

Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the AME Church: An Open Letter to My Brothers and Sisters in the Clergy

Monica A. Coleman



I had an early introduction to the field of clergy sexual misconduct. It was the summer of 1994, less than a week after I publicly acknowledged my call to the ordained ministry. I was sitting in a booth at a sandwich bar & grill with a female minister from my local church who bought lunch for me and my best friend—also a new candidate in ministry. It was an occasion for both celebration and advisement. I remember little else from the conversation except the words of warning from the older minister. She leaned across the table, lowered her voice and said, “Never ever under any circumstances date a man who goes to your church. I don’t care how fine he is. I don’t care how smart he is. Unless God puts a neon sign over him, a burning bush, don’t do it. There are other Christians in your city to date because [if you date someone at your church,] the chances are higher that things can go wrong than that things

will go right.” I filed these words into my mental Rolodex with all the other pieces of unsolicited advice I was receiving about being a young single woman in ministry. At that time, I could not have imagined the wisdom, experience and timeliness of these words to the future of ordained ministry.

It is impossible to escape the controversial impact of sexual misconduct in our society. From Bill Clinton to Henry Lyons to reports of Catholic priests and altar boys, we can see the disastrous effects of sexual relations between persons in positions of power and authority and their subordinates. The African Methodist Episcopal Church is not immune to this issue, and we must acknowledge its effects on both clergy and laity alike. Today, I write to you as a member of the clergy in the AME Church. I write to you of the dangers, the possibilities and the challenges we all face as we think about how we do ministry on a day to day basis.

THE CHALLENGE OF MINISTRY

The time during which we wrestle with and accept the call to ordained ministry is one of the most exciting and frightening times in the life of a minister. We are overflowing with the concept and prospect of representing the words and actions of God through Jesus Christ. There are sermons to write, lessons to teach, ministries to organize, and people to serve. There are few greater joys than the excitement that accompanies realizing that God has chosen us to partake in this great

work of kingdom-building. Yet it is also an humbling and overwhelming occasion. The harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few. Some of us are first-generation ministers with very little understanding of the world of responsibilities and obligations we are entering for the rest of our lives. Some of us have been raised in a ministerial culture and strive to understand what the calling will mean for us as unique individuals. The future is both exciting and unknown. We spend days, weeks, months, even years, in prayer and fasting seeking clarity for God’s voice, God’s will, God’s path, God.

Ideally this feeling of excitement and fear never passes. It does subside as we become more secure in the path that God is calling us to walk. We feel less urgency in discerning our every move throughout our days. We feel confident in our relationships with God and God’s plan for us. Yet we must also constantly seek God as our understanding of God, ministry, church, society and culture evolves. Our specific tasks change, we learn more, we experience more. Daily challenges and triumphs call us to re-evaluate the question, “What does it mean to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and how do I fit in to that?”

Unlike our predecessors in past generations, we are presented with several models and images of ministry beyond that of the “shepherding pastor who looks after and leads the flock.” We are more than priests who administer the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. The civil rights movement challenged us to be prophetic voices of change speaking to the pertinent social and economic issues of our immediate and national society. The last two decades challenge us to understand our roles as

that of professionals. We formalize our leadership positions and prophetic calling into complex networks of church auxiliaries, community activism and economic institutions. A minister now must deal with non-profit specifications, 501(c)3, boards of directors, liability insurance . . . the list continues. Although we do not all serve in mega-churches, our denominational structure lends itself to growth, expansion, organization and network. Whether this occurs on a local or national level, in an urban or rural setting in a church parish or general office, we are all part of an increasingly technological and systematic world. While we still shepherd the flock, we are now beginning to see ourselves as professionals—we are counselors, doctors, lawyers, CEOs, executive directors. Unlike many other professionals, we are the jack-of-all-trades professionals serving communities who are often ignored, neglected and underserved by government and big business.

BEING A PROFESSIONAL

In *Ethics for the Professions*, Darrell Reeck defines a professional as a “highly trained member of the work force with certain characteristics of training and discipline that more or less set him or her off from other categories of workers.” By this definition, clergy easily fall under the rubric of “professional.” The AME Church has long placed a high premium on the education of its clergy and laity. We know and believe in the importance of being trained. In fact, the largest share of our general budget goes to our education institutions. Whether we have acquired a professional degree from a seminary, Bible college or divinity school, or have dutifully applied ourselves to the Ministerial

Institute, we are expected to be knowledgeable about the Bible and other “things of God.” We are expected to have sufficient knowledge to preach a sermon, teach a Bible study, encourage the bereaved, counsel the engaged, comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

Other definitions of “professional” state that professionals are those who provide a service to clients for which they receive payment.¹ If we are honest with ourselves, we see that we are like other professionals: We have “clients;” we receive “payment” (if not financial, in other privileges associated with ministry—free meals, fringe benefits, parsonage, etc.); we even have our own clinical language: salvation, redemption, creation, forgiveness, sin, evil, good, reconciliation etc. Increasingly, we are seeing ourselves as professionals who both need and deserve personal planners, office hours, pensions, secretaries, expense accounts etc. While I intentionally overstate the case, I am challenging both myself and all of us to take seriously the implications of the professional model we use to describe ourselves and our vocation, and the ways in which our everyday realities fit into this model.

Like all professionals, we are educated in our field of specialty and we offer a service to groups and individuals. Like other professionals, we adhere to a code of conduct taken as an oath. Doctors take the Hippocratic Oath; attorneys take the Ethical Code of the American Bar Association. When the bishop laid hands upon us, we took an oath to adhere to a code of conduct. We promised to handle our orders with care doing our best to well represent both God and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Unlike other professionals, every thing

we say and do carries moral weight. This is what both attracts us and humbles us in the work of ministry. We are agents of God, God’s representatives, contributing to the will of God on earth. We are responsible for the spiritual formation and development of those to whom we minister. We describe an alternative reality from that seen on television, in the movies and on the radio. Our motivations and rationale differ from those of other professionals. God, rather than a financial goal, is our *raison d’être*, our reason for being, living, doing, sacrificing, serving, leading, preaching, organizing. Unlike a corporate executive, we must demonstrate concern for the people we serve and the society in which we live, and be selfless in our response. Bottom-line profitability is not the measure of our success or failure.

In this context, we are compelled to understand the way in which we must address professional ethics. Like all professionals, we must have an ethic, a code of conduct that guides, shapes and bounds our actions. It reminds us of our responsibilities, obligations and duties. It structures our expression and commitments. Unfortunately, we are not always instructed in professional ethics. Adhering to and disregarding the ethic has beneficial or disastrous effects. This is true for all professionals. Unlike all of our other professional peers, this effect directly represents and affects our community’s understanding of God.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

As clergy, a great deal of responsibility is placed in our hands. Ethics are important precisely because of the nature of the work that we do. In his definition of professionals, Reeck adds that professionals are those

who are “commissioned to satisfy complex needs making judgments entailing potentially dangerous consequences.”² Our assessments and advisements have life consequences for the people we serve. This influence can be seductive as we realize that people actually take our words and actions with seriously. This influence can also be overwhelming as we cower before the throne of God making sure to say and do just the right thing. We must constantly put ourselves in check while encouraging ourselves to be worthy of this calling.

The most important ethical issues with which we must wrestle surround the concept of boundaries. In *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Richard Gula reminds clergy that the ministerial relationship is likened to, but distinct from, that of friendship. Friends choose each other. Friends hold certain things in common. Friends are equal in power and status, giving and receiving equally. Friends also invite truthful self-disclosure of one another. Although some of the people with whom we have ministerial relationships are also friends, when we function in a ministerial capacity, we are not functioning as friends. The clergy association is not necessarily voluntary or relaxed. The focus of our contact is upon the individual or family and the way in which we can be of assistance or guidance to them. Although we have all probably experienced God’s grace and wisdom in friendships, the ministerial relationship adds a very different dimension to the encounter: unequal power.

As clergy, we are in positions of power and must deal with others in a professional capacity appropriate to this power differential. This means that we are

obligated to draw and maintain boundaries in the work we do. This is often difficult to hear because there are many occasions in which we feel more overburdened than empowered. This is difficult to hear because we have a history of friendship with many of the people we serve in a ministerial capacity. This is challenging to hear because we are honestly fond of many of the people with whom we work. This is frustrating to hear because we often encounter the same people in ministerial and social settings. Yet this is a part of the vocation to which we are called. People become vulnerable to us trusting us with their greatest fears, weaknesses and temptations. People trust us looking for spiritual and moral guidance. People respect us listening for explication of Biblical texts and words of encouragement, hope and liberation. It is a great responsibility. I find, at times, that it is even scary. The selflessness and care required to serve in our ordained capacity translates into a need for consideration of the boundaries we will maintain and the ethic to which we adhere.

Most aspects of professional ethics are difficult to establish and maintain. Confidentiality is one such example. In everything I do, I remind people that as a minister, I will adhere to a level of confidentiality. If I am serving in a social service agency, educational institution or parish church, I can and will maintain confidentiality in my conversations and counseling if an individual requests it. Confidentiality calls us to treat each individual’s story with the care of precious jewels. Confidentiality bars us from gossip and from relaying or identifying details of counseling sessions in sermons. Confidentiality serves as a safeguard to us, and a gift

we give to the people with whom we serve. Yet, it is also a challenging ethic. We have legal obligations to divulge confidential matters in cases of child abuse in the instance of the intention to harm self or others. If you have ever had to break a confidential bond because of these legal exceptions, you know that it changes the entire nature of the ministerial relationship. It was a difficult yet necessary decision. This is part of the cross we bear.

There are many other examples of the need to establish boundaries. Another example can be seen in the decision about whether or not to conduct business with those with whom we have a ministerial relationship. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to either decision. Do you want to counsel someone who is repairing the leak in your home? Do you feel comfortable negotiating a price with someone sitting in the third pew? When you are unhappy with the service rendered, can you still say "God bless you" on Sunday? Is this individual simply the best person to provide the service at a reasonable cost? Is this person the only service provider in your area? We all draw the boundaries in different places for different reasons. This is a reminder that we can not make decisions hastily unaware of the implications of our words and actions. Each of us must grapple with the pros and cons, the context and our individual personalities to establish an ethic with which we are comfortable. The issue of sexual misconduct is yet one other aspect of professional ethics with which we must deal. The ways in which and the persons to whom we express our sexuality are especially convoluted for clergy. Because the nature of our work cultivates intimacy between other

individuals and ourselves, we are particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct. Because people express their vulnerabilities to us, we are always in a position of power and therefore morally responsible in any contact, including sexual contact. Because sexuality and power are both God-given realities that can be used for good or evil, there are theological implications to their intersection.

CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Although clergy sexual misconduct has only recently received publicity, it is not a new occurrence. 1 Samuel 2:22-25 documents an Old Testament precedent of sexual misconduct. The Scripture tells us that God rejected the sons of the priest, Eli, because they misused their position to engage in sexual misconduct. These men "had no regard for the Lord" and "lay with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting." (NRSV) What is new is the public's disdain for all clergy that results from the public misconduct of a few. Sexual misconduct now has legal and political consequences along with the moral and communal consequences of which we have always been aware.

The church policy on clergy sexual misconduct outlines the definition and repercussions of sexual misconduct for all ministers in the AME Church. This letter does not intend to duplicate the work of the Compilation Committee. I do, rather, charge us to be conscious of our relationships with those with whom we minister, and to establish ethics *before* rather than after a situation occurs.

NATURE OF OUR WORK

As clergy members, we must be particularly aware of the tendency toward sexual

misconduct. Unlike that of many other professionals, the nature of our work makes us especially vulnerable to the crossing of personal and sexual boundaries in the ministerial relationship. The first area of vulnerability is created by the fact that our work creates and fosters great levels of intimacy with many people. Intimacy develops quickly in these types of relationships. I believe that honesty also calls us to acknowledge that dedication, personal investment, spiritual maturity, personal advisement and oratorical skills are qualities that can be very sexually attractive. The work of ministry often puts us in positions to experience and share these qualities with various people throughout our days and over a length of time. There are individuals who find ministers sexually attractive because of the work we do, and there are times when we find individuals sexually attractive because of their commitment to God and the work of kingdom building.

A second area of vulnerability stems from the silence that shrouds talking about and dealing with sexuality in general. I am not referring to the oversexualized culture that surrounds young people. Some music, television and film do nothing short of throw sex (and often flippant irresponsible acts of sex) in our faces day after day. I am referring to the silence about healthy expressions of sexuality that tends to pervade our cultures, and church culture in particular. Some of us live in areas where sex education is still a controversial subject matter in public education. Quality sexuality education for the young, young adult, middle aged, and elderly still remains inaccessible and undesirable to many groups and individuals. I readily

admit that open discussion of sexuality is a product of the last two to three decades, virtually unknown to those that were trained and raised before the 1960s. As a society, we don't really talk about the dimensions of sexual attraction, sexual tension and sexually appropriate behavior. Yet these are things about which we all think and wrestle.

Most importantly, churches tend not to deal with sexuality. This is not particular to the AME church. In 1998, all churches *should* be grappling with ways to talk about sexual health, sexual promiscuity, sexual abstinence, sexual orientation, sexual harassment, sexually transmitted diseases, etc. When we do not, we leave the clinical and secular world as primary educators about sexuality. But many churches are not talking about these issues. Talking about sexuality creates diversion and dissension in communities of faith. The different opinions and perspectives are more easily managed in silence than in open dialogue. We try to subsume the need for sexual education under quip slogans for abstinence, "Don't do it because God said so." When we do not call for open discussions of sexuality in a Christian context, we become part of the silencing of sexuality that denies the reality of society and the calling of God to speak to the issues of our day.

As clergy, we must also be aware that our lives are centered on spirituality, and there is a connection between spirituality and sexuality. Our sexuality is part of our God-created humanity and sexual activity has spiritual dimensions and consequences. As persons who have committed our lives to the will and work of God through Jesus Christ on earth, we need not be surprised when our lives holistically present us with

overlapping areas of sexuality and spirituality. I'll speak for myself and say that I find spiritual maturity sexually attractive. This means, I look for spiritual maturity in the persons with whom I romantically partner. It also means that I can find myself sexually attracted to someone with whom I have no business being in a romantic relationship. If I am not aware of this tendency, I can find myself in quite a quandary. The intersection of spirituality and sexuality may occur more frequently and more intensely for those in the ministerial professions than others.

The third area of vulnerability centers around the fact that most of our contact with people comes in a casual context. We work irregular hours, often before 9:00 am and after 5:00 pm. We see our students, employees, staff and parishioners throughout our community. We may even be friends or have a long history with some of the individuals and families that fit under the former categories. Our counseling may not take the formal 50-minute structure of therapists or scheduled appointments of doctors and lawyers. It is easy to let down our guards and relax our boundaries in the casual settings where most of our work occurs. When we do this, we become even more likely to forget about boundaries or to cross the boundary before we even realize that it has been crossed.

This means that *all* of us are vulnerable to clergy sexual misconduct. If we are the senior pastor or the minister of Christian education, the seminary instructor or the social worker, male or female, married or single, young or old, beautiful, handsome, heterosexual or homosexual, we must all be conscious of the possibility of sexual

misconduct. In the strictest sense, sexual misconduct can occur with anyone with whom we have that ministerial relationship. That includes our peers in ministry, superiors and subordinates in ministry, church members, clients and students. This does not mean that every sexual relationship between clergy and non-clergy or clergy who work together constitutes sexual misconduct. It does mean that every relationship in this category has ethical implications and consequences, many of which constitute sexual misconduct. Do not think that your marital status, gender or sexual orientation exempt you from facing the challenge and potentiality of sexual misconduct. We will be sexually attracted to those with whom we work. People will be sexually attracted to us because of our work. For this reason alone, we are all susceptible to engaging in sexual misconduct.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Our responsibility is to handle with care the gifts that God gives us as human beings and as clergy. Sexuality is a God-given gift to humanity intended for both expression and procreation. Even the most liberal clergy seem to agree that God has intended sexual interaction for intimate, loving committed relationships. We, like all human beings, are custodians, stewards even, of a gift that God has given to us for a certain purpose. As clergy we have an atypical access to people's vulnerabilities and sexual weaknesses. The classic example is that of the grieving individual. It is commonly known in psychological circles that many people divert the pain of grief by engaging in romantic and sexual relationships. It can lessen the sense of loss

and bring life to a situation that had previously been thoroughly tainted by the color of death. As clergy we will counsel the bereaved, some of whom are consciously or unconsciously looking for a sexual relationship as an outlet for their pain. We have a vocational calling to be aware of and support the power of sexuality and its most appropriate expression.

The power we have is also a God-given gift of our calling. In ordination, we are charged to "take thou authority" to represent God and the Church of Jesus Christ and Richard Allen. Because the AME Church is a hierarchical structure composed of bishops, general officers, elders, deacons, etc, we are involved in a system that deals with power differential by its very definition. Hierarchy is intended to give guidance, structure and administration to groups and individuals. It is easy to abuse the powers of both hierarchy and sexuality. These gifts are not granted to us for abuse, egoism or to be taken lightly. Because we are in a position of power, any violation of this power is our responsibility. This statement is hard to hear because we often think, "It takes two to tango," or "S/he came onto me." Our position of authority necessarily means that we are always the more responsible party.

I don't dare pretend that dealing with all of this is easy. People have extraordinarily high expectations of ministers that they often do not even dream of having for themselves. More than other persons, people expect us to deny our humanity, individuality and need for privacy simply because we have accepted God's calling and the church's ordination. We are expected to be perfect, extra-holy,

remarkably spiritual, especially religious and supernaturally capable of balancing personal, vocational, financial and individual demands. This, too, is part of the calling. Part of our calling is to strive for perfection in emulation of Jesus Christ, while reminding laity that we are not superhuman and, like all Christians, are daily pressing toward the mark and sometimes falling short of the glory of God. Our awareness of our humanity and limitations is not an excuse for inappropriate behavior. Rather, it is a starting point for avoiding situations of sexual misconduct and establishing our own professional ethics.

There are a number of measures we can take to prevent sexual misconduct. The literature divides these measures into two categories: (1) awareness of the warning signs, and (2) preventive steps. There are several warning signs that can alert us to the beginning of an inappropriate sexual relationship in a ministerial setting.

WARNING SIGNS³

- Feeling sexual arousal
- Seeking out the other person and spending more time together apart from scheduled pastoral meetings
- Directing the conversation to sexual subjects and sexualizing language with innuendo
- Becoming more occupied with sexual fantasies
- Spending more time with the other person and more often than is necessary for meeting the goals of the pastoral relationship
- Turning the conversation to one's own interests and needs and away from what the other person needs to talk about

Seeking a more private place or an informal or romantic setting in which to meet

Meeting for lunch or dinner to discuss "ministerial issues"

Exchanging gifts of a very personal nature or of significant value

Canceling or switching appointments to be available whenever and as often as the other person wants

Beginning to look forward to the other person coming and becoming preoccupied with appearing attractive to that person by the way you choose your clothes, wear your hair or use makeup or cologne

Assuming a seductive posture—holding hands a little more tightly in prayer, kissing, letting an arm linger on the shoulder, turning hugs into embraces etc.

Being secretive with supervisor, spiritual director, support group, therapist or spouse about what is developing

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

There are also several steps we can take to avoid situations of sexual misconduct or the appearance of any misconduct. Some typical suggestions follow:

Always have another person in the building when counseling

Install a door on the counseling office that prevents total privacy (glass insert)

Establish counseling guidelines including hours and days

Create a referral list and actively make referrals to professional therapists

Decide in advance how much touching is appropriate

Support and strengthen own self-care with lifestyle—exercise, proper

nutrition, sufficient sleep, recreation, friends, prayer, reflective reading etc

- Maintain regular spiritual disciplines
- Occasionally get therapy in order to keep own life in perspective
- Celebrate with friends away from ministry to satisfy needs for intimacy
- Try not to counsel anyone whose needs extend beyond level of competence
- Maintain boundaries of professional commitment. Try not to provide pastoral service and then expect to enjoy a personal relationship with the same person.
- Be clear about the expectations of the work—monitor workload, avoid extended appointments, meeting late into the night or meetings in settings that only confuse the expectations of the relationship

These lists can easily make us feel paranoid, skeptical and constrained in the way we do ministry. I believe the spirit of these principles can be summarized into three categories: (1) self-awareness, (2) a system of accountability, and (3) the prior establishment of an ethic. The warning signs encourage us to be aware of the sexual dimension in our interactions, feelings and behaviors. While we spend much time focusing on the needs and concerns of others, we must also spend time taking care of ourselves. We need to take time regularly to assess our own feelings, struggles and need for self-care. It is easy to get so busy that we do not take the time we need with our friends, family, individual selves, health care maintenance etc. When we do that, we only become depleted of the resources we need to function both inside and outside our clerical duties. Awareness of our own

strengths and weaknesses only makes us more evolved persons and more effective ministers.

We also need to create systems of accountability. Many of our professional peers have long seen the need for supervision and answerability. Therapists often have their own therapists or peer evaluation groups. Doctors constantly consult one another for second opinions and referrals. Attorneys, likewise, are known to consult their peers for legal and ethical questions. Corporate businesses are organized with accountants, auditors and consultants to prevent mishandling of fiscal access. Likewise, churches and individual ministers need to have effective systems of accountability. The National Baptist Convention well demonstrates a chaotic case where fiscal accountability failed to work. Whether we decide to see a professional therapist, spiritual mentor or peer in ministry, we all need to be held accountable to the oaths and ethics we have taken. We need to be held accountable in a spirit of love, not judgment, where there are no punitive repercussions to the information that is shared. We, too, need confidential pastoral relationships in our lives.

A SUGGESTED ETHIC

Lastly, we need to establish a professional ethic that includes, but extends beyond, sexual conduct. Each of us needs to decide for ourselves and/or our communities the details of that ethic. The AME Church Manual on Sexual Misconduct begins that process, yet we need to spell out the details for ourselves. Richard Gula recommends this ethic of sexual conduct for all ministers to consider:

1. We are to witness in all relationships the chastity appropriate to our state in life, whether celibate, married or single
2. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have a professional responsibility. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, all forms of overt or covert seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses another person.
3. We are to provide a safe place for people to be vulnerable without fearing that sexual boundaries will be violated.
4. We strive to be aware of our own and another's vulnerability in regard to sexuality, especially when working along with another
5. We bear the greater burden of responsibility for maintaining sexual boundaries in the ministerial relationship, for we hold greater power
6. We must not initiate sexual behavior, and must refuse it even when the other invites or consents to it
7. We must give preference to the perspective and judgment of those who are vulnerable and dependent on us in order to determine whether touching would be an appropriate expression of ministerial care
8. We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, since we cannot control how physical touch will be received. That is, we are to take into account how age, gender, race, ethnic background, emotional condition, prior experience, and present life situation all affect how

our touching may be received and interpreted

9. We should become familiar with the dynamics that make us vulnerable to violating sexual boundaries
10. We strive for greater self-awareness in order to recognize the sexual dynamics at work for us in ministerial relationships and to heed the warning signs in our lives which indicate when we are approaching boundary violations
11. We should satisfy our needs for affection, intimacy, attraction and affirmation outside the ministerial relationship
12. We should seek supervision or other professional help to remain focused on our professional responsibilities and to hold firm to the sexual boundaries of the ministerial relationship
13. We must report clear violations of sexual conduct to the appropriate ecclesial and civil authorities, and then do what we can to see that justice is done for the victim, the offender, and the community from which the victim and minister come⁴

THE CHARGE

I charge all of us who bear or are training for the order of ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church to read this letter as a charge and a challenge. We must firstly admit that we struggle and wrestle, as do all human beings, with the expression of our sexuality and how that fits into our professional commitments as persons in a care-giving profession. We must also admit that we can be more accountable as individuals and as a church

We need to make our judicial boards as active in evaluation and discipline as they are in name and status. We need to enforce the punitive action that is recommended for those clergy that behave inappropriately. As things stand now, the AME Church has had numerous cases of clergy sexual misconduct that have been settled out of court with significant financial cost to the denomination. Our silence pervades this issue as none of these cases could be found in legal records, nor would high officers of the denomination reveal the information they knew about these cases. As long as we continue to be silent, and move offending clergy from one assignment to another, we fail to address the root of the problem and we send the message that this behavior is indeed acceptable in our churches. We are also charged with the responsibility of establishing ethics, discussing sexuality and caring for ourselves. A minister friend of mine often says that clergy sexual misconduct should be part of the training for ordination. He seriously states that the admissions class of Ministerial Institute ought to include instruction about professional ethics along with "the black suit, church history and carry your discipline and hymnal." I agree with my friend. We need to continue be willing to admit our individual and collective vulnerabilities and address the issue of sexual misconduct before the lawsuits, news reports and hurting laity have any more stories to tell.

RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS

Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute,
Collegeville, MN <http://www.isti.org>

The Center for the Prevention of Sexual
and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA
<http://www.cpsdv.org>

Tamar's Voice
P. O. Box 17442
Irvine CA 92623-7442
949-261-7887 TamarTalk@aol.com

PRINT RESOURCES

- Battin, Margaret. *Ethics in the Sanctuary: Examining the Practices of Organized Religion*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1990.
- Boumil, Marcia Mobilia and Joel Friedman. *Betrayal of Trust: Sex and Power in Professional Relationships*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995.
- Fortune, Marie and James N. Poling. *Sexual Abuse By Clergy: A Crisis for the Church*. Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1994.
- Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin: An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1983.
- Is Nothing Sacred?: When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989.
- Friberg, Nils and Mark R. Laaser. *Before the Fall: Preventing Pastoral Sexual Abuse*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Gonsiorek, John C. *Breach of Trust: Sexual Exploitation by Health Care Professionals and Clergy*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1995.
- Grenz, Stanley J. and Roy D. Bell. *Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

- Houts, Donald C. *Clergy Sexual Ethics: A Workshop Guide*. Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1991.
- Hopkins, Nancy Myers and Mark Laaser. *Restoring the Soul of a Church: Healing Congregations Wounded by Clergy Sexual Misconduct*. Collegeville, MN: The Alban Institute, c1995.
- Hopkins, Nancy Myers, ed. *Clergy Sexual Misconduct: A Systems Perspective*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, c1999.
- The Congregation is also a Victim: Sexual Abuse and the Violation of Trust*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1992.
- Lebacqz, Karen and Ronald G. Barton. *Sex in the Parish*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- Milgrom, Jeanette Hofstee. *Boundaries in Professional Relationships: A Training Manual*. Minneapolis: Walk-In Counsel Center, 1992.
- Nelson, James B. and Sandra P. Longfellow. *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.
- Reeck, Darrell. *Ethics for the Professions: A Christian Perspective*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982.
- VanDyke, Beth. *What About Her?: A True Story of Clergy, Abuse, Survival*. Mukilteo, WA: WinePress Publishing, 1997.
- Wiest, Walter E. and Elwyn A. Smith. *Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional*. Minneapolis, Fortress, 1990.
- Wind, James P. et. al, eds. *Clergy Ethics in a Changing Society: Mapping the Terrain*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.

ENDNOTES

1. Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith, *Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional*. (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1990) 72-73.
2. Darrell Reeck, *Ethics for the Professions: A Christian Perspective*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982) 18.
3. Richard M Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1996) 112-16.