

Clergy Restoration

Operations Manual of the Restoration Committee of the Minnesota-Iowa Baptist Conference. (Author: Rev. Nils C. Friberg, PhD, with additional input from Rev. Rob Boyd, Minnesota-Iowa Baptist Conference Director of Church and Pastoral Vitality. We have co-chaired this committee since 1992.)

This manual is written for church and district or national denominational leaders who lead or participate in the restoration of people who have experienced moral failure while in ministry.

General principles:

1. This manual for restoration aims to present the subject of restoration to people who lead the process within congregational polity.
2. This excludes hierarchical systems where bishops or ecclesiastical boards intervene and decide what to do. However, there is much to learn from such people. And we hope they will find our insights helpful as well.
3. We insist on incorporating women and their insights in the process.
4. This approach employs both a spiritual renewal element and psychological insight.
5. We will not focus on the process of discovery of an event of misconduct. There are sufficient guidebooks about that process already on the market.
6. Nor will we treat the impact on congregations by the misconduct, except in the sense that we will encourage candidates to make efforts to reconcile with the people & church/churches where the misconduct occurred. Understanding the impact of sexual misconduct will guide the reconciliation process. But that impact will not be described in this manual. (But see *Restoring the Soul of a Church*, Laaser & Hopkins, eds., referred to in the bibliography below.)
7. We assume that candidates will seek us out, not that we will be seeking candidates for restoration. We are not proposing an enforcement policy, but rather & only a restorative process. Church bodies will need to have their own discipline policies and operate from them under careful legal guidance.
8. We recognize that each church will tend to organize such efforts according to their own experience or lack thereof, for good or for ill. We need flexibility in the light of the great variety of cases, the nature of the misconduct, its features, motives, impacts, and many other facets. This leads to the conclusion that some tailoring of the treatment of each case is unavoidable. State laws vary, as well as insurance company policies that regiment parts of this process. Consultation with both an attorney and the legal counsel of the church's insurance company is absolutely necessary in most cases. This manual does not pretend to give legal advice, nor do we own such responsibility. We reserve the right to modify this policy at any time.

Introductory issues:

History and basic assumptions: We began to function as an ongoing organizational arm of the MIBC Board of Stewards about 1992. The way that candidates come to us varies. They may present themselves by calling our MIBC Director of Church and Pastoral Vitality. Or, the church involved may call that office. A friend or colleague may inquire. We do not seek out candidates, as though we were responsible to discover them and bring them in. We are not an enforcement agency. The committee's main responsibility is to assess and monitor the way candidates are reacting to the accountability process we put in place. This is very much a hands-on process that needs thoroughness, flexibility, discernment, and good resources with which to consult. We have seen a great deal of variety of issues in candidates. We need to balance staying the course and concentrating on

the goals of the specific restoration process with being ready to flex with the peculiarities of each case. We've had to adjust our approach to some degree with each case.

Later we will comment further on membership of the committee. However, it needs to be said at the outset that in our practice we form a new committee, tailor-made, with each new candidate. To preserve the experience learned from past cases the co-chairs remain the same, but the formation of a new group with each new candidate reflects the elements of both the ecclesiastical setting and the friendship circle of the candidate.

In contrast to guidelines from some other sources [cp. Tom Pedigo's manual in the bibliography], it is our strong conviction that women need to be on the committee. Beyond the necessary involvement of the spouse of the candidate (if available), it's important to have a Christian woman therapist with competence in the field of human sexuality, and at least one additional woman from the involved congregation who understands how women have been impacted by the events and persons under study. They add their necessary and invaluable insight from a woman's point of view to the committee's perceptions and process. Any process that ignores or neglects this resource does so at the risk of coming up with both false or partial perceptions and conclusions.

Committee members need to be chosen for their mature Christian character, reputation, and experience. The more knowledgeable they are and well-balanced as persons, the better they will function. However, this does not imply that we should pressure them to become instant experts in subjects such as misconduct, addiction, theology, or psychological theory. They need to be able to digest what's coming forth in the process, to be alert and aware of the candidate's processes and reactions. Persons on such committees need to be comfortable and balanced in their perceptions of and response to sexuality in general, and particularly to their own sexual formation and ethics.

In dealing with victims, there needs to be advocacy, combined with careful and thorough listening to their concerns in order to help them find means of healing and therapeutic assistance. Some kind of reparation, restitution, or payments may be required from the candidate for provision of therapy costs for the victim. An impact statement from victims is very helpful in this process. Historically we haven't had a ready-made victim-advocate program in place and have had to improvise in various ways. Our denomination is not large enough to maintain something like this over time. We seek out skilled persons or professionals to take this advocacy role.

This document does not treat the biblical material or theological reasons for restoration. These are argued persuasively in several other books. We are fully aware of strong arguments against any efforts to restore someone to ministry after sexual misconduct. When we consider the principles and strictures of the Pastoral Epistles on selection of ministerial candidates, we recognize that many people are approved in our day for ministry without the area of their sexuality being thoroughly evaluated and tested. Theological schools vary considerably in the thoroughness of the evaluation of their students' integration of personal sexuality with their faith-stance and spiritual lives. Persons who face testing or failure in this area, with competent help, can effectively achieve a higher level of awareness of their need to integrate their sexuality fully under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The desired outcomes should become clear as you read through this manual.

Steps in the Process

(The meeting sequence may vary from candidate to candidate. When we say "next meeting" it may be necessary to meet several times to fulfill the next objective.)

1. Restoration defined:
 - a. We take a definition from the book, *Restoring the Fallen*: "A Spiritual Care Team is another kind of intensive care unit. It is a group of mature Christians who voluntarily commit themselves to support and assist a person or persons with acute spiritual needs through a process of returning that person to fellowship with God, family and fellow believers" (p.11).
 - b. Note that the above definition does not include restoration to ministry. If restoration to ministry is held up as a primary goal, this "carrot" may motivate the candidate to be less than thorough and forthcoming in the process. Restoration to ministry needs to be retained in the background, never promised at the outset, and depending on the

repercussions of the misconduct and outcomes of the restoration process, perhaps never accomplished.

- c. Restoration is primarily to God, the candidate's marriage, family, and local church. The church-at-large will not be brought into view until all the other levels of restoration are reached.
 - d. A major concern here: when can this candidate be considered safe enough? This demands lengthy and carefully considered, prayer-filled judgment on the part of a wise committee. We agree with the important warnings against a superficial rushing to forgiveness and restoration by Jack Hayford, (*Restoring Fallen Leaders*, Regal, 1988). He argues for a thorough process that involves full repentance, reconciliation, and recovery.
2. Initial Evaluation of the Candidate.
- a. The candidate meets first with the MIBC Director of Church & Pastoral Vitality who composes a rough outline of the candidate's history and events relevant to our committee's work.
 - b. Having assessed the candidate as appropriate for the process, the MIBC Director of Church and Pastoral Vitality contacts the church involved, and interviews two or three well-informed people from that setting.
 - c. He then contacts the established chair of the restoration committee. They discuss the case, and decide together who would be good members of the restoration committee.
 - d. If there are any police or court-related issues, we don't proceed with a candidate unless these are clearly resolved. In cases of on-going investigation by law enforcement or court authorities, we would not take the case until completed with firmly positive conclusions by proper authorities.
 - e. We are not favorable to accepting work with a candidate who over time has shown a pattern of repeated moral failure. Persons with persistent negative behavior in areas of sexual harassment, finances, leadership, or interpersonal relations are not good candidates for restoration. Again, careful discernment is required.
 - f. In consultation with the church involved, we decide who should be on the committee.
Membership guidelines:
 - (1) at least two, up to four, persons from the church involved who are well-balanced, established, mature Christians, with good judgment; these persons will be the main sources of information of the impact made upon the church by the event of moral failure; however, if additional church members need to be interviewed, that can be done by the committee;
 - (2) a Christian woman therapist, and one other woman from the affected church body;
 - (3) a person who is already, or willing to, function as an advocate and intimate accountability person for the candidate;
 - (4) a person representing MIBC leadership and Board of Stewards (BOS). This work is considered confidential, and details are not revealed to the BOS.
 - (5) Myself as chair (or another trained and experienced person).
 - (6) Often the spouse of the candidate becomes part of the group (in several cases, she has been an invaluable help!)
 - g. Develop a plan for emotional and spiritual support of the spouse over the ensuing months. Overconcentration on the candidate alone neglects the spouse and family. Consider her needs for supportive relationships and worship, especially if the couple needs to leave the church they've been serving. She may need a personal counselor as well.
 - h. The couple's children need careful study and an action plan should be put together with the parents and a skilled therapist.

3. We plan our first meeting for orientation of the committee (without the candidate present) at which time documentation of the investigative report(s) is ready to be presented. The report(s) should include the following information:
 - 1) Specific occasion(s) when the behaviors of moral failure occurred, with dates, times, places, and complete descriptions of relationship issues involved.
 - 2) Descriptions of how the complainant reacted or responded to these behaviors.
 - 3) Effects of the behaviors upon the complainant, whether physical, emotional, spiritual, social, job-related, etc.
 - 4) Names of possible witnesses or persons to whom the complainant reported these behaviors.
 - 5) A statement from the complainant about what she/he needs in order to feel safe and secure again. A carefully worded summary of this testimony needs to be written and signed by the complainant testifying that the document truly represents what happened.
 - 6) The interviewers need to co-sign with the complainant, and date their signatures.
 - 7) A report of how discovery was made and processed, and efforts made to this point to assist the victim(s).
 - 8) The committee will examine the reports, and in addition:
 1. Gather phone, e-mail addresses, mailing addresses of committee members.
 2. Get to know each other, our backgrounds and relationship to the candidate, church, or other connections relevant to the case.
 3. Pray together, and covenant to continue to pray regularly for this situation. I usually challenge the group with some of the following issues:
 - (a) To know well our own sexuality and spirituality, and their relationship to the process ahead;
 - (b) need for assertive work with the candidate, but taking an approach that is grace-filled, long on listening skills, short on judgmentalness;
 - (c) openness/readiness to work with resistant or recalcitrant person(s);
 - (d) we're not judge and jury, neither are we therapists, although we will consult if needed with attorneys and mental health professionals;
 - (e) there are significant decisions ahead; we will help the candidate decide what action to take during the process and after the process is over;
 - (f) This is a significant time commitment. Attendance needs to be faithful. Planning of meeting dates needs to be done long enough ahead that all persons can be present.
 - (g) We stress with vigor the need for absolute confidentiality, and give warning as to the ramifications of breaking it on thousands of people.
4. Second meeting with candidate present & spouse:
 - a. Prayer and general orientation to the process
 - b. We hear the candidate's story with sufficient detail to support the committee's understanding of who they're dealing with.
 - c. The candidate describes the critical events leading up to the moral failure, as well as the details of what followed or accompanied the development of the situation.

- d. We listen for: sense of responsibility, repentance, defensiveness, minimization, denial, empathy for victim and larger group around them, insight into self.
 - e. We listen for signs of misuse of power, being manipulative, narcissism, entitlement, boundary crossing, and present state of the marriage.
 - f. The group addresses to the candidate enough questions to get most issues of fact/events clarified.
 - g. We set up next meeting: date, plan of the meeting, which may include interviewing church members involved as to their perceptions of the issues leading up to the event of misconduct and its impact upon the church.
5. Next meeting(s):
- a. With candidate absent we have members of the committee summarize what they heard; we attempt to come to agreement on main issues and list and explain them on paper;
 - b. With the candidate present we determine what has been done so far to deal with his/her own issues in therapy, marital, individual, sexual. We ask about restitution, confessions, meetings with church, and victim.
 - c. What has been done to attend to the victim's needs, or to address the church where the event occurred?
 - d. Listen for: awareness and empathy of the candidate for the impact of behaviors and attitudes, as well as grasp of issues, familial, sociocultural, intellectual, doctrinal, emotional-psychological, ecclesiastical, and how these operated to get the candidate into trouble.
 - e. What is the candidate currently doing to deal with these factors and to make changes toward overall health in each of the several areas? Does the candidate have a plan for healthy outcomes?
 - f. Are there financial or job-related issues that need immediate attention? Referral?
 - g. Plan next meeting with prioritization around answers to the above issues.
6. Next meeting(s):
- a. Does the candidate need further counseling?
 - b. Does the candidate need spiritual mentoring? (By whom? How? When?)
 - c. Interview spouse again to determine perceptions of reactions to what has happened and features of the candidate's life that either remain as they were or have changed in the process with this committee.
 - d. Ask candidate about the use of and attitudes toward the spiritual disciplines, self-care, friendship support, use of power, response to one's own neediness, woundedness, and emotional intelligence (EQ, which involves self-awareness and other-awareness).
 - e. Continue to plan meetings as long as you have issues to work on from the above steps and processes.
7. Overall Time-frame for the whole process:
- a. Usually 18-24 months
 - b. Meetings usually last two hours – consider human limits!
 - c. Meet either monthly or bi-monthly, depending on the urgency of giving immediate guidance and monitoring to the candidate
8. At the end of the process a meeting of the committee without the candidate to consider issues such as:
- a. Need for follow-up by accountability partners.
 - b. Check-in with committee leaders once a year.
 - c. Sometimes it's advisable to hold a meeting between the candidate and those most affected by the event of moral failure. Great care should be taken so as not to identify victims who want to remain anonymous. Such meetings may need to be private and limited to particular families or persons, and with skilled mediation present. Long-held-back feelings will often

interrupt powerfully in such encounters, so coaching and preparation of both sides must be done in advance, knowing that there is danger of revictimization or personal injury.

9. Public meeting at the end of the process:
 - a. In some cases, we have arranged for a public meeting to which we invite people from the involved church.
 - b. We send out invitational letters which invite the attendees to express their concerns and hopes for the candidate.
 - c. At the meeting a statement from our district office is read about the purpose and nature of the committee's process, with its features, and limitations.
 - d. Leaders of the restoration committee report on the general process that has been accomplished, and their satisfaction with the results.
 - e. The candidate repeats words of repentance and requests for forgiveness.
 - f. Prayer for the candidate is led by several. Care needs to be taken not to confuse this with a re-ordination which can only be done by a local church body. In some cases, however, the candidate has been asked to turn in ordination papers to church authorities at some level. Re-establishing these would need to be done under the guidance of a district executive minister.
 - g. Public meetings of this sort can bring painful memories to the awareness of abuse victims who happen to be present. The committee should have a couple of professional people in the wings to counsel people who may express need for immediate counseling help at the meeting; referrals may be needed. No mention of any victim's name is to be made at this meeting!
10. Finally, we prepare a letter that is given to the candidate which carefully states:
 - a. We do not certify the candidate – we only report on our process; we don't promise placement or protection for the candidate.
 - b. We can, however, offer counsel to any search committee that seeks information about the candidate's process with us.
 - c. The letter summarizes the process with the candidate, tells how many times we've met, and the general features of the work we did together.
11. We invite the candidate and the original church involved to re-contact us on occasions when further guidance is needed.

Goals for the Restoration Process:

Therapists to whom candidates are assigned are periodically asked their opinions about whether these goals are being achieved by the candidate, but cannot be held responsible for the candidate's future conduct. At the outset of the process we ask the candidate to provide the committee co-chairs with a waiver so that we can consult with his/her therapist.

1. Does the candidate have cognitive, spiritual, social, and emotional understanding of the following:
 - a. Why did this particular event of misconduct happen?
 - b. Can the candidate delineate well all personal contributions and responsibilities in it?
 - c. What background features (family of origin, personal abuse history, developmental, family of origin, marital/parenting, and spiritual life, as well as marriage and ways of practicing ministry at the time) were involved in contributing to the failure? Is the candidate able to describe and utilize sexual boundaries to the satisfaction of the committee, the therapist, and spouse?
 - d. Does the candidate have a good grasp of the impact of this moral failure upon various persons, including either a specific victim, the leadership of the church, the church members, the marriage and family?
2. Is the candidate well on the way to correcting the above background features and contributing factors through:
 - a. Marital and personal therapy

- b. Personal spiritual disciplines, formation, and mentorship
3. Is the candidate willing to take accountability for daily decision-making and attitudes concerning dealing with sexual feelings and exercise of influence?
4. We strongly recommend that, as soon as possible, the candidate learn to journal daily, and to form/join an accountability group that might follow the process of Mark Laaser's *Faithful & True* workbook (see bibliography).
5. Journaling should focus around triggers of illegitimate sexual impulses; the candidate should trace patterns of lustful fantasy, with detail of how they occurred and why, and describe what was done about them. This material ought to be regularly gone over with a counselor or sponsor.
6. Healthy goals should now be clear for personal and marital/family growth with enough practice at this new kind of living that new habits of life are beginning to take hold and maintain in the candidate's life.
7. Firming up an inner sense of personal identity and integrity with others.
8. Does the candidate's spouse have solid confidence and trust in the candidate's behavioral, spiritual, relational, and attitudinal changes?
9. Do the candidate's best friends also have the same confidence and trust?

Brief Bibliography:

- Friberg, Nils, & Mark Laaser, *Before the Fall: Prevention of Pastoral Sexual Misconduct* (Collegeville, MN.:Liturgical Press, 1998). [This is a book about prevention. However, many clues to misconduct are discussed. Sections of the book ask candidates to elaborate their views of spiritual and sexual integration.]
- Hands, Donald, and Wayne L. Fehr. *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A new psychology of intimacy with God, self, and others.* (Alban Institute, 1994) [Good description of how the aspects wholeness go together.]
- Hopkins, Nancy Myer, and Mark Laaser, eds. *Restoring the Soul of a Church: Healing Congregations Wounded by Clergy Sexual Misconduct.* (Liturgical Press, 1995. [I wrote a chapter in this book on wounded congregations. This is one of the few books that describe impact of sexual misconduct on congregations. Rev. Harold Hopkins has a list of ten criteria for the restoration process on pp. 135-137)
- Hopkins, Nancy Myer. "The Congregational Response to Clergy Betrayals of Trust. (Liturgical Press, 1998). [An excellent handbook on the earlier phases of discovery and response by the congregation.]
- Laaser, Mark. *Faithful & True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World.* LifeWay Press. '97. [Describes sexual addiction in great detail along with excellent process guidelines for recovery in accountability groups.]
- Laaser, Debra. *Shattered Vows: hope and healing for women who have been sexually betrayed.* Zondervan, '08. [Mark's wife provides helpful material for spouses.]
- MacDonald, Gordon. *Rebuilding Your Broken World.* Thomas Nelson, 1988, 1990.
- Muse, Stephen, ed. *Beside Still Waters: Resources for Shepherds in the Marketplace.* Smyth & Helwys, 2000. (Good chapter on boundaries.)
- Pedigo, Thomas L. *Restoration Manual: A workbook for restoring fallen ministers and religious leaders.* Colorado Springs, CO: Winning Edge Ministries, 1994, 2007. [This manual is aimed at churches that are male-dominant elder board and independent of any denominational structure. Good theological section.]
- Struthers, William M. *Wired for Intimacy: how pornography hijacks the male brain.* IVP, '09. [Beside describing effects of pornography, has a good section on healthy masculinity & sexuality.]
- Ten Elshof, Gregg A. *I Told Me So: self-deception and the Christian Life.* Eerdmans, '09.
- Wilson, Earl & Sandy, Paul & Virginia Friesen, Larry & Nancy Paulson, *Restoring the Fallen. A team approach to caring, confronting and reconciling.* IVP, 1997. [One of the best books on the accountability and recovery process.]
- Wilson, Earl. *Steering Clear: Avoiding the slippery slope to moral failure.* IVP, 2002. [Describes in thorough detail how people get into trouble and provides prevention means.]

Helpful web sites [A listing here doesn't imply endorsement of all content]:

- Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute: www.csbsju.edu/isti [a huge bibliography and many articles on this site.]
- Faithful and True Ministries: www.faithfulandtrueministries.com.
- Advocate web: www.advocatweb.org.
- A thorough discipline/restoration policy from the Christian Missionary Alliance Church can be read at: <http://www.sheridanhope.com/files/PDFs/DISCIPLINE%20POLICY.pdf>. This policy lacks a description of a thorough process, but adds helpful information on steps to be taken by denominational officials.
- A thoughtful article (accessed 11-23-10) from a Seventh-Day Adventist author: <http://www.atoday.com/magazine/2002/01/second-chance-can-fallen-pastors-be-restored>.
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ncfriberg@comcast.net. Rob Boyd's e-mail: rboyd@mbcworld.org.

There are historical documents useful to this work of restoration: (1) "Guidelines for Restoration of Ministers" available from the Minnesota-Iowa Baptist Conference office (published in 1989). (2) "Moral Failure: Model Policies and Procedures for the Baptist General Conference Churches, Districts and National Office" (published in Feb., 1997. Both Rev. Boyd and I were members of the commission that wrote that policy.).