

RESTORATION OUTCOMES

One of the realities that we face in ministry is dealing with a pastor who has crossed the line in terms of sexual conduct. This could mean being involved in inappropriate touching, pornography, adultery or other sexual activities that are not consistent with the Biblical description of sexual purity. As a covenantal community of regions, it would be prudent for us to establish a standard for dealing with the situation where a pastor in a member church has been involved in sexual misconduct. The purpose of this document is to set forth minimum guidelines for a restoration process. A prime resource for these guidelines is the book *Restoring the Fallen*, by Wilson, Friesen and Paulson.

The book encourages what is referred to as a "Spiritual Care Team" as a main component in the restoration process. This designated group comes alongside, and monitors the progress of the one seeking restoration. It is a team comprised of both men and women. The women are present to help the wife who is an innocent victim of her husband's sinful conduct. The specific duties and qualifications are clearly spelled out in, *Restoring the Fallen* (Chapter 4, pages 31-40). The best evidence that someone has truly changed is not a detailed report from experts, but rather the testimony of those who have come alongside and worked with the restored, and have seen firsthand the following evidences over a period of time. What is presented here relies heavily on the suggestions of Drs. Earl and Sandy Wilson, who graciously met with the Regional Directors to offer counsel in the process of setting a standard.

1. **Evidence of repentance**
 1. A full disclosure of all the categories. Example: I had (the exact number) of affairs; not the details of the affairs.
 2. A willingness to deal with all the character issues that relate to the conduct that calls for restoration.
 3. A complete change in the direction of conduct and thinking.
 4. A true remorse for the impact that the conduct had on God, wife, family, friends and ministry.
2. **Evidence of humility**
 1. A willingness to submit to God.
 2. A willingness to submit to man (Elders and Spiritual Care Team).
 3. A willingness to accept imposed limitations if deemed necessary.
 4. A willingness to accept that full-time vocational ministry may not be restored
 5. A willingness to answer without deception and self-protection the questions of all those hurt by the actions.
3. **Evidence of restoration**
 1. To God, who is now confessed as Lord of every area of life.
 2. To wife and family. There may be cases where this is not possible due to actions outside of the person's control. When this occurs there still needs to be evidence that a genuine effort was made to accomplish this.
 3. To the body of Christ.
4. **Evidence of willingness to make restitution**
 1. Willing to ask forgiveness and to apologize to all who were wronged.
 2. Willing to make amends where prudent and possible.
 3. Willing to make financial restitution if necessary.

The ultimate purpose of the restoration process is for the fallen to restore his relationship with God, then with his wife, family, and all others who were negatively impacted by his conduct. With these evidences occurring, each region will need to determine if and when the pastor can be recommended for restoration to full-time vocational ministry.

It is expected that as part of a covenant community of regions we will share information concerning those who have gone through this restoration process. It is also expected that as a covenant community of regions we will share information about those may try to avoid or minimize the restoration process.