, I witnessed a father and son being reunited because they were both incarcerated in the same prison. It was at that moment that lyrics from decades past came rushing to the forefront of my mind: "*You know it's never gonna end. The same old cycle's gonna start again.*" It's no secret that the high recidivism rates among our prison populations vividly illustrate the reality of "*The world you get's the one you give away. It all just happens again way down the line.*"

Nevertheless, the validity of this truth extends beyond the confines of prison. I have also observed it in my role as a pastor. As a pastor, over the course of a few years, one becomes acquainted with the families in their church. Consequently, one also becomes acquainted with their generational family dynamics. I became acquainted with specific families in churches where I have become familiar with three generations of the same family. Reflecting on one's parents and grandparents, we often find that we can trace not only our physical features through the family line but also observe character

traits and spiritual influences that transcend generations. While a godly heritage can provide a solid foundation of virtues and faithfulness, actions such as anger, lust, and bitterness establish destructive patterns that must be acknowledged and overcome. Often, there is a noticeable contrast between families who fully embraced Christianity in both confession and practice before their children reached adolescence and those who clung to remnants of the past that should have been relinquished. I am not suggesting that this is an exact science. Each family contains numerous potential variables that cannot always be traced, and external influences invariably play a role. However, I am asserting that there are discernible patterns that I have consistently observed in families. Moreover, the Bible repeatedly illustrates these themes of generational sin.

First, let's define what generational sin is. After that, we will then examine how abuse is presented in the bible and look at few examples from scripture for each. Nan Brown from Crosswalk.com gives the following definition for generational sins:

"Generational sins are weaknesses or tendencies that are handed down to us through the generations from parents or members of our family. These sins can involve behavioral patterns and ways of thinking that keep us trapped in the past" (Brown, 2018, What is Generational Sin para. 2). Most of us can understand that generational sins manifest in patterns, and once a pattern takes root in a family, it can persist and multiply, with the effects lasting for generations. Though sins can be transmitted through generations, each individual is responsible for his or her own personal sins against God. The Bible verifies this in the following passages:

"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut 24:16 NKJ).

“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (Ezek 18:20 NKJ). From these two verses, it seems clear that only an individual is responsible for their own sins.

However, another Bible verse, one of the Ten Commandments, appears to contradict this principle.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image— any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exod 20:4–6 NKJ).

This verse in Exodus appears to conflict with those in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel. The latter explicitly state that God does not punish sons for their fathers’ sins. However, in the verse from Exodus, it states that God “visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.” Many articles and even dissertations delve into this question in greater detail. However, for brevity, I will summarize: Ezekiel addresses the **guilt** of the father’s sins never being held against the sons, while Exodus discusses the **consequences** of the father’s sins being passed on to the children. Dr. Norman Geisler commented on these texts:

If a father is a drunk, the children can suffer abuse and even poverty. Likewise, if a mother has contracted AIDS from drug use, then her baby may be born with AIDS.

But this does not mean that the innocent children are guilty of the sins of their parents. Further, even if the Exodus passage implied that moral guilt was somehow also visited on the children, it would only be because they too, like their fathers, had sinned against God. Noteworthy is the fact that God only visits the iniquities of “those who hate” Him (Ex. 20:5), not those who do not. (Geisler, 2015, *Defending Inerrancy*).

In addition, it is important to note that, according to the Exodus text, if the children of a God-rejecting earthly father choose to make the Lord their sovereign and commit to loving Him with their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut 6:5 NKJ), this decision can enable God to demonstrate His “covenant of faithfulness to a thousand generations” (Exod 20:6 NKJ). This is contingent upon each generation’s continued commitment to loving God and adhering to His commandments. Ultimately, God judges individuals rather than entire families.

Having briefly examined the distinction between individual and familial sins, I now intend to explore what constitutes abuse from a biblical perspective. In this theological reflection and throughout the rest of this research paper, the terms “sins” and “abuse” are often used interchangeably. Biblical abuse refers to the sinful mistreatment of others that contradicts the biblical mandate to love and respect one another. It encompasses more than physical violence, including any form of mistreatment or misuse driven by inherent selfishness that results in harm to others. The Bible characterizes abuse as a sin because it violates the command to love one another (John 13:34). Abuse fundamentally disregards others and opposes this directive, as the abuser prioritizes personal gratification over the well-being of others, regardless of the consequences. This

notion is unequivocally condemned in both the Old and New Testaments: “You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry” (Exod 22:22–23 NKJ), and “That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness” (1 Thess 4:6–7 NKJ). Now that abuse and generational sins have been defined, we can proceed to examine how these concepts have progressed through families “way down the line” throughout the Bible.

Adam and Eve

The initial couple fashioned by God possessed all conceivable blessings. They enjoyed life, the companionship of a partner, direct communion with God, and were devoid of all shame, remorse, or regret. Their existence was characterized by perfection. However, as the familiar story unfolds, Eve fell victim to the deception of the serpent, and Adam, despite being fully aware of God’s warning concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, chose to prioritize his relationship with Eve, a fellow created being, over obedience to God the Creator. Consequently, their disobedience to God’s command regarding the forbidden tree resulted in a series of direct consequences, as outlined in select passages from the book of Genesis:

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”... To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth

children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Gen 3:9–11; 16–18 NKJ)

The consequences of their disobedience were nearly immediate. Adam and Eve both experienced an immediate sense of shame regarding their nakedness, a phenomenon unique to humans among all species. In addition, each gender endured curses that would impact their respective sexes throughout all future generations. Throughout history, women would face increased sorrow, conception, and pain in childbirth as consequences of Eve’s disobedience. In addition, they would experience a somewhat less than ideal desire for their husbands and husband rulership would also be a result. Adam’s disobedience resulted in adverse effects on the soil. The ease and enjoyment previously associated with labor would be diminished, and work frustrations increased due to Adam’s disobedience. Western commentators have observed that the curses on femininity were related to interpersonal relationships, where women often find a sense of purpose. Conversely, the curses on masculinity were linked to decreased satisfaction and heightened frustration in their trade or labor, where men typically derive their sense of purpose.

So, if you feel hesitant or embarrassed about being naked, or if your interpersonal relationships or work seem less than perfect, you can attribute it to our ancestors, Adam and Eve.

If that wasn't depressing enough, we now also get old, sick, and die. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12 NKJ).

Unfortunately, the consequences of their sin also extended to every other creature as well.

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits... For the creation was subjected to futility... because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption... For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Rom 8:19-22 NKJ)

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's commands radically altered the entire creation; even plants weren't spared in the curse. "Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you..." (Gen 3:18 NKJ). Because we are all genetic descendants of Adam and Eve, their sins have affected us "*way down the line.*" In Christian theology, this theme is commonly referred to as inherited sin or original sin, which is the doctrine that humans inherit a tainted nature and a proclivity to sin from birth. Romans 5:12, cited above, explains this concisely. The primary issue is that every person is born with a fallen, imperfect sinful nature that separates us from fellowship with God. Therefore, there is no way to escape the tendency to sin. Consequently, all people sin and fall short of God's glory (Rom 3:23).

Fortunately, a rescue plan was already in place even before our parents Adam and Eve sinned. The plan of redemption for all of humanity's sins was already set in place before God even created the world! Jesus came to atone for our sins on the cross. Through His sacrifice, we are redeemed and seen as faultless by the Father when we accept Jesus' sacrifice (1 Pet 1:19–20; Eph 1:3–6; 1 Cor 5:21; John 3:16–17; 4:16; Acts 4:12; Rom 7:24–25; Rev 13:8).

This is wonderful news for all of us and gives us hope for the future. However, until the unveiling and the day of redemption, we are still bound to sin and its consequences. Nevertheless, God did not leave humanity without guidance to avoid further sins. Throughout history, He provided direction through special revelation, prophets, judges, leaders, kings, and priests. Through these channels, mankind could identify, avoid, and repent of sins that degrade the image of God within themselves. God understood that once sin took root in a family, it would have consequences that would trickle down and destroy future generations. I want to focus particularly on one family and their struggles with generational sins.

Abraham and His Descendants

In Genesis chapter 11, we are introduced to a man named Abram (later called Abraham) and his wife Sarai (later called Sarah), who had previously migrated with his father Terah from the city of Ur (located in modern-day southeastern Iraq) to the city of Haran (modern-day southeastern Turkey). However, Abram's journey was far from over. In Genesis 12, God instructed Abram to leave his father's house and go to a different land where God would bless Abram and his descendants in various ways. Abram then faithfully followed God's somewhat vague instructions (as God didn't specify the

destination, but rather commanded Abram to leave, promising further guidance upon arrival). Upon reaching Eastern Turkey, Abram traveled south for approximately 400 miles to a place called Shechem (modern-day central Israel), where God spoke to him once again, promising to give that land to Abram's descendants. Abram then resided in nearby Bethel for an unspecified period until a famine in the region compelled him to travel further south into Egypt. It was there, just before entering Egypt, that we witness one of Abram's most notorious faults—deception.

And deception will become an ongoing issue in his family "*on down the line*" for generations.

And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore, it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." (Gen 12:11-13 NKJ)

Indeed, Abram's concerns were justified. Sarai was highly desired by the Egyptians because of her beauty. The Pharaoh of Egypt even took her into his palace and nearly married her until God intervened by sending plagues on Pharaoh and his household (this was not the last time such an event occurred in the Bible involving an Egyptian Pharaoh). This act of deception by Abram was ultimately rooted in fear. Fear exerted such control over him that Abram was willing to expose his wife to potential harm to avoid the threat of death! However, once Pharaoh discovered that Sarai was married to Abram, he expelled them from Egypt (which undoubtedly must have been an

embarrassing situation for Abram). Now, did Abram learn his lesson about deceit, especially when it involved his wife? Well, no.

Years later, Abram (then known as Abraham, and Sarai, as Sarah after God changed both of their names following a covenant they had made) once again resorted to the same deception with another ruler. Why did he do that? It was again because he feared that others might kill him to acquire his beautiful wife, Sarah. This incident occurred in an area known as Gerar (modern-day central Israel) as Abraham migrated into the territory of a king named Abimelech. Again, almost the exact same scenario unfolded as it had previously in Egypt. Abraham, fearing for his life, falsely claimed that Sarah was his sister. However, in Genesis chapter 20, we discover that Abraham was only telling a half-truth.

Sarah was actually Abraham's half-sister. They shared the same father (Terah) but had different mothers. Nevertheless, they were fully married and had been husband and wife for decades. So, technically, he was not lying, but he was still being outright deceitful due to a fear that he would be killed. Sure enough, King Abimelech took Sarah into his household and presented Abraham with numerous gifts to placate her "brother." Sarah resided in Abimelech's household for an unspecified period, during which she remained untouched by the king. However, how long could this celibacy endure? It appears that physical intimacy was imminent, but God intervened once again to protect Sarah.

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she, even she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.” And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore, I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.” (Gen 20:3–7 NKJ)

King Abimelech promptly returned Sarah to Abraham, and for the second time, there was a severe public rebuke— not directed solely at Abraham, as was the case in Egypt, but also targeting Sarah for their deceit. Then to Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed, this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody.” Thus, she was rebuked (Gen 20:16 NKJ).

Following this incident, there are no further recorded episodes of Abraham and Sarah lying about their relationship. However, this same sin of deceit will resurface, as the song states, “*way down the line.*”

Isaac

In Genesis 21, Isaac, the son promised to Abraham by God, was finally born to Abraham at the age of 100. In Genesis 24, nearly 40 years after Isaac’s birth, he married Rebekah, his first cousin once removed, who was the granddaughter of his father Abraham’s brother Nahor and Milcah. While many other significant events unfolded rapidly with this family in this section of Genesis, I want to specifically focus on what happened in chapter 26 where the sin of deception resurfaces. This episode occurred in

Gen 26:1–33. Here, Isaac, in order to avoid a famine, emigrated to the southern region of Gerar, ruled by a king whose name happened to be Abimelech. This was the same place and the same name of the king that Isaac’s father Abraham had previously encountered. Isaac moved in obedience to God’s instruction, with God promising to fulfill the oath made with his father to bless him and make a great nation from his descendants. Genesis 24:16 informs us that Isaac’s young wife, Rebekah, was also “very beautiful.” So, what did Isaac fear? Isaac shared the same fear as his father Abraham — that foreigners might kill him to take his beautiful wife. In this situation, what did Isaac do?

So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, “She is my sister”; for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” because he thought, “lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.” Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’” And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.” So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” (Gen 26:6–11 NKJ)

Isaac then spent a year in the area and became wealthy, arousing envy among the Philistines who inhabit Gerar. Eventually, even King Abimelech himself began to envy Isaac’s prosperity and sent him away from his territory.

Now, I'd like to digress slightly. In certain circles, there is considerable debate and controversy concerning the king of Gerar known as Abimelech. As you've been reading, you may be wondering, "Abraham and Isaac experienced nearly identical events and scenarios: they both had beautiful wives, were forced to move due to famine, settled in the same town (Gerar) at different times, and both resorted to the same lie to protect themselves. Most intriguingly, they encountered kings with the same name. One might question: could this possibly be the same king? Wasn't there a gap of nearly 90 years between Abraham's encounter with Abimelech and Isaac's encounter with him? Could this even be the same king?" If you are pondering these questions, you are not alone. Many ancient commentaries have debated whether the Abimelech who interacted with Abraham and Sarah was the same as the one who encountered Isaac and Rebekah.

As far back as the second century CE, Jews found this same question about Abimelech compelling. During this time, a translation of the Torah was developed for Aramaic-speaking Jews and early Christians who could not read the original Hebrew. This translation was called the Targum Onkelos, and it included "clarifications" for the reader that weren't in the original Hebrew. Below is a snippet of the Targum Onkelos with the change in bold italics. This event occurred after King Abimelech had sent Isaac out of his country.

And Isaac said to him, why have you come to me when you have hated me, and sent me from you? And they said, seeing we have seen that the Word of the Lord is for thy help; and we have said let the oath that was *between our fathers* be now confirmed between us and thee... (Targum Onkelos, Genesis 26)

However, the original Hebrew text from Gen 26:28 reads a little differently: “But they said, ‘We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you.’ So we said, ‘Let there now be an *oath between us*, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you’.”

There are two possibilities concerning the Targum Onkelos text: The translator was either working from a different source text (highly unlikely given the scrupulous nature of Jewish scribes throughout history), or the writer of the Targum Onkelos added “between our fathers” to persuade the reader that this was not the same Abimelech from the time of Abraham. If the early account of the Targum Onkelos didn’t raise enough questions on the issue, another retelling of the book of Genesis emerged in the 16th century known as the Sefer haYashar, or in English, the “Book of Jasher.” This text also suggests the existence of two Abimelechs, a father and son. Those who advocate for the existence of two distinct Abimelechs cite additional reasons beyond the Targum Onkelos and the Book of Jasher. Notably, Abimelech exhibits no recognition of having previously encountered Isaac’s father Abraham in the second account. The absence of any reference from either Abimelech or the narrator of Genesis may strike readers as peculiar.

However, scholars have proposed reasons throughout the centuries indicating that this is indeed the same Abimelech. One of the most glaring is the presence of another person named each time with Abimelech: Phichol, the commander of Abimelech’s army: “And it came to pass at that time that *Abimelech and Phichol*, the commander of his army, spoke to *Abraham*, saying, ‘God is with you in all that you do’” (Gen 21:22 NKJ).

Then *Abimelech* came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and *Phichol* the commander of his army. And *Isaac* said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?” (Gen 26:26–27 NKJ)

The mention of a certain "Phicol" in both instances seems to be a very compelling argument for the first Abimelech argument. However, proponents of the second Abimelech argument use the Phicol argument in a different way. One of the main reasons scholars propose the two Abimelechs' argument is that there is simply too much time between the two encounters, some estimate as much as 90 years. However, with that reasoning, proponents of the two Abimelechs say that it is more likely that Abimelech and Phicol are not names but rather titles, comparable to the Pharaohs of Egypt and Caesars of Rome. This might mean that the names were passed down from fathers to sons with their respected positions. One of the main reasons for this line of thinking comes from the story of King David pretending insanity before the Philistine king of Gath known as **Achish** in 1 Samuel 21. The same era of that event is recorded in Psalm 34, but the title of Psalm 34 reads: "A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before **Abimelech**, who drove him away, and he departed."

This has led many scholars to believe that, among the Philistines at least, Abimelech was a title given the king, rather than a personal name which would support the two Abimelechs' theory.

The last biblical Abimelech we need to investigate is in Judg 8:34 where we are introduced to Abimelech, the son of Gideon. However, this Abimelech, although he was eventually declared a king by the citizens of Beth-millo and Shechem, was a Jew and not a Philistine as in the previous accounts and therefore, one could assume it was simply a name and not a title. Even more support that it was merely a name, is that this Abimelech was merely the son of Gideon's concubine and the only reason he came to power in that small region was because he had killed his half-brothers.

Whether you side with the supporters of the single Abimelech theory or those favoring the idea of two Abimelechs doesn't seem to really matter that much in the grand scheme of things. Personally, I want to believe in the one Abimelech. I will discuss the deeper significance of the implications of the one Abimelech in a little bit. But from my research of the debate, it seems like the main factor contributing to the two Abimelech's theory is the longevity factor. The argument between the two Abimelech's mindsets seems to stem from the fact that if the same king that encountered Abraham later encountered Isaac, he would be really old. It's acknowledged that he would be considered old by modern standards, given the typical lifespan and expectations of our time.

However, back in the time of Abraham and Isaac, people were living more than twice as long as people today. Go back just six generations from Abraham and they're living five times longer than our current lifespan. Go back just a few more, to the time of Noah and the Flood and it's twelve times the longevity as today. Obviously, something changed after the flood that caused mankind to die sooner. It only took about twelve generations after Noah for this new reality of death before age 100 to become common. By the time of Jacob's son Joseph, this appears to be the new normal.

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." (Gen 47:7-9 NKJ)

Pharaoh is obviously surprised at his great age. How could 130 years be considered “few”? And what did Jacob mean by saying 130 is nothing compared to my fathers? This observation may not be immediately apparent when reading through the Bible. However, upon reviewing a chronology chart (see Table 1), one notices that when Joseph’s father, Jacob, was born, he lived long enough to see his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Shem, who had been on the ark during the flood. Furthermore, Abraham lived for a considerable period before the passing of Noah, who reached the age of 950. So, for Joseph to say in a sense to Pharaoh, “You think I’m old? You should have seen my relatives,” is nothing if you grew up with a couple of 400-year-old men living down the block. This understanding also provides insight into other perplexing questions, such as why Abimelech, and others, found Abraham’s wife Sarah attractive, despite her being 90 years old at the time. While indeed Sarah was 90, the standards of age and appearance differed significantly in ancient times compared to

Table 1

Biblical Patriarch’s Age at Death

Biblical Patriarch	Age at Death
Noah	950
Shem	600
Arphaxad	438
Salah	433
Eber	464
Peleg	239
Reu	239
Serug	230
Nahor	148
Terah	205
Abraham	175
Isaac	180
Jacob	147

modern perceptions, 90 didn't look like what it does today. Therefore, there appears to be no chronological issue in considering the Abimelech encountered by Abraham to be the same figure encountered by Isaac, whether separated by 50 years on the low end or 90 on the high end.

I personally believe it was the same Abimelech who was there to see how sins are and were transferred from one generation to another. I believe God, through the writings of Moses, is purposely showing these lessons to the nation of Israel for numerous reasons. The first so that they wouldn't later become puffed up with pride for being a people specifically chosen by God. Despite God purposefully exposing the sins of the patriarchs, the Jews (centuries later) did not always humble themselves when confronted with their own character flaws. Jesus repeatedly encounters their arrogance and reliance on pedigree: "And do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Matt 3:9 NKJ). "They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39 NKJ).

The lesson for any reader of the Bible is that we, too, should be cautious to rely on any spiritual greatness of our ancestors or our religious affiliation for that matter. I once heard it said that "God has no grandchildren" meaning your relationship with God is your own and not automatically inherited through your parent's relationship with God. This is evident especially in the lives of Isaac and Jacob. Each time God first revealed Himself to either of them, He introduced Himself as the God of their respective fathers but not explicitly as their God. Even though they had been taught about God they hadn't

personally experienced or submitted to Him. Therefore, they didn't have a relationship, and without the relationship they did not know God. This truth is again echoed by Jesus in the New Testament.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you;** depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matt 7:21-23 NKJ)

God is not your God until there is a submission to His will and a relationship is established. This is when you begin to know God. Read through the book of Genesis and this process of knowing God unfolds. That same process is eventually evident in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but it is not immediate.

The second reason I believe that these accounts are recorded for Israel's, and ultimately everyone's sake, is that God wants us to recognize our own flaws in the lives of those in the narrative. Like the mantra often repeated in modern-day substance abuse recovery programs: "Acknowledging you have a problem is the first step in recovery." Only when we realize that we have sin, will we go to God for the only real solution that works. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9 NKJ).

God wants to save us from the curse. He wants to forgive us. And He wants to cleanse us of the unrighteousness of our sins, so that our sins and their consequences don't perpetuate to our progeny. Notice, though, from the verse, that confession is a key factor. And one can't confess anything unless he is first made aware. God first brings

awareness of sin to our attention. The God of the Bible is a God of restoration who wants to save us from the sins of our parents and the sins of our own doing and give us freedom not only in the life to come in heaven, but also in this life as well. This will not only benefit ourselves, but also those who will come after us.

Jacob

The sin of deception is not rooted out in the life of Abraham and Isaac. We don't hear much about it for a while. Then it comes back stronger and is much more of a predominate theme in the life of Isaac's son Jacob and with his sons as well. Genesis 25 tells us of the strange circumstances concerning Rebekah's difficult pregnancy. She makes an inquiry to God and God gives a prophecy concerning the twins in her womb.

And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. (Gen 25:23-26 NKJ)

How would the older serve the younger, when the firstborn was traditionally the one with the status and given the majority of the inheritance? Well, interestingly Jacob's name carries with it his character. Jacob came out grabbing the heel of Esau and was named for this action. The name Jacob comes from the Hebrew root עִקֵב 'qib' which means: to follow, or to be behind but it can also mean to supplant, circumvent, assail, and overreach. And if you know the story, that's just what Rebekah conspires with her favorite son Jacob to do to Isaac and Esau. Jacobs plotting results in the successful

circumvention of the birthright from his older brother at the end of Genesis 25. The real deceit, however, doesn't come until chap. 27, when Rebekah overhears that Isaac plans to bless Esau in a private ceremony. Now, one must understand that by Isaac attempting to hold this blessing ceremony of Esau in private is sort of deceitful in itself because these blessing ceremonies were usually public to everyone to let everyone know who is now in control of the family assets.

After some careful reading and some thought, I believe that Isaac may have already known about Esau giving up the birthright to Jacob. A secret blessing on his favorite son Esau would be less likely to upset Rebekah and Jacob. I believe Isaac is resorting to his old ways of avoidance to solve potential problems, like when he lied about Rebekah being his wife. For the blessing to be instituted, Isaac only requests that his favorite son Esau first hunt a deer and make him a stew from it. The time required to do so provides Rebekah the opportunity to secure for her favorite son Jacob the coveted blessing of the firstborn. Rebekah kills two goats and makes a stew. In his blindness and old age, Isaac is then deceived by Jacob who puts on his brother's clothes and even adds animal hair to his skin to impersonate his brother's hairy features. The outward deception of Abraham and Isaac is being greatly increased in the third generation. It is now being perpetuated inwardly involving the entire immediate family. Jacob successfully deceives his father and lives up to his name, as noted immediately after Esau returns. "And Esau said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!'" (Gen 27:36 NKJ).

Jacob's supposed victory is short lived as his actions ultimately send him running for his life to avoid being killed by his brother. Does Jacob learn his lesson as he flees to

live with his uncle Laban in Haran? Not really. In a sense, what happens in Haran is poetic justice as Jacob the “deceiver” is tricked by his uncle to marry his oldest daughter Leah instead of the object of Jacob’s real desire, the younger daughter Rachael. But no, Jacob does not learn to let God be the sole proprietor of justice. Jacob attempts to later deceive his uncle Laban in a goat breeding scheme in Genesis 30. And it only gets worse from there. In chap. 31, Jacob secretly flees from Laban and Rachael steals her father’s household gods. And in chap. 32, with all this stress brought on by constant lying and deceit, Jacob now gets word that his brother Esau is coming toward him with 400 armed men! I believe it’s here that Jacob literally has his first real “come-to-Jesus” moment as he enters into a physical and spiritual wrestling match with God Himself. At this juncture, God changes Jacob’s name to Israel, signifying “one who wrestles with God” or “is triumphant with God.”

Despite Jacob’s deepening relationship with God and the name change, he still exhibits numerous character flaws. Jacob’s deceit resurfaces in Gen 33:13–17, where he again deceives his brother Esau by promising to follow him to Seir but instead goes to Succoth and later Shechem, resulting in another disaster for Jacob and his family. Contrary to his vow to God in Gen 28:10–22 to return to Bethel, Jacob chooses to settle in Shechem, thus deviating from his intended path. It’s in chap. 34 that Jacob’s daughter Dinah is raped by a young man who is a member of the royal family of the area. Jacob appears discontent, yet he seems resigned to let bygones be bygones by consenting to the marriage of his daughter to the young pagan man. Jacob also remains oddly silent when the proposal is made to give their pagan daughters in marriage to his sons. This sharply contrasts with the resolve of Abraham in Genesis 24, who took great care to ensure that

Isaac would not marry a wife who worshiped other gods. Dinah's brothers, Simeon, and Levi had no intention of taking this matter lightly. Familiar with the craft of deception, the two brothers devised a plan to deceive all the men of the city. They informed the men that they must undergo circumcision before marrying their sister and intermingling with their women. The townspeople were pleased and acquiesced to the conditions. However, after the men were incapacitated during their healing process, Simeon and Levi slaughtered them, plundered the town, and seized both slaves and property.

As a result, Jacob is terrified and compelled to flee, fearing retaliation from the people of the surrounding towns, who seek revenge for the travesty. It is only after this incident that we read of Jacob going to the place where he should have settled initially, in accordance with the previous vow he made to God. "Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother'" (Gen 35:1 NKJ).

And for a little while things seem to be peaceful, but the generational sins rear their ugly head again way down the line. Isaac and Rebekah exhibited favoritism toward their children. I believe, that had it not been for this favoritism, many unnecessary problems could have been avoided. Nevertheless, these sins persisted and were further perpetuated by Jacob, who struggled with favoritism both towards his wives and sons.

Jacob's Favorite Son

Joseph was the oldest of the two sons of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. In Genesis 35, Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin, Joseph's youngest brother among his 12 sons. Despite being the 11th son, Joseph clearly enjoys favoritism from his father over his brothers. At approximately 17 years of age, Joseph has already been given a sort of

white-collar position as foreman over his older brothers who are subjected to the manual labor of herding goats. Add in a couple of dreams that Joseph has regarding his future of having a more exalted position in which his brothers bow down to him, and you have the straw that breaks the camel's back regarding the brother's jealousy. They plot to kill him by casting Joseph into a pit. However, providence intervenes as a trading caravan passes by on its way to Egypt. One brother suggests selling Joseph as a slave to make a profit instead of killing him outright. However, the brothers face the dilemma of what to tell their father about Joseph's fate. They resort to deception, a skill they have learned well. They kill a young goat, tear up Joseph's special coat, dip it in the blood, and present it to their father Jacob. He is absolutely heartbroken, convinced that his favorite son has been devoured by some wild animal. Interestingly, Jacob's deception of his own father, Isaac, also involved killing a goat and fabricating a lie using clothing. How does the song go again?

*Nothing changes cause it's all the same
The world you get's the one you give away
It all just happens again way down the line
And all the things you learn when you're a kid
You'll f*^% up just like your parents did
It all just happens again way down the line*

The Offspring (1997).

Fortunately, God's providence utilizes these family sins of deception and favoritism for His ultimate purpose. He used Joseph to save most of the Middle East from a famine, preserving the nation of Israel. It is through this family line of Israel that Jesus eventually comes, offering salvation to the entire world. God does bring healing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but He does not miraculously remove the consequences of

their sins. They suffer tremendously and needlessly because of their actions. However, God uses their mistakes for our benefit. Through their stories, He opens our eyes and provides us with examples and insights. The journey to healing is often messy, lengthy, and fraught with painful consequences.

Why are these lessons important for us as spiritual leaders? Because our journey extends beyond our personal lives and families to include the lives of all the people we encounter in our ministry. Spiritual leaders will inevitably encounter numerous damaged and broken individuals who often fail to recognize the source of many of their problems. Some of the deepest and darkest sins and dysfunctions that embed themselves in family lines for generations originate from instances of physical and sexual abuse.

Unfortunately, these patterns can often be concealed and masked by both perpetrators and victims, making them extremely difficult to identify. Only when a sin is identified and brought to light can the first steps toward healing begin. This is where training in recognizing signs of abuse becomes crucial. In the next chapter, we will explore specific methods for identifying physical and sexual abuse, aiming to prevent these patterns from perpetuating way down the line in future generations within our congregations.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE RELATED TO ABUSE

Why is it important for pastors to receive training in responding appropriately to abuse within their congregations? Clergy often serve as the initial point of contact for members seeking advice and counseling on various life issues and challenges. These issues may stem directly or indirectly from various forms of abuse. Regrettably, many clergy have not received training to recognize the signs, symptoms, prevalence, causes, or effects of abuse, nor do they know when and how to refer individuals to specialists or law enforcement agencies when abuse is suspected or reported. This can lead to insufficient emotional and spiritual healing at best, and at worst, it can result in lawsuits and further psychological damage that may endure for a lifetime or affect future generations. A contributing factor is the lack of additional education, certification, identification methods and tools available to the clergy.

Regarding literature on the training of pastors concerning these issues, I encountered a notable gap. While there exists a plethora of articles and journals delineating instances of clergy abuse within congregations, particularly highlighted by the recent scandals involving the Catholic Church over the past few decades, I was unable to locate a singular comprehensive resource on training pastors in addressing various forms of abuse. Consequently, the literature review presented herein explores the pertinent domains that pastors ought to be acquainted with concerning the identification,

comprehension, and reporting of physical and sexual abuse. This literature review is structured into two primary sections delineating each form of abuse— physical and sexual— each comprising subcategories encompassing definitions, statistics, indicators, and effects. In addition, the chapter concludes by examining laws pertinent to mandatory reporting obligations surrounding both types of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Definitions

The most fundamental definition of physical abuse is described as follows: “Physical abuse means any non-accidental act or behavior causing injury, trauma, or other physical suffering or bodily harm.” (Giardino, 2008) This definition is comprehensive, albeit broad.

Physical abuse encompasses numerous branches and sub-branches, making it challenging to track them all. However, within the context of ministerial duties, two main branches are particularly prevalent among congregations. These are: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), more commonly known as domestic violence, and Child Maltreatment (CM), more commonly known as child abuse and neglect.

It’s important to note that, in my research, the definitions I encountered have remained relatively consistent over the past 40 plus years, with only slight variations appearing in each new article. However, if a ‘newer’ definition is introduced, it should be recognized that it doesn’t significantly differ from those established in previous decades. For instance, Alvarez et al. (2017) provided the following definition for IPV: “Behaviors such as physical aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse that occur within an intimate relationship and result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm” (p. 483).

Hussain et al. (2015), citing a 2010 CDC definition, simply added the elaboration of “current or former partner or spouse” to their definition (p. 62), which aligns closely with the concept of an “intimate relationship” (Alvarez et al., 2017, p. 480). These subtle nuances should be acknowledged to help readers understand the minimal evolution in the definitions over recent years and to contextualize any additional definitions provided in the reading.

The World Health Organization’s definition on child abuse (1999), as cited by Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019), reads:

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. (p. 180)

Elderton et al. (2017) similarly defined elder abuse, but included the terms “deprivation” and “institutional setting” (p. 223). Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) proceeded to enumerate several sub-categories of child abuse, providing definitions for each. These are also presented in decreasing order of frequency as determined by their research: neglect, followed by physical abuse, then sexual abuse, and finally emotional abuse (sexual abuse will be further defined within its own category shortly). Before delving into that category, I would like to address Babakhanlou and Beattie’s definition of neglect. Their definition, while closely related to physical abuse, warrants separate consideration due to its distinctive characteristics. Furthermore, given its prevalence in our society, neglect is likely to be encountered most frequently by pastors. “Neglect is

defined as the persistent failure of the caregiver to provide for the child's physical, emotional, educational and medical needs, which can result in developmental delay, physical and psychological harm" (p. 182). The possibilities for defining physical abuse and its subcategories are numerous. Despite the multitude of definitions, they serve as invaluable tools for recognizing and understanding physical abuse. Our attention will now turn to the prevalence and high-risk categories of individuals experiencing various forms of physical abuse.

Statistics

Physical abuse remains relatively common in the United States, though its prevalence has decreased compared to previous decades. Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) highlighted the difficulty in accurately determining true figures due to numerous confounding factors. Firstly, reporting is highly inconsistent, even when a diagnosis is made. Second, distinguishing between punishment and abuse can be challenging. Lastly, conclusive evidence of abuse may be lacking, and relying solely on circumstantial evidence may not meet the required standards of proof. According to Bottoms et al. (2014), a significant minority of victims never disclose their experience of physical abuse (34%). A pertinent question for pastors to consider is: Who experiences abuse? The answer is: Everyone.

Nevertheless, certain demographic groups are disproportionately affected. (Breiding et al. 2014) place women at the forefront, reporting that one in three women experiences some form of physical abuse during their lifetime, with one in four women experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Hussain et al. (2015) suggested that nearly 85% of IPV victims are women, with approximately 2-5 million women affected

annually (p. 6). Breiding et al. (2014) cited a study by the Violence Policy Center, stating that the most severe outcome of IPV is death. In 2013, 62% of female homicides were attributed to their husbands or boyfriends. Miller (2015) discovered that among women who experienced IPV, 21% had been victimized by multiple partners, and between 5% and 13% had endured IPV for more than 20 years (p. 159). Which women are more at risk for IPV? Stockman et al. (2015) identified specific subpopulations in the United States with higher prevalence rates than the average population. African American, biracial, and American Indian/Alaska Native women statistically face higher risks of IPV (p. 70).

Children are also highly vulnerable to physical abuse. Herrenkohl et al. (2016) observed that in 2013, over 3.5 million referrals were made to child protective services in the United States. In addition, over 2 million cases, at a rate of almost 29 per 1,000 children in the U.S. population, were investigated due to concerns for the health and safety of the involved children (p. 363). Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) reported similar findings. They found that approximately 5% of all children are reported to child-protection services each year for all types of maltreatment. Moreover, they estimated that 50% of children who have been abused will be abused again. Their research also estimated that more than 3,000,000 children are victims of child abuse, resulting in approximately 2,000 child deaths each year (p. 185). Jackson et al. (2014) discovered that more than 1,600 children died due to abuse or neglect in the United States in 2012 (p. 55).

Following children, adult men are also among those most subjected to physical abuse. According to Godbout et al. (2019), between 7% and 29% of men reported

experiencing rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner (p. 104). They observed that a meta-analysis of the research indicated that abuse was more prevalent among non-heterosexual and prison populations, although specific statistical information was not provided.

Indicators

Physical abuse can manifest in various ways, often accompanied by physical signs. It is important for pastors to be familiar with common indications in order to identify signs and symptoms of abuse. Identifying abuse is crucial in preventing further occurrences. Physical abuse encompasses a wide range of behaviors and manifestations. Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) enumerated various forms of physical abuse, such as hitting, shaking, scratching, biting, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, starving, and neglect of hygiene (in cases involving children and incapable adults; p. 184). Referencing a 2007 study by Swerdlin and colleagues, they stated that “the most common injuries identified in victims of physical abuse include soft-tissue injuries and fractures. The most common dermatologic signs of child abuse include bruises, followed by scratches, soft-tissue edema, strap marks, burns, and bites” (p. 186). They further listed several common injuries indicative of abuse, such as femur fractures in a child too young to walk, bilateral long bone fractures, skull fractures, sternum or scapula fractures, rib fractures, injuries inconsistent with reported history, multiple fractures in various stages of healing, bruising to the ears, neck, or abdomen, genital injuries, oral injuries including injuries to the lips, tongue, and oro-nasal bleeding, burns on the posterior upper body, burn marks on multiple body parts, and burn marks resembling the shape of an instrument.

However, these outward signs are often inconsistent and subtle, making them difficult to notice. Signs that are often more noticeable and indicative of various forms of abuse (not limited to physical) include the following for any age or sex: “sudden onset of altered mental status, wearing of filthy clothes, poor hygiene, children with poor school performance or regularly missing from school, are reluctant to go home, making efforts to avoid specific family members and changes in behavior such as aggressive, withdrawn or disruptive.” It’s important to note that most domestic violence or (IPV) will have similarities to the child abuse signs and attitudes listed above by Babakhanlou and Beattie.

Alvarez et al. (2017) approached the topic from the perspective of primary care physicians screening for abuse (p. 489). Although pastors have a distinct role, they, like primary care physicians, are also mandatory reporters and may often be among the first individuals parishioners turn to before seeking a physician’s help. These authors provided the following screening tips: “Broach the topic of IPV using general and nonthreatening questions such as ‘How are you feeling?’ ‘How are things going in your life?’ and ‘Happy at home?’” However, Alvarez didn’t stop there, as many researchers note that questions like those mentioned above are often insufficient for someone to admit to being physically abused. He and his team also share effective approaches used by other physicians to gather information. Examples included questions like: “Are you a victim of domestic violence?” or “Do you experience any problems with domestic violence?” Some providers also started the screening with a general, nonjudgmental statement about domestic violence, such as “I’m going to ask you a question that I ask all women.”

Pastors should be aware that such inquiries should only occur when physical abuse is suspected, and primarily with the party on the receiving end of abuse or with the primary caretaker. I will further elaborate on the rationale for this approach when discussing reporting laws and legal considerations. Alvarez and his team also recommend that physicians should make certain accommodations, such as conducting the screening in a safe environment (e.g., away from the suspected abuser), allowing the patient time to respond, and maintaining eye contact throughout the session. Pastors should strive to replicate these practices as much as possible when abuse is suspected among members of their congregation.

Pastors and clergy should anticipate that information or admission regarding suspected physical abuse may not always be readily volunteered. Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) provided insight into common suspicious aspects of abuse, including inconsistent and vague histories, lack of detail, discrepancies between the caregiver's account and the observed injuries of the dependent or significant other (p. 186). They also noted the absence of any provided history, unwitnessed injuries, significant delays between injury occurrence and seeking medical attention without explanation, aggressive caregiver responses, injuries inconsistent with reported mechanisms, and histories incongruent with the developmental age of the child.

Causes

The consensus of the research consistently points to one major theme: People tend to be products of their environment. Hurt people will hurt other people. Those who have experienced abuse or even witnessed abuse as a child are much more likely to replicate

similar abuse. Abramovaite et al. (2015) drew the following conclusions from their research:

1. The probability that a husband will be violent depends on whether he grew up in a violent home.
2. The probability that a wife will remain with a violent husband depends on whether she grew up in a violent home.
3. Individuals who grew up in violent homes tend to marry individuals who grew up in violent homes. Thus, if abusive parents operate in a social milieu where this is common behavior, children may indeed develop such traits; if society does not tolerate such behavior, the intergenerational cycle is likely to be weakened. (Abramovaite et al., 2015, p. 163)

In their meta-analysis of peer-reviewed research, these authors found that “parents who have reported abuse in childhood were significantly more likely to engage in abusive behaviors toward their children” (p. 168). They also referenced numerous case studies spanning decades on various contributing factors.

Kalmuss (1984), as cited in Abramovaite et al.’s (2015) meta-analysis, researched 2,143 adults and found that simply observing physical violence between one’s parents is more strongly related to severe marital aggression than being hit as a teenager by one’s parents (p. 165). Kalmuss also found that this phenomenon does not appear to be gender-specific, as “observing one’s father hitting one’s mother increased the likelihood that sons will be victims as well as perpetrators, and that daughters will be perpetrators as well as victims of severe marital aggression.”

Abramovaite et al. (2015) also cited Bevan and Higgins (2002) who found that child maltreatment, low family cohesion and adaptability and alcohol abuse were found to be significantly associated with frequency of physical spouse abuse. Also,

rather than physical abuse or witnessing family violence, childhood neglect uniquely predicted the level of physical spouse abuse. (p. 171)

These authors also referenced another study, this time by Dixen et al. (2005), that found that roughly 62% of child maltreatment and neglect originated from the following parental factors: parenting under 21 years of age, history of mental illness or depression and residing with a violent adult (p. 172).

Chen and Ling (2016) also noted the following factors: Children are more likely to be maltreated if their parents perceive them as problems, have poor parent-child relationships, have insufficient knowledge of child development, have high levels of stress and depression, and believe in the superiority of corporal punishment (p. 92). They also found that, "the inability of parents to manage depression and stress is also a factor linked to child maltreatment." In addition to the previous factors, research by Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) linked children under the age of 4 years as being at the greatest risk of severe injury (p. 182). It's no wonder that 79% of fatalities through child maltreatment occur in this age group.

Choi and Sikkema (2016) found another interesting factor regarding tendencies towards abuse later in life (p. 433). They specifically studied women diagnosed with perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) and found direct links to child abuse and neglect. They noted that PMADs were directly linked to depression, PTSD, anxiety and their own physical and sexual abuse. They also found that a significantly higher number of women were diagnosed with PMADs during childbearing. There were two main reasons that Choi and Sikkema (2016) linked a high diagnosis of PMAD's during pregnancy or early childbearing years:

First, the perinatal period is marked with unique stressors— rapid physical and emotional changes during pregnancy, strenuous challenges of labor and delivery, heightened caregiving demands in the postpartum— that could exacerbate or trigger onset of psychopathology in the presence of existing vulnerability... Second, pregnancy and motherhood involve role transitions where early traumatic memories may likely resurface. Since maltreatment is most commonly perpetrated by the child's own parents, becoming a parent could activate cognitions, emotions, or biological responses related to childhood experiences of being parented, including abuse and neglect. (435)

Let's now go on to discuss the effects of such causes.

Effects

Starting where we left off regarding PMAD's, the effects of the diagnosis can be a significant threat to maternal and child well-being. The evidence from Choi and Sikkema (2016) suggests that mood and anxiety disorders occurring during pregnancy predict negative obstetric and delivery outcomes as well as poor infant and child outcomes (p. 437). They also noted that postpartum mood and anxiety disorders may compromise mother-child bonding and interaction as well as child growth and long-term development. In regard to IPV, Breiding et al. (2014) put women at a greater risk for numerous conditions including: "chronic pain, asthma, gastrointestinal, neurological, reproductive problems (sexually transmitted infections, human immunodeficiency virus [HIV], unintended pregnancy), poor mental health (notably post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], depression, substance abuse) as well as increased injury and mortality from homicide and suicide."

In the research by Elderton et al. (2017), they found that anywhere from 15.4% to 52% of people experienced PTSD in the aftermath of personal violence (p. 229). They also found that “survivors of trauma involving human intent are more than twice as likely to experience PTSD as survivors of nonpersonal trauma, such as accidents or natural disasters.” Hussain et al. (2015) also linked IPV with long lasting significant health problems, also noting all the conditions listed by Breiding et al. (2014). Till-Tentschert (2016) noted findings that women who experienced violence by an adult perpetrator before the age of 15 appeared to be at greater risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse later in life (p. 1877). Breiding et al. (2014) also reported that the cost for providing care to all victims of IPV (not just women) cost the healthcare system in the U.S. anywhere from 2.3 to 7 billion dollars. Citing a 2006 CDC statistic for IPV, Miller (2015) put the national cost at 8.3 billion dollars (p. 157).

Child Maltreatment (CM) seemed to have even greater long-term consequences due to impressing during the primary cognitive developmental years. Romano et al. (2015) relayed the following:

Physical abuse and children with recurring reports had the highest likelihood of emotional disturbances compared to other maltreatment types. Children who primarily experienced neglect had the highest rates of a later mental retardation diagnosis. Children with a history of sexual abuse had the highest rates of learning disabilities. Children exposed to multiple types of maltreatment had the worst outcomes, with the highest rates of childhood delay and other health impairments. (p. 424)

Edalati and Krank (2016) associated exposure to CM with an increased risk for developing substance use disorders (SUDs). In their research they further noted that CM has been strongly related to earlier initiation of alcohol, illicit drug use and a higher rate of substance use into adulthood. The researchers highlighted the fact that “chronic substance use is associated with impairments in cognitive functions. The most consistently reported impairment is related to executive function, such as deficit in mental flexibility, planning, problem solving, and behavioral inhibition” (p. 460). If that wasn’t bad enough, it was also linked to a higher rate and severity of comorbid psychiatric disorders, such as PTSD, personality disorders, major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders and suicide attempt in patients with substance dependent diagnosis. According to Elderton et al. (2017), sexual and reproductive problems can also be the result of CM. Cognitive impairments were found to be a direct result in abnormal developments in the hippocampus, amygdala, cerebellar vermis, and prefrontal cortex (PFC). They said, “CM is also associated with EEG abnormalities, enhanced activation of the HPA axis, and diminished left/right hemisphere incorporation, in addition to cognitive impairments and neuropsychiatric disorders” (p. 231). These impairments contribute to reduced intellectual ability, memory, information processing, attention, working memory, executive functions, and intellectual developmental delays, as well as dyslexia. The consequences of these deficiencies are directly linked to elevated rates of maladaptive self-attitudes, self-blame, low self-worth, early institutionalization, neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Fuller-Thomson and Hooper (2014) highlighted the fact that “children with various disabilities are 3 to 4 times more likely to be physically abused than nondisabled peers” (p. 1589).

The findings regarding school performance were disturbing. According to Romano et al. (2015), "Children who experienced physical abuse had significantly higher-grade repetition, whereas neglected children had significantly greater school absences, compared with non-maltreated children" (p. 426). In their review of 29 studies covering 13,401 students, Romano et al. (2015) found that maltreated children were 2.04 times more likely to repeat a grade than non-maltreated children across all school years and also noted that the risk of repeating a grade was highest in kindergarten and first grade (p. 427). They also reported that maltreated children were 1.67 times more likely to receive a poor English/reading grade, 1.53 times more likely to receive a poor math grade and had higher levels of school problems in general. They also had greater school absences, greater referrals for special services, and higher placement in special education, with boys being at greater risk than girls. In addition, maltreated children showed lower achievement test scores and experienced more failure in core academic subjects. Children suffering from (CM) also exhibited significantly higher levels of externalizing and internalizing behavior problems compared with non-maltreated peers. In addition, physically abused children had lower self-concept and experienced greater feelings of aggression. The authors' conclusion from the study succinctly stated: "Maltreatment was associated with significantly greater conduct disorder, school difficulties, grade repetition, lower grades, lower standardized test scores, and greater discipline referrals" (p. 436).

Regarding the potential long-term versus short-term implications of the many effects of abuse, Ip et al. (2016) discussed the differentiation between Axis 1 and Axis 2 disorders as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth

Edition (DSM -IV -TR ; American Psychiatric Association, 2000), as well as the recovery/treatability potential for numerous disorders resulting from abuse. The authors said,

Axis I Disorders include diagnoses that have acute symptoms and are generally treatable, such as mood disorder, anxiety disorder, attention deficit and disruptive behavior disorders, sleep disorder, and schizophrenia; whereas Axis II disorders, such as personality disorders, are usually lifelong mental health problems that arise in childhood. Literature reviews have shown that a history of child maltreatment often results in both short- and long-term adverse mental health outcomes, manifested through a wide array of Axes I and II psychopathological conditions. (p. 575)

Herrenkohl et al. (2016) argued for immediate action on the grounds of escalating costs associated with CM . They cited a 2016 statistic from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. DHHS), indicating that in fiscal year 2015 alone, approximately \$8 billion was distributed to U.S. state and territory child welfare agencies for child welfare services and foster care directly attributable to CM (p. 364).

Sexual Abuse

Definitions

First, it should be noted that, similar to physical abuse, there are numerous definitions and sub-categories associated with Sexual Abuse (SA). Perhaps the most prevalent context of sexual abuse is in cases involving children, clinically known as Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) defined CSA as “any sexual activity that the child cannot understand or give consent to. It may include fondling, oral-genital contact, rape, genital or anal penetration, exhibitionism , voyeurism , and exposure

to pornography” (p. 181). I feel that this is an adequate definition of CSA, and it seems to reflect definitions of CSA proposed by other current researchers. While there are various other definitions proposed by researchers for SA, I opt not to include them here to avoid redundancy. From my review of peer-reviewed journals, it is apparent that, like definitions of physical abuse, definitions of sexual abuse are generally similar. Most of them align with the definition provided by Babakhanlou and Beattie, but in the case of SA, they may omit the word “child” or situations that specifically apply to children, resulting in a common definition of sexual abuse. However, it is important for the reader to be aware that the numerous definitions and subcategories of SA can raise certain issues.

For instance, Matthews and Collin-Vezina (2019) observed a lack of conceptual models in defining SA/CSA. They attributed this to the various subcategories within the realm of sexual abuse, such as child sexual assault, child sexual victimization, child sexual exploitation, adverse sexual experiences, and unwanted sexual experiences. These commonly used concepts are frequently ambiguous and diverse (p. 132). They also highlighted the growing importance of these definitions and subcategories when viewed through the lenses of public health, law, and public policy: “The lack of a shared understanding of what different experiences should be called, and why, can distort or limit the capacity of researchers, clinicians, legislators, policymakers, and communities to measure, treat, prevent, interrupt, and respond to sexual abuse” (p. 134). Therefore, regarding definitions, it is important for the reader to understand that there is no clear-cut definition for SA or CSA, and that different definitions are often used among different researchers, legal institutions, and policymakers.

Statistics

Referencing the CDC, Doe (2016) stated that

1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before age 18... Children or adolescents are 2 to 3.7 times more likely to be victimized as adults. This means that the ratio increases into adulthood to 1 in 5 men and 1 in 2 women. (1:08)

From this simple statistic it is obvious that CSA directly correlates to a rise of SA into adulthood. In a recent meta-analysis of 65 prevalence studies covering 22 countries, Plummer and Cossins (2018) found that 19.7% of women and 7.9% of men had experienced CSA before the age of 18 (p. 288). Similarly, Abel et al. (2018) reported in their meta-analysis that on average, nearly 10% of students have been victims of sexual abuse or misconduct by school employees or volunteers (p. 13). Notably, at some high schools, as many as 50.3% of the students had been victimized at some point during their education.

Till-Tentschert (2016) found that women who were exposed to sexual abuse in childhood were four times more likely to experience sexual mistreatment in a partnership (pp. 1888-1889). Her research indicated that approximately 52% of women who reported some form of sexual or physical violence before the age of 15 also experienced subsequent physical or sexual violence in adulthood. In contrast, only 24% of those who did not experience such violence in childhood went on to experience violence as adult women. The research consistently suggests a clear association between early childhood abuse and continued high rates of abuse into adulthood. However, the question arises: who are the perpetrators of this abuse?

Out of the 3,000,000 cases of child maltreatment reported in the U.S. each year, approximately 20% involve sexual abuse. Most perpetrators are men, and in 70–90% of cases, the perpetrator is known to the child (Babakhanlou & Beattie, 2019, p. 185). These statistics align with the findings of Abel et al. (2018), who reported that about 10% of children and adolescents are sexually abused by adults caring for them outside the home. Plummer and Cossins (2018) noted that girls are more likely than boys to be abused by a family member, particularly a parental figure or older relative, often by someone 11 or more years older than them. Conversely, boys are more likely to be abused by a nonfamily member who is known to them. When boys experience abuse within the home, it's less likely to be perpetrated by a parent or grandparent; instead, it's more likely to be by a relative closer in age, such as an older cousin or sibling, usually no more than 5 years older (p. 301). Seto (2019) suggested that children are at relatively greater risk from stepfather figures than from biological fathers. In addition, children living in lower-income households and those subjected to social isolation or rejection by peers are at higher risk for CSA. Vulnerable adult victims of SA often exhibit characteristics such as being female, having a history of childhood or adolescent sexual abuse, and being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (p. 7).

Turchik et al. (2016) identified another demographic with significantly higher rates of CSA and SA. Referring to CDC data on the LGBTQ community, they reported that 13.1% of lesbians and 46.1% of bisexual women have experienced rape in their lifetime, while 46.4% of lesbians, 74.9% of bisexual women, 40.2% of gay men, and 47.4% of bisexual men have experienced other forms of sexual violence. Individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) also face a heightened risk of sexual abuse (p. 139). O'Hare

et al. (2015) highlighted the prevalence of traumatic events such as physical and sexual abuse, witnessing violence, or experiencing life-threatening illness or injury among people with schizophrenia spectrum and major mood disorders, with rates of experiencing one or more traumatic events approaching 90% or more within their lifetime. They specifically reported that “44.7% of clients with SMI reported childhood sexual assault (females, 52.0% ; males, 35.5%). Rates of sexual assault during adulthood were reported by 46.7% (females, 63.6% ; males, 25.9%)” (p. 1216). Over half of all females with SMI (53.6%) had experienced sexual abuse at least once, with 31% reporting multiple episodes. These statistics far exceed those of the general population, where 1 in 6 males and 1 in 4 females are sexually abused.

Despite the statistical information, it’s important to acknowledge that these numbers are likely inaccurate due to significant underreporting. Bottoms et al. (2014) found that a “substantial minority of victims failed to ever disclose their sexual abuse (23%), physical abuse (34%), emotional abuse (20%)” (p. 1310). Tener and Murphy (2015) concurred, noting that many survivors of CSA never share their stories, with “one in five survivors never disclosed their childhood sexual abuse, and nearly 60% delayed disclosure for more than 5 years after the first episode.” In addition, less than one-third disclosed the abuse during childhood, with most survivors waiting an average of 21 years before disclosing during adulthood.

Doe (2016) listed the following common reasons why people do not report. (Note that most of the following reasons are fear based). Add the words “fear of” to each item: retaliation, no one helping, no one believing them, there not being enough evidence, they misunderstood the abuse, getting someone in trouble, the justice system, no one can help,

it will get worse, disrupting relationships, criticism, interrogation, being examined, being judged. Other non-fear-based reasons for not sharing were: anger, guilt, powerlessness, embarrassment, depression, isolation, denial, shame, disbelief, emotional shock or an inability to explain (as in the case of small children or the incapacitated; p. 6:10).

Indicators

The central inquiry of this project is: How can religious leaders identify CSA and SA? Babakhanlou and Beattie (2019) acknowledged that recognizing sexual abuse can be challenging, as signs and symptoms may be vague, and individuals may refrain from reporting due to “fear of consequences” (p. 186). However, Doe (2016), a clinical sexologist, has compiled the most comprehensive list of signs and symptoms I have encountered in my research. She delineated the following indicators of SA across three age categories: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Common signs of sexual abuse in children: Nightmares, trouble sleeping, change in eating habits, refusing to eat, loss or increase in appetite, difficulty swallowing, mood swings, rages, insecurity, clinginess, withdrawal, excessive crying, fear of new or unusual people and places, being sexual with toys, pets, or other children, provoking conversations about sex, drawing sexual things, telling sexual stories, using new words for their genitals, fecal and urinary incontinence, resistance to getting undressed, saying “my body is dirty, ugly or bad,” difficulty walking or sitting, may not want to go home, may be overly compliant, watchful like something bad is going to happen, distressed by flashbacks, has unexplained gifts and money, mention of secrets, a new older or “special” friend and other physical or verbal signs of abuse that often coincide with sexual abuse. Other signs can include: Urinary tract

infections, sexually transmitted infections (STI's), pain and bleeding when going to the bathroom and bodily discharges on them such as blood or semen.

Common signs of sexual abuse in adolescents: Self-injury (cutting, burning), inadequate personal hygiene, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, running away from home, trouble concentrating in school, truancy (skipping school), depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, fear of intimacy or closeness, compulsive eating or dieting, aggression, masturbating excessively or in public, sexual interest towards children, low gastrointestinal functioning, pregnancy, plus everything else a younger child might exhibit.

Common signs of sexual abuse in adults: Sexual difficulties, loss of interest in sex, compulsive sexual behaviors, turmoil in close relationships, depression, anger, fear (especially when triggered by reminders of the abuse) uncertainty of personal safety, neglect of: house, job, children, and bank accounts, trouble concentrating, struggling at work or school, feelings of guilt or shame, negative self-image, sense of dirtiness both inside and out, prevalent distrust of others and emotional numbness (Doe, 2016).

These are all signs of abuse that can significantly assist in identifying potential cases, with the aim of intervening and hopefully putting an end to SA. However, is there more that can be done to potentially prevent abuse before it starts? Educating and training children on the issue could be one solution, but this task rarely falls within the job description or responsibilities of a religious leader. So, what actions can religious leaders take? Well, they can protect the flock by learning some common traits of SA wolves. Pastors, rabbis, priests, etc., may also be among the first to recognize potential signs of

abusers. This is particularly relevant in cases where a school or daycare facility is directly affiliated with a church organization, a situation that is becoming less common but still prevalent.

Causes

When examining causes, we investigate the statistics, common traits, methods employed, backgrounds, and external influences of perpetrators. Religious leaders familiarizing themselves with these traits can more easily identify potential red flags in their churches and convey them to teachers, campground staff, and human resource panels when hiring. Clergy can provide questions for future potential employees to ask when listing their references on resumes. “The CDC recommends that all youth service organizations protect children by undertaking preventive screening of all job applicants” (Abel et al., 2018, p. 4). However, research notes that these precautions are not foolproof. Abel et al. (2018) went on to state the following:

The greatest failing of these checks is that they identify so few adults (less than 0.2% of job applicants) as having sexual offense histories. The checks identify very few people who present a risk because they depend on the job applicant having already been convicted of child sexual abuse. In addition, most individuals who have sexually abused children are not convicted, as illustrated by two studies that found that only 6% of all child sexual abuse cases were reported to the police. (p. 4)

Despite the low numbers that screening seems to catch in the application process for sexual histories, the screening process can be seen as a deterrent for any potential employee who may have the potential for CSA, conveying the message that the hiring organization is not an easy target for predators. It effectively relays the message, “We

have many adults who are aware of CSA and are vigilant.” Abel et al. (2018) stated that 20.8% of all children will be sexually abused. They also noted in their research that for males, “the prevalence rate for hidden child molesters or admitters was assumed to be 7%... For females, the prevalence rate for hidden child molesters and admitters was assessed to be 4%” (p. 2). This implies that child molesters are likely to abuse more than one victim, as the statistics of the abused far outweigh those of the abusers. These authors continued:

It was reasonable to assume that they were at greater risk to do so in the future because recidivism rates for sexual abusers of children range from 22% to 32%. These rates, based on a sexual abuser of children being convicted and then being reconvicted, are likely well below the recidivism rates of such abusers who have never been convicted. (p. 15)

In other words, the statistics indicate that those who have never been caught often abuse multiple victims.

As before, Doe (2016) provided another comprehensive list, this time detailing common traits often exhibited by abusers.

Signs of potential perpetrators of sexual abuse: Generally makes others feel uncomfortable, refuses to let people set their own limits, insists in unwanted touch, walks in on people, unsuccessful relationships with peers, needy, possessive, abusive in other ways, controlling, victim of child abuse, refers to sexual images and stories around children, exposes minors to adult sexual interactions without concern, has secret or planned meet-ups with teens or little ones, exchanges unusually frequent calls, texts and emails with kids, is overly interested in the sexuality of a child or teen,

interferes with the child's dating life, talks about the child's appearance, gives children unexplained gifts or money, allows kids to be sexually inappropriate with each other, too good to be true.

Is there any research on the methods employed by abusers? (Elliott, 2017, p. 84-88) specifically examined the behaviors of perpetrators of CSA in his article titled "A Self-Regulation Model of Sexual Grooming." First, let's define grooming. Elliott cites three previous definitions of grooming. The first comes from Craven et al. (2006), who defined grooming as "a process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults, and the environment for the abuse of this child, including gaining access to the child, gaining the child's compliance, and maintaining the child's secrecy" (p. 84). Second, McA Linden (2006) described it this way: "The literal term 'to groom' means to 'prepare, as for a specific position or purpose' or 'to prepare for a future role or function'" (as cited in Elliott, 2017, p. 84).

The third definition was by Olson et al. (2007): "The subtle communication strategies that child sexual abusers use to prepare their potential victims to accept the sexual contact" (as cited in Elliott, 2017, p. 54). Elliott proceeded to outline the grooming process in a step-by-step approach. First, in all types of grooming, there is a preparatory process widely recognized as a common feature in the sexual offending process. During this phase, the offender engages in behaviors aimed at cultivating a relationship with the victim before initiating sexual contact. "Furthermore, sex offenders may attempt (or may be required) to engage in the same types of behavior to develop relationships with caregivers, guardians, and others in the wider community in order to gain access to children" (Elliott, 2017, p. 91). He also observed that not all sex offenses involve a

preparatory process, but he conveyed that sexual assaults rarely occur spontaneously, and numerous studies “have found that a majority of sexual offenders self-report engaging in behaviors aimed at establishing a relationship with their victim before initiating sexual contact” (p. 91).

Elliott (2017) delineated four main sequences that typically unfold over time in the grooming process: (1) gaining access—the causal factor that predicts action; (2) the cycle of entrapment—the action factor; (3) communicative responses to sexual acts—the intervening factor; and (4) ongoing sexual abuse—the outcome factor. Each of these factors is indirectly shaped by the contextual environment, including time, culture, and dynamics of power and control. Step 2 “the action factor” has at its core the phenomenon of deceptive trust development, described as the phenomenon that enables the protagonist to groom, isolate, and approach the child. “The success of the approach is dependent on the strategy used and the response of the victim” (Elliott, 2017, pp. 92–93). Perpetrators commonly employ what can be termed as incentives. Firstly, there are moral incentives that convey the notion that sexual contact is beneficial or healthy. These may involve exploiting the target’s innate drives, such as curiosity, exploration, mastery, closeness, intimacy, and avoidance of conflict. In such instances, sexualized games are often employed to establish rapport. Conversely, coercive incentives take the form of threats, blame, and negative consequences for noncompliance. These tactics often include bribery, gifts, money, flattery, emotional manipulation, coercion, and threats directed towards the target, their family, or their pets. Numerous researchers have observed that offenders, especially those within the family, employ tactics such as offering gifts,

love/attention, threats of withholding benefits, and threats of altering the target/perpetrator relationship to coerce compliance from the victim.

In his study, Elliott (2017) also referenced O'Connell (2003), one of the pioneers in examining internet sexual grooming strategies (p. 85). O'Connell delineated seven stages typically found within the online grooming sequence: (1) friendship forming, (2) relationship forming, (3) risk assessment, (4) exclusivity, (5) sexual, (6) fantasy reenactment, and (7) damage limitation. O'Connell provided the following overview: In Stages 1 and 2, the perpetrator seeks information about the target to assess aspects of their circumstances for potential manipulation and to gain insight into the target's life to establish rapport. Elliott (2017) also referenced the findings of Webster et al. (2012) who discovered the following:

...[S]ome sex offenders present themselves to varying degrees in ways they believe would appeal to the target and continually refine that presentation based on target feedback. In Stages 3 and 4, the protagonist builds the relationship, establishing secretiveness and assessing the potential for detection (e.g., the whereabouts of caregivers, or surveillance over computer use). After establishing that it is safe to do so, the protagonist seeks to isolate the target and create exclusivity between themselves and the target. The protagonist seeks constant feedback from the target allowing them to assess levels of trust. Once the protagonist feels they have gained the child's trust, Stages 5, 6, and 7 involve introducing sexual topics into conversation and gauging the target's responses. (p. 85)

These sexual tests serve as desensitization techniques, involving the use of visual images or language that is goal-relevant, often manifesting initially as dirty jokes. Elliott

(2017) also referenced The European Online Grooming Project (EOGP; Webster et al., 2012), a large-scale mixed-methods project that utilized police records along with interviews and focus groups involving offenders and young people (p. 88). The EOGP describes three techniques for desensitization: visual images, language, and incentives (e.g., gifts/threats), involving a gradual escalation in the intensity of offense in each realm.

However, for many offenders, the time, effort, and strategic planning involved in the aforementioned techniques can wear on their patience. Many of these steps can often be skipped and easily circumvented through the use of an alternative form of disinhibition. "Disinhibition refers to the use of physical or psychological means to reduce one's own inhibitions or those of another. Individuals with higher levels of disinhibition are believed to act more impulsively, seek more thrills, and may not thoroughly consider the long-term consequences of their actions" (Elliott, 2017, p. 90). The most popular and time-saving disinhibitor is drug intoxication, notably alcohol (given its availability and legality).

Alcohol intoxication has been shown to disrupt performance on a wide range of activities and is believed to selectively impair mechanisms fundamental to behavioral control. A number of studies have demonstrated a positive association between alcohol use and experiences of sexual victimization and a substantial proportion of sexual assaults occur when the victim has been drinking. (Elliott, 2017, p. 90)

Now, let's shift focus slightly to explore the psychology of offenders and attempt to answer the question: why do they offend in the first place? A growing body of research suggests that child molesters often exhibit one or more personality disorders (PDs).

Negative experiences in the context of early attachment relationships in childhood can contribute to a limited capacity to trust significant others and the outside world. In turn, this may give rise to problems with self-control and interpersonal relationships, which form the core of PD's... Specifically, child molesters reported lower levels of attachment security and higher levels of attachment avoidance, suggesting that child molesters may suffer from substantial discomfort with close and intimate relationships. (Garofalo & Bogaerts, 2019, p. 98)

Grady et al. (2017) conducted a study titled "Linking Adverse Childhood Effects and Attachment: A Theory of Etiology for Sexual Offending," They went into great depth in their research of how these PD's begin and transform into eventual child molestation. Regrettably, I must provide a condensed summary of their findings, which I will endeavor to do below. Initially, they highlight that childhood insecure attachments are classified into three subcategories: anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. Children develop attachment insecurity in the context of unresponsive, inconsistent, abusive, controlling, or neglectful caregiving. "Insecurely attached individuals may perceive intimate relationships as threatening and develop maladaptive interpersonal patterns in an effort to avoid feelings of vulnerability." Another significant finding I have condensed from their research is the robust relationship between childhood and adult attachment patterns, indicating that childhood attachment patterns serve as predictors of adult patterns. Adult attachment styles parallel those of children and encompass four primary organized patterns: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant. Similarly, children with secure attachments grow into adults with positive and relatively stable views of themselves and others. Adults who identify as anxious-preoccupied

demonstrate high levels of emotional expressiveness and may exhibit excessive dependence on their partners. Individuals with a dismissive-avoidant style tend to deny their need for intimacy, purposefully avoiding relationships to unconsciously evade rejection. Lastly, individuals falling into the fearful-avoidant category experience significant ambivalence concerning intimate connections.

They simultaneously seek and reject emotional connections, because relationships make them feel vulnerable and have been experienced in the past as threatening or wounding. These individuals often have an abuse history and most likely had a disorganized attachment pattern as children. (Grady et al., 2017, p. 435)

Grady et al. (2017) asserted that individuals with insecure attachment styles exhibit significant challenges in emotional, behavioral, and cognitive regulation, as well as in establishing intimacy later in life. These challenges also contribute to various mental disorders, such as affective disorders, substance abuse disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychotic disorders, and antisocial, borderline, and narcissistic personality disorders. "Longitudinal research on older individuals with insecure attachment styles has shown that these individuals have higher rates of aggressive behavior and empathy deficits when compared to individuals with secure attachment styles" (Grady et al., 2017, p. 440). These difficulties typically stem from early maltreatment and family dysfunction, resulting in mistrust, hostility, and self-regulation issues in children. These issues may manifest in behaviors characterized by hyperactivity, opposition, defiance, and conduct problems. Consequently, these behavioral patterns may provoke social rejection from teachers and classmates.

Grady et al. (2017) further highlighted that maltreated children are prone to developing insecure attachments, which significantly contribute to ongoing challenges in managing relationships throughout their lives (p. 440). In addition, they emphasized that emotional abuse, in particular, is associated with the development of insecure attachments in children, potentially affecting males more than females. Furthermore, early attachment experiences have the potential to influence individuals beyond childhood and well into adulthood. Negative caregiving experiences, such as parental divorce and various forms of childhood abuse, have been linked to insecure adult attachment. Moreover, they acknowledged that childhood physical abuse is correlated with adult attachment avoidance, and to a lesser extent, attachment anxiety. Here lies the crucial insight into why individuals with PDs may have a predisposition to molesting a child.

Grady et al. (2017) suggested that “Sexualized coping can serve as a means to soothe distress and/or fulfill needs for intimacy, affection, attention, and control, particularly for individuals with a history of childhood sexual abuse” (p. 440). The molestation that occurred during childhood can uniquely contribute to sexually abusive behavior through various channels. These authors enumerated several avenues, including compensation for feelings of powerlessness, social learning wherein individuals model their abuser’s behavior and distorted thinking, and the association of sexual arousal with adult-child sexual activity. “These people commonly have deficits in arousal control, emotional regulation, intimacy and relationship skills, problem solving, self-monitoring, social skills, victim awareness and empathy, as well as a lack of family support networks, minimal offense responsibility, and sexually unhealthy attitude” (p. 441).

Maniglio (2015) observed that early sexual abuse could predispose individuals to the subsequent development of conduct disorder, potentially leading to further sexual victimization through association with sexually abusive peers (p. 242). In other words, like attracts like, but in the case of sexual victimization they are likely to abuse each other further. Plummer and Cossins (2018) discovered that the age of onset was linked to the transition from victim to offender at a specific age (p. 300). For instance, ten percent of boys who experienced childhood sexual abuse (CSA) at 12 years or older were subsequently convicted of a sexual offense, compared to boys abused under the age of 12 (2.9%). Grady et al. (2017) concluded their research with the following statement:

...[M]oreover, sex can be used in many ways to meet emotional needs, and it offers opportunities to feel accepted, attractive, desirable, powerful, or close to someone. Sex also feels good, providing immediate physical gratification and something to look forward to or distract them from painful emotions... Not only are these individuals altered at an emotional level but long-term studies of adults who were sexually abused as children show that these individuals are biologically changed with lower resting levels of cortisol, asymmetrical stress responses, and abnormal physical development including increased rates of obesity and earlier onsets of puberty. (p. 436)

Another often overlooked causal factor for SA/CSA is individuals within organizations who may not be sexually attracted to children or adults for abuse, but are driven by the profits of the sex trafficking industry. Allow me to elaborate. During my undergraduate studies in Criminal Justice, I learned that sex traffickers frequently infiltrate school systems, campgrounds, and religious institutions to exploit and traffic

potential victims into the sex industry. I recall a victim visiting our class to share her experience. In her high school, a man in his mid-20s assumed a false identity as a senior student and effectively recruited numerous naive girls into the sex trade through coercion and blackmail. He was attractive, affluent, and drove an impressive car. He and the victim dated, and eventually, he filmed them having sex without her knowledge. Later, she was threatened that if she didn't engage in further sexual acts for others, the video would be sent to her Christian parents. Her boyfriend became her pimp, profiting thousands of dollars from her exploitation.

Muraya and Fry (2016) noted that human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar industry that profits from the enslavement and commoditization of approximately 20.9 million people all over the world, and many of them are children. "The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], estimates that every year 1.8 million children are trafficked, with girls representing approximately two-thirds of victims" (pp. 204–205). Research has shown that children are trafficked for various reasons including domestic labor and organ removal, but by far, the most common is the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) or child sex trafficking "which accounts for up to 58% of all trafficking cases and includes child pornography, child prostitution, child marriage, use of children in live sex shows and the exchange of sex with teenagers for gifts" (p. 204).

Effects

Many recent studies have shown that survivors of SA/CSA experience numerous social and psychological difficulties, including interpersonal, sexual, and emotional disorders. Cantón-Cortés et al. (2014) discovered that survivors of sexual abuse

encountered a broad spectrum of social and psychological challenges. Consequently, many abused children develop unhealthy attachment styles that persist into adulthood, adversely impacting their “parenting, peer, and romantic relationships. This often leads to elevated levels of anxiety and difficulties in expressing emotions.... unproductive and excessive focus on negative emotions, or turning away from feelings of distress, leading to inappropriate emotional regulation” (p. 425). Commonly reported symptoms include depression, anxiety, and PTSD. For example, Plummer and Cossins (2018) conducted a clinical study involving 273 victims aged 5–18 years who were sexually abused (p. 289). Their findings revealed that boys were significantly more likely to develop victimizing sexual behaviors such as molestation, incest, or rape. In contrast, girls were more likely to develop reactive sexual behaviors, such as flirting, or inappropriate grabbing or touching, as a result of their previous sexual abuse experiences. These behavioral patterns often have detrimental effects on the victims’ future interpersonal relationships.

According to Abel et al. (2018), victims of CSA often experience loss of trust, depression, and identity confusion (pp. 6–7). Many victims become self-abusive and may engage in risky sexual behavior, increasing the likelihood of pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases. “As a group, the children show a higher prevalence of major affective disorders, including mental, personality, and anxiety disorders, and they also exhibit physical and psychosomatic diseases, including enuresis, encopresis, chronic abdominal pain, headaches, anal or pelvic pain, vocal cord dysfunction, and fibromyalgia” (p. 7). These authors also reported that victims of childhood sexual abuse were twice as likely to attempt suicide compared to individuals who were not sexually abused.

Carlson and Oshri (2018) identified two emerging risk factors for depression among youth with histories of sexual abuse: the closeness of the relationship between the victim and perpetrator and the age at which the abuse occurred (pp. 391–395). In summary, the closer the relationship, the higher the risk of adverse psychopathological symptoms such as PTSD and depression. This aligns closely with what psychologists refer to as betrayal trauma theory. Betrayal trauma theory suggests that “parental perpetration leads to greater psychopathology symptoms due to the victim’s enhanced sense of betrayal and loss of trust toward the previously entrusted person.” Another factor was the age at which the sexual abuse occurred. “Researchers have documented associations between earlier onset of child maltreatment with increased subsequent depressive symptomology.” To simplify their findings, basically any child who was sexually abused after the age of 12 usually experienced much more drastic and long-lasting depressive symptoms.

...[T]he falling trajectory appear to coincide with the developmental period of adolescence in which youths’ sexual awareness is emerging. This timing may place youth at an increased risk of depressive symptomology due to their enhanced understanding of the sexually violating nature of CSA acts. (Carlson & Oshri, 2018, p. 394)

As far as academics were concerned, in their meta-analysis of 29 different studies, Romano et al. (2015) reported on 13,401 students and made the following conclusion: “Children with a history of sexual abuse had the highest rates of learning disabilities. Children exposed to multiple types of maltreatment had the worst outcomes, with the highest rates of childhood delay and other health impairments” (p. 422). In addition, boys

were particularly at risk for special education and educational disabilities compared to girls. These children also exhibited higher levels of school problems compared with non-maltreated peers. In particular, they experienced higher grade retention, increased school absences, increased referrals for special services, higher placement in special education, lower achievement test scores, and more failures in core academic subjects. Sexually abused children, compared with their peers, had significantly lower academic achievement, social competence, and ego resiliency.

The psychological consequences of SA/CSA include shame, guilt, fear, shock, distress, disorientation, confusion, panic, helplessness, anger, hopelessness, worthlessness, memory loss, difficulty planning, and overcoming daily problems. These may be accompanied by suicidal ideation. Aggression and hostility are common outcomes as well, often manifesting as self-harm behaviors such as cutting, burning, hitting oneself, and substance abuse. It is particularly distressing that survivors of abuse are at increased risk of perpetrating abuse themselves or becoming involved in abusive relationships (Muraya & Fry, 2016, p. 217).

Mandatory Reporting Laws

In this section, we will explore several questions concerning California laws regarding mandatory reporting of physical and sexual abuse. (Chapter 5 will explain the reasons why California laws were initially researched as opposed to Wisconsin laws.) One fundamental question is: who qualifies as Mandatory Reporters? The simplest answer is any person who is required by law to report a particular category or type of abuse to the appropriate law enforcement or social service agency (Regal Medical Group, 2020). Jordan and Pritchard (2018, p. 71) observed that

between 1963 and 1967, all 50 states adopted some form of child protection statutes, with the 1970's witnessing the creation of laws aimed at improving state responses to vulnerable adults who, by virtue of age or physical or mental disability, were unable to care for themselves. (p. 71)

In the United States, four types of mandatory reporting laws have been enacted. These include laws mandating reports of injuries associated with crime or due to the use of certain weapons, abuse of children, abuse of vulnerable adults, and reporting of domestic violence (p. 71).

Mandatory Reporters are legally obligated to report incidents themselves but are not required to investigate any known or suspected case of abuse (with the possible exception of third-party information—more on that below). Who is mandated by law to report? All licensed healthcare professionals, including but not limited to physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, EMTs, paramedics, medical examiners, and all employees in long-term health facilities. In addition, the following are mandatory reporters: social workers, marriage and family counselors, child-care custodians, elder or dependent adult custodians, teachers, clergy, employees of protective services or law enforcement agencies, commercial film and photographic print processors, commercial computer technicians, and many others. Who are mandatory reporters supposed to report to?

Reporting the information regarding a case of possible child abuse or neglect to an employer, supervisor, school principals, school counselor, coworker, or other person will not be a substitute for making a mandated report to the police department,

sheriff's department, county probation department or county welfare department.
(RAIN N, 2020)

Another consideration for Mandatory Reporters working in California is the legal consequences of failing to report. According to Penal Code 11164-11174,

[f]ailure to report is a misdemeanor crime punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine... Any mandated reporter who willfully fails to report abuse or neglect, or any person who impedes or inhibits a report of abuse or neglect, in violation of this article, where that abuse or neglect results in death or great bodily injury, shall be punished by not more than one year in a county jail, by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or by both that fine and imprisonment. (RAIN N, 2020)

The categories of abuse we will cover include child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse. These three sections essentially cover all stages of life.

Child Abuse

First, we will delve into child abuse. According to the California Penal Code, child abuse is defined as "a physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person." This also includes: emotional abuse, sexual abuse (assault or exploitation) and neglect. However, child abuse does not include incidences such as public fighting between minors, reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer, or spanking that is reasonable and age-appropriate and does not expose the child to the risk of serious injury. It should also be noted that "any person, except a mandated reporter who reports child abuse, may remain anonymous. Mandatory reporters are required to give their names but are provided unqualified immunity from civil liability" (RAIN N, 2020). Essentially, this means that mandatory reporters cannot be sued in the

state of California for reporting suspected abuse. However, it should be noted that this is not universally applicable across all states and may not be guaranteed under certain circumstances in California either.

There do seem to be instances where individuals have faced civil lawsuits for failing to investigate a claim of child abuse before reporting it. Foreman and Bernet (2000) documented several such cases, including *Vacchio v. St. Paul's United Methodist Nursery School* (1995),

A nursery schoolteacher noticed that a child had a black eye. Without performing any investigation, the teacher notified child protective services. The parents of the child sued the teacher and the school, alleging that the report was unfounded, false, and that it was made without any attempt to determine the circumstances of how the child sustained the injury. The defendants, of course, asserted that they were protected by the immunity provided by the child reporting statutes. The judge ruled, however, that it could be argued that reporting suspected abuse without performing any investigation at all was gross negligence and therefore not protected. The judge's conclusion was consistent with the message of this article, that reporters of suspected abuse should use some judgment before calling protective services. (p. 192)

Foreman and Bernet (2000) further elaborated:

Confusion and disagreement exist among mandatory reporters regarding their obligation to report suspected child abuse, particularly if allegations are raised by third parties but the mandatory reporter does not share the suspicion. There are several reasons for this confusion, including lack of knowledge of the state law,

unclear wording of the laws themselves, and the decision of some practitioners to disregard the law and do what they think is best. (p. 193)

In my own personal research, conducted twenty years after Foreman and Bernet's study, I have found that significant differences persist among states, contributing to confusion regarding certain legal terms. For instance, in 19 states, mandatory reporters are required to make a report if they have "reason to believe," "reasonably believe," or "reasonable cause to believe" that child abuse has occurred. Conversely, 13 states employ the phrases "reason to suspect" and "reasonable cause to suspect." In addition, 16 states use a combination of "know," "suspect," and "believe" in their statutes. While these terms essentially convey the same meaning for reporting purposes, their nuances become crucial in cases of civil liability for failure to report. California and Tennessee use slightly different terminology. In Tennessee, reports must be made for

any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition which is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect or which on the basis of available information reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect. (Tennessee Code Title 37 Juveniles, TN Code § 37-1-403, 2021)

California law employs the term "reasonable suspicion," but introduces a caveat (section 1) but then seems to contradict itself, particularly in section C, suggesting that individuals may still be subject to civil court actions despite being under protection.

§ Those persons legally mandated to report suspected child abuse **have immunity from criminal or civil liability** for reporting as required, even if the knowledge or **reasonable suspicion** of the abuse or neglect was acquired outside of their

professional capacity or scope of employment. Mandated reporters and others acting at their direction are not liable civilly or criminally for photographing the victim and disseminating the photograph with the report. (P.C. 11172(a))

(1) For purposes of this article, "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on the person's training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. "Reasonable suspicion" does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any "reasonable suspicion" is sufficient.

§ **In the event a civil action is brought against a mandated reporter** as a result of a required or authorized report, he or she may present a claim to the State Board of Control for reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the action **if he or she prevails** in the action or the court dismisses the action (PC 11172 [c].)

Basically, in California you have protection, but the protection does not seem to be an absolute guarantee that you don't lose a case if you are brought to civil court. The California law hasn't changed since 1995, and many researchers and lawmakers have also noted issues with how the words 'reasonable suspicion,' 'objectively reasonable,' or 'reasonable person' could be construed in court. Foreman and Bernet (2000) have the following grievance if a mandatory reporter did not report:

Reasonable connotes an objective standard by which to measure a mandatory reporter's decision regarding whether to report possible child abuse. According to the objective standard, even if the reporter in question did not personally believe or

wonder if a child was abused, he or she could be found in violation of the law if a court later decided that a “reasonable person,” given the same set of circumstances and the same education, would have suspected child abuse. (p. 195)

Despite the complexity of legal statutes, I will outline the key concerns regarding reporting and not reporting child abuse. Generally, individuals who report suspected child abuse are shielded from liability or retribution. However, there is a slight chance that this protection may not apply if an individual reports suspected abuse without conducting any investigation. Therefore, it may be advisable to undertake some follow-up investigation to mitigate the risk of potential civil liability. In regard to not reporting, Foreman and Bernet (2000) said the following: “Although there is variation among states to the degree of suspicion that triggers mandatory reporting of child abuse, no state... requires mandatory reporters to report child abuse suspected by a third party if the mandatory reporter does not suspect abuse” (p. 195). It is important to note that their statement specifically pertains to third-party accusations of abuse. However, they do recommend investigating third-party accusations, as they are often not unfounded. Therefore, protection against potential civil litigation and the likelihood that the initial child abuse report contains some merit are compelling reasons for mandatory reporters to conduct at least some level of investigation, particularly concerning third-party accusations.

Another crucial reason to prioritize investigating third-party and potentially questionable claims is the issue of overreporting of child abuse allegations. Overreporting can further strain an already overburdened child protective system. These agencies often operate with insufficient staff and stretched-thin resources, hindering their ability to provide adequate follow-up for children who genuinely need it. Foreman and Bernet

(2000) also noted that mandatory reporters should also be aware that investigations by protective services, though often cursory, are never pleasant and in some cases have had decidedly negative consequences for the family (p. 192). Further elaboration on this issue will be provided in the section addressing domestic violence.

The guidelines for reporting child abuse include making an immediate report by phone (or as soon as practically possible), submitting a written report via fax or electronic submission within 36 hours of receiving information about the incident using Department of Justice forms available from local child protective agencies or online, and reporting the incident to a county welfare department, police or sheriff's department, or county probation department. The report must include the name, business address, and telephone number of the reporter, the capacity that qualifies the person as a mandated reporter, the information that led to the reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect along with the source of that information, the child's name, address, present location, school, grade, and class if known, as well as the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's parents or guardians, and any relevant personal information about the person or persons who may have abused or neglected the child, including their name, address, and telephone number.

The mandatory reporter may include with the report any non-privileged documentary evidence relating to the incident. The form to be completed regarding suspected child abuse can be found at https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf (RAIN N, 2020). It is important for mandatory reporters to understand that while pregnancy by a minor does not automatically require a report, they should be aware of the state's laws regarding statutory rape; in California, the laws on

statutory rape (see below) require that all sections be reported, except in cases where the individual under the age of 18 is married to the other party involved.

(a) Unlawful sexual intercourse is an act of sexual intercourse accomplished with a person who is not the spouse of the perpetrator, if the person is a minor. For the purposes of this section, a "minor" is a person under the age of 18 years and an "adult" is a person who is at least 18 years of age.

(b) Any person who engages in an act of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor who is not more than three years older or three years younger than the perpetrator, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(c) Any person who engages in an act of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor who is more than three years younger than the perpetrator is guilty of either a misdemeanor or a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170.

(d) Any person 21 years of age or older who engages in an act of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor who is under 16 years of age is guilty of either a misdemeanor or a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by imprisonment pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170 for two, three, or four years. California (§ 261.5(a)-(d))

Domestic Violence

To report domestic violence, a mandatory reporter in the state of California is required to call the Police Department immediately or as soon as practicable in the city where the incident occurred. In addition, they must submit a written report within 48 hours. According to California Penal Code Section 11160-11163.6, there is no legal

requirement to inform the victim of the report. However, ethically, mandatory reporters should inform the victim of their obligation. It's also essential to report whether or not the victim consents to a report. Despite the clear legal requirements for reporting domestic violence, researchers have noted numerous complications and negative effects for victims once authorities are notified. Religious leaders in California should understand these potential consequences to better support victims of domestic violence after a report is made.

Certain states have exemptions to reporting domestic violence. According to Jordan and Pritchard (2018), it is left up to the mandatory reporter's discretion in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Tennessee to report instances of domestic violence (pp. 81-82). In Oklahoma, a report can only be made if the mentally competent adult victim requests it orally or in writing; the mandatory reporter cannot do so without the victim's consent. Although this may seem strange to some, there are reasons why these states have taken this stance. A study conducted by Sullivan and Hagen (2005) surveyed six domestic violence and sexual assault service shelters in a Midwestern state to gather victims' perspectives on mandatory reporting laws. Participants in the study had experienced physical violence, including being beaten with fists and objects, run over by a car, strangled, stabbed, and sodomized. Surprisingly, only one participant out of the sixty-one victims believed that mandatory reporters should notify the police. The experience of that one outlier victim differed from that of most other participants in that she was raped by a stranger. The rest of the participants unanimously believed that reporting should not be mandatory until several changes are made in the system to promote victims' safety.

Sullivan and Hagen (2005) also found that all participants in the study, except for one, expressed extreme disappointment with the response they received from the police, prosecution, and the courts:

They reported that the police did not take their cases seriously and failed to investigate the crimes fully, pursue charges against the abusers, or apprehend the abusers if charges were authorized. They also reported that the prosecutors either did not consult with them before plea bargains were offered to the defendants or failed to prosecute the cases vigorously through to trial. They described a long history of judges failing to give meaningful sentences to convicted defendants; failing to enforce personal protection orders, conditions of bonds, or probation orders; and awarding abusers custody and parenting time with children. (p. 353)

The women also conveyed that retaliation assaults were often more violent than the original beatings. Another significant concern for injured women was the fear that seeking medical treatment or help from local police would result in Child Protective Services (CPS) being notified and their children being removed. Many of the women who participated in the study had previously or currently had children removed from their homes. For instance, in one focus group, 6 out of 19 women currently had their children placed outside of their care by the child welfare system. When CPS removed children from their homes and child welfare cases were opened in family court, the mothers felt they received inadequate legal representation from their court-appointed attorneys. Some reported minimal contact with their attorneys between court hearings and their attorneys' failure to return telephone calls. In addition, the women reported that court-appointed attorneys in child welfare and criminal cases often advised them to plead guilty

regardless of the charge or their guilt or innocence. In some counties, policies require the police to notify CPS whenever they investigate a domestic violence call involving children present in the home. One victim (Nicky) recounted the following to the researchers:

I went through a CPS investigation. After he shot up the house, the police spent 11 hours digging bullets out of the walls. The house was torn up. Then my mother-in-law called CPS and said, "She always lives like this." It took three years to get my kids back. (Sullivan & Hagen, 2005, p. 311)

The participants mentioned several other issues that influenced their reluctance to have their victimization reported to the police. The two most prevalent concerns were fear that their mental health histories would become public and be used against them, and unwanted attention from the media. The participants strongly believed that it should be a woman's choice whether to contact the police. The only time these women hesitated in expressing this opinion was if the victim was a child.

In their research years later, Jordan and Pritchard (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of domestic violence, finding similar opinions among victims, although not as drastic in numbers as in Sullivan and Hagen's 2005 study. Jordan and Pritchard (2018) found that only two out of five women reported they would have been less likely to contact a domestic violence shelter if they knew in advance that a mandatory report would be made (p. 76). They also cited other works in their meta-analysis, such as Rodriguez et al. (2002), who conducted a study with 358 women in California (p. 77). They found that while most women supported some form of reporting to police, the majority (68%) did not endorse a domestic violence reporting mandate if it was against

the wishes of a patient. In the same study, almost half (45%) of the abused women reported that they would be at greater risk for violence from their partner if they were subject to a mandatory reporting law. These authors also referenced the work of Glass et al. (2001), who conducted a study of women served in 11 community hospital emergency departments in Pennsylvania and California (p. 77). They found that 40% to 60% of abused women said they would not disclose violence to their healthcare provider if they knew that a mandatory reporting law existed. They then referenced works by Coulter and Chez (1997), who found that "abused women were significantly less supportive of mandatory reporting than non-abused women" (Jordan & Pritchard, p. 78).

Then how should a pastor handle this information while still complying with the laws in California? I suggest that most of the time, a pastor will already perceive that a person is suffering from domestic violence before the victim actually discloses anything. A pastor could choose to explain first that they are a mandatory reporter and what that entails before asking about domestic violence. Although this may deter a person from disclosing abuse information, it also empowers the victim to decide whether to disclose, as they know their situation better than the pastor does. Informing the victim of their status as a mandatory reporter beforehand, rather than after the fact, would not violate domestic violence reporting laws in California.

Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse

Elder abuse is broadly defined to encompass physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, as well as financial exploitation and caregiver neglect. It is a significant issue in the United States, estimated to affect 1 in 10 elders. This figure is likely an underestimate because many elderly victims are afraid or unwilling to lodge a complaint against the

abuser, whom they love and may depend upon (Tan, 2019). The laws that protect the elderly (e.g., 62 and over in most states) may also extend to other younger vulnerable adults who, due to impairment, are unable to communicate or make responsible decisions to manage their own care or resources, carry out or arrange essential activities of daily living, or protect themselves from abuse.

As a Mandatory Reporter, you are required to report if you witness an incident, receive information or evidence (whether visual or audible), or if an elder or dependent adult discloses an incident that appears to constitute abuse. All health practitioners and employees in long-term healthcare facilities are mandatory reporters. “A vast majority of individuals working with elder & dependent adults are excellent caregivers.

Unfortunately, stress can lead to unintended actions by caregivers— actions that may result in abuse, neglect, or mistreatment (Regal Medical Group, 2020).” Clergy are often among the first to report elder abuse, especially in churches where many members are geriatric and reside in long-term care facilities, with little to no family or visitors besides the clergy. How does a mandatory reporter report elder abuse? According to RAINN (2020), a known or suspected instance of abuse should be reported by telephone or through a confidential internet reporting tool, immediately or as soon as practically possible. If reported by telephone, a written report shall be sent, or an internet report shall be made within two working days. If the suspected abuse results in serious bodily injury, a telephone report shall be made to the local law enforcement agency immediately, but also no later than within two hours.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE PASTORAL TRAINING SESSION

As noted in the review of current literature in Chapter 2, the training of pastors to identify and report physical and sexual abuse among members of their congregations has received little attention across denominations, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, abuse continues to persist, often directly in the presence of those who could be the greatest asset to those who are suffering. As mentioned earlier, pastors are often on the front line and the most likely first responders to incidents of abuse for several reasons. Firstly, members often seek advice, wisdom, answers to questions, counseling, and interventions, viewing pastors as spiritual authorities. Secondly, this spiritual authority comes with a high level of trust and confidence that church members place in the pastor in exchange for advice and confidentiality. (This confidentiality may not exist within the member's friends or family circles.) A third factor to consider is that many church members often turn to pastors instead of professional counselors, who may come with a steep monetary burden. Pastoral advice and counsel are usually offered free of charge. For these reasons, pastors are often the frontline for victims of abuse within their congregations.

The Literature Review (chap. 2) and the Theological Reflection (chap. 3) informed the project's development. This chapter outlines the steps to implement the plan of action for *Facilitating Appropriate Clergy Responses to Abuse in the Central*

California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (later changed to the Wisconsin Conference; see chap. 5).

This chapter is divided into three specific sections. The first section describes the development of a pastoral training session centered on physical and sexual abuse, detailing the context in which the idea of the necessity of a training session and curricular context originally developed. The second part of this chapter outlines the training methodology and structure that will be implemented in the training of the pastors, while the third section covers the evaluation of the learning outcomes for the training.

Developmental Context for the Training Session

The choice of topic and title, “Facilitating Appropriate Clergy Responses to Abuse in the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” with a focus on physical and sexual abuse, primarily arose from my four years as a pastor. Other factors, such as fellow pastors sharing their experiences of abuse among members in their ministries, also influenced my decision. However, the main inspiration for my paper’s topic comes from an incident I encountered as a new pastor. In 2015, having recently graduated from the seminary at Andrews University, I lacked prior pastoral experience and the usual networking connections to a conference. This made it challenging to secure immediate employment as a pastor upon graduation. After a year of uncertainty, wondering if God had actually led me to seminary or not, I was offered a position as an associate pastor in a large church within the Central California Conference.

Becoming a new pastor was one of the most daunting tasks I had ever undertaken, especially because it was unlike any job I had ever had before. Fortunately, I was working under an experienced senior pastor. Being in a large congregation, I gradually

met and interacted with the members, which sometimes required a bit of discernment on my part. Occasionally, certain members are interested in befriending you for manipulative purposes or other less than ideal reasons. I encountered a few members who instantly raised red flags for me. Later, when talking with the senior pastor, he often confirmed my suspicions about certain individuals and then offered me great advice on how to engage with them.

However, there was one member who completely flew under both our radars. He was a young man in his late 20s, married with young children. He and his family attended church regularly, and I had spoken to him a few times but always casually. The couple wasn't directly involved in ministry or volunteering at the church. He worked full-time, and she was at home raising two children and pregnant. However, this individual was involved in ministry as a teacher at the local academy. He had worked there for approximately three years by the time I arrived and had previously been employed as a teacher at another academy in the Southeastern United States. Before that, he was a counselor at a church summer camp within the denomination.

After about six months of me being employed at the church, the senior pastor stepped down and left the country to pursue his own ministry in Canada, leaving me to pastor the church with the help of the elders. The transition wasn't particularly easy, and I faced many challenges. Things were going well enough until a scandal erupted at our academy. It was all over the news. "Local Christian school teacher flees authorities amid accusations of sexual assault against students."

From what I recall, at least two different male students had come forward with accusations that they had been forced to perform oral sex on the teacher in a classroom

closet, years prior, while they were in the third and fourth grade. It was also reported in the news that the teacher had faced previous sexual misconduct allegations while employed at another Adventist academy, and that he was hired at our academy with that information being known by our academy's administration. The local news later reported that the teacher had been tipped off by a conference employee, allowing him to evade capture by the authorities. Within a few more months, a total of four boys at our academy alone had come forward with similar allegations.

Some of the allegations reported by the local news were false and/or misreported. For example, the statement that our academy hired him knowing there was sexual misconduct previously at another academy was misleading. It turns out the "misconduct" was that he had gotten his girlfriend (whom he later married) pregnant. It's not surprising that the local news left out that vital bit of information. However, he did receive a charge of driving under the influence (DUI) while working at his previous academy, which ultimately led to his termination. Certain people who were employed at my conference knew him from his former conference and vouched for him. Consequently, he was hired at our academy despite his previous termination. It's rare to be arrested for DUI your first time. This indicates a pattern and a reason he should not have been hired to work at our academy in the first place.

Regarding the conference employee tipping him off, that was also misconstrued by the media. Before the police could issue a warrant, someone had mentioned the allegations to this former conference employee. The individual called the teacher out of concern for his friend to minister to him and verify the allegations. This, of course, tipped off the teacher, prompting him to flee the state. Having worked with this former

employee, I knew he was a very caring and compassionate individual, but he was also somewhat naïve about many things. I highly doubt his intentions were to tip off the teacher, but that is how the media portrayed the story. The local police were also displeased with his actions. Rumors circulated that they wanted to arrest him for aiding and abetting, but nothing came of it because this individual was out of the country at the time.

The teacher fled the state, leaving his pregnant wife and two young children behind. Immediately, she moved back in with her parents across the country. After roughly three months of being on the run, he was finally apprehended in Florida at a relative's house. He was then extradited back to California to await his trial. His trial proceedings began in 2017, and he was held in the Fresno County jail on a million-dollar bail, facing a 266-year sentence. In 2019, prosecutors offered him a plea deal for 30 years in prison, which he initially refused.

Based on 18 counts of child molestation, including oral copulation of a child 10 years or younger, lewd, or lascivious acts with a minor, and sexual penetration with a foreign object, a judge determined there was sufficient evidence to proceed with the trial. However, it wasn't until 2022, that he pleaded guilty. He is currently serving a 30-year sentence at Ironwood Correctional Facility in Southeastern California.

The scars that remain from his actions run deep, and many of them still linger in obscurity. The consequences were evident across the academy and the conference. Families of the victims relocated, and individuals disassociated themselves from churches. Notably, one of the victims was a member of my church, while another was a student in my Bible study class at the academy. Another boy in my class endured verbal

mistreatment from the teacher. According to his mother, he was likely being groomed for potential future sexual abuse. Subsequently, the enrollment plummeted from 120 students to approximately 70 the following year. Because it was highly publicized by the media, there were protestors with signs standing across the street from the academy for about a week. The conference encountered widespread suspicion from numerous members, resulting in some leaving the church and others withholding tithe. The conference's handling of the situation was also far from ideal, with several families filing lawsuits against the school. Settlements were reached without going to court, underscoring the multiple instances of negligence by academy staff. While the financial repercussions were substantial for both the school and the conference, the greatest toll was on the lives of many children across different states. Their lives will never be the same because of this man's actions. Could the training that I am planning to implement for the pastors of the conference have potentially prevented some of these occurrences? I firmly believe so, at least to some extent.

To safeguard the students' identities, a strict gag order was implemented, applying to all conference staff. They were instructed not to disclose any information regarding the identities of the children. Very few people, even amongst staff at the academy, knew the exact identity of those who were among the abused children. The majority of the incidents had occurred years earlier. Prior to the implementation of the gag order, I received information about the sexual abuse from a family member of one of the victims. The family made complaints to the school about some of the teacher's actions involving their son. The accusations were dismissed, and even ridiculed, by former administrators at the academy. The initial complaints should have activated the

process of putting the teacher on administrative leave until the accusations were fully investigated. None of this happened. This partly contributed to the school's decision to settle rather than go to court. The academy was found to be guilty of gross negligence on multiple fronts.

Approximately a year after the teacher's arrest, things began to settle down at the academy. While teaching a Bible class at the school one day, I overheard a group of teachers chatting during lunch. They were exchanging funny stories about students they have had over the years. One teacher, unaware of the identities of the abuse victims, mentioned the specific student. Aware of his history, I immediately paid closer attention. "Remember how he used to try and run-away during lunch and jump the fence and had to be brought back kicking and screaming?" The group laughed. "Yeah, he was a strange one, obviously things weren't quite right at home." I was furious inside, but to protect his identity I kept my mouth shut. All I could think was "How could they not see the warning signs or connect the dots after the fact?" I believe the answer is that they were never trained to see the signs or even look for them.

Training Methodology

I contacted the ministerial director of my former conference and received approval to implement my project during the 2022 training cycle. This involved utilizing the proposed content from chapters 2 and 3, along with the methodology outlined in this chapter. The methodology I employed in the training is one that I have personally utilized during my tenure as an instructor in the Air Force. Furthermore, it bears significant resemblance, if not identical, to the teaching method employed at Andrews University Seminary for preaching classes. Although unnamed in preaching classes, this method is

informally referred to as “The 7 Step Teaching Method” in military contexts. Becoming a training instructor in the military entails a meticulous and rigorous process. Every instructor undergoes a six-month course to acquire skills in effectively conveying information to students. Our guidebook as training instructors was a comprehensive nearly 500-page document titled *Air Force Manual 36-2236 Guidebook For Air Force Instructors*.

The seven-step teaching method, as outlined in the manual, underwent decades of development, and required millions of dollars to study the most efficient method of relaying information to students. A wide range of subjects were investigated, including learning styles, attention spans, content control, timing, retention strategies, and numerous other facets. The outcome was the creation of what would come to be known as the seven-step teaching method. The steps are as follows:

1. Attention
2. Motivation
3. Overview
4. Body
5. Remotivation
6. Overview
7. Closure

The first step is the attention step. According to the *Air Force Manual*, the attention step is described to the instructor as follows:

Attention. To gain attention, the instructor may relate some incident focusing students on the subject and providing a background for the lesson. Another approach may be

to make an unexpected or surprising statement or ask a question that relates the lesson to group needs. A rhetorical question (Have you ever...? or Can you imagine...?) may be effective. In all instances, the primary concern is to focus student attention on the subject. (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 6.9.1.1.)

Following my initial introduction, initiation of subject content, and a trigger warning of the topic at hand, I plan to proceed directly to my attention step. This will involve a less detailed recapitulation of the situation at the academy as described previously. The last two sentences of my story will serve as a transition to smoothly lead into the next step, which is the motivation step. *"All I could think was 'How could they not see the warning signs or even connect the dots even after the fact?' I believe the answer is that they were never trained to see the signs or even look for them."* It is important to note that transitions will be utilized between each of the seven steps. But what exactly are transitions? The Air Force defines them as follows:

Transitions are statements used by the instructor to move from the introduction to the body of the lecture, between main points, between subpoints within each main point, and from the body to the conclusion of the lecture. Transitions signal to the students that we are progressing to a new point, but they are also important in maintaining the continuity of the information given. (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 13.5.5)

My attention step, which involves recounting the story of what happened at the academy, will also serve as my motivation step. I find that these two steps are often intertwined, and the absolute necessity to keep them separate is usually not a requirement. After writing and delivering enough speeches, individuals will come to

understand that separating the two steps is only necessary on rare occasions. The manual provides the following definition for the motivational step:

Motivation. In the motivation, the instructor should make a personal appeal to students and reinforce their desire to learn... the instructor should cite a specific application for student learning experiences. In many cases, the need for this lesson as a foundation for future lessons is strong motivation. This motivational appeal should continue throughout the lesson... (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 6.9.1.2.)

By revisiting my attention/motivational story and others like it, I will continue the appeal throughout the entire lesson.

The third step, which I consider to be the cornerstone of any teaching didactic in the introduction phase, is the overview step.

Overview. For most instructional methods, the introduction should provide an overview of what is to be covered during the class period. An overview should have a clear, concise presentation of the objective and main points as a road map for learning. Effective visual aids can be helpful at this point. A clear overview can contribute greatly to a lesson by removing doubts in the minds of the students about where the lesson is going and how they are going to get there. Students can be told what will be covered or left out and why. Inform them about how the ideas have been organized. Research shows students understand better and retain more when they know what to expect. The purpose of the overview is to prepare students to listen to the body of the lesson. (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 6.9.1.3.)

The overview for the entire lesson will be concise, lasting less than three minutes.

However, with such a long lesson I will also be sharing a more compressed overview for

every section of the presentation. I plan to keep the overviews short due to the guidance from the *Air Force Manual 36-2236*, which stresses that lectures should not exceed the 50-60-minute mark without providing the audience a five-minute break or more between sessions. However, some studies present outliers to this notion. In the late 1970s, well before the advent of PowerPoint, researchers analyzed 1353 questionnaires from 12 lectures delivered to medical students. They found that “student concentration rose sharply to reach a maximum in 10-15 minutes and fell steadily thereafter. The data suggest that the optimum length of a lecture may be 30 instead of 60 minutes” (Stuart & Rutherford, 1978, p. 515). However, it’s essential to consider that these were medical lessons delivered to medical students in the 1970’s. It’s possible that the content was somewhat dry, complex, and repetitive, as they likely encountered similar material on a daily basis. Nevertheless, it is a valid study, and the fact remains that attention spans are finite, even among the brightest medical students. This reinforces my intention to make my training sessions as engaging as possible.

To captivate my audience, I intend to employ a variety of public speaking tactics. These tactics are drawn from my experiences as an Air Force instructor, my time as a substitute teacher, preaching classes, and lessons I have learned from giving sermons over the years. These tactics include audience participation, personal anecdotes, stories of others, voice modulation, timing, anticipatory questions, PowerPoint presentations, visual aids, charts, strategic breaks, audience-directed questions, group activities, pre- and post-presentation assessments, opportunities for audience participation, adherence to the seven-step teaching method, and inviting alternative speakers (such as a conference attorney). Following the overview, I will transition to the fourth step of the seven: the

body of my lecture. This section will constitute the main subject material and will receive the bulk of my focus. A detailed outline of the lecture's content, specific topics within the body, and their organizational structure can be found on the next page.

Let us use the analogy of a trip on an airplane. If the attention, motivation, and overview stages were the takeoff, and the body represented the flight itself, then the remotivation, overview, and closure would be akin to the landing.

Remotivation. The purpose of the remotivation is to instill in students a desire to retain and use what they have learned. Effective instructors provide motivation throughout the lesson. But the remotivation step is the instructor's last chance to let students know why the information presented in the lesson is so important to the students as individuals. The remotivation may also provide the groundwork for future lessons or reasons the information will help the students do their jobs more effectively. But whatever the reasons given, they should be ones appealing directly to the students and show the importance of the subject matter learned. (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 6.9.2.2.)

Following the remotivation, another brief overview of the subject matter will be provided to reinforce the content of the presentation in the students' minds. This is the only "clone" of the seven-step teaching method, as it is provided twice and mirrors the initial overview in both length and content. The final step is the closure. In movies and sermons, the closure step is often crucial. However, when giving lectures, I find it is rarely necessary because the remotivation and second overview typically accomplished what was necessary to land the plane effectively. Often, executing a closure step in an instructional setting can be excessive and awkward for both the lecturer and the students.

I will likely include this step at the conclusion of my full-day but will most likely skip it in most of my subsets of presentations. The closure step, as described by the Air Force, is as follows:

Closure. For many instructors, the closure presents the most difficult challenge in planning a lesson. Students need to be released from active participation. In lectures, they need to be released from listening. In interactive methods, they need to know that it is time for their verbal participation to end. Sometimes instructors who don't know how to close will say, "Well that's about all I have to say," or "I guess I don't have anything else." This type of closure is not very satisfying. There are many more effective ways of closing. Sometimes vocal inflection can signal that the lesson is ending. Quotations, stories, or humorous incidents can also provide effective closure. Sometimes when the lesson is to be followed by others in the same block of instruction, we might say something such as, "Next time, then, we will continue with our discussion of... . Between now and then if you have any questions, come to my office and I'll see if I can answer them for you." (Department of the Air Force, 2003, 6.9.2.3.)

Outline for the Lesson

Introduction of Speaker

Attention:

Vague story of what happened in Conference years before

Motivation:

Written testing of audience

Transition: 10 min break

Body:

1. Research (Chapter 3 Literature related to Abuse)

Attention

Motivation

Overview
Body
A. Physical Abuse
 A1 Definitions
 A2 Statistics
 A3 Indicators
 A4 Causes
 A5 Effects
 A6 Group Sharing

Transition: 10 min break

B. Sexual Abuse
 B1 Definitions
 B2 Statistics
 B3 Indicators
 B4 Causes
 B5 Effects
 B6 Group Sharing

Remotivation
Overview
Closure

Transition: 10 min break

2. Biblical (Chapter 2 Generational Sin)

Attention
Motivation
Overview
Body
A. Generational Sin
B. Adam and Eve
C. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
Remotivation
Overview
Closure

Transition: 1 hour break for lunch

3. Legal (Chapter 3 Literature related to Abuse)

Attention
Motivation
Overview
Body
A. Mandatory Reporting
 A1 Child Abuse
 • Definitions
 • Laws
 • Scenarios and Input from Attorney

Transition: 10 min break

- A2 Domestic Violence
 - Definitions
 - Laws
 - Scenarios and Input from Attorney

- A3 Elder and Dependent Abuse
 - Definitions
 - Laws
 - Scenarios and Input from Attorney

Remotivation
Overview
Closure

Transition: 10 minute break

Remotivation: Written testing of audience

Overview:

Closure:

Determining the Learning Outcome

Determining the learning outcomes of the pastors in the training session will be achieved through a series of pre- and post-training questions. Pastors will be instructed to provide their names and emails on the questionnaire but will be assured that their identities will remain anonymous. Pre-training questions will consist of various hypothetical scenarios involving church members reporting or exhibiting different signs of physical and sexual abuse. Each scenario will be followed by multiple-choice or open-ended questions, concluding with options to choose various methods of reporting procedures. Correct answers will not be given to those in attendance until the second round of training scenario questions have been completed and turned in to the test administrator. The test administrator will be solely responsible for collecting all data.

Due to the sensitive nature of the training, participants may face certain risks, including the potential for emotional distress triggered by the content. To address this

potential issue, participants who find themselves feeling emotionally unsettled will be encouraged to leave the session immediately. In addition, I will provide contact information for two certified counselors, both with PhD's, who have already agreed to assist with any emotional distress resulting from the seminar. Each participant will be offered a one-time counseling session. If further support is needed, referrals will be provided.

Following the initial questions and answers, the training will continue for the remainder of the day. Upon completion of the day's training, a second set of questions, resembling the first set of questions and scenarios, will be provided. Each scenario and its possible answers will closely mirror those of the first set of questions. The second set of scenarios will maintain the same style and content as the first set to ensure the accuracy of assessing learning outcomes. However, names, locations, and other details will be varied enough to prevent identification from the original set of questions.

If the day-long training session is as successful as anticipated, I expect a 30-40% increase in the number of correctly answered questions after the training. This estimation is based on my previous understanding of the issues during my tenure as a newer pastor in the conference, combined with my current comprehension of abuse issues and mandatory reporting. I estimate that my level of understanding has increased by as much as 50%.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF THE INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

Over time in ministry, pastors are likely to encounter members who have experienced or are currently experiencing various forms of abuse. Abuse is often unrecognized by individuals not directly involved. Consequently, victims of abuse suffer in silence, often with little hope of liberation. Many victims never come forward to seek help due to fears of reprisal and social exclusion. As detailed in previous chapters, pastors often occupy a unique position to recognize, report, and contribute to the elimination of abuse. Unfortunately, many pastors receive little training on identifying and reporting abuse among their members. Seminaries often neglect these topics, and once pastors are working in a conference, their training is usually minimal at best. If training does take place in a conference, it usually consists of short online programs, such as Shield the Vulnerable, aimed at fulfilling the basic requirements outlined by Adventist Risk Management's insurance policy to protect the conference from potential litigation.

The Wisconsin Seventh-day Adventist conference has opted to exceed the basic requirements for their pastors by providing a unique opportunity. They arranged to receive an advanced education on identifying physical and sexual abuse among their members, along with proper procedures for reporting these incidents to the appropriate authorities. On May 11, 2023, the Wisconsin conference hosted a one-day seminar I developed to train their pastors on the complex aspects of abuse and reporting laws. The

seminar was a culmination of my previous ministry experience and the four and-a-half years dedicated to researching the topics, as outlined in the literature review and theological reflection. The training comprised PowerPoint presentations and numerous handouts delivered over a 5-½ hour period. This chapter's sections illustrate the project's development, the covered content, and the participants' experiences.

Obstacles in Finding Willing Participants— March-October 2022

Previously, I was employed by the Central California Conference, which has a long and frequent history of sexual abuse among its employees. With encouragement from my former ministerial director, who also served as my Doctor of Ministry project coach, I never anticipated any issues with implementing my project within the Central California Conference. However, reality proved to be quite different. In early 2022, the conference president at the time retired, and my former ministerial director opted to pursue a position as Professor of New Testament Studies at Union College. Residing in Pennsylvania, I was unaware of these developments until I contacted my former ministerial director to schedule my project's implementation. "Not to worry," he assured me, "I'm confident the new ministerial director will accommodate you without any problems." With his assurances, I felt reassured and didn't concern myself with it. Even after conversing with the new ministerial director, I remained confident, as he expressed assurance that the new president of the Central California Conference would welcome the training without any difficulties. My phone conversation with the new ministerial director seemed very promising. He emphasized the urgency of this training more than ever. A month before contacting him, another incident of sexual molestation involving a gym

teacher occurred at another academy within the conference. He promised to get back with me within two weeks.

About a month later, having not received a response, I called him. I assumed he was likely busy and had forgotten. During the conversation, it was implied that the new conference president was not currently inclined to host this training, as he was prioritizing evangelism seminars over pastoral training. The ministerial director assured me he would revisit the topic and call me back within a week. A week later, I was informed that the decision had been made, and it was not in my favor. The ministerial director had done everything possible on my behalf, so I expressed gratitude for his efforts and devised a new plan. While I was frustrated with the decision, I remained unconcerned about the outcome. I knew there were many other conferences in need of this training, and they would likely be eager to host such an important seminar. However, my blind optimism lasted only a couple of weeks.

Lack of Interest Among Conferences

The next week I initiated the process by drafting an email intended for all conference officials. Following this, I proceeded to contact each conference individually to inquire about the appropriate recipient for the email and obtain their respective email addresses. In approximately 80% of the conferences contacted, it was determined that the designated recipient for such correspondence would be the ministerial director. The subsequent section presents the content of the email transmitted.

My name is Nick Moore, and I am reaching out to you and the _____ Conference regarding the possible implementation of my Doctorate of Ministry project from Andrews University. I currently live in Pennsylvania, and am a chaplain at a federal

prison, but from 2016-2020 I was an associate pastor with the Central California Conference at the Clovis Church. During my time there, one of my members, who worked at our academy, was arrested for molesting four boys at the school. It was quite the ordeal to say the least. The investigation and trial took almost five years but just recently, he was sentenced to 30 years. Because of that experience, I chose to center my doctoral thesis around training pastors how to identify physical and sexual abuse among their members and the mandatory reporting laws and procedures surrounding it. I have been working on my project since 2019 and have condensed my research into a one-day training seminar for un-ordained pastors during one of their in-person training sessions. I plan to gauge their knowledge prior to the training with a test of possible scenarios they may experience and have them write how they would respond to the scenarios. The next six hours would be training via Power-Point presentation. Finally, I would re-test them, which would ultimately determine if the training was beneficial or not.

My original plan was to return to my old conference for the project's fulfillment, but in the last year, the entire administration has changed, and the new leadership is not interested in hosting this type of training. My old Ministerial Director, Dr. Pierre Steenberg had full interest in hosting the training, but he also left last year and took a position as a professor at Union in Nebraska. Dr. Steenberg was also a member at my church and would have no problem vouching for me as he was also my D. Min project coach for the first two years. He can be reached at (559) 273-xxxx. Feel free to call or email back with any questions. Thank you for your consideration!

Initially, I sent this email to five conferences during the first week. I was confident that contacting five conferences was optimal, as exceeding this number could potentially lead to overbooking and the need to decline invitations. When I did not receive the results I anticipated, I sent the email to an additional 10 conferences. Among this group, I garnered interest from a ministerial director who displayed considerable enthusiasm. However, he ceased responding to my emails for unknown reasons. With limited success thus far, I dispatched another 15 emails a month later, yielding comparable outcomes. I iterated this process at least two additional times. After five months, I had contacted 49 conferences within the North American Division, ultimately securing three with an apparent genuine interest in hosting the training. I was astounded by the extent of effort, adversity, and rejection encountered in securing just those three. However, within two months, two conferences either ceased communication or encountered scheduling conflicts. Consequently, only the Wisconsin conference remained as a viable option.

Out of the 49 conferences I emailed, a total of 33 never responded. In addition, five conferences directly declined, either by phone or email. Their replies were as follows:

██████████ **Conference:** *"The president is only interested in hosting training that focuses on evangelism."* Ministerial Director

██████████ **Conference:** *"We already rely on Shield the Vulnerable to train our pastors regarding this issue"* Ministerial Director

██████ **Conference:** *"Dear Mr. Moore, Thank you for the invitation to participate in your Doctor of Ministry Project. My sense is that it won't work for the ██████████ Conference at this time. Thanks again."* Ministerial Director

██████████ **Conference:** *"Hey Nick, I'm sorry for not getting back to you sooner. I think the content of your project is beneficial. However, six hours of*

training on this topic would be too much. We encourage our pastors to report signs of abuse to our HR Department for further guidance. I pray you will find an opportunity to present your project.” Ministerial Secretary

Conference: *“Nick, Thanks for sharing your interest in training some of our pastors with the abuse issues described. We do have required training and in consultation with administration respectfully decline your training offer.” Unknown*

In addition to those conferences, there were 10 others that initially replied with interest but, for unknown reasons, ceased further communication.

Conference: *“Good morning, Nick Moore. Thank you for your call this morning. I will see that Elder _____ receives a copy of this email, and we will reach out to you with any questions. God bless.”*

Conference: *“Nick, I am sharing this with our Associate Director who works directly with our interns. When we have the chance to discuss this, I will get back to you.”*

Conference: *“Hey _____, I [am] sending you this for possible use in our NIM classes. Since I will be in retirement by that time, I am sending it to you for consideration, Thanks.”*

Conference: (This conference was initially the most promising, yet after about five emails back and forth they unexpectedly stopped responding) *“Hi Nick, Interesting that you would reach out to me, I was actually thinking of working with my next pre-ordained training meeting on this very topic...Most unfortunately, I think most of us who have been in ministry long enough have had to deal with this. Are you going to be at Called in Lexington? --I was thinking that possibly we could meet up, but if not, I am still open to working with you on this important topic.”*

Conference: *“Hi Nick, _____ is currently on vacation but feel free to reach out to him next week at 407-xxx-xxxx.”*

Conference: *“Hey Nick, will your training be done via Zoom”?*

Conference: This conference was very interested in my project and made quite an effort to call me back several times. Although there was interest and an acknowledgement that abuse is a problem in our denomination, the conference ministerial director doubted his ability to effectively give me what I was looking to obtain for the necessary fulfillment of the project. There would be difficulty with the logistics of bringing pastors from the area covered by their conference. In addition to this, there would be six different language groups in attendance, some of which spoke

little to no English. The ministerial director encouraged me and assured that he would get back to me if he were able to make something happen.

There was one conference who responded but had already arranged for a similar training session, coinciding with the type of training I was offering. This conference was the **Pennsylvania Conference**. Despite ultimately declining my seminar, the Pennsylvania Conference was exceedingly supportive and maintained frequent engagement with me. The conference had previously scheduled a speaker to address child and sexual abuse with their pastors and teachers in a one-day training seminar. I received an invitation to attend the event and participated in August of 2022. Participating in this seminar enriched my own presentation in several aspects.

At this conference, I was introduced to Ashley Frazier, ESQ, MPA, who serves as the Claims Counsel for Adventist Risk Management. She graciously provided assistance by addressing numerous legal inquiries that I had via phone and email. In addition, I had the opportunity to engage with the presenter, Corey Jensen, M.S., of CBI Consulting, Inc. With over 35 years of experience as a sex offender treatment provider, she has conducted more than 7,000 therapy sessions with child molesters in various state prison systems. The Pennsylvania Conference marked the 27th Adventist Conference where Mrs. Jensen had presented since 2002. Furthermore, she has delivered seminars and training sessions for various denominations and organizations, including the U.S. Marshals, National Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Norwegian Police, U.S. Embassy Security Forces, NY PD's Special Victims Unit, U.S. Navy, Big Brothers, Boy Scouts of America, and numerous schools nationwide. I had the opportunity to interact with her during breaks and after the seminar. We exchanged research and information, corresponded multiple times, and shared PowerPoint slides to enhance each other's

presentations. Mrs. Jensen played a pivotal role in supplying several slides utilized in my presentation. In addition, she provided information on child molesters and risk management practices as she had previously been consulted years prior by Adventist Risk Management in the development of their child safety policies. Her expertise and wealth of knowledge were invaluable.

Time Allocation Issues of the Willing Conference

After confirmation from the Wisconsin Conference, the next step was to establish a date. The conference holds quarterly day-long training seminars attended by both ordained and un-ordained pastors. Throughout the entire process, the ministerial director of the conference provided invaluable assistance and was eager to support my project in any capacity possible. Ten months before the training, I submitted a draft schedule to him. This draft encompassed all the topics to be addressed but only provided a rough estimate of the time required for each. Two months prior to the training, the ministerial director requested another proposed schedule for the day. The initial schedule commenced at 8:00 a.m. and concluded at 4:00 p.m., allowing for a lunch break and several additional breaks, thus allocating six hours for my presentation. I dedicated almost a year and a half to developing a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation comprising nearly 350 slides, and this schedule was tailored to accommodate the extensive content. Shortly after receiving my proposed schedule, he politely emailed me requesting a reduction in duration by two hours. He proposed incorporating a morning devotional and allocating two hours for administrative matters with the pastors following the training. In addition, he mentioned that if additional time was required, he would explore the possibility of extending the event to two days within budget constraints.

Considering the challenges encountered in finding a conference willing to host my training, I recognized the prudence in shortening the seminar rather than requesting additional funding to extend the pastors' stay. This necessitated the removal of numerous slides, reduced time allocated for handouts, omission of planned stories, and a shortening of group sharing sessions. Presented below is the agreed-upon proposed schedule between the ministerial director and myself.

09:30	Introduction and Testing
10:00	5 min break
10:05	Physical Abuse
	Definitions
	Statistics
	Indicators
	Causes
	Effects
	Group Sharing
11:00	10 min break
11:10	Sexual Abuse
	Definitions
	Statistics
	Indicators
11:45	Lunch
12:45	Resume
	Causes
13:30	5 min break
13:35	Resume
	Effects
	Prevention
	Group Sharing
14:30	10 min break
14:40	Mandatory Reporting
	Child Abuse
	Definitions
	Laws
	Domestic Violence
	Definitions
	Laws
	Elder Abuse
	Definitions
	Laws
15:20	10 min break

15:30 Re-testing
15:45 Group Sharing & Conclusion
16:00 Administrative Items

Part One: Introduction of the Training and Testing
—M ay 11, 2023

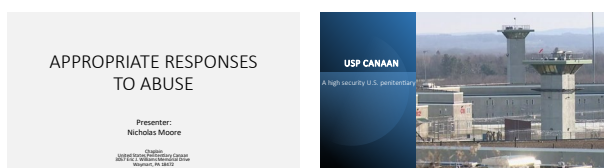
It's often emphasized that making a strong first impression when meeting someone is crucial. I hold the belief that the same principle applies when initially engaging a captive audience, regardless of the duration of the interaction.

Introduction of the Topic

The introduction of the topic commenced immediately following the ministerial director's morning devotion. To effectively introduce myself, I employed a two-fold approach utilizing both visual and verbal elements. The screen prominently displayed the title of the training topic: "Appropriate Responses to Abuse," (see Figure 1) which is a condensed version of my dissertation's title. Alongside this, my name and professional designation as a chaplain at a federal prison were prominently featured. Introducing my occupation served as a deliberate segue to the subsequent slide, which depicted the prison where I am employed. This approach served a dual purpose: firstly, it created an element of surprise for the audience, effectively capturing their attention; secondly, it established my credibility and expertise in the upcoming subject matter.

Figure 1

Training Topic



As the audience viewed the image of the prison, I provided a verbal description of the individuals I encounter daily. This description served as a seamless transition to my fourth slide.

“There are a lot of dangerous people here; hitmen, gang leaders, mobsters, international and domestic terrorists, serial rapists and child molesters. I’ve learned how dangerous people can appear completely normal. They are incredibly skilled at manipulating others. However, before I worked here, I worked at a place where discernment regarding dangerous people is even more necessary and failure to do so can have more serious consequences.”



“I worked as the associate pastor here from 2016-2020. In a prison you expect to be around dangerous individuals, but here, appearances can be deceiving. And dangerous people can do a lot more damage here than they can in prison. Today, I’ll share several stories of situations I’ve encountered, including some involving my former congregation members. To kick things off, I want to focus on one member in particular who inspired me to be here with you today.”

I began by sharing a condensed passage from chapter four, recounting my early days as a newly appointed pastor at the church when troubling child molestation allegations surfaced at our academy. This narrative continued to a later incident where I overheard teachers discussing one of the children who had been a victim, almost a year after the initial incident (refer to page 84). *“It struck me profoundly that these teachers failed to connect the dots due to a lack of training in identifying signs and symptoms of*

abuse." Utilizing this information, I transitioned from capturing attention and motivating to providing an overview of the topics scheduled for discussion that day.

Testing of the Participants

After providing the overview, I transitioned into the first testing phase with those in attendance. The attendance throughout the day fluctuated between 26 and 31 individuals. I commenced by clarifying that the training was a significant component of my Doctor of Ministry program with Andrews University. Following that, I distributed the Informed Consent Form and reviewed it with the participants. Then, I distributed the survey itself. Below are the entire contents of the survey.

Name:

How many years have you been a pastor?

How long have you been with the Wisconsin Conference?

How many churches do you pastor?

How many members do you have on the books for each church?

How many people would you say attend each of your churches at least once a month?

Are you ordained?

What is your age, race and sex?

What is your education level?

What degrees do you have?

What schools did you earn your degrees from?

Did you attend these schools in person or online?

Scenario 1

Lillian, a member of your church and a young mother of three, wants to talk to you privately in your office after church. She tells you that when her husband Tony drinks, he becomes violent. Tony is the head deacon at your church. Lillian claims that two weeks ago they got into an argument and that Tony dragged her down the stairs by her hair. Lillian admits that although Tony has never physically struck her, the confrontations are becoming more physical. On the outside, things look great, and they even hold hands at church. You personally like Tony and have even golfed together.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 2

Once a month you take communion to the local nursing home to a long-time church member. He is an elderly man who is in the beginning stages of Dementia. He has no family, and the nursing staff says you are his only visitor. During this visit he tells you that one of the nurses slaps him and pinches him when he refuses to take his medication. The nursing staff always seem very friendly, and he looks in no way physically neglected or abused.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 3

One of your church elders informs you that 16-year-old Suzy and 19-year-old Brad from youth group are having sex.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 4

After hosting Wednesday night youth group, 14-year-old Mikenzie stays after to talk to you. She is from a broken home, but you don't know much else other than her parents are not together anymore. She is obviously anxious and embarrassed. She tells you that she is pregnant but does not want to reveal any more information.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 5

A woman at your church, who is in her 40's, makes an appointment with you in your office. In your office she tells you that she was molested as a young girl by her uncle and has never shared this information with anyone. Although the entire extended family are long time members of the church and her uncle (now in his 70's) has been a very active member over the years, she tells you that she is coming to you now because she is uncomfortable that he occasionally talks with other families' young children at church.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 6

The wife of your head elder comes to you and tells you that her husband has recently raped her and has done this numerous times over the course of their 20 years of marriage. She is thinking about filing for divorce and is coming to you for advice.

- What do you do?

- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

After completing the test scenarios, the participants were given a 5-minute break.

However, they took longer than expected to complete their responses to the scenarios and utilized more break time than I had anticipated. When everyone returned to their seats, it was nearly 10:20. By this point, I was 15 minutes behind schedule.

Part Two: Physical Abuse— May 11, 2023

I deliberately chose to begin our discussion with the topic of physical abuse for two main reasons. Firstly, it provided a softer introduction, characterized by its relatively lighter, less abrasive, and less shocking content compared to sexual abuse. I believed that introducing the audience gradually to the subject matter was a more considerate approach than delving into the more distressing topic right from the start. Secondly, my decision to begin the day with a discussion on physical abuse was influenced by my extensive experience in presenting, preaching, and teaching. Maintaining an audience's engagement after lunch, especially after several hours of classroom time, is a well-known challenge. Given that the subject of sexual abuse is inherently more captivating, emotionally charged, and likely to elicit stronger reactions, I strategically scheduled it for our post-lunch session when energy levels tend to dip.

Definitions

Although many, including myself, may find the process of defining terms somewhat unexciting, it was deemed necessary to include it in each section of this project. The rationale behind this decision is to provide clarity for the audience and eliminate any guesswork regarding the topic at hand. Excluding or postponing the

definition within the presentation can lead the audience's minds to wander, causing them to speculate about the subject while missing out on other crucial information. Although our main focus is on physical abuse, I opted not to provide a definition for physical abuse itself, as it might seem redundant and potentially condescending, considering that adults typically understand its basics. Instead, in this section, I chose to define three distinct forms of physical abuse: Child Maltreatment, Intimate Partner Violence, and Neglect.

Statistics

Incorporating statistics can enhance the credibility of your statements. In my presentation, I substantiated the statistical data with citations from peer-reviewed research, which were cited at the bottom right-hand corner of each slide. To engage the audience and sustain their interest in what might otherwise be a dry subject, I posed thought-provoking questions before presenting the statistical information. Examples of these questions include, "Which demographic group do you believe experiences the highest rate of physical abuse?" and "Which category of women tends to be at a greater risk for Intimate Partner Violence?" This approach encouraged active participation and sustained the audience's engagement throughout the presentation.

Indicators

During this segment of the presentation, I delved into essential content that significantly enhanced the participants' understanding. Identifying the signs and symptoms of physical abuse is the initial and crucial step in its prevention. This section covered several key topics, including common indicators, types of abuse, common

injuries indicative of abuse, non-physical signs of abuse, strategies for discussing the topic in conversation, and common suspicious aspects of abuse.

Causes

This section offered the audience valuable insights into the factors contributing to the development of physical abuse in individuals' lives. Throughout this section of my presentation, the primary emphasis was on referencing researchers and their findings within the context of their study subjects. The overwhelming evidence from these studies suggests that experiencing abuse or growing up in abusive environments significantly increases the likelihood of becoming an abuser in the future.

Effects

This section of the presentation appeared to resonate with some members of the audience, evident from their reactions, especially regarding the effects of physical abuse. In this section, we examined a variety of consequences, including chronic pain, asthma, gastrointestinal issues, neurological disorders, and reproductive problems (such as sexually transmitted infections, human immunodeficiency virus [HIV], and unintended pregnancy). Furthermore, we delved into the impact on mental health, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], depression, and substance abuse. We also discussed the increased risk of injury and mortality from homicide and suicide, the financial burden on the healthcare system, learning disabilities, substance use disorders, and abnormal brain development.

Group Sharing

I initially included this section in my curriculum because I believed it would be one of the most valuable aspects of each presentation. It provides participants with the opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts and experiences. Personally, I find that I grasp and contextualize information more effectively when it's presented within the framework of a real-life story, which is why I believe Jesus used parables so extensively. However, I was also apprehensive about allowing people to share their stories, primarily because I was running behind schedule. I had initially incorporated these sharing segments when I had an extra two hours for the presentation. Fortunately, no one had any stories to share, and I was able to easily and quickly address the few questions raised at the end of the session.

Part Three: Sexual Abuse— May 11, 2023

Around 11:15, I transitioned into the topic of sexual abuse. Despite lecturing for an hour and a half, the audience remained engaged and eager. I attribute this to several factors. These factors include the use of a dynamic PowerPoint presentation, engaging content, active audience participation, well-deserved breaks, and a purposeful transition at the conclusion of the physical abuse section. This transition built anticipation for the upcoming segment on sexual abuse. I took a calculated risk of possibly losing the audience's attention by following the same flow as the previous segment, introducing similar segments in order (definitions, statistics, indicators, causes, etc.). However, I believed this approach helped the audience maintain their focus because it allowed them to anticipate what would come next, fostering a somewhat subconscious level of attention to the content. To kick off this section, I employed a "shock and awe" tactic to grab

attention. I asked, “Which denomination do you think has the most cases of sexual abuse?” The audience guessed, and then I revealed that the Seventh-day Adventist church ranked third. Shock factor achieved.

Definitions

For definitions, I condensed it to three slides, focusing solely on defining Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). However, I also included numerous subcategories of CSA within this section, which we later explored in greater detail during the lecture.

Statistics

In the statistics segment on sexual abuse, I opted for a more comprehensive approach. My rationale was that by including a greater number of peer-reviewed statistics, I could enhance the credibility of my presentation and help the audience grasp the gravity of the current reality in which we live and work. Within this section, I addressed a wide range of topics, including comparisons of abuse victims by gender (boys and girls), age groups (children vs. adults), occurrences of sexual abuse in school environments, within immediate families, during adulthood, among individuals with severe mental illnesses, and the reasons behind non-reporting of abuse. To conclude this section, I posed a transitional question to bridge the audience to the next segment. “How can we, as religious leaders, identify someone who may be suffering from sexual abuse?”

Indicators

Although this section consisted of only 12 slides, I consider it the most pivotal part of my entire presentation. Within it, I provided pastors with essential signs and symptoms to watch for. Recognizing that indicators can vary widely across different age

groups (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood), I segmented this section accordingly. In these slides, I covered a total of 68 common indicators of sexual abuse. For accessibility and practicality, I distributed paper handouts containing all these indicators to the attendees. In addition, I encouraged pastors to snap photos of my slides using their phones, a suggestion that roughly 50% of the class appeared to embrace. After concluding this section, I granted the group a well-deserved lunch break, allowing them approximately one hour to recharge.

Causes

The section I titled “Causes” marked a significant juncture in my presentation, as it introduced the slides and information concerning child sex offenders from Mrs. Corey Jensen of CBI Consulting. I began by preserving the integrity of her PowerPoint slides, maintaining their distinctive blue background colors, as she had originally shared with me. I also acknowledged Mrs. Jensen’s extensive expertise and credentials, showcasing her qualifications on two separate slides. In addition, I shared the backstory of how we crossed paths and explained that I had obtained full permission to incorporate her slides into my presentation. Within my extensive presentation on sexual abuse, comprising a total of 157 slides, 42 of them were sourced from Mrs. Jensen’s original presentation, which encompassed over 300 slides. I spent months meticulously curating and reorganizing her content, selecting only the most relevant and logical slides to ensure a seamless flow in my presentation.

The “Causes” section delved into several critical facets of why and how offenders perpetrate abuse against their victims. Similar to my presentation style and structure, Mrs. Jensen also initiated her section with numerous statistics on sexual offenders. The

subsequent subsection explored the mindset of offenders, featuring a concise two-slide section from Mrs. Jensen's material. Following that, I incorporated a segment on the common character traits of sexual abusers, drawing from my own research, and supplemented it with seven slides from Mrs. Jensen on the same topic.

Originally, I included a substantial and intricate section titled "Why do they offend in the first place?" This section was primarily based on my own research efforts and explored various theoretical ideas about the factors that may lead individuals to become sexual offenders. However, due to last-minute time constraints, I made the decision to omit the first half of this section to save time. In addition, I chose to remove it due to its speculative nature. While well-researched and peer-reviewed, much of the content remained hypothetical in its attempt to unravel the numerous potential causes contributing to the development of child sexual offenders.

To ensure transparency and acknowledge the importance of exploring the "why" aspect of how offenders may become perpetrators, I chose to retain the slides in the presentation, albeit with a bold red line striking through each one. As I quickly navigated through these slides, I briefly described their content, primarily to convey to the audience that I had indeed conducted research on the complex nature of why individuals may develop into sexual offenders, addressing both the nature versus nurture aspects. The remaining section on "why they offend" focused on substantial data and motivations, encompassing research related to brain chemistry and financial incentives, such as sex trafficking.

The next subsection within my "causes" section delved into the grooming tactics employed by child sexual offenders. I provided comprehensive definitions and statistics,

transitioning into an exploration of how the grooming process typically unfolds within familial, associate, and online settings. To conclude this section, I included a three-minute video testimony from Diamond D., a former transvestite, courtesy of XXX Church of Las Vegas, Nevada. In the clip, Diamond D. candidly shared his realization that his promiscuous adult lifestyle was directly linked to childhood molestation. This video clip served as a relevant segue to my next topic.

Effects

The segment addressing the effects experienced by abuse survivors was undeniably emotionally charged and impactful. While the content primarily consisted of quotations from peer-reviewed research, it was evident that some attendees were deeply affected by the profound impact of sexual abuse on its victims. This section, although concise at just six slides, presented a substantial amount of text on each slide—almost pushing the limits of readability on the screen. Rather than read through such a large amount of material myself, I chose to select a person at random to read one entire slide. This approach served three distinct purposes simultaneously.

Firstly, it afforded me, as the presenter, a momentary break. Secondly, it encouraged audience participation, actively involving them in the presentation. And thirdly, it immediately motivated everyone to pay keen attention to what might otherwise be considered dry material, driven by the anticipation of possibly being selected to read next. Following the completion of these read-aloud sections, I granted the audience a five-minute break, although they extended it to ten minutes.

Prevention

As we entered this next section, which I consider the heart of my entire presentation, I strategically began with an attention-grabbing step and a motivational story to invite active audience participation. Given that this section followed a break and held crucial importance, I aimed to ensure everyone was fully engaged. To kick things off, I employed an attention step inspired by the popular “Choose Your Own Adventure” book series that captivated kids during the late 80’s to the mid-90’s. For those unfamiliar with the series, I provided a quick overview of how the books worked—readers faced decisions at the end of each chapter, leading to different outcomes and multiple possible endings based on their choices. Next, I introduced an extended scenario from my early days as a new pastor, using it as my motivational story to maximize audience engagement and maintain their attention. I presented a series of scenarios and asked attendees how they would respond to each. I aptly titled this narrative after the central character, Mr. Mendoza (not his real name).

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 1

You are a new pastor at a church and one of the elders inform you that Mr. Mendoza, whose wife currently owns and operates a small nursing home, was sentenced 25 years ago to a 10-year sentence for raping one of his incapacitated patients. Since his arrest, the business was put into his wife’s name, but he still operates it with his wife. They come to church regularly and socialize like everyone else before and after services.

- What do you do?

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 2

A few weeks later, Mr. Mendoza comes to you and expresses his desire to take the position as small group choir leader that you recently advertised for in the bulletin.

- What do you do?

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 3

About a year in, you hear through casual conversation with the secretary that about 10 years ago Mr. Mendoza sexually assaulted the cleaning lady in the pathfinder building while she was working. This incident was reported to unknown people at the church, but nothing was ever reported to the police

because the cleaning lady did not want any attention due to her immigration status. You find this very odd that you have never heard this before but after some asking around you find out that this is common knowledge.

- What do you do?

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 4

At an elder's meeting it is brought to everyone's attention that Mr. Mendoza has been sitting in the recliner in the mother's room during service so he can hear better. No church member has complained but the elders who have been around for a while and who know his history are concerned. One elder speaks up and vaguely remembers that Mr. Mendoza was asked by a pastor years ago that if he wishes to attend, he must always have a chaperone. No one has enforced this in years.

- What do you do?

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 5

After the meeting with the elders, you call the conference and get some guidance. You and the head elder draft up a new chaperone agreement and call Mr. Mendoza into your office. The head elder has known Mr. Mendoza for years, so he very kindly and compassionately communicates the church's policy regarding chaperones for those with criminal backgrounds such as his. Mr. Mendoza at first flat out refuses to sign any such agreement because his victims were older women and not children. This is probably the most awkward and uncomfortable meeting you have ever been in. After some very patient and gentle counsel, he agrees to sign and have a chaperone at all times.

- What do you do?

Mr. Mendoza Chapter 6

Each week a different elder is assigned to meet Mr. Mendoza at the door and chaperone him from a slight distance. Mr. Mendoza is almost always at church with his wife. After a few months, the elders stop being as diligent, and you see Mr. Mendoza walking the halls by himself and attending potlucks and church events with no elders in sight. You remind your elders repeatedly, but the ball is dropped repeatedly. You then confront Mr. Mendoza privately about your signed agreement to which he replies that his wife is his chaperone.

- What do you do?

From this injunction, I proceeded to the next slide which contained a sample Participation Agreement sourced from Adventist Risk Management's website. To enhance engagement, I also distributed physical copies of this exact document to the audience. Initially, my plan had been to read through the entire agreement with the participants, but I had to make another time-conscious adjustment. Instead, we briefly

reviewed key sections, and I encouraged attendees to keep it for their records, suggesting they peruse it at their convenience.

Next, I played a short two-minute YouTube video from End It Now Ministries. This video depicted a cartoon scenario in which a church member met with the pastor, expressing a desire to volunteer at the church. The first scenario illustrated the pastor handling the situation poorly, while the second demonstrated the pastor handling it correctly and utilizing the participation agreement. To facilitate a seamless transition, I distributed five different handouts accessible on Adventist Risk Management's website. These handouts encompassed essential topics, including the Child Protection Plan, Sex Offender Attendance Agreement, Managing Known Sex Offenders, Sex Offenders in the Church Legal Guide, and Reference Checks Do's and Don'ts. Again, we briefly discussed each handout, albeit limited by time constraints.

Group Sharing

Unfortunately, time constraints necessitated skipping this particular section, and I urged participants to reserve their questions for the concluding segment. Throughout the presentation, several questions had arisen that warranted thorough responses, sparking lengthy discussions among attendees lasting several minutes. The section on sexual abuse had unexpectedly consumed nearly 45 minutes beyond my initial estimate, largely due to various factors. Consequently, I was rapidly approaching the pre-established time limits for the entire training, as stipulated by the ministerial director.

Part Four: Mandatory Reporting— May 11, 2023

This marked the fourth and final presentation of the day, comprising a total of 59 PowerPoint slides. While I typically began each new section with a carefully crafted attention step and motivational story, I made the pragmatic choice, given our time constraints, to bypass these formalities and instead initiate with a straightforward overview of the lesson.

Who are Mandatory Reporters?

Although I didn't employ a formal attention step, the second slide in the PowerPoint served as a quick attention-grabber by posing a direct question to the audience: "Who are Mandatory Reporters?" While I didn't anticipate or necessarily desire a vocal response, my aim was to capture their attention and steer their thoughts toward the upcoming question. The subsequent 12 slides delved into the specifics of mandated reporting, covering the categories of professionals designated as mandated reporters, the types of crimes that necessitate reporting, the designated recipients of these reports, and the potential consequences for failing to fulfill this obligation. I structured the presentation by prioritizing reporting requirements based on the age of the victims, with children taking precedence, followed by adults, particularly in the context of domestic violence, and concluding with elder and incapacitated adult abuse.

Child Abuse

Once again, in alignment with my approach in most sections of this presentation, I began with fundamental definitions. However, this time, I took an additional step by elucidating what does not qualify as child abuse, such as necessary force exerted by a

peace officer, age-appropriate disciplinary spanking, and typical conflicts between minors. Following this foundation, I transitioned to delve into a couple of state statutes specific to Wisconsin, addressing issues unique to the region, distinct from most other states. Following this, I delved into the potential legal implications of reporting child abuse without prior investigation, recounting a court case from New York where a teacher faced a successful civil lawsuit from parents due to their failure to investigate claims before reporting. In this concise section, I also explored the legal risks associated with third-party accusations.

The next segment focused on the guidelines that must be adhered to when making a report, encompassing the essential aspects of who, what, when, where, and how to file a physical report.

During this discussion, I provided a visual representation of the Department of Justice form for online reporting in California, while noting that Wisconsin has its own distinct policies and standards governed by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. For the benefit of the group, I displayed the department's online procedures for filing a claim in Wisconsin.

Shifting gears, I addressed the contentious and often misunderstood topic of statutory rape, which varies in terms of age of consent, penalties, and mandatory reporting requirements from state to state. I dedicated five slides to meticulously outline the specific state statutes governing each of these facets in Wisconsin. To conclude the section on child abuse, I delved into the somewhat intricate Wisconsin state statute that governs the specific laws pertaining to clergy as mandatory reporters. It's worth noting

that Wisconsin's laws regarding mandatory reporting by clergy differ from those in most other states.

Domestic Violence

Consistent with my approach in previous sections, I initiated this segment by providing definitions of domestic violence. Subsequently, I outlined a noteworthy aspect—that a handful of states have markedly different laws concerning reporting domestic violence compared to the rest. Specifically, there are four states—New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wisconsin—where mandatory reporters are not obligated to report domestic violence. In addition, I addressed the unique situation in Oklahoma, where a mandatory reporter must obtain written consent from the victim before reporting domestic violence.

Anticipating the audience's surprise, I posed a leading question, inquiring, "Any guesses as to why New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and here in Wisconsin leave it up to the reporter's discretion? Or why in Oklahoma, you can't take any action without the victim's permission?" No one among the audience managed to guess the correct answer. I then proceeded to elucidate the reasons behind these exceptions as noted by researchers. In essence, the primary concerns revolved around the potential for further retaliation by the abuser and Child Protective Services potentially removing children from the mother's custody. Concluding the section on domestic violence, I once again employed a cartoon presentation from End It Now Ministries. This presentation illustrated both the right and wrong approaches for a member seeking help from a pastor regarding a domestic violence issue.

Elder Abuse

The concluding segment of the entire presentation focused on elder abuse, a topic that, like many, I personally did not fully grasp until my research. To ensure clarity and dispel any potential misconceptions, I, as before, commenced with comprehensive definitions.

Moving forward, I delved into the criteria that define elder and incapacitated adult abuse, shedding light on how reports pertaining to these cases should be handled. In closing, I presented a slide outlining the specific reporting procedures prescribed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. To further assist the audience, I distributed a handout containing these procedures and the contact information of the organization.

It's worth noting that the section on elder abuse, while succinct in terms of time and slide count, was intentionally condensed. This decision stemmed from the fact that much of the information regarding physical and sexual abuse and reporting procedures had already been covered, and I aimed to avoid redundancy. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I was unable to provide the audience with a break, though it appeared they didn't require one at that juncture. Consequently, we proceeded directly to the final testing phase.

Final Testing and Conclusions

The 2nd Survey

As the class commenced the final scenarios, I found myself running nearly 45 minutes beyond the allotted schedule. Furthermore, the participants' completion of the final testing scenarios stretched considerably longer than I had initially anticipated. In

fact, by the time they were finishing their testing, the conference president had already taken the floor to deliver his address.

Despite the president's speech, the class persisted in writing, and I suspect this continuous activity might have contributed to the incomplete filling out of the second survey among many participants. It's worth noting that the second survey retained the same set of scenarios as the first, with the addition of an extra section at the end, comprising the following questions:

1. Have you ever had any type of training regarding similar topics before?

If you answered "yes" please also answer the following questions below.

- A. What was the training called?
- B. When and where did you receive this training?
- C. How did your previous training compare with today's training?

2. From what you remember, was the topic of your responsibility as a mandatory reporter ever presented to you in your theological education in undergrad or graduate school?

If so, to what degree and depth was it addressed?

3. What were some of your biggest takeaways from today's training?

4. The training was presented in a logical and easy to follow format. Please circle a rating below.

0 = Absolutely not 10 = Flawless

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How could this training have been better presented?

5. Rate your knowledge level on a 0-10 scale of the topics of physical and sexual abuse and the mandatory reporting procedures surrounding each before and after the training.

Before the training:

Physical Abuse _____

Sexual Abuse _____

Mandatory Reporting _____

After the training:

Physical Abuse _____

Sexual Abuse _____

Mandatory Reporting _____

6. As a result of this training, how prepared do you feel if you were to encounter abuse among one of the members of your congregation as a result of this training? Please circle a rating below.

0 = Not at all prepared 10 = Totally prepared and confident

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why did you answer this way? Please be specific as possible.

I extended my apologies to the ministerial director several times for exceeding my allocated time. However, he reassured me that the time overrun wasn't a concern, emphasizing the importance of the presentation. After most of the students had left, the ministerial director and I found an opportunity to engage in conversation about the training. He appeared genuinely impressed with my presentation and the depth of my knowledge on the subject. I must admit, aside from the time issue, I felt the presentation had gone exceptionally well. My confidence was high, I had a firm grasp of the material, handled all questions proficiently, infused humor naturally, and established a genuine connection with the audience.

The ministerial director seemed to share this positive sentiment and even extended an offer for me to consider a pastoral position if I ever desired a change. I expressed my contentment with my current role as a prison chaplain in Pennsylvania but mentioned that I would consider his offer on a part-time basis if my work ever brought me to Wisconsin. He candidly shared his initial reservations about hosting my presentation, recognizing the potential risks involved in subjecting his pastors to hours of content from an unknown presenter, which could have gone awry. He acknowledged that this hesitancy might have contributed to my previous challenges in securing presentation opportunities. It was a straightforward yet eye-opening explanation that had not occurred

to me before. I had previously assumed that the difficulty in securing conference commitments was due to negligence in pastoral training. However, I now understood that hosting me presented a significant gamble for each conference.

A Very Unforeseen Event

My visit to the Wisconsin conference concluded on Thursday, May 11th, at around 5:30 pm, and I embarked on the seven-hour drive back to Michigan to visit family before returning to Pennsylvania. At approximately 9 pm, while driving on the expressway in Chicago, I received a call from the ministerial director. Given the fatigue from a full day of speaking engagements and hours on the road, I opted not to answer at that moment. Upon arriving at my mother's house in Michigan, I promptly went to bed. The next morning, around 9 am, I noticed that the ministerial director had called again about twenty minutes earlier and left a voicemail. In addition, there was a text message from him that read:

"Hey, if you have a moment, I could use your advice. It looks like we may have to fire someone today related to the topics of your presentation. Call if you can."

I offered a brief prayer, seeking wisdom, and immediately returned his call. The following is a paraphrased summary of our conversation.

Ministerial Director: *I am so glad you called. I received some concerning information last night from a confidential source. It appears that one of our pastors has been sending and receiving child pornography from a young boy he met on a mission trip.*

Me: *Whoa, that's quite a serious situation.*

Ministerial Director: *It feels almost like divine timing that you were here discussing this topic yesterday, and then I get this news right after your presentation. Listen, I need your guidance since you're the expert in this area. I have a Zoom meeting with conference officials in about 10 minutes to discuss this. What do you suggest we do?*

Me: Well, by policy, you have to put him on administrative leave. But I wouldn't recommend that.

Ministerial Director: *Why not?*

Me: If the boy is in a different country, he is probably not in immediate physical danger. If you inform him that he's on administrative leave due to child porn accusations, he'll likely erase any evidence from his phone and servers. It's possible this isn't his first time engaging in such activities, and he might have lots of other incriminating evidence on his laptop and phone. Then, you'll have to keep him on paid administrative leave for the next six months to a year while he erases all traces before any police investigation can occur.

Ministerial Director: *So, should we contact the police first then?*

Me: It might be wise to reach out to Adventist Risk Management first to ensure you're following all the correct protocols, especially since they are your insurance agency as well.

The director and I then said our goodbyes. After a brief moment, I realized I had another suggestion to make. However, since he was in a meeting, I decided to send him the information via text instead. Drawing from my background in Criminal Justice and my experience working for the Department of Justice, I was aware that international crimes and cybercrimes fall under federal jurisdiction. Involving local law enforcement agencies would only lead to delays. Swiftly, I searched for the contact information of the local Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) field office in Madison, Wisconsin, and forwarded him their contact number via text message. I advised him that informing the FBI would grant them probable cause to search his phone and any other electronic devices he may possess. Based on my research, this seemed like the most practical step to take instead of immediately placing the pastor on administrative leave. Doing so might give him the opportunity to delete crucial information from his electronic devices.


I had decided not to inquire about the proceedings until I sent out the second survey in August. However, I didn't have to wait that long. On Sunday, June 4th, 2023, I received a text from the ministerial director with a link to a news article (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Fox 11 Online Article

Green Bay pastor accused of sex crimes against child he met on mission trip.

by Molly Ruffing, FOX 11 News
Fri, June 2nd, 2023, 9:25 PM UTC



Cory Herthel has been charged in federal court with attempted production of child pornography and the transfer of obscene material to a Venezuelan child. (Photo source: Brown County Jail)

GREEN BAY (WLUK) -- A Green Bay pastor is facing charges for alleged sex crimes against a Venezuelan child he met while performing missionary work. Cory Herthel, 40, allegedly maintained contact online with the child after his missionary work. Herthel is accused of encouraging the boy to send him videos of his genitalia in exchange for money. He is also accused of sending pictures of his own genitalia to the child.

Herthel is being charged with attempted production of child pornography and the transfer of obscene material to a child. If convicted of both charges, Herthel could face up to 40 years in federal prison. A conviction on either charge would require him to register as a sexual offender.

Note: (2023).

To say the least, I was astounded by the swiftness of the FBI's response. Between May 12th and June 2nd, the case had already made headlines. What I wasn't aware of was the FBI's recent implementation of the Violent Crimes Against Children (VCAAC) program.

The mission is to lower the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation, to provide a rapid and effective investigative response to such crimes, and to provide appropriate training and other resources to state and local law enforcement partners.

Investigations are conducted in each of the FBI's 56 field offices by Child Exploitation Task Forces, which combine Bureau resources with those of other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Nearly 400 law enforcement partner organizations participate in these task forces and are assisted by FBI intelligence analysts, victim specialists, and subject matter experts. The task forces also work closely with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). (Campbell, 2017, p. 1)

In July 2023, a few weeks later, I once more contacted the ministerial director to check on the situation's progress. Our discussions revolved around various aspects and details of the investigation. I learned that the former pastor had cooperated with the FBI and promptly confessed his guilt. In addition, he expressed remorse over the situation. Subsequent conversations with the ministerial director primarily revolved around how the church and the conference were addressing this matter.

Secondary Follow Up Survey

In early August of 2023, I distributed a follow-up survey to 21 of the training seminar participants who provided me with their email address. The questions on the follow up email survey included the following:

Dear Colleague,

In May of 2023 you participated in a training session presented by Nicholas Moore of Andrews University that was titled "Appropriate Responses to Abuse." The training was regarding identification methods of recognizing physical and sexual abuse among members of your congregation and the mandatory reporting laws and procedures surrounding each form of abuse. If you would be willing, please take a few moments to answer the following questions as it will greatly add to the research efforts of Andrews University's Doctor of Ministry program. If the answer is "Yes" to any of the sections, **please be as detailed as possible**. If the answer is "No" or "Not Applicable" a simple "No" or "N/A" is acceptable.

1. Since your attendance at the training, have you experienced the following:

Instances or situations where physical or sexual abuse was brought to your attention as a pastor? If so, what were they and how did you address them? Was mandatory reporting necessary on your part?

2. Since your attendance at the training, have you used or implemented any of the material that was covered in the training seminar regarding the:

- a. Counseling of members
- b. Advising other employees or boards
- c. Content of your sermons
- d. Safety considerations at work or with your own family

3. Is there anything else that you feel was a key takeaway from the training that you wish to share with the researcher and or Andrews University regarding future implementation of such training?

After sending out the survey to the 21 participants, I also forwarded the same survey to the ministerial director, along with a text message notifying him of its distribution. The director swiftly replied, expressing his intent to dispatch a follow-up email to remind the pastors to participate. A week later, I had only received two

responses. I reached out to the ministerial director via text, requesting the motivational email he had mentioned earlier. He promptly responded with the following email:

Hello Pastors,

As a follow-up to our last pastors meeting, Chaplain Nick Moore would like your assistance in helping him complete his D. Min research.

He surveyed us at the beginning of the meeting. Then made his presentation on abuse. To complete his research, he needs us to fill out one more set of surveys.

It would be a blessing to him if you could take a moment and fill out the attached survey and send it to him.

Thanks!

In the subsequent week after sending out that email, I managed to collect only one more response, bringing my total to a mere three. The second respondent provided a valuable suggestion I hadn't previously considered: "*This would be easier if it was an online survey.*" With just three responses in hand, I decided to heed their advice. During the following week, I crafted an online survey on the platform Allcounted.com, using the same three questions. Within 12 hours, four more responses rolled in, bringing my tally to seven. Although I had hoped for a higher response rate than 33%, this experience taught me that most individuals are reluctant to participate in a survey they didn't encounter in person. Moreover, it highlighted the greater likelihood of receiving responses through online surveys compared to email questionnaires that require additional effort to complete.

Survey Results

Here are the responses from the seven individuals who participated in the follow-up survey:

1. Since your attendance at the training, have you experienced the following:

Instances or situations where physical or sexual abuse was brought to your attention as a pastor? If so, what were they and how did you address them? Was mandatory reporting necessary on your part?

Participant 1: Yes, at camp meeting, one of the young ladies in the teen division told me and another pastor how her siblings were bullying her/telling her to die/telling her to cut herself, etc. I did report it to CPS. Unfortunately, this family has a long history of abuse, and I received a message back from their county's cps that there would be no follow up. I think they're tired of dealing with this family where the whole family is messed up. It's very sad; prayers appreciated for the family, and for the SDA pastor in their area dealing with this.

Participant 2: Hi Nick, this is in response to your questions as follow-up from your training with Wisconsin Conference Pastors. I am a spouse and not a Pastor, so my answers don't fit your questions, but the Conference has had developments in this area. Here are links to news: <https://news.snbcl3.com/cory-j-herthel-green-bay-pastor-arrested-for-child-pornography/><https://twitter.com/FirstTheNews/status/1665100319221760000> (has photos)

The accused Pastor mentioned was present at your training that day (2nd row, center) and spoke up as being knowledgeable at detection of offenders in his congregation and dealing with them (ironic). Blessings in your continued work,

Participant 3: N/A

Participant 4: No

Participant 5: Just mentioned that an individual was nominated to a position and had to seek counsel of the office if they could hold an office. The offense was in the past but due to the severity and nature had to advise against it.

Participant 6: During camp meeting we were informed by a staff that was helping in our kids' department that teens had experience some sort of abuse during a group discussion. We informed our Ministerial Director of the situation, and it was advised to speak with the teens about the situation and work with them as much as possible. Our department pastor took the time to follow up with the teens.

Participant 7: A young man (age 32) in my church (a member of the church for several years) has been under his mother's supervision and care. He gave a tablet to young pre-teens to play games during church. During potluck the parents noticed that their daughters were playing with it. So, they asked the girls to give it to them so they could check it out. When they checked the search bar and checked previous searches, they were loaded with porn websites. Thankfully, their daughters evidently didn't login to any of those websites. The parents were distraught when they approached me. The young man, his mother, and the parents met during the week and had a serious talk with the young man and the ramifications of his actions. I took action and required the following: (a) he shouldn't show up for church for 12-15 weeks. (b) Counseling (intervention) for getting rid of porn addiction (c) Installing covenant-eye software in his laptop, tablet to block any or all sexual images (d) he'll be accountable to the pastor to report his weekly counseling session and he's following through with all the requirements. (e) We'll reevaluate at the end of 15 weeks to see if it's safe for him to return to church. This will

be contingent on how the pre-teens and the parents feel about his returning. I want to make sure our children are safe! I don't know if this called for a mandatory reporting?

2. Since your attendance at the training, have you used or implemented any of the material that was covered in the training seminar regarding the:
 - a. Counseling of members
 - b. Advising other employees or boards
 - c. Content of your sermons
 - d. Safety considerations at work or with your own family

Participant 1: A. Yes. An RSO has started attending one of our churches; I had to advise the church board on how to deal with the situation. The church ultimately voted to not allow any RSO's to attend, because the church is very small and does not have the manpower to properly chaperone one. We'll now see if he will attend one of the other churches in the area.

B. Yes. In regards both to the pastor of the family in the above story, and in regard to the allegations against our pastor in Green Bay. C. No. D. N/A only because was already implementing them; was still excellent stuff that was shared.

Participant 2: N/A

Participant 3: A. Yes, I have shared with several elders some information about how to take more serious consideration in preventing the abuse in our church! B. N/A C. Yes, I have intentionally added some points of how to take care of our children and prevent a possible abuse!

D. Yes, I share with my wife some ideas that I learned during the seminar in order to protect our baby daughter!

Participant 4: Both B and D. We have a registered sex offender who would like to attend our church and as a church board we voted to use the form from Adventist Risk

Management as our protocol for all registered sex offenders. This is a very thorough form that outlines specific behavior for them and serves as protection for them and us.

Participant 5: Getting a window installed in all of the children's departments and pastor's study. Also making sure all leadership positions and children's positions have to go through the training and background check.

Participant 6: Yes, I spoke to my church elders about the training and informed them to always be vigilant when it comes to kids in our church environment.

Participant 7: Yes! I warned the young man about the mandatory reporting and counseled parents on this.

3. Is there anything else that you feel was a key takeaway from the training that you wish to share with the researcher and or Andrews University regarding future implementation of such training?

Participant 1: It was all great. The practical implementation, like the RSO Participation Agreement, is key. Had to remind another pastor about that document while he is dealing with an RSO.

Participant 2: N/A

Participant 3: Maybe it will be good to have a link with an online survey, that will be easier to complete! Blessings,

Participant 4: I felt as though it was very informative. As a new pastor, I didn't recognize the responsibility involved in this aspect of our ministry. It brought some clarity and awareness for me as to what we are required to report and how to go about reporting. It prompted me to implement using the form from Adventist Risk Management as our protocol for registered sex offenders in our church.

Participant 5: I think a continued discussion and also signs of abuse would be helpful.

Maybe traits and understanding what kind of person becomes an abuser would be helpful.

Participant 6: Training was very well presented, wished we had more time to discuss this more deeply.

Participant 7: Will be in touch!

The results from the third survey were crucial in reinforcing the conclusions I had drawn from the extensive training session and the initial two surveys. Administering the third survey several months after the training allowed participants the time to reflect more deeply and provide more detailed responses. This contrasts with the conditions of the first two surveys. In the first survey, participants might have felt constrained by my tight schedule, which likely impacted the depth of their responses. In addition, the second survey was likely affected by the conference president's unrelated presentation, which began while I was still distributing the surveys. This timing issue likely caused further distractions, as many of the second survey responses appeared rushed or incomplete. Another factor potentially contributing to the lack of detailed responses in the second survey was participant fatigue after a full day of training.

By extending the period before conducting the third survey, I was able to create an environment that encouraged more thoughtful and detailed feedback. I specifically designed this survey to include questions about participants' key takeaways and the practical application of the training content. This approach yielded invaluable insights, not only for validating the data but also for identifying ways to improve the training

presentation. The feedback was crucial for refining my understanding and enhancing future presentations, should I have the opportunity to present again. The following chapter will provide a more detailed evaluation of the project as a whole and will discuss my conclusions regarding in-class participation during the training, the results of all three surveys, and follow-up conversations with certain training participants.

CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

Summary of the Project

This research endeavor aimed to enhance the comprehension and skills of Seventh-day Adventist pastors within the Wisconsin Conference, particularly those who might confront cases of physical and sexual abuse among their congregants. In addition, it aimed to educate these pastors about their legal obligations as mandatory reporters under Wisconsin's laws when dealing with such abuses.

The project consisted of a one-day training seminar led by the researcher, which unfolded in five distinct segments: initial participant assessment, discussions on physical abuse, sexual abuse, the intricacies of mandatory reporting, and a concluding assessment to gauge learning outcomes. Each of the central segments delved into various subtopics, including specific considerations for different age groups (children, adults, and the elderly) related to abuse and the nuanced mandatory reporting protocols applicable to each.

To ensure retention and active engagement, the seminar employed dynamic instructional techniques inspired by the pedagogical approaches of the United States Air Force and Andrews University Seminary. The educational tools utilized in the presentation included three survey analyses, a comprehensive five-hour PowerPoint presentation, illustrative video content, and a variety of informative handouts.

Before the training began, I distributed a knowledge assessment survey to the 31 participants in the multi-purpose room at the Wisconsin Conference headquarters. The survey aimed to measure their current understanding of abuse types and Wisconsin's reporting laws. It featured various real-life scenarios pastors had previously faced, asking participants for their recommended actions. After this initial assessment, the participants underwent roughly five hours of training. PowerPoint presentations were the primary method, supplemented by oral scenario discussions, videos, and handouts. To conclude, I presented a second survey mirroring the first, allowing participants to reflect on their learning and measure their progress.

Approximately three months later, the participants were sent a survey via email to further assess their learning outcome from the initial training. The data from the three surveys conducted by the participants, along with observations by the researcher, were included in the study. This chapter provides a description of the evaluation, a summary of the chapter conclusions, overarching conclusions, recommendations, personal transformation, and a final word.

Description of the Evaluation

The following is a description of how data from the intervention (Chap. 5) was evaluated and interpreted, along with a report of the resulting conclusions and outcomes.

Evaluation Method

A research study was designed and employed that compared data sets before and after the training had taken place. Written data from the participants was evaluated. Throughout the training session, emerging data were reflected on and compared with the

researchers' observations and notes. Three months following the original data interpretation, new data was solicited from the participants and reflected upon by the researcher, contrasting with the original information gathered. Common themes emerged and were identified as the project progressed. These themes were noted within the chronological narrative (chap. 5), with accompanying interpretation. Findings and conclusions were drawn inductively from the data.

The intent of this project was to validate the researcher's theory that further training of pastors in identifying and reporting abuse would significantly benefit the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Furthermore, this project aimed to demonstrate that effective training is achievable with minimal effort through a personal presentation, leading to notable improvements in learning outcomes and confidence in the correct identification and reporting procedures among attendees. This mixed-methods study outlines an improved yet adaptable training module, ready for replication and potential future implementation in training of clergy.

Interpretation and Conclusions of Data: Chapter 5

An analysis of the data uncovered several themes from the initial and follow-up training session surveys. The first two surveys, conducted during the session, yielded key insights. Of the 31 attendees, 21 (or 68%) completed both surveys thoroughly enough to enable a before-and-after training comparison. In addition, among these 21 participants, the feedback section at the end of the second survey was also completed. From the data and classroom interactions with participants, several crucial factors can be inferred.

The first notable factor was that all participants reported an enhanced understanding of the three core aspects of the training: physical abuse, sexual abuse, and

mandatory reporting. Furthermore, there was unanimous positive feedback on the presentation of the material. The audience consistently favored several sections of the presentation, particularly the real-life scenarios, followed by the practical content of the resource packets distributed to each participant.

On the downside, several participants felt that parts of the training were rushed, particularly the final section on mandatory reporting. I fully concur with the audience's assessment. By that point in my presentation, I had exceeded my allotted time and hurried through slides, providing only brief examples to allow time for the second survey. In addition, many surveys expressed a wish for more opportunities for audience feedback and questions. Although this was initially incorporated into the training, last-minute time constraints imposed by the conference led to the reduction of these interactive segments.

Out of the 21 participants who completed both surveys, only four (19%) reported receiving any training on the topics of physical and sexual abuse during their theological education. Three of these individuals received training during their Master of Divinity coursework at Andrews University, and one during undergraduate theology studies at Southern Adventist University. It's important to note that these four participants also mentioned that the training they received was minimal or merely touched upon during a counseling class, focusing only on child abuse and neglecting domestic violence or elder abuse. In addition, two other attendees of the Andrews University M.Div. program reported that they had not received any training in the areas of physical or sexual abuse.

None of the 21 participants who completed both surveys reported receiving any training on mandatory reporting procedures during their theological education. However, three participants did indicate they had received such training, but only as a result of

volunteering with Pathfinders or at their local academy, where they were required to undergo online training for certification. One participant received training from Shield the Vulnerable, another from Sterling Volunteers, and a third from Verified Volunteers. In addition, a fourth individual, on their own initiative, had previously viewed videos on mandatory reporting from End It Now Ministries.

While analyzing the initial questionnaires, it was observed that pastors with bachelor's degrees were slightly less inclined than those with master's degrees to report instances of abuse to the police. Furthermore, older pastors (aged 50 and above), regardless of their level of education, were significantly less likely to report to the police compared to their younger counterparts. Instead, they preferred to "pray about it" or "bring it to the attention of the church board members." Among the older pastors reluctant to report to the police, all identified as either Hispanic or Asian, and all indicated they had previously resided outside the United States, based on their educational backgrounds.

One aspect I, as the researcher, did not foresee was the significantly heightened interest and concern among pastors about managing registered sex offenders who are attending or are already members of their congregation. This issue was frequently raised during classroom discussions, breaks, lunch, and in all three surveys. Pastors expressed a general lack of knowledge and considerable anxiety about how to interact with and establish appropriate boundaries with registered sex offenders. As the researcher and trainer, I felt well-prepared to address this topic in the training, sharing stories from my experiences with various registered sex offenders in my previous congregation. I also provided and discussed several handouts from Adventist Risk Management on the ethical

and legal approaches to interacting with sex offenders within the church. Personally, I was unaware of the prevalence of this issue in our denomination. I believed my multiple encounters with sex offenders in my congregation were unique. Discovering how many pastors are dealing with or have dealt with similar situations was surprising. If I were to conduct the class again, I would allocate more time to the topic of registered sex offenders and incorporate additional scenarios.

Outcomes of the Intervention

The insights gained from this project aim to inspire further research and training for all Seventh-day Adventist pastors. The data suggest that comprehensive training enabled participants to achieve a deeper understanding of various types of abuse and provided new perspectives on the legal and ethical dilemmas that may arise, necessitating their activation as mandatory reporters.

An impactful outcome of the intervention surfaced during a phone call I received from a training participant, significantly after both the training and my completion of Chapter Five. This pastor sought advice on handling a situation with a church member, a young man in his late teens who expressed a keen interest in entering the ministry. The pastor had recently discovered that this young man had molested his younger sister around five years prior. Within this small church, largely comprised of interconnected family units, this situation was not new to the members, yet had never been reported to law enforcement. The pastor had been assured by the elders, some related to the young man, that the matter had been “addressed” and the young man had “sincerely repented.” Now, seeking guidance, the pastor reached out to me to discuss the next steps, pondering

how to reconcile the young man's past actions with his current aspirations within the church's moral and legal framework.

I informed him that despite the discomfort and the temptation to overlook the issue, his role as a mandatory reporter obligates him to act, which includes reporting such incidents. I introduced several considerations, starting with the statute of limitations for rape. This topic arose because, during the training session's survey responses to Scenario 5, three pastors mentioned the statute of limitations as a reason for not reporting decades-old rape accusations. I explained to the pastor that the statute's time frame does not absolve him of his duty as a mandatory reporter. I also highlighted the legal risks for the pastor, including potential criminal and civil liability, should he fail to report and the individual commits a similar offense. While we discussed additional details and nuances, the core message was unequivocal: as a pastor and conference employee, he must report the incident to the authorities. Another outcome of the intervention, which I will undoubtedly share in future presentations, is the stark reality that the scourge of abuse exists even among our church leaders. Since implementing this project, one of the pastors who attended my training was arrested for sexually abusing children and has since been convicted and formally sentenced. Seven months following his arrest, new details of the case have come to light, reinforcing a point I made during the training: sexual predators often have a longer history of offenses and more victims than initially thought (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Green Bay Press-Gazette Online Article

Former Green Bay pastor sentenced to 15 years for online sex crimes with multiple children



Natalie Eilbert
Green Bay Press-Gazette
Published 4:25 p.m. CT Dec. 4, 2023

GREEN BAY – A former Green Bay pastor has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for online sex crimes with multiple children living in Venezuela, Cuba and Spain. Cory Herthel, 40, was a pastor at Green Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church but was fired shortly after he was charged in June. Gregory Haanstad, United States attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced Herthel's sentencing Monday.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation received a tip from Herthel's church in May of possible sexual exploitation of a minor living in Venezuela. Herthel admitted in court documents to first meeting the child begging on the streets of Ecuador during a mission trip. Further investigation revealed Herthel sent the child videos of himself masturbating and requesting videos and images of the child in return, using various online applications to pay the child.

Court records revealed a second child living in Cuba with whom Herthel also exchanged sexually explicit images and videos. Herthel helped the child with his move to Spain, with the final goal of having him move to the United States. On multiple visits to Spain, Herthel acknowledged engaging in a sexual relationship with the child. Herthel also solicited a second boy in Cuba, requesting sexual photos and videos in exchange for monetary payments. Herthel pleaded guilty to attempted sexual exploitation of a child in August.

A second count of the same charge was dismissed as part of the plea agreement. Senior U.S. District Judge William Griesbach described Herthel's crime as "terrible" and "an abuse of spiritual authority" at the sentencing hearing Monday. Griesbach said Herthel's crimes will continue to impose serious psychological and emotional scarring on his victims. Following his 15 years' imprisonment, Herthel will spend 20 years on supervised release. He will be required to register as a sexual offender for the rest of his life. The case was brought as part of the U.S. Department of Justice's initiative Project Safe Childhood. It was investigated by the Green Bay and Milwaukee offices of the FBI, with the assistance of the Green Bay Police Department.

Note. (2023).

Another outcome of the intervention was the presentation of another training session in May 2024. In February 2024, the ministerial director of the Indiana conference contacted me and invited me to present my training to the pastors of their conference, having been recommended by the ministerial director of the Wisconsin conference. After finalizing the date, it was decided, due to financial and logistical constraints, to host a

shortened three-hour training for the un-ordained pastors via an online Zoom meeting on May 14, 2024. A total of 22 pastors, both ordained and un-ordained, including the ministerial director and conference president, attended the meeting.

To accommodate the timeframe and avoid previous mistakes, I made significant adjustments to the presentation for the Indiana meeting. Notably, I omitted the entire category of physical abuse to ensure ample time for discussing mandatory reporting. In addition, I allocated more time for addressing questions from attendees and revisiting scenarios. This modified training session also included a greater focus on managing registered sex offenders in the pastors' churches. Despite removing sections and numerous slides, the Zoom meeting still extended to nearly four hours. I was very pleased with the outcome of this meeting and even had attendees commending me for the interesting content. One attendee even remarked, "this was one of the most entertaining Zoom meetings I have ever been on." Such feedback boosts my confidence and motivates me to present at future conferences. However, as my own critic, I recognize the potential for further streamlining of subjects and slides for future shortened online training sessions.

Summary of Chapter Conclusions

In addition to the conclusions reached from the intervention data (chap. 5), a brief summary of the theological, theoretical, and methodological conclusions reached in chapters two, three, and four, form the basis for a set of overarching conclusions.

Theological Conclusion: Chapter 2

A study from the book of Genesis on the perpetuation of sins within the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was undertaken to develop a theological framework for this research study. The overarching theme of the theological conclusion from chapter 2 supported identifying and reporting abuse to prevent potential generational tendencies. I concluded that without a radical conversion from sin to God's righteousness, the sins of the parents will inevitably be mirrored by their children. More often than not, these sins will be perpetuated to a greater degree by the subsequent generation. This pattern reflects the essence of the sins and character flaws observed in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Mankind opted for sin in the Garden of Eden. "Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men," (Romans 5:12, New King James Version). As descendants of Adam, we are all inherently marked by the genetic curse of sin. However, God did not leave us forsaken. Remarkably, a plan of salvation was in place even before our forbearers, Adam and Eve, committed the first sin. The plan for humanity's redemption was established before the creation of the world itself! Jesus' mission was to atone for our sins through His crucifixion. It is by His sacrifice that we find redemption from sin and are regarded as blameless before the Father, once we embrace Jesus' offering (1 Pet 1:19, 20; Eph 1:3-6; 1 Cor 5:21; John 3:16, 17; 4:16; Acts 4:12; Rom 7:24, 25; Rev 13:8).

This is absolutely wonderful news for all of us, offering a future filled with hope. Yet, until the day of redemption arrives, we remain susceptible to sin and its repercussions. However, God has provided humanity with a path to avoid further sins.

Through special revelation, prophets, judges, leaders, kings, and priests, He has guided mankind. These various channels enable us to identify, avoid, and repent of sins that could further tarnish the image of God within us. God understood that once sin entrenched itself within a family, it could have devastating effects on future generations. I believe that as spiritual leaders, pastors possess a unique opportunity, given their close association with the familial dynamics of their congregants, to identify various forms of abuse (sins) and help prevent these negative patterns from being passed down from one generation to the next.

Theoretical Conclusion: Chapter 3

In chapter three, my primary goal was to review literature on abuse, focusing on its physical and sexual aspects, and to delve into the complexities of mandatory reporting. The literature spanned a broad spectrum of disciplines, perspectives, and research methods. The initial emphasis of chapter three was on gathering definitions and descriptions from a variety of sources to clarify what physical abuse entails. Subsequently, the narrative shifted to statistical data, followed by indicators, leading up to the exploration of the causes of physical abuse, essentially examining why individuals may become abusers. The final aspect examined was the effects of abuse. The rationale for investigating these topics in this particular sequence is rooted in the natural progression of abuse throughout a person's life and how it is commonly addressed. In counseling sessions, the process of healing typically begins with the victim gaining an understanding of what abuse is (**definitions**) before they address questions and facts. Counselors often present **statistics** to convey to the victim that they are not alone, emphasizing that others have faced similar experiences. Following this, the discussion

often moves to addressing the victim's questions about the lack of intervention despite evident **indicators**, the reasons behind the abuser's actions (**causes**), and the enduring **effects** of abuse and strategies for recovery. This structured approach, starting with definitions and progressing through statistics, indicators, causes, and effects, was applied to both physical and sexual abuse in the research material.

Finally, the research delved into mandatory reporting laws, with this segment organized into the age categories of childhood, adulthood, and geriatric or cognitively impaired groups. This final section also explored the legal and ethical dimensions of mandatory reporting laws, focusing on the responsibilities and the numerous challenges reporters face. Not reporting is considered a misdemeanor, carrying penalties such as jail time and fines. Although there is protection from civil liability for mandatory reporters, the nuances in the wording of the law fuel ongoing debates about the extent of this immunity. Ethical dilemmas, especially in cases of domestic violence, were emphasized in the research to illustrate the complex balance between reporting abuse and respecting the victims' autonomy. A full understanding of this project's essence requires recognizing the challenges and potential adverse effects on both victims and reporters.

Methodological Conclusion: Chapter 4

Following the literature review, I redirected my efforts towards organizing information about abuses and reporting procedures. This was with the aim of developing a focused training program for pastors. I chose to segment the topics into clear, distinct categories. Within these categories, I consciously divided the research into specific subsets, covering definitions, statistical insights, indicators, root causes, and the extensive effects of abuse.

These sub-categories naturally arose during my research process, presenting themselves as essential elements of the thorough understanding I aimed to impart to the audience. Delving into peer-reviewed literature presented challenges, as it was nuanced and designed for experienced research scientists. Despite the initial hurdles of meticulously revisiting complex topics on abuse and reporting laws, I gradually deepened my comprehension of the material.

Given the challenges I faced, I opted to reorganize and categorize the gathered knowledge logically to ensure clarity and simplicity throughout the project's development. Setting consistent standards across sub-categories helped in efficiently tracking information during the research's dynamic stages. In addition, anticipating the conversion of this information into a future PowerPoint presentation significantly influenced the decision to use the subset method. A logical progression, beginning with definitions and moving through statistical insights, indicators, root causes, and the broad impacts of abuse, was considered crucial for effective communication, particularly with an audience new to the subject matter.

Leveraging my extensive experience as a military training instructor, the rationale for the subset method was bolstered by the principles of repetition and consistency. Acknowledging the shared commonalities among physical abuse, sexual abuse, and mandatory reporting within their subsets, this strategy guaranteed a unified and understandable framework for presenting complex concepts to a varied audience.

Ultimately, the choice of methodology led to the selection of a blended qualitative and quantitative research design. This decision was in harmony with the primary goal of creating an in-depth, day-long presentation aimed at educating and training pastors on

identifying and addressing potential cases of physical and sexual abuse within their congregations. In addition, it emphasized teaching the accurate and lawful methods for reporting these abuses to the appropriate authorities.

Overarching Conclusions

Reflecting on chaps. 2, 3, and 4, along with the conclusions drawn from the data interpretation in chap. 5, it is now possible to identify two overarching conclusions from the project.

First, we inhabit a fallen world. In this realm, adverse events afflict good people, and often, the innocent and defenseless become victims of those with malicious intent. Scripture unequivocally states that since the fall of our forebearers, Adam and Eve, we have inherited a natural tendency towards evil and rebellion against God's commandments. The outcome of these unchecked inclinations is the eventual spiritual and physical degradation of humanity. This pattern is consistently demonstrated in the scriptures, as entire nations faced the dire consequences of defying God's moral laws. Nevertheless, in His mercy and love for His creation, God has, throughout history, sent righteous men and women to reveal His true character and commandments.

For fallen humanity, adhering to those precepts has proven easier said than done. Yet, in His boundless mercy, God provided additional guidance and revelation through His written Word. Within the scriptures, specific individuals and nations are depicted as either being blessed both spiritually and physically by obeying God's laws or facing dire consequences for their disobedience. The acts of disobedience chronicled in scripture often extend beyond the initial perpetrator, affecting those related to or in close proximity to them. This typically triggers a downward spiral of moral decline leading to ruin, unless

divine intervention steps in to redeem and purify the wrongdoers. This pattern recurs throughout scripture, ultimately culminating in God Himself departing His throne, assuming human form, and undertaking the ultimate rescue from sin and death.

The second theme centers on the concept of free will, implying that individuals must choose to be saved and then actively collaborate with their Creator to eliminate sin from their lives and society (faith without works is dead). Abuse represents a primary tactic the enemy uses to devastate humanity, who is aware of its destructive impact. While this project did not explore all forms of abuse, it's important to recognize that every type can have enduring and even generational consequences. However, physical and sexual abuse are the most readily identifiable, trackable, and thus, more easily researched and documented, unlike other forms of abuse such as spiritual or emotional.

As followers of Christ, we, as Seventh-day Adventists, should foster a church environment that stands in stark contrast to the world around us. Ideally, physical and sexual abuse would be unheard of or exceedingly rare among our members. However, given that we reside in a fallen world, we must anticipate the enemy's attacks and be prepared to support the victim and when the situation allows, the perpetrator as well. The ways in which we can more effectively and practically accomplish this are outlined in my recommendations below.

Recommendations

I have identified three recommendations for further action based on this limited intervention and research project:

1. The literature review revealed a significant gap in research across denominations concerning the training of pastors to recognize, address, and report abuse

among their members to the proper authorities. This subject has largely been overlooked by researchers. While numerous studies have explored incidents of abuse by clergy on their parishioners, I found no research focused on training clergy to prevent such abuse within their congregations. I recommend that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly the Seminary at Andrews University, dedicate more time and resources to exploring the potential benefits—both spiritually and legally—of such training for current and future pastoral leaders.

2. Through my discussions with conference officials within the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists, it became clear that Ministerial Directors, Conference Presidents, and even attorneys working for various conferences are often unaware of the specific laws regarding mandatory reporting procedures within their territories. I suggest implementing more comprehensive training for all upper management positions within the NAD on mandatory reporting procedures within their jurisdiction.

3. I was impressed by the dedication and resources invested by the NAD in centralizing information and legal expertise through Adventist Risk Management (ARM). Their staff exhibited professionalism and a comprehensive understanding of my training content. However, there appears to be a significant disparity between ARM's expertise and the training provided to the average pastor. For most pastors, the only connection to ARM is a two-hour online learning module called "Shield the Vulnerable," which covers only the basics of my training and appears to function merely as a compliance checkbox to protect conferences legally. I propose that ARM or another relevant entity should broaden their outreach to include all conferences, offering more detailed training on these

crucial issues. Given the opportunity, I would be eager to extend my training to conference pastors and administrators.

Personal Transformation

This project has accompanied me through six years of personal growth and development. It has been a constant amid various career shifts and geographic moves. Initially motivated by a somewhat self-centered desire to attain a Doctor of Ministry degree, my perspective evolved as the project progressed, transforming into a genuine belief in the righteousness of my work. Over time, the drive to complete this project shifted away from the accolades and titles it might add to my resume, focusing instead on the welfare and protection of the individuals at the heart of my research. Consequently, this journey has made me a less selfish person.

Yes, the formal span of this project covers the last six years, beginning in 2018, but my journey with it truly started in 2011. It was during this time that I was nearing the completion of my undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice at Eastern Washington University. Previously, I had considered becoming a Fish and Wildlife officer for Washington State. However, as graduation neared, I began to lose peace about that prospect. One night while attending a large non-denominational bible study, I ran into an old Air Force acquaintance of mine who was taking online seminary courses to become a Navy Chaplain. With a loss of motivation regarding my then current prospects, a longing to do some type of ministry, and a desire to go back to the military, I felt that attending seminary was God's answer to my prayers. Shortly thereafter in 2012, I graduated from Eastern Washington University and immediately enrolled in the Seminary at Andrews

University and moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan with the goal of completing a Master of Divinity and becoming a Navy Chaplain.

During my initial two years at seminary, I made considerable strides towards my new goal. I earned an endorsement from Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, began volunteering and preaching at a local church, and to enhance my chaplaincy resume, I started volunteering at a prison in Indiana. In 2013, I was admitted into the Navy Reserves through the Chaplain Candidate Program and received my commission as a Naval officer. By 2015, I had graduated from seminary and applied for a full-time position as an Active Duty Chaplain with the Navy. At that moment, I felt on top of the world! The Navy had flown me to the Pentagon for an interview since they were filling four positions and only interviewing six candidates. With my prior service and Special Operations experience, I was confident that I would be one of the selected.

However, upon meeting the other candidates, my confidence wavered. Like me, they had prior military experience, but they also possessed something I lacked: years, and in some cases, decades of post-seminary full-time ministry experience. My experience was limited to part-time volunteering at a church and a prison. Consequently, I was one of the two candidates not chosen. This initially devastated me. I was told that to be considered in the future, I would need at least two years of full-time ministry experience.

Following this setback, I reached out to every English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist conference in the world. Meanwhile, I moved back into my mother's house and returned to the farming job I had during high school. At 31, I was broke, living in my mother's basement, and the butt of jokes at work. "Where did all that schooling get you,

college boy? Right back where you started 15 years ago.” In addition, it seemed no conference was interested in me, marking a disheartening six months.

In May 2016, a seminary friend messaged me on Facebook, suggesting I apply for a position at a local church in Clovis, California. Despite having sent my resume to nearly 80 conferences worldwide, including the one overseeing this church, I applied with little expectation. Surprisingly, the church expressed interest in a video meeting. The initial discussion with the church elders went well, followed by a subsequent video meeting with the Central California Conference leadership. The role was for an associate pastor, supported jointly by the conference and the church. I was upfront about my aspirations to become a military chaplain and my two-year experience requirement. They requested a three-year commitment, to which I agreed.

About two years into my tenure at the church, a Navy recruiter, unaware of my background, visited our church seeking chaplain candidates due to a shortage. I saw this as a divine sign and felt that my moment had arrived. Aware that joining the Navy could take over a year, I initiated the application process. Conversations with military chaplains had made it clear to me that military chaplaincy is not only competitive at entry but also throughout one's career, with the risk of dismissal for not achieving a certain rank within a specified timeframe.

One strategy to distinguish myself was to pursue a doctoral degree. After experiencing setbacks, I was determined to stand out. Believing that a Doctorate in Chaplaincy would be a significant advantage for selection and retention during potential downsizing, I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry in Chaplaincy program, aiming for career advancement in the military. In 2018, I was accepted into the D.Min. program at

Andrews University, and by August 2019, my three-year commitment to the church would conclude. Everything seemed to be aligning perfectly.

However, in December 2018, a skiing accident while with the church youth led to a broken arm. At the hospital, after addressing my arm, I requested further tests for another issue that had been bothering me. The diagnosis was bladder cancer. My immediate concern wasn't the cancer itself but the frustration knowing this would disqualify me from military chaplaincy, a goal I had pursued since 2011. Indeed, the Navy later confirmed I needed to be five years cancer-free to qualify. Once more, my aspirations were shattered, this time seemingly more definitively. The cancer was low-grade and non-invasive, and I underwent simple surgery for its removal. It felt as though God was closing a door I desperately wanted to pass through.

It was then that I began a new struggle, what to do with myself? I was ambivalent about a lifelong pastoral career, yet I had already invested in the first semester of my Doctorate of Ministry and the travel from California to Florida for the initial classes. The decision to proceed was influenced by the affordability of the degree, subsidized by the North American Division, and the absence of any alternative career plan. It wasn't until my second week of classes that I found my dissertation focus. I identified a pervasive issue within my own and many other churches that had been overlooked in seminary education: abuse, primarily sexual abuse. My decision to tackle this sensitive subject was not without reservations, particularly given the contemporary prominence of the "Me Too Movement," which might have made my male perspective controversial as the movement was solely focused on women reporting sexual abuse from men. In addition, I harbored concerns about being misperceived due to the nature of my research. I did not want to be

thought of as some sort of pervert who chose to focus his research on a sexual topic. To mitigate these concerns and broaden the scope of my study, I included physical abuse and mandatory reporting procedures, which became indispensable to addressing and understanding sexual abuse.

This project began to serve a purpose beyond mere career advancement. Without this specific topic, I doubt I would have pursued the project to completion, as my drive for a doctoral degree was no longer career-motivated. Having to abandon my military chaplaincy aspirations, I sought a new focus for my efforts. As someone diagnosed with ADHD, I often struggle to concentrate on uninteresting subjects. However, this project engaged me to a degree I consider among my highest achievements.

I also sense that much of this project's material was providentially provided. The timely convergence of certain information and events seemed too coincidental to be mere chance. I believe God was guiding this project, as well as my career path, in extraordinary ways, arranging events with a foresight I could only appreciate in hindsight.

Without clear career ambitions, I extended my stay at the church into a fourth year, which led to my ordination—a milestone I wouldn't have reached had I left as initially planned. This additional year allowed me to truly embrace my ministry, enhancing both my experience and my congregation's engagement significantly more than in the previous years.

During the Covid pandemic, as the conference faced financial constraints leading to the elimination of all associate pastor roles and potential layoffs, my position was not

only secure but also poised for a promotion to a senior pastor of a two-church district south of Clovis, California.

However, I had recently begun to envision a different path for myself. With my background in Criminal Justice and rewarding experiences in prison ministry during seminary, I started to consider that perhaps God had other plans for my life. Prison chaplaincy became my new direction. In my final year at the church, I applied to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, but the pandemic had significantly slowed the hiring process. Conference officials were preparing for my transfer to another district, which would have entailed a lengthy commitment from me. Instead, with the Bureau's hiring on pause, I sought a temporary role as an intern hospital chaplain with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Johnson City, Tennessee. I was accepted and, in August of 2020, left my pastoral position in Clovis after four years of service.

Over the next seven months, I worked full-time at the Veterans Affairs hospital, completing two units of Clinical Pastoral Education and acquainting myself with the nuances of chaplaincy, in anticipation of a role with the Bureau of Prisons. By May 2021, I was hired as a Chaplain at a high-security federal penitentiary in Northeastern Pennsylvania. While the area itself might not be my ideal, the numerous divine circumstances I encountered affirmed my calling to this place for the present. The prison ministry has been profoundly fulfilling, and I was honored with a promotion to Supervisory Chaplain within two years.

In addition to my work at the prison, I also serve as a guest speaker three to four times a month at a struggling Adventist church in Binghamton, New York, and am also employed part-time as a hospital chaplain in Scranton, Pennsylvania. For the first time in

my life, I find myself without any immediate career ambitions or goals, which, after years of relentless effort, brings me an unfamiliar yet welcomed peace. The journey since 2011, with its numerous trials and growth facilitated by this project, have grown my confidence and trust in God. Whether He maintains my current circumstances or shuts a door that I want to walk through, I don't think I will be as crushed as I might have been before. Through all this, He has developed my character and mindset in two primary ways. First, in the attainment of a degree of selflessness that developed through this project and its content. And secondly, through my struggles and strivings since 2011, which developed a contentment and trust in God that He has His best planned for me.

A Final Word

Why should the Seventh-day Adventist Church invest in further training for its pastors on recognizing and reporting abuse among its members? This study has shown that pastors are generally not trained adequately in these critical areas, and when training is provided, it tends to be minimal and insufficient for equipping them to handle real-world situations. Throughout this research, I've engaged with numerous church members affected by abuse and witnessed firsthand the devastating impact it has on victims, as well as on the church communities and schools connected to them. It's imperative that the Seventh-day Adventist Church takes a proactive stance in preventing further abuse. I am convinced that equipping our shepherds with the weapon of knowledge is the most effective strategy for this endeavor.

APPENDIX A

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

IRB Application

Title and Purpose of the Study

The title of the project is "Facilitating Appropriate Clergy Responses to Abuse in the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." The task of this project is to train pastors how to identify physical and sexual abuse among their members and how to apply the correct mandatory reporting laws and procedures surrounding such incidents. The training will be conducted during a one-day training seminar for pastors during one of their in-person training sessions. I plan to gauge their knowledge prior to the training with a test of possible scenarios they may experience and have them write how they would respond to the scenario. The next six hours would be training via Power-Point presentation. Finally, I would re-test them, which would ultimately determine whether the training was beneficial or not.

Subjects

The target group that will be the focus of the project are the pastors within the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This group of roughly 20-40 pastors will be the sole demographic of the research. The group consists of pastors with at least a Bachelor's in Theology. Most of the pastors in the group are also working on their Masters of Ministry, have their Master of Ministry or have their Master of Divinity. All these pastors have a ministerial license, issued by the conference to practice. The North American Division requires four years of full-time ministry post-master's degree to be considered for ordination. Most of the un-ordained pastors have more than four years full time experience but lack a completed master's degree.

Recruiting

The project will take place in the form of a 6-hour training session in a classroom with approximately 20-40 pastors in attendance. In the Wisconsin conference, the pastors are required to attend three training sessions per year until they obtain ordination credentials from their respective conferences. The pastors' trainings usually consist of various topics to prepare them for the difficulties they may encounter in their ministry. The ministerial director of the conference is responsible to coordinate the pastoral training sessions.

Consent

All subjects will be presented an informed consent form at the onset of the training session. After reading the informed consent, the individual will have the opportunity to either participate or not with the testing portion of the training seminar.

Voluntary Participation

In my protocol, participation in the testing portion will be voluntary and participants will be free to leave the test sheet blank. However, attendance in a certain number of conference training classes per year is usually a requirement for employment within the conference and or to be considered for ordination. As the instructor of the class, I hold no accountability over the attendee. Attendance in the class may, however, be required by the conference's ministerial director.

Procedures

The project will be evaluated by measuring the clergy's self-reported knowledge through a series of written questions and scenarios at the beginning of the training

session. These questions will include their understanding of signs, symptoms, and mandatory reporting laws regarding physical and sexual abuse. At the conclusion of the 6-hour training session the pastors will also be given the same written questions that will be used to determine if their knowledge on the subjects presented has changed as a result of the days education and training. Ultimately, the difference between the two knowledge exams will be used to determine whether the training is beneficial for the pastoral educational tract towards ordination or for further research.

To accomplish the training session, I have taken data from peer-reviewed research in the areas of physical and sexual abuse and its effects along with consultation from trained professionals and simplified it in a way that is more easily understandable and identifiable. After the initial testing of the pastors, the training will commence.

Outline for the Lesson

The training session will be conducted as follows:

Introduction of Speaker

Attention:

Vague story of what happened in Conference years before

Motivation:

Overview: Written testing of audience

Transition: 10 min break

Body:

1. Research (Chapter 3 Literature related to Abuse)

Attention

Motivation

Overview

Body

A. Physical Abuse

A1 Definitions

A2 Statistics

A3 Indicators

A4 Causes

A5 Effects

A6 Group Sharing

Transition: 10 min break

B. Sexual Abuse

B1 Definitions

B2 Statistics

B3 Indicators

B4 Causes

B5 Effects

B6 Group Sharing

Remotivation

Overview

Closure

Transition: 10 min break

2. Biblical (Chapter 2 Generational Sin)

Attention

Motivation

Overview

Body

A. Generational Sin

B. Adam and Eve

C. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Remotivation

Overview

Closure

Transition: 1 hour break for lunch

3. Legal (Chapter 3 Literature related to Abuse)

Attention

Motivation

Overview

Body

A. Mandatory Reporting

A1 Child Abuse

- Definitions
- Laws
- Scenarios and Input from Attorney

Transition: 10 min break

A2 Domestic Violence

- Definitions
- Laws
- Scenarios and Input from Attorney

A3 Elder and Dependent Abuse

- Definitions
- Laws
- Scenarios and Input from Attorney

Remotivation

Overview

Closure

Transition: 10 minute break

Remotivation: Written testing of audience

Overview:

Closure:

Risk

The level of risk for the participant will be extremely low. The surveys will be anonymous and all that will be known is what "a" pastor, not "the" specific pastor answered on a particular question to an indiscriminate scenario. There are however, two risk factors that I can potentially foresee. The first involves a pastor who has encountered either physical or sexual abuse themselves and may be triggered by some of the content covered in the presentation. In anticipation of this event occurring, I will begin with a warning before the presentation begins concerning the content. I will also provide a contact to two different therapists should the content of the presentation bring up any lingering mental turmoil in the individual. Dr. Pierre Steenberg (D.Min, Ph.D., BCC) is a certified marriage and family counselor who has already volunteered his services for free should this event occur. Dr. Ann-Marie Buchanan (Ph.D., LM SW, MSW) has also volunteered her services as well.

The second risk factor that could possibly occur is a potential misrepresentation by myself or misunderstanding of the attendee regarding mandatory reporting laws. These can vary greatly from state to state especially regarding domestic violence. To

combat these potential false representations, I have consulted attorneys from Adventist Risk Management regarding the content of my training. Although the lawyers are hesitant to give any direct answers to hypothetical scenarios because they only give legal advice on a case-by-case basis, no negative feedback regarding my presentation of the laws and procedures in the areas of physical and sexual abuse involving minors and the elderly were of concern to them. Regarding different state laws surrounding widely different reporting procedures for domestic violence, I have consulted the Wisconsin state statute. I am also asking the attorney from the conference to review my representation of the laws before presentation and or be present during the section regarding mandatory reporting to correct any possible wrong articulation of current reporting laws.

Data Collecting

The project will be evaluated through use of surveys by measuring the clergy's self-reported knowledge. A series of written questions and scenarios at the beginning of the training session will measure the understanding of signs, symptoms, and mandatory reporting laws regarding physical and sexual abuse. At the end of the 6-hour training session the pastors will also be given similar written questions that will be used to determine if their knowledge on the subjects presented has changed because of the day's education and training. Ultimately, the difference between the two knowledge exams will be used to determine whether the training is beneficial for the pastoral educational tract towards ordination. The data will be collected in the conference's Executive Training Room. The surveys will be collected by myself. Video and audio recording will not be used.

Securing of Data

Data collection in the training session will be done through a series of before and after training questions. The pastors will be instructed to enter their name and email on the questionnaire but will also be informed that their identities will remain anonymous. The questions given before the training takes place will include different hypothetical scenarios surrounding church members reporting or displaying different earmarks of physical and sexual abuse. Each scenario will have write-in answers regarding each scenario. Correct answers will not be given to those in attendance until the second rounds of scenario questions have been answered and turned into the test administrator (myself). The data will be stored on a password protected computer and hard copies of the tests will be kept in a secure file cabinet located in my work office (a federal prison).

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Andrews University

Doctor of Ministry

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Facilitating appropriate clergy responses to abuse in the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study. Its purpose is to investigate the effectiveness of training pastors in the areas of identifying and reporting physical and sexual abuse among members of their respective congregations within the Wisconsin Conference. To date, no such research study within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has addressed the question of the effectiveness of training pastors in these areas.

This study contains survey questionnaires on demographic information and open-ended questions to hypothetical scenarios regarding physical and sexual abuse intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. Completion of the two surveys may take up to 15 minutes each. The resulting data will help us better understand the current level of knowledge of pastors regarding abuse before training occurs and the potential increase of learning as a result of the training. The comparison of the survey answers before and after the training has taken place will ultimately determine the effectiveness of similar training for pastors, teachers and seminarians in the future. One additional survey will be emailed to the participants approximately three months from today's date to ascertain if any of the information from the training has been put into use by the pastor.

As an attendee in this training seminar, your participation with the survey sections of the training will be voluntary. You are free to leave the questionnaire blank if you

choose to do so. If you choose to participate in the surveys at the beginning and ending of the training seminar, your personal information will not be disclosed. It is requested that you please take your time in answering the survey questions using complete sentences.

There are certain risks associated with attending training of this type. One risk factor that participants may encounter would include the potential emotional triggering content of the material covered in the training. Because of the sensitive nature, participants who may be feeling emotionally disturbed by the content are encouraged to step out of the meeting immediately. If you, as an attendee are negatively affected by the material covered in the training, you may contact either Dr. Pierre Steenberg Ph.D., D.M in., BC C C at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or Dr. Ann-M arie Buchanan Ph.D., LM SW , MSW at (xxx) xxx-xxxx free of charge to discuss any emotional duress that resulted from attendance in the training seminar. This would be a one-time counseling session. Should further counseling be required a referral would be made.

Another risk factor is the fact that slightly different legal precedence exists across different states and territories regarding mandatory reporting laws in the areas of physical and sexual abuse. Participants are reminded that this training seminar may not be totally in line with current and or future reporting procedures in the state of Wisconsin. Pastors are encouraged to contact the legal team of the Wisconsin conference should any questions of this nature arise.

If you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Ann-M arie Buchanan by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or e-m ail at xxxxx@ hotm ail.com and or Nicholas Moore by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or e-m ail at xxxxxx@ gm ail.com . You can also contact the Andrews University Institutional Review Board at (269) 471-6361 or e-m ail at irb@ andrew s.edu .

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. Therefore, I give my full voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Signature (Participant)

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

SURVEYS

Survey One

Full name and email address:

How many years have you been a pastor?

How long have you been with the Wisconsin Conference?

How many churches do you pastor?

How many members do you have on the books for each church?

How many people would you say attend each of your churches at least once a month?

Are you ordained?

What is your age, race and sex?

What is your education level?

What degrees do you have?

What schools did you earn your degrees from?

Did you attend these schools in person or online?

* Seminar participants are encouraged not to share their answers or opinions with each other regarding the following scenarios during the training session or when on break or lunch. The reasoning behind this request, is that it may influence another individual to change their mind based on another person's opinion, rather than their own individual learning outcome.

Scenario 1

Lillian, a member of your church and a young mother of three, wants to talk to you privately in your office after church. She tells you that when her husband Tony drinks, he becomes violent. Tony is the head deacon at your church. Lillian claims that two weeks ago they got into an argument and that Tony dragged her down the stairs by her hair. Lillian admits that although Tony has never physically struck her, the confrontations are becoming more physical. On the outside, things look great, and they even hold hands at church. You personally like Tony and have even golfed together.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 2

Once a month you take communion to the local nursing home to a long-time church member. He is an elderly man who is in the beginning stages of Dementia. He has no family, and the nursing staff says you are his only visitor. During this visit he tells you that one of the nurses slaps him and pinches him when he refuses to take his medication. The nursing staff always seem very friendly, and he looks in no way physically neglected or abused.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 3

One of your church elders informs you that 16-year-old Suzy and 19-year-old Brad from youth group are having sex.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 4

After hosting Wednesday night youth group, 14-year-old Mikenzie stays after to talk to you. She is from a broken home, but you don't know much else other than her parents are not together anymore. She is obviously anxious and embarrassed. She tells you that she is pregnant but does not want to reveal any more information.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 5

A woman at your church, who is in her 40's, makes an appointment with you in your office. In your office she tells you that she was molested as a young girl by her uncle and has never shared this information with anyone. Although the entire extended family are long time members of the church and her uncle (now in his 70's) has been a very active member over the years, she tells you that she is coming to you now because she is uncomfortable that he occasionally talks with other families' young children at church.

- What do you do?

- Do you report the incident?

- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 6

The wife of your head elder comes to you and tells you that her husband has recently raped her and has done this numerous times over the course of their 20 years of marriage. She is thinking about filing for divorce and is coming to you for advice.

- What do you do?

- Do you report the incident?

- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Survey Two

Full name and email address:

Scenario 1

Lillian, a member of your church and a young mother of three, wants to talk to you privately in your office after church. She tells you that when her husband Tony drinks, he becomes violent. Tony is the head deacon at your church. Lillian claims that two weeks ago they got into an argument and that Tony dragged her down the stairs by her hair. Lillian admits that although Tony has never physically struck her, the confrontations are becoming more physical. On the outside, things look great, and they even hold hands at church. You personally like Tony and have even golfed together.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 2

Once a month you take communion to the local nursing home to a long-time church member. He is an elderly man who is in the beginning stages of Dementia. He has no family, and the nursing staff says you are his only visitor. During this visit he tells you that one of the nurses slaps him and pinches him when he refuses to take his medication. The nursing staff always seem very friendly, and he looks in no way physically neglected or abused.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 3

One of your church elders informs you that 16-year-old Suzy and 19-year-old Brad from youth group are having sex.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 4

After hosting Wednesday night youth group, 14-year-old Mikenzie stays after to talk to you. She is from a broken home, but you don't know much else other than her parents are not together anymore. She is obviously anxious and embarrassed. She tells you that she is pregnant but does not want to reveal any more information.

- What do you do?
- Do you report the incident?
- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 5

A woman at your church, who is in her 40's, makes an appointment with you in your office. In your office she tells you that she was molested as a young girl by her uncle and has never shared this information with anyone. Although the entire extended family are long time members of the church and her uncle (now in his 70's) has been a very active member over the years, she tells you that she is coming to you now because she is uncomfortable that he occasionally talks with other families' young children at church.

- What do you do?

- Do you report the incident?

- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

Scenario 6

The wife of your head elder comes to you and tells you that her husband has recently raped her and has done this numerous times over the course of their 20 years of marriage. She is thinking about filing for divorce and is coming to you for advice.

- What do you do?

- Do you report the incident?

- If so, to whom and how do you report it?

7. Have you ever had any type of training regarding similar topics before?

If you answered "yes" please also answer the following questions below.

D. What was the training called?

E. When and where did you receive this training?

F. How did your previous training compare with today's training?

8. From what you remember, was the topic of your responsibility as a mandatory reporter ever presented to you in your theological education in undergrad or graduate school?

If so, to what degree and depth was it addressed?

9. What were some of your biggest takeaways from today's training?

10. The training was presented in a logical and easy to follow format. Please circle a rating below

0 = Absolutely not 10 = Flawless

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How could this training have been better presented?

11. Rate your knowledge level on a 0-10 scale of the topics of physical and sexual abuse and the mandatory reporting procedures surrounding each before and after the training.

Before the training:

Physical Abuse _____

Sexual Abuse _____

Mandatory Reporting _____

After the training:

Physical Abuse _____

Sexual Abuse _____

Mandatory Reporting _____

12. As a result of this training, how prepared do you feel if you were to encounter abuse among one of the members of your congregation as a result of this training? Please circle a rating below.

0 = Not at all prepared 10 = Totally prepared and confident

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why did you answer this way? Please be specific as possible.

Survey Three

In May, of 2023 you participated in a training session presented by Nicholas Moore of Andrews University that was titled "Appropriate Responses to Abuse". The training was regarding identification methods of recognizing physical and sexual abuse among members of your congregation and the mandatory reporting laws and procedures surrounding each form of abuse. If you would be willing, please take a few moments to answer the following questions as it will greatly add to the research efforts of Andrews University's Doctor of Ministry program. If the answer is "Yes" to any of the sections, **please be as detailed as possible**. If the answer is "No" or "Not Applicable" a simple "No" or "N/A" is acceptable.

1. Since your attendance at the training, have you experienced any one of the following:
 - a. Instances or situations where physical or sexual abuse was brought to your attention as a pastor? If so, what were they and how did you address them? Was mandatory reporting necessary on your part?

2. Since your attendance at the training, have you used or implemented any of the material that was covered in the training seminar regarding the:
 - a. Counseling of members

 - b. Advising other employees or boards

 - c. Content of your sermons

 - d. Safety considerations at work or with your own family

3. Is there anything else that you feel was a key takeaway from the training that you wish to share with the researcher and or Andrews University regarding future implementation of such training?

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CURRICULUM VITA

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2012-2015 Master of Divinity, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,
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2010-2012 Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, Eastern Washington
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2023-Present Interim Preacher at Blessed Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church,
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Chaplain Associate at Geissinger Community Medical Center,
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