

Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

Resource Packet

Abuse of Power

written by
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**Prepared by the General Conference
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day Committee**

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Adventist Review

Children's Ministries

Education Department

Family Ministries

Health Ministries

Ministerial Association

Women's Ministries

Youth Ministries

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Dear Church Leaders:

Joyful greetings to each of you. Once again we are preparing for another Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day. For some of you this may be your first time that your church is observing this very important day. To you we say a special thank you for making the time in your church schedule to bring the very important topic of abuse to our brothers and sisters.

For those of you who have observed this day in the past we say a special thank you for continuing to keep the emphasis on a problem that can only be helped as we speak out more and more.

Our theme for this year is "Abuse of Power." This year we have again chosen to handle a topic that is too infrequently spoken about but one that is present in our church. How do those in power and leadership relate to church members? Many have had painful experiences that they may have never spoken about but that nonetheless need to be addressed.

The packet this year was prepared by General Conference Women's Ministries Department in conjunction with Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, Adventist Review, Children's Ministries, Education Department, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Ministerial Association, and Youth Ministries.

In this packet you will find:

- A Sabbath Worship Sermon
- Children's Story
- Responsive Reading
- Seminar
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Seminar Handout

As usually we have given you a variety of information for your choosing. As a church leader you are free to add to or substitute material that pertains to your country.

At the General Conference this is a team effort and so we ask that as a church leader you include other departments in your church as you observe this day.

We, at the General Conference, pray for the success of this day. We pray that God will give you the boldness you may need to address this topic that He will bless your team and the plans you make. Most of all we pray for the lives of those who will be blessed because someone has acknowledged their pain and extended a hand of love to them.

Love and joy,

Heather-Dawn Small
Director

About the Authors:

Ardis and Dick Stenbakken are a retired pastoral couple who have a wide back-ground in church and family ministry. Ardis has a BA and MEd in English and secondary education. Dick has Masters Degrees in Theology and Philosophy; New Testament Studies; Family Therapy; Family and Community Education; and a Doctor of Education in Family and Community Education. Dick served as an active duty Adventist chaplain in the US Army for almost 24 years; during this time he did thousands of hours of family and personal counseling. Ardis taught English and was involved in women's and community issues. From 1992 to 2004 Dick was Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the General Conference. Ardis served as Associate Director of Women's Ministries from 1995 to 1997, and then as Director until the end of 2004. They have taught courses in pastoral sexual ethics at Andrews University, dealing with abuse of power issues. Through the years they have enjoyed preaching and presenting seminars together. They now live in Loveland, Colorado. They have two married children and two little granddaughters. Ardis continues to edit the Women's Ministries devotional books and speak and preach. Dick has a ministry presenting dramatic Bible characters; 19 of these characters are available on three DVD's.

Abuse of Power
Packet
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

Sabbath Worship Service: You will note that the sermon suggests that you have some visuals for illustration. It is also suggested that the person presenting the sermon “make it their own.” In other words, if you can add personal experience, local stores, local statistics, or other material which will make the sermon more meaningful and personal for your congregation, by all means, use them!

Suggested Opening Hymn of Praise: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #12

A **children’s story** is included. The majority of it is directly quoted from the Bible.

Scripture Reading: The included **Responsive Reading**. You may have two leaders: one reads the italicized lines and the congregation joins the second reader in reading the bold type. Or you can have two groups of 3-5 persons each who take turns reading the lines. This is a good way to include some of the youth. Alternate reading: “Christianity in Practice,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal # 787; or “Growing in Christ (Sanctification),” # 789.

Closing Hymn: “Not I, But Christ,” Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal # 570.

Seminar: The seminar consists of two parts: one is additional information regarding the abuse of power. The other section is vignettes; you will want to divide your group into smaller groups of probably 4-5 persons each to discuss the cases. Each group should be assigned to discuss one area of abuse. Each group will look at the two vignettes for their area, and chose *one* or them to discuss. You should allow about 5 minutes for discussion and then about 15 minutes for the groups to report their discussion to the larger group. Individual groups should be held to about 2 minutes each for their reports.

Abuse of Power
Responsive Reading
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.

This is truly the way to worship him.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body.

We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well.

If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously.

If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously.

And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.

Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.

When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.

Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

—Romans 12:1 -21, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004 by [Tyndale Charitable Trust](#).

Abuse of Power
Children's Story
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

Do you remember the story of David in the Bible? He was the one who killed the giant Goliath with a sling and a stone.

David became king of Israel, and he was a good king. He had lots of power; he could tell someone to go somewhere, and they had to obey. Unfortunately, he could tell people to do bad things too, and people did them. And one time he did something very bad that hurt a lot of people. In fact, one of the people was even killed by David's orders.

Because David was usually a good person, disobeying God must have hurt his conscience. But he didn't do anything about it. He just went on acting like he had not done anything wrong. And more and more people talked about it, and began to think David was not such a good person after all.

Finally, God sent his prophet Nathan to talk to David. But instead of just telling David that he had sinned and hurt people, Nathan told him a story.

Nathan said that a rich man and a poor man lived in the same town. The rich man owned a lot of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had only one little lamb that he had bought and raised. The lamb became a pet for him and his children. He even let it eat from his plate and drink from his cup and sleep on his lap. The lamb was like one of his own children. They all loved that lamb.

One day someone came to visit the rich man, and the rich man wanted to have a dinner for his guest. But the rich man didn't want to kill any of his own sheep or cattle and serve it to the visitor. So he stole the poor man's little lamb, and killed it, and cooked it, and served it instead. He used his power to take away the poor man's little lamb.

King David was furious with the rich man and said to Nathan, "I swear by the living LORD that the man who did this deserves to die! And because he didn't have any pity on the poor man, he will have to pay four times what the lamb was worth."

Then Nathan told David: "You are that rich man! Now listen to what the LORD God of Israel says to you: 'I chose you to be the king of Israel. I kept you safe and gave you a lot of things and power. I let you rule Israel and Judah, and if that had not been enough, I would have given you much more. Why did you disobey me and do such a horrible thing?'"

Then Nathan told David that he would have a lot of trouble and unhappiness because of his sin. You see, when anyone uses his or her power to take advantage of anyone else, God is displeased; people, even boys and girls, can be hurt. And even the person who

hurts them suffers just like David did. I am glad that David said, "I have disobeyed the LORD." He was sorry for his sin, and asked God to forgive him. And of course God did as He always does for us. But that did not change the fact that people were hurt. So let's be careful how we use power. Sometimes bigger or stronger children will push other children around or call them names. Or make fun of someone different. That hurts. And sometimes big people who have power try to hurt little children. If someone tries to do that, you need to say, "No!" and go tell an adult you trust. Jesus wants us to do only things that make us and others feel good, not bad.

Let's pray that we will each use our power only to help others.

—2 Samuel 12, adapted from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © 1995 by [American Bible Society](#).

Abuse of Power
Seminar
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

It would be well for the presenter to have local or national statistics to share as well as knowledge of local laws , and perhaps current local cases.

It is also important to note that neither the sermon nor the seminar cover all that there is to be said on this topic; for instance, very little is said about restoration or punishment—there is just not enough time. The South Pacific Division has policy and a committee to handle sexual misconduct and abuse in the church. Other divisions may have similar resources—you can contact your division Women’s Ministries or Family Ministries for information. A good web site for more information is <http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/default.asp>. It deals primarily with pastoral misconduct, but much of it is applicable to other situations as well. A good book on sexual abuse of power is Sex in the Forbidden Zone by Peter Rutter, Fawcett, 1991.

The subject of abuse of power is a large subject with many ramifications. In the sermon on the abuse of power also prepared for this day we particularly looked at the biblical story of the sin of David and Bathsheba. But there are many other stories and there are many aspects to this problem. There is the problem itself, what the abuse of power means, how the problem is dealt with so that the problem does not become bigger, what to do about the problem, and how to affect restoration. Both the victim and the abuser need ministry. And if the abuse occurs in the church there are often people who do not believe it has happened and take sides, and often the church itself suffers.

Types of Abuse of Power:

So, what are the elements of power, and who has power? In all cases of abuse of power, abuse takes place when a person takes advantage of a person or group for the benefit of the abuser.

- Positional. The use of one’s position, education, status, to command/demand compliance of others without their consent. See Luke 3:14 where John the Baptist tells soldiers to NOT use their position to exploit others.

Some of these positions are:

- Pastor
- Lawyer
- Teacher
- Coach
- Caregiver
- Doctor
- Therapist
- Church leaders

- Youth and Pathfinder leaders
 - Boss/VIP/political
 - Husbands/wives
 - Parents
- Economic—the use or misuse of money and trust in managing funds; the person wields power because they have the money—they are looked up to, or they control things or events with their money by either giving or withholding it. Texts: Acts 5:1 -12—Ananias and Sapphira; James 5; Deuteronomy 8:18.
 - Influence. This may be because they have written a book, are a member of a certain group, force of personality, etc.
 - Physical. Usually the use of size, strength and or physical strength to force compliance. This is perhaps obvious—if you are bigger or stronger than I, you have power over me. Texts: Numbers 22:22-27: Balaam beats his donkey; Genesis 37: Joseph’s brothers sell him to slavery. 2 Samuel 13:14: “and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.”
 - Informational. A person often has power over another if they have information that the other lacks or needs. This is particularly true in church leadership. If you are on the inside path of information, you can control events and people.
 - Psychological and Emotional. The use of emotions to dominate, shame, manipulate , or control others. Ephesians 6:4: Do not exasperate your children; Genesis 2:1 -7: Satan/Eve/Adam intimidating lies = pressure.
 - Spiritual. Use of spiritual influence or position to command, demand, demean, or force someone into a belief or behavior. Texts: John 11:49: Caiaphas, “You know nothing at all!”
 - Sexual. Exploitation of another for personal sexual gratification. The abuse by these individuals may be in the form of sexual abuse, incest, molestation, or sexual harassment. Note: In many countries there are strong legal guidelines on reporting, and potentially severe legal penalties for this kind of abuse, especially the abuse of minor children. Texts: 1 Samuel 2:22-25: Eli’s sons; or 2 Samuel 11: David and Bathsheba.

In all of these cases, the person with the power is also the one who should be held responsible for the situation—not the victim. Stephen Covey, in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, has what he calls the proactive model. This means that “as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions.” Then he goes on to say, “Look at the word

responsibility—‘response-ability’—the ability to choose your response”¹ What this clarifies is that the person with the power is the one with the responsibility, and cannot say, “Well, she/he tempted me,” or as in the case of Bathsheba and David, we cannot blame her. David was king and the one responsible. If this were not so, we should have had Psalm 51, a prayer of repentance, from Bathsheba, not David. But he knew he was in the wrong, and so did the prophet Nathan. In fact, 2 Samuel 11:27 says, “But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.”

The pastor, the teacher, the therapist, the Pathfinder leader—whatever person is in charge—is the one responsible and accountable. Larry Spielman says, “The leader’s role produces an implicit trust between the leader and those over whom the leader has power. The leader must not use this sacred trust for personal gratification. The power differential between King and subject, or leader and follower, makes the person with the less power vulnerable to exploitation.”²

Some facts we need to know about the abuse of power:

- Perhaps the most important fact to always remember is that the one in power—power of any type—is the one who is responsible.
- We will not be judged by what temptations people put in front of us, but by our response.
- Inappropriate sexual contact with a person of the opposite or same sex is sin, even among consenting adults. This might involve child molestation, adultery, homosexuality, sexual harassment, voyeurism, and other types of inappropriate sexual contact. These sins should not occur among Christians, but they do. When one of the individuals has power (the pastor, church leader, teacher, doctor, etc.) that person always is the responsible one and will need to be held accountable.
- If you hear of an abuse case, don’t express disbelief. Unfortunately, things like that do happen, even in our church.
- When any type of abuse occurs, the objective from that point on is restoration. This involves such components as confrontation, confession, repentance, personal counseling, marriage or family counseling, and accountability groups. The restoration process is not easy and it takes time. In not all cases is restoration possible or appropriate.
- “According to Robert Shoop, a Kansas State University expert who has studied sexual harassment and abuse in schools, this abuse isn’t just limited to coaches. Band directors, music teachers or anybody who has access to your child in a private environment outside of the school setting could also be a predator as well.... But

¹ page 71.

² http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/19-3_Spielman.pdf. Accessed 2/24/2008.

that's not to say your kids are any safer in school classrooms. Reported incidents of teacher-student sex cases are becoming more and more common. Shoop said that these cases are probably the tip of the iceberg in regards to the number of cases; however, no national [USA] studies exist to discuss how prevalent a problem it truly is. Yet, he said the scandal is comparable in magnitude to (but has been overshadowed by) the incidents of alleged abuse by priests in the Catholic Church."³

- When sexual misconduct occurs, the church needs to adopt specific procedures. On one hand, stating specific actions can be helpful. But on the other hand, being too specific can make it impossible to follow the adopted procedure in every case. Failure to follow adopted procedures can result in litigation.
- Every individual involved with children should complete a volunteer application form and undergo appropriate background checks. ARM (Adventist Risk Management) has guidelines to help pastors on how to deal with staff and volunteers.
- If you become aware of abuse by any church leader, a quick response is vital. Contact, the Conference, Adventist Risk Management, and your attorney.
- Remember that regardless of the accusation, the mission of the church must be to protect the abused, to listen to the victim, and to cooperate with the authorities.
- If you are a church leader and someone comes to you for counseling, unless what they tell you is illegal, you must keep the confidence. To share what you hear with anyone else in the church can ruin your ministry and their spiritual walk.
- "Another factor misinterprets the gospel mandate to forgive sinners. Thus, pastoral sexual misconduct is viewed more as a moral lapse than as a betrayal of professional trust. Of course, this ignores the Savior's directive that those who harm little ones should be severely, even irretrievably, punished. Remember, sexual misconduct is seldom a need for a sexual relationship as much as it is an abuse of power and position." —"Organizational Misconduct," James A. Cress, September 2002, *Ministry* magazine.
- How do you make church leader misconduct in the congregation worse? By responding in the wrong ways. The problem of pastoral misconduct affects all denominations. The Presbyterian Church estimates that up to 23% of its clergy have at some time engaged in "inappropriate sexual behavior or inappropriate sexual contact." In the year 2000, every Catholic Diocese in America except two had been hit with civil lawsuits involving sexual misconduct.⁴

³ <http://www.mediarelations.k-state.edu/WEB/News/Webzine/0202/sexualabuse.html>. Accessed 2/24/2008.

⁴ http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/quick_question29.html. Accessed 2/26/08.

- Author Naomi Wolf was sexually harassed as an undergraduate at Yale University in the 1980's. She has written about her years of struggle to determine what Yale has done to hold its faculty accountable. She concludes that, "If we see this as a systemic-corruption issue, then when people bring allegations, the focus will be on whether the institution has been damaged in its larger mission." She says, "The Catholic Church is a good example: The public understood that church leaders' maintaining silence about systemic sexual transgressions corrupted the mission of an organization that had a great responsibility to society as a whole." She says that "even the military is starting to understand that this type of sexual harassment of cadets corrupts its social mission." So if the institution looks at how its mission is damaged when one of its leaders/employees/representative engages in abuse of power, it might be motivated to act when it recognized its self-interest and potential negative consequences it may face (legal, financial, public image, etc.) which can undercut its mission and indeed, its survival.⁵

Steps for the One in Power to Use to Avoid Falling Into Sin:

If you are one of the persons with power, particularly one of those in a power position, you need to take steps to make sure you do not fall into causing abuse. Unfortunately, many who have caused abuse felt that they were not vulnerable—they didn't even need to take precautions. But anyone can fall into trouble if safety measures are not taken. To help protect yourself, here are steps you should take.

- Have an accountability partner or group and meet with them regularly and honestly.
- Leave the office door open and the window in it uncovered.
- Keep your desk between you and your counselee at all times as a physical barrier.
- Avoid even casual physical contacts
- Counsel only with couples or with members of the same sex (men counsel with men, women counsel with women).
- Never assume that you are invincible. Given the wrong circumstances, every pastor [or other person in power] is vulnerable to temptation, sin and the abuse of power.⁶

And if you are dealing with one of these persons in power, you should check to see that they are taking steps to protect you.

The Importance of Church Discipline⁷

⁵ Information from Dr. Marie M. Fortune, Founder and Senior Analyst, FaithTrust Institute, in a promotional e-mail.

⁶ http://www.thehopeofsurvivors.com/pdf_files/Pastor_Brochure.pdf . Accessed 2/24/2008.

⁷ <http://www.cotubic.org/ministers/Restoration/introduction.html> . Accessed 2/20/2008.

Most churches assume that they will never have a case of abuse and therefore have no plans as to how to take care of the problem. One of the most common ways of dealing with a problem of abuse of power has been to sweep it under the rug. But dealing with the abuser is vitally important. Here are some texts to look at: "Discipline is not optional. It is mandatory in Scripture."

"Matthew 18:15-20 teaches that a sinner is to be confronted, reprovved and, if they refuse to repent, excluded from the church.

"Acts 5:1-11 illustrates the seriousness of sin within the church, the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit to sin, and the quick judgment of God upon sin.

"1 Corinthians 5:1-5 teaches that the church's response to persistent, unrepentant sin is to grieve, deliberate, judge the sin, and exclude the unrepentant member.

"1 Thessalonians 5:14 commands us to warn the disobedient and the disorderly.

"2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 teaches us to warn the undisciplined brother and withdraw from him.

"1 Timothy 5:20 tells us to rebuke persistent sin publicly.

"Titus 1:13 says to severely reprove those who teach untruth.

"Titus 3:10 commands us to withdraw from a person who causes divisions, but only after adequate warning.

"Revelation 2-3 calls churches to repentance and warns of impending discipline if they refuse.

"These passages make it clear that God intends the church to take corrective measures when members persist in sinning."

A Few Ellen White Statements Regarding the Abuse of Power:

"Many who profess to be the ministers of Christ are like the sons of Eli who ministered in the sacred office and took advantage of their office to engage in crime and commit adultery, causing the people to transgress the law of God. A fearful account will such have to render when the cases of all shall pass in review before God, and they be judged according to the deeds done in the body.... Adultery is one of the terrible sins of this age. This sin exists among professed Christians of every class...." —The Sin of Licentiousness, *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery, and Divorce* (1989), 99.2.

"As God has shown me how abhorrent in His sight are these defiling sins, and as they are steadily increasing in our world and would intrude into our churches, I warn you to give no place to the devil. Fly from the seducer. Though a minister, he is Satan in the

form of a man. He has borrowed the livery of heaven that he may serve his master and deceive souls.” —The Sin of Licentiousness, *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery, and Divorce* (1989), 105.2.

“The worst feature in this case is that all his satanic work is done under pretense of being a representative of Jesus Christ. One sinner dressed up as an angel of light can do incalculable harm. Dark and fearful plans are deliberately made to separate man and wife. Said the apostle: ‘Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.’ (2 Timothy 3:6) These licentious characters even creep into respectable families and by their deceptive wiles and intrigues lead astray the conscientious. Damnable heresies are received as truth, and the most revolting sins committed as acts of righteousness, for conscience becomes confused and stupefied.” —*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5*

“The world has nearly filled up the measure of their iniquity, but that which will bring the heaviest retribution is the practice of iniquity under the cloak of godliness...” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 256, paragraph 3

“We can subdue our children only as we subdue ourselves. But there are so many parents who have brought with them into the home life their hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. They have not left their childishness behind. They scold their children for things which should never be noticed. Parents, never scold your children. Deal firmly but kindly with them. Keep them busy. Make them feel that they are a part of the family firm, that they can help mother and father. Thank them for what they do for you.” —*That I May Know Him*, 149.5.

“A preacher may be dealing in sacred, holy things, and yet not be holy in heart. He may give himself to Satan to work wickedness and to corrupt the souls and bodies of his flock.

Yet if the minds of women and youth professing to love and fear God were fortified with His Spirit, if they had trained their minds to purity of thought and educated themselves to avoid all appearance of evil, they would be safe from any improper advances and be secure from the corruption prevailing around them. The apostle Paul wrote concerning himself: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

“If a minister of the gospel does not control his baser passions, if he fails to follow the example of the apostle and so dishonors his profession and faith as to even name the indulgence of sin, our sisters who profess godliness should not for an instant flatter themselves that sin or crime loses its sinfulness in the least because their minister dares to engage in it. The fact that men who are in responsible places show themselves to be familiar with sin should not lessen the guilt and enormity of the sin in the minds of any. Sin should appear just as sinful, just as abhorrent, as it had been heretofore regarded; and the minds of the pure and elevated should abhor and shun the one who indulges in sin, as they would flee from a serpent whose sting was deadly.”

“If the sisters were elevated and possessed purity of heart, any corrupt advances, even from their minister, would be repulsed with such positiveness as would never need

a repetition. Minds must be terribly befogged by Satan when they can listen to the voice of the seducer because he is a minister, and therefore break God's plain and positive commands and flatter themselves that they commit no sin. Have we not the words of John: 'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him'? What saith the law? 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' When a man professing to keep God's holy law, and ministering in sacred things, takes advantage of the confidence his position gives him and seeks to indulge his base passions, this fact should of itself be sufficient to enable a woman professing godliness to see that, although his profession is as exalted as the heavens, an impure proposal coming from him is from Satan disguised as an angel of light. I cannot believe that the word of God is abiding in the hearts of those who so readily yield up their innocency and virtue upon the altar of lustful passions. —*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, pages 456-57

Discussion vignettes:

There are many stories of the misuse and abuse of power which are recorded for our warning and learning in the Bible. One of the saddest and most complete illustrations of multiple types of the abuse of power at several levels can be found in 1 Samuel chapters 2 through 4.

(As a workshop leader, read these chapters in advance, and mark some of the texts which illustrate the multiple abuses catalogued in the chapters.)

(Below you will find a list of specific texts, and the issues of abuse they illustrate. You may wish to challenge the group to look for, find, and list the various kinds of abuse they can find. If you do it that way, it would be helpful to list the text and the abuse issue on a board, overhead, or some other way so that all can see the textual reference and the abuse as they are uncovered. This will help fix the story and warnings in the minds of participants).

2:3 “The Lord is a God who knows and by him deeds are weighed.” *(This sets the stage for the warnings to be gained from what follows)*

2:9, 10 “It is not by strength that one prevails. Those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. *(Again, this is a warning and an introduction to what will be shared)*

2:12 “Eli’s sons had **no regard for** (did not know) **the Lord.**” *(In other words they were not real. They were fakes pretending to be religious leaders; religious abuse)*

2:12-16 They intimidated the people and essentially robbed them. **They had no regard for the people** *(positional and religious abuse)*

2:17 The abusive behavior is labeled as sin.

2:22-25 They had **no regard for the women** who served at the temple. They used their position to be sexually and religiously abusive. *(positional, sexual and religious abuse)*

You may use, alter, or make up your own short stories, but these will represent several areas worthy of discussion. Two short examples are given for each category. Select what you wish to use with the group, but be sure to have a mixture of issues to discuss. The nature of the abuse and some boundary violations are listed to help you.

A.

1. The pastor or a church leader says, "Sister B, you make the best _____ in the area, and our visitor from the General Conference this Sabbath especially loves _____, so you make 6 of them for the meal after church in honor of our guest. No one can do it like you do!"

◆ *Positional*

◆ *Boundary violations: Time; funds; energy; no choice; one way communication; can not refuse; others.....*

2. The head elder stops a member after a worship service and says, "You know, we need to have an active visitation program for missing members, so here is a list of people for you to visit this week."

◆ *Positional*

◆ *Boundary violations: Does the person have the spiritual gifts to do this work? Time issues; transportation issues; lack of choice of how to help; dictated and one way; others.....*

B.

1. A Pathfinder leader is helping to teach 12 year olds to swim for their swimming honor. The leader consistently "supports" the swimmers as they are learning to face-float by placing a hand on their genital area as they swim. The leader also strokes and caresses their bodies as "a way of showing appreciation for how well they are doing."

◆ *Sexual*

◆ *Boundary violations: Physical touching; emotional and sexual feelings; potential "grooming" for more invasive sexual contact; spiritual violation; trust violation; Others.....*

2. While a spouse is absent from the home, the other spouse begins to discuss sexuality with their children and offers to demonstrate "the finer aspects of sexuality" with them "so they will be ready for good sexual experiences when they marry." The rationale is that "they will be sexually active at some point in their lives, and they may as well learn from a caring parent than a careless peer."

◆ *Sexual*

◆ *Boundary violations: Spiritual; parental responsibility; moral; physical; psychological; emotional; developmental; legal; others.....*

C.

1. The Sabbath School teacher becomes adamant and demanding that the class members agree with his interpretation of a text or doctrine, and shouts out to the class, "You *must believe* what I tell you! I am right, and you are WRONG! If you don't believe and do as I tell you, you not only can not be a member of this church, but you will be headed for hell!"

◆ *Spiritual*

◆ *Boundary violations: free will and choice; emotional; social; spiritual; more.....*

2. A visiting evangelist presents a list of behaviors that "you must do" and another list of behaviors that "you must never do," with further explanation that to strictly obey these dictates will be the only way to "work out your salvation."

◆ *Spiritual*

◆ *Boundary violations: spiritual (no room for the Holy Spirit to work!); emotional; psychological; free will and informed choice; growth and decision making; legalism vrs. grace, more.....*

D.

1. Brother B tells his wife, "The Bible says that a wife should *always* obey her husband, and since you did not do that, I gave you a black eye. Look, it's for your own good. You have to learn to do what I tell you. That's God's way, and this discipline is for your benefit and salvation. From now on, obey me or it will be worse. You have been warned!"

◆ *Physical*

◆ *Boundary violations: physical; emotional; spiritual; social; psychological; legal; more.....*

2. Sister D frequently slaps her children in the face if they disobey her or if they do not respond to her in the way she demands. Now one of the kids has a big bruise on their arm where sister D grabbed the child as part of the "process of discipline." Her favorite text is, "Children obey your parents..."

◆ *Physical*

◆ *Boundary violations: physical; emotional; spiritual; psychological; legal; more....*

E.

1. A young man tells his girl friend, "Look, if you *really* love me as much as you say you do, then prove it by having sex with me. All the other couples we know are sexually active...are you some kind of a pervert that you won't sleep with me? Are you a Lesbian or something?"

◆ *Psychological and emotional*

◆ *Boundary violations: emotional; spiritual, physical; psychological; sexual; more....*

2. An aging parent tells their child, "After all I have done for you, you treat me this way and _____. I simply can not believe you would do that! I am a complete failure as a parent! You have let me down! You don't love me!"

◆ *Psychological and emotional*

◆ *Boundary violations: emotional; psychological; spiritual; more.....*

F.

1. An adult child is appointed as the legal representative of an aging parent. As such the child has access to the parent's bank accounts and money on hand. They begin to make withdrawals of funds beyond the actual costs of maintaining the parent's living expenses. Their thinking is, "I will inherit it all anyhow, so this is just an advance on what is essentially mine anyhow."

◆ *Economic*

◆ *Boundary violations: legal; moral; financial; spiritual; social; more.....*

2. Brother and Sister T have said they will make a large donation toward the building of a new church. They want a style that the other church members feel is inappropriate for their congregation. But Brother and Sister T say they will not give the money unless the church votes for their plan.

◆ *Economic*

◆ *Boundary violations: spiritual; legal; ethical; financial; manipulation, more.....*

(On the following page are the vignettes to be copied and given to the participants)

Abuse of Power Seminar Handout

For each of the following vignettes,

- ◆ Decide what is the nature of the abuse (physical, spiritual, emotional, sexual, etc.)
- ◆ What are the boundary issues involved or violated?
- ◆ Discuss what could be or should be done about the violation.
- ◆ Should there be intervention, and if so, how?
- ◆ What are the issues of accountability?

A.

1. The pastor or a church leader says, "Sister B, you make the best _____ in the area, and our visitor from the General Conference this Sabbath especially loves _____, so you make 6 of them for the meal after church in honor of our guest. No one can do it like you do!"

2. The head elder stops a member after a worship service and says, "You know, we need to have an active visitation program for missing members, so here is a list of people for you to visit this week."

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B.

1. A Pathfinder leader is helping to teach 12 year olds to swim for their swimming honor. The leader consistently "supports" the swimmers as they are learning to face-float by placing a hand on their genital area as they swim. The leader also strokes and caresses their bodies as "a way of showing appreciation for how well they are doing."

2. While a spouse is absent from the home, the other spouse begins to discuss sexuality with their children and offers to demonstrate "the finer aspects of sexuality" with them "so they will be ready for good sexual experiences when they marry." The rationale is that "they will be sexually active at some point in their lives, and they may as well learn from a caring parent than a careless peer."

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C

1. The Sabbath School teacher becomes adamant and demanding that the class members agree with his interpretation of a text or doctrine, and shouts out to the class, "You *must believe* what I tell you! I am right, and you are **WRONG!** If you don't believe and do as I tell you, you not only can not be a member of this church, but you will be headed for hell!"

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2. An aging parent tells their child, "After all I have done for you, you treat me this way and _____. I simply can not believe you would do that! I am a complete failure as a parent! You have let me down! You don't love me!"

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**Abuse of Power**  
**Sermon**  
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2008

*To begin your sermon, show the congregation some type of sharp instrument: an Xacto Knife, a sword, ax, or cooking type knife. Ask someone in the congregation to come up to inspect the knife. Ask them, "Is this good or bad? Harmful or useful?" Encourage this person if necessary to indicate that something sharp is neither good nor bad in itself—it is how it is used. Thank them for their help.*

You realize of course that we must be careful, not careless, with something sharp. We must also be careful, not careless, with power. Power in itself is not good or bad—it just is. But it can be used for great good or for great harm.

There are many different kinds of power. Let's look at some of them:

There is a kind of power we will call positional. This means that a person has power because of their position. Some of these positions are:

- Pastor
- Lawyer
- Teacher
- Coach
- Caregiver
- Doctor
- Therapist
- Boss/VIP/political
- Husbands/wives
- Parents

## Church Leaders: youth/Pathfinders

Generally, we look up to these people and respect them. But if they abuse their power, great harm can come. We will look at this more closely a little later. Other types of power can be:

- **Economic**—the use or misuse of money and trust in managing funds; the person wields power because they have the money—they are looked up to, or they control things or events with their money by either giving or withholding it.
- **Influence**. This may be because they have written a book, are a member of a certain group, force of personality etc.
- **Physical**. Usually the use of size, strength and or physical strength to force compliance. This is perhaps obvious—if you are bigger or stronger than I, you have power over me.
- **Informational**. A person often has power over another if they have information that the other lacks or needs. This is particularly true in church leadership. If you are on the inside path of information, you can control events and people.
- **Psychological and Emotional**. The use of emotions to dominate shame, manipulate or control others. Ephesians 6:4 says, Do not exasperate your children.
- **Spiritual**. Use of spiritual influence or position to command, demand, demean or force someone into a belief or behavior.
- **Sexual**. Exploitation of another for personal sexual gratification. The abuse by these individuals may be in the form of sexual abuse, incest, molestation, harassment, verbal and/or emotional abuse, or taking advantage of a person or group for the benefit of the abuser. Note: In many countries there are strong legal guidelines on reporting, and potentially severe legal penalties for this kind of abuse, especially the abuse of minor children.
- **Size/strength**. This is perhaps obvious—if you are bigger or stronger than I, you have power over me.

Some of you sitting here may say, “Well, I am not in any of those categories. I have NO power.” But everyone has power in some sphere, and we must all respect boundaries and be held accountable for the use of that power. And it is usually a person who feels they have no power who becomes the victim. So you need to be aware and protect yourself.

Around the world there are more and more stories in the press and by word of mouth about the abuse of power. We are all probably well aware of another church that has been in the news because of abuse of children by the priests. We doubt that the

problem is worse in any one area of the world, but some areas are more open about the problem. We are proud of the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been proactive regarding abuse by pastors, teachers, and other church leaders. But we will never solve the problem by pretending abuse does not happen.

In February of 2008, there was an article in *Ministry*<sup>8</sup> magazine about Adventist Risk Management, the Church's insurance company. One of the directors, in answer to questions about abuse by church leaders, says, "Abuse happens. Some denominations have taken the position to deny, deny, deny—until the courts intervene.... The expertise the whole group (Adventist Risk Management) has developed together comes into action to try to minimize the pain and suffering caused by the abuse.... The moment the complainants become angry, they turn against the church, they turn against the individuals who are trying to help them. And recovery for them becomes virtually impossible." You see, when power is abused, people get hurt. And often they lose their trust in God as well.

When boundaries are crossed, someone always gets hurt, and often it is the person who has the power as well as the "victim." And when it is a church leader not only do the individuals get hurt, but so do the church and the mission of the church. We will talk more about this in the Abuse of Power Seminar (*Note to presenter—this is a good time to advertise the time and place of the seminar*).

In the United States, between 2001 and 2005, more than 2500 educators had their teaching credentials revoked, denied, surrendered or sanctioned as a result of sexual misconduct allegations<sup>9</sup>—which was of course an abuse of power. Those who abused were hurt; those who were abused were hurt, sometimes for life. As an experiment, "Abuse of power" was entered into the Google internet search engine and then the countries Ghana, the Philippines, Sweden, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, Jamaica, Syria, and Austria were entered one by one. Hundreds of thousands of hits came up. This means that the problem is not limited to any part of the world.

The Bible is full of stories about power, the good use of power, and the abuse of power: The first and most obvious is that of Lucifer who became known as Satan. He had power, but he wanted more power. He used his position to poison the minds of a third of the angels. Not satisfied with causing them to fall, he went to work on Adam and Eve and all those who came after. Once again, the abuser and the abused are hurt—Satan will get his final punishment at the end of the thousand years.

The misuse of power is often subtle. It can be seen in manipulation. This certainly happened in the Garden of Eden. Sometimes the abuse of power comes in the form of "Poor me," or by causing one to doubt; this again was used in the Garden of Eden. And sometimes the abuser tries to force by saying, "After all I've done for you!" All these are dishonest, abusive, and manipulative.

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<sup>8</sup> A Seventh-day Adventist magazine for pastors.

<sup>9</sup> The Loveland, Colorado, *Reporter-Herald*, January 28, 2008.

The opposite of Satan and his abuse of power is Jesus, the one who is the all powerful, the Almighty, the one Who never used His power for his own benefit. In fact He laid His power aside and took the position of a servant. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He is our example. He knew and respected boundaries. He never forced anyone—and He still doesn't. He gives us choice and freedom.

Pharaoh was another who abused his power. "Pharaoh said to Moses: 'Get out of my sight! And watch your step. I don't want to ever see you again. If I lay eyes on you again, you're dead'" (Exodus 10:28). Misuse of power boomerangs—it was his son who died, not Moses.

Another biblical example of abuse of power was the story of Eli's sons. (1 Samuel 2:22-25) They practiced many forms of abuse until Eli's ministry was destroyed and the sons and Eli all died. Ellen White had something instructive to say about this case: "Many who profess to be the ministers of Christ are like the sons of Eli who ministered in the sacred office and took advantage of their office to engage in crime and commit adultery, causing the people to transgress the law of God. A fearful account will such have to render when the cases of all shall pass in review before God, and they be judged according to the deeds done in the body.... Adultery is one of the terrible sins of this age. This sin exists among professed Christians of every class...." —The Sin of Licentiousness, TSB 99.2

One of the stories in the Bible that can really help us understand this whole issue of abuse of power is the story of David and Bathsheba. Historically we have looked at this story simply as a story of adultery. It is still adultery, but we need to take a new look at the story.

More than once, David had exercised great restraint in use of power. He had understood boundaries. He had listened to Abigail and didn't kill her husband and all those around him.

David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me" (1 Samuel 25:32). When David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he instead cut off a corner of his robe. David even felt guilty about that. The Bible says, "Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, 'The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD'" (1 Samuel 24:5, 6). A similar experience came later where David took the spear and water jug from beside Saul's head.

But when David saw and desired Bathsheba, he ignored boundaries and used his considerable power to get what he wanted. Some have suggested that Bathsheba had tempted him, and could have refused his advances. Those who suggest this do not understand the power of an ancient king. And even if she could have refused David, he was the one who should have been responsible. Larry W. Spielman, who has written about leadership and prevention of church professional misconduct writes, "Some have

pointed the finger at Bathsheba, suggesting that she seduced David by bathing where the king was sure to notice her. This makes Bathsheba, not David, responsible for the king's inability to control his erotic urges. Such a suggestion is ludicrous. Even if Bathsheba behaved in a way to arouse the king's passions, King David is fully responsible for what he does. Despite her beauty and allure, Bathsheba does not have the ability to cause the king to lose all sense of control and responsibility any more than Goliath had the ability to cause David to be afraid. Indeed, in the latter crisis David remained calm and in control (1 Sam. 17:36-37)."<sup>10</sup>

David was seen as a religious and political leader. He was expected to hold a higher level of accountability. But he let down his God, himself, Bathsheba, his country, his friend Uriah, and his family—because of his sin he was never able to discipline his sons.

Sometimes a person in power will excuse abuse by saying this action was a "Private matter." Sometimes the legal term is used of "consenting adults." But what David thought was private was not private and it affected the entire nation. He found "your sins will find you out" (Numbers 33:23).

So what do we do about this problem? Is there a solution? Any good news? Oh yes!

First, we must each admit that we could be guilty of abusing power in some place in our life if we don't let the Holy Spirit guide us in all things. We must beware of allowing ourselves to be victims, or abusers of power. As members of a congregation, members of a community, members of a family, we must hold people accountable—and hold ourselves accountable before God.

So, these are some of the things we can and must pay attention to:

- **Accountability:** As a pastor, or other spiritual leader or teacher, you must recognize that God holds you more accountable and responsible for keeping His standard, not only for your words, but for your whole manner of life. "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." —James 3:1, NASB
- **Mutuality:** When we meet on mutual ground, no one overpowering another, we can best work together. If there is inequality at any level, someone is disadvantaged and there is a much greater chance for power to be misused and for abuse to take place.
- **Respect.** We must respect our own boundaries, our own bodies, and our own power. That means not using them to abuse, nor allowing abuse to happen to us. Paul makes this very clear in "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1, NRSV), and "Do you not know

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/19-3\\_Spielman.pdf](http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/19-3_Spielman.pdf). Accessed 2/24/2008.

that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

- Collaboration. Again, we have biblical examples. In the very beginning, Adam and Eve were *both* given control. Neither one was to use their power over the other. When we work with, not over others, a much better result occurs. In the New Testament it is interesting that Joseph and Mary were *both* given visions. Elizabeth and Zachariah worked *together* in training their son, John. Look at the word itself: co (together) labor (to work)...to work together.

Ananias and Sapphira are a negative example of collaboration that was abusive. They had financial power—why they decided to deceive with it we are not told. But it illustrates the seriousness of sin within the church, the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit to sin, and the quick judgment of God upon sin.

For a beautiful illustration of combined and positive accountability, mutuality, respect and collaboration, look at what Paul wrote in Ephesians:

Starting in Ephesians. 4:1 and following, he wrote that believers are urged to “...live a life worthy of the calling you have received....Be completely humble and gentle; be patient...keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” If we would actually *live* like that there would be no abuse at any level! There will be no one taking advantage of another because they have the power to do so.

Paul continues in v. 17-19, warning us of the futility of wrong thinking and action which leads to darkened understanding, separation from the life of God “because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”

Do you see the contrast? Do you feel the gut-level impact of those contrasting states? One is worthy of the calling you have received, humble, gentle, patient, keeping the unity of the Spirit. The other is full of wrong thinking and action which leads to darkened understanding and ultimately separation from the life of God.

Verse 23 invites us to both a new attitude and a new self, “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Here is the Master Artisan, using the sharp edges of truth to shape and change us from being either abusers or victims—or both—to a beautiful display of His presence.

But Paul goes on. In 4:26 he deals with the reality that we will at times be angry. Yes, we will be angry! Even Jesus got angry (Mark 3:5), but, He was *never abusive*. Anger is just like the sharp instrument demonstrated at the beginning of this sermon. Anger can be violently destructive, and abusive, or we can be so angry about something that is wrong that we are compelled to move to a positive solution; we are compelled to change the abusive injustice or behavior. But, keep clearly in mind that anger is never to be an excuse for any kind of abuse. Never. Ever. “In your anger do not sin. Do not let

the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold,” is how Paul puts boundaries on that very human emotion.

Rather, he continues in Ephesians 5:1, we are to imitate God and “live a life of love.” The original word Paul uses for imitate is *mimetai*, from which we get the word “mimic or imitate.” There is only one way we can do that: we must intently look at and to God; to concentrate on His characteristics, and then seek to incorporate those same characteristics into our daily living in order to be like Him and to reflect His character to those around us. To do less, Paul says, is to give the devil not only a foothold, but the key to the front door.

We are to “...find out what pleases the Lord” (5:10), and to “Be very careful...how we live—not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity...” (5:15).

If we live lives focused by those compellingly positive characteristics, we will “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (5:21). Do you see the mutuality here? Then in all of our relationships—and Paul unfolds family relationships clearly in the rest of the chapter and book—we will reflect the accountability, mutuality, respect, and collaboration that represents our process of being shaped into artistic and beautiful imitators of God.

We won’t be exasperating, provoking, or “hassling” each other—or even our own children (6:4). Our marital relationships will be built on equity, respect and mutual submission to each other and especially to God.

*If you can, have something that has been carved—perhaps a beautiful carving in wood or stone, or even clay. Bring it out and display it for everyone to see.*

Just as a knife—or any sharp instrument—can be used to harm, to cut, to wound, to deface, that same sharp instrument can create something beautiful. Power is just the same. It can be used to create a beautiful life shaped by the Spirit to eternal glory. That power can in turn be used by us to shape others in positive and productive ways. We become artisans and co-laborers with God to make this world a more beautiful place, and help people toward a beautiful future: and ultimately to a powerful and beautiful forever.

When our lives are lived in this way, with this positive use and appreciation of power, we fully demonstrate the character of God, and attract others to Him in true worship. This is evangelism at its best. Misuse and abuse of power becomes dis-evangelism, and pushes us and others away from the Divine design. May God help us, through His power, to reflect His character and His glory, so those around us can be freed from any past abuse they may have suffered, and find help, healing, and wholeness through His power and presence.

(All texts are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise noted)