

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

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Workers' Codes of Conduct

Posted May 21, 2023

Recommended Two by Two Church Reform after Dean Bruer Scandal

Lyle Schober ~ Texas/NM CSA Information and Resources, May 2023

Rob Newman ~ California CSA Guidelines, May 2023

NSW Australia ~ Child Safety Policy, July 1, 2019

NSW Cover Letter for Child Safety Policy

NSW Worker Code of Conduct, July 1, 2019

Graham Thompson ~ Sermon re CSA, June 4, 2012

Dale Shultz ~ California CSA Guidelines, July 2006

Recommended Two by Two CHURCH REFORM after Dean Bruer Scandal

The Dean Bruer Scandal is another wakeup call for the Two by Two workers and friends church, which is not "the Truth."

It is terrible if a person sexually abuses another person

It is even worse if they abuse a young person

It is even worse if they abuse multiple people

It is even worse if it continues for many years

It is even worse if others know about it and do nothing to stop it

It is even worse if the person is in a position of supposed authority

It is even worse if the abuser shows complete hypocrisy by being a religious teacher with supposed moral authority

It is even worse if other people in authority undertake similar abuse and thereby provide validation

It is even worse if other people in authority actively hide abuse over many years

There were complaints about Dean Bruer's early companions, dating back to the 1970s. Those complaints were ignored, allowing Bruer to learn that abuse was accepted among the Two by Two workers and friends ministry, and then to carry out abuse himself over many years.

The Two by Two workers and friends ministry prides itself on its financial secrecy, yet that allowed Bruer to accumulate sufficient funds to pay for many hotel visits.

The Two by Two workers and friends ministry prides itself on its "homeless ministry," yet Bruer frequently paid for hotel rooms.

The Two by Two workers and friends ministry are now claiming that transparency is appropriate, yet once again they have NOT been transparent.

- *The Two by Two workers and friends ministry did not disclose the information about Bruer for many months*
- *The Two by Two workers and friends ministry initial disclosure about Dean Bruer was limited to certain people, with instructions to not share it further*
- *The Two by Two workers and friends ministry has failed to be transparent in other cases, even resulting in charges against an overseer, yet they continue the same lack of transparency*

The 404 tributes that were posted on Dean Bruer's funeral memorial page are evidence of 404 people being utterly deceived, and there are thousands more who have been deceived over many years.

Dean Bruer is evidence that the workers may be worse than the people they are instructing.

Dean Bruer is more evidence that the unmarried ministry fosters sexual abuse.

Dean Bruer is evidence that the Two by Two workers and friends church should never be called "The Truth" or "The Way."

Dean Bruer is evidence that "the way" is imperfect and is definitely not the "one true way."

The Two by Two workers and friends ministry has evolved significantly during its ~120 years of existence, but it will not survive unless it dramatically reforms itself now. Membership numbers continue to reduce significantly, not because "the end is near," but because people now have access to information that clearly shows the faults in the church, its doctrine and its ministry.

The Two by Two workers and friends ministry must immediately:

- *Reform financial arrangements; disclose current reserves of funds; implement independent management of reserve funds and transparent reporting to members about stewardship of accumulated funds*
- *Reform the requirement for an unmarried ministry, which is not biblical and was not a requirement for many years after the church was established*
- *Reform the hierarchy of [male] overseers – senior male workers – general male workers – female workers*
- *Involve general members in major decisions*
- *Be transparent about disciplinary matters*
- *Develop policy for staying in member's homes, including not staying in single adult homes; not staying if it requires sharing a bedroom with a member (adult or child); not being in bedrooms or other rooms with children*

Note: Many workers are entirely honourable and innocent, but Dean Bruer is not the only abuser who has been tolerated and protected. Any worker who has known of abuse but has failed to act should immediately resign and let the others get on with reforming their church.

Posted April 5, 2023

Child Safe Policy [Developed and Endorsed for New South Wales, Australia on July 1, 2019]

Policy Statement

As a fellowship we are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children (under the age of 18). All children have a right to feel safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children. We will ensure that a caring and appropriate response is initiated should abuse or suspicion of abuse occur.

This policy was written with a focus on children who come into contact with any part of the fellowship.

The testimony of our fellowship is supported and maintained by an open and transparent policy.

Purpose

The safety, welfare and well-being of children is paramount; we believe children should never experience abuse of any kind.

- We are committed to conduct ourselves in a way that protects and safeguards children from any possible harm.
- We are committed to support and respect the healing of survivors of abuse within the fellowship.
- We have zero tolerance to abuse and will comply with reporting requirements of any suspicion of abuse, on reasonable grounds, to the authorities.
- There will never be any attempt to manage reported abuse within the fellowship.
- We encourage reporting of any suspected abuse.
- To report in NSW (can be anonymously), phone Department of Family and Community Services Child Protection Helpline 132111. In ACT phone Child and Youth Protection Services, 1300 556 729.

We recognise parental responsibility for providing education and boundaries to maintain child safety. We will respect any boundaries parents have in place. We encourage open conversation and education in families around child safety.

We expect members of the fellowship to keep children safe.

This policy will be available to people participating in the fellowship.

Any person under investigation or convicted of an offence against a child will not be permitted to participate in activities that provide access to children.

We support a ministry that is itinerant and relies on the support of the fellowship to enable the Gospel to be shared.

All workers have a responsibility to be aware of and support all aspects of a child-safe environment. They will undertake the following:

- Complete child-safe training every 3 years.
- Complete police checks every 3 years.
- Adhere to this policy and the Workers' Code of conduct.
- Ensure they are respectful of and acknowledge the rights of children at all times.
- Complete appropriate training before joining the staff in NSW.

Governance

- We will ensure biennial review of this policy or as required.

- We will maintain record keeping in respect of governance of the requirements of this policy.
- All workers will complete the appropriate training before commencing in the Gospel work and will be provided with the Workers' Code of Conduct.
- All workers will be provided with NSW regulations and information in regard to reporting requirements.
- Visiting workers will be provided with a copy of this policy and the Workers' Code of Conduct.

Developed and endorsed for NSW 1 st July 2019. Review due 2021.

Workers' Code of Conduct

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
1 Tim 4:12.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thess. 5.22

Children (Under 18) are a vital part of our fellowship; all Workers are responsible for promoting their safety, protection and well-being.

I will:

- Adhere to the Child-Safe Policy and this Code of Conduct at all times.
- Be a positive role model to children.
- Follow accepted guidelines relating to physical contact.
- Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between children and myself and respect a child's boundaries and personal space.
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children.
- Be transparent in my actions and whereabouts in relation to contact with children.
- Apply the "rule of two"— avoid spending time alone with children, ensuring parents know and support this boundary, and have educated their children about it.
- Wear publicly appropriate clothes in common areas during visits with families.
- Address inappropriate behaviour towards children.
- Ask for help if I am uncertain about child safety, or this Code of Conduct, or believe I have breached this Code.
- Report suspected child abuse and neglect to the authorities as soon as reasonably practicable.

I will not:

- Engage in behaviour or communication that causes children to feel uncomfortable, afraid or disempowered.
- Use language that is inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive or sexually suggestive or provocative when speaking around children.
- Use any computer, mobile phone, video or camera to exploit or harass children.
- Minimise or cover up a suspicion or allegation of abuse.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as assisting with toileting.
- Hit or physically assault. This includes refraining from physical punishment or engaging in discipline.
- Display favouritism, develop inappropriate or sexual relationships, or indulge in any form of sexual contact with children
- Engage in the grooming of children and/or families
- Rely on my position or my reputation and that of the fellowship to protect me.
- Investigate a suspicion or allegation of abuse by questioning a child or individuals involved but rather defer the matter to authorities.
- Dismiss a child's concerns or discourage disclosure.
- Allow any child to enter a bedroom where I am staying in the company of myself and a co-worker.

Some examples of appropriate and/or acceptable behaviour

- Handshakes, pats on the shoulder or back and shoulder-to-shoulder hugs.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Having discussions one-on-one with older children in public accessible areas.
- Encouraging children to respect personal spaces, i.e. knock on doors before entering.

Some examples of inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour:

- Developing intimate or special relationships with children.
- Advising children to keep communications or interactions secret.

- Holding a small child on the lap except in the presence of an adult member of the family. Lifting or placing a school age or older child on your lap.
- Wrestling, tickling, piggy-back rides or massaging.
- Remarks that relate to sexual attractiveness or development.
- Showing physical displays of affection in isolated areas of the premises such as bedrooms, bathrooms, private areas of the home or cars.
- Sharing a bedroom with a child.
- Inappropriate or lengthy hugs or kisses on the mouth.
- Touching buttocks, genital areas, chest, knees, thighs or legs.

Some examples of environments where additional caution should be used:

- Camping environment.
- Convention grounds.
- Swimming areas
- Physical sporting events
- Workers staying with families without a co-worker.
- I recognise that children have the right to feel safe at all times.
- I recognise that child abuse has ongoing impacts and that the first step in healing for survivors starts with the telling of their experience.
- Should a child disclose abuse to me I will respond with compassion and care. I will not make promises to the child I cannot keep, e.g. in relation to a child asking to keep matters confidential. Instead I will advise the child, "I will do everything I can to keep you safe."
- I will do all I can to make the child feel heard and supported.
- I will complete mandatory reporting as required.

TTT LINK to above documents: [Child Sexual Abuse \(CSA\)](#)

Cover Letter for above documents by David Saunders and Wayne Dean

Dear Elders,

Recently Graham Snow and Wayne Dean met with Allan [Kitto] and me here in Sydney, then with the NSW workers at a staff meeting. It was reinforced that as a fellowship, it is paramount we provide a safe and secure environment for all children.

Therefore, we are writing to you to address a difficult and sensitive topic, and to ask for your assistance. It is in relation to child sexual abuse. We would like to discuss how to have a caring and appropriate response should any abuse or suspicion of abuse occur. We acknowledge that the management of any reported child abuse is the sole responsibility of authorities.

Sadly, in the past there have been cases of abuse in the fellowship. We cannot pretend they did not occur, nor can we brush them aside. We need to support and respect the healing of any victims of abuse within the fellowship.

The Australian Government has held a Royal Commission in recent years and many recommendations have been made.

For the last couple of years, Wayne and Graeme Dalton have worked with a small panel of helpers in South Australia, openly discussing the issue and how to deal with it in future. They have put together two documents that help us to better understand our responsibilities as workers and friends. We are not a registered religious organisation and do not have creeds, tracts or other documents. We do feel, however, that these guidelines are needful and that we as a group are committed to protecting children from any harm.

It has been decided Wayne and I will visit all the elders in NSW during July; to discuss and give out printed copies of these documents. This worked very well in South Australia in January this year, when all the elders and their wives met together in small groups. The elders then distributed the documents to each of the members of their meeting, in an appropriate time and way.

Allan has agreed that because we will be making these visits it is better for this correspondence to be handled through my email address. We will be in touch with you all again with a suggested date and place to meet. We understand it might not be possible for everyone to attend on the date we suggest, but we will follow up later with those who miss out, or another elder can fill you in.

Your brothers in Him

David [Saunders] and Wayne [Dean]

19 June 2019

Graham Thompson
Auckland Special Meeting
June 4, 2012
[New Zealand Worker who resigned January 2014]

Mark 10: 13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

It tells us here about the people bringing children to Jesus. The disciples discouraged them. It tells us the reaction of Jesus. In this bible it says He was much displeased. I was looking at the meaning, the way it was originally written, the word. It says that the word used for the reaction of Jesus is a word of very strong emotion which literally comes from the root which means He felt pained. It is commonly taken to mean that He felt great indignation. I love to see the care that Jesus had for the children.

Today I want to speak about the care of children. Amongst the things that we are speaking of is a matter that is referred to often in current terminology as CSA. The first word of these three is child and the last is abuse or assault and the middle one I am not going to voice but it begins with and refers to a kind of physical mistreatment that is of the cruellest, basest, most defiling and most damaging kind.

There are some things that we don't like to speak of and don't ordinarily speak of so openly and there are some things that are so distasteful that we don't even like to feel it might be necessary to speak about them so we are not going to voice that word but I must say that if anyone has the slightest doubt about what is going to be referred to, please ask afterward.

Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians said about things to keep away from. In Ephesians 5:12 he said it is a shame even to speak about those things that are done of them in secret. But there are times when it is necessary to say something because it is not always done of them. There have been times and occasions when things have been done which should not have been done among the fellowship. There have been times when things have been done which should not have been done by members of the ministry.

Today we want to speak about these things as discretely as possible and as clearly as necessary. In the last year or so there has been quite a lot of discussion about matters in Victoria, Australia. I find it very saddening and have to say that I feel that the response of the ministry has not been adequate. There is no point in trying to make an apology because words can't deliver. But what is really needed is that most profound of all apologies and that is reform of attitude and beginning to acknowledge where there has been error and the committed purpose and earnestness to ensure that where there has been error that there will not be error again.

One thing that needs to be remembered very clearly in this matter of treatment of children is that we are talking about crime, and more than that, we are talking about the most heinous kind of crime of all. The various crimes that are committed, some are against property, some against the interests of society or the state, and there are some against the person. Of all crimes, the crime of one person against another person is the worst. The crime of a man against the person of another man is bad. The crime of a man against the person of a woman is worse. The crime of a man against the person of a child is the worst of all. It has the worst disastrously damaging effect and leads to a legacy of challenge that is mostly carried the life-long through.

So we come to the question of what one does to handle such a thing. I Corinthians 6 there is advice given about not letting matters go to law or to be heard before the court. I have heard people express the view that this applies to the matter to which we are referring today but it does not. This is not a matter of criminal wrong-doing in this chapter that Paul is talking about. He is talking about what we would call in today's legal proceedings a civil suit. A matter of one person against another person in the matter perhaps of being defrauded or suffering loss or some contest or dispute about property or something of that nature. That is what he is speaking about on this chapter. We must never fall into the error of suggesting that because a person is in the fellowship of the children of God that there are things they are sheltered from in terms of not having penalties applied.

It must never be thought that the gospel or fellowship presents an umbrella under which people may hide and the law may be broken with impunity or the law-breaker find shelter and not face the consequence of breaking the law and it must never be seen or seem to be that the fellowship of God's people presents an opportunity or place where there is scope for the breaking of the law. Think about Jesus and His love and His feelings and His purity and how he valued little children because in them He saw the essence of purity and lack of defilement that He loved because it spoke of what He lived himself and that is why there is a respect toward children in Jesus. Think of Jesus who felt so toward little children and how He would feel if there was anything to which His name was attached which could be used in a way in which children could suffer or in which suffering was allowed.

Scripture which applies to matters of criminal breaking of the law, one of the passages, is found in Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the

same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Peter also wrote some words that are relevant to this. I Peter 2: 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Those scriptures are those that apply to the attitude toward the criminal breaking of the law. We are very favoured people in this country that we live and have lived in a society with wonderful liberty because of the rule of law and a general orderliness. There are some things that we should give thanks to God for because we read in Revelation about a time when that will be taken away from the earth. We hardly bear to think about what that may be like. We in this country are in a favoured and fortunate position that the rule of law and general orderliness is the norm. We are favoured because of that great freedom and great security. We have good government. I'm not speaking about the currently elected members but about the system of government that we have and the rules and protocols, the way the country is ordered, we are a favoured people.

There are powers that remain with God and they are under His rule. There are agents appointed by God as the ministry of God to attend to matters of evil doing and wrong doing and it says there the ministry of God is not to be resisted but to be dealt with as necessary according to the mind of God. It is necessary to thank God for this wonderful environment of orderliness in which we live. So the process of the law is not to be resisted. There is to be a cooperation, there is to be an acceptance, there is even to be a thankfulness to God for the very same because it is of God.

So there is the question now of what do we do if there should seem to be a risk somewhere to the children. The safety and welfare of the little children must never be compromised by anything. There must never be anything that is allowed that could impact upon it or threaten or give the slightest measure of risk to the children. Where there is a known risk there must be openness so the risk can be avoided. Failure to do so is as much an offence as the offence itself.

Where there is known to be or even thought to be reasonable grounds, a suggestion of risk, in that also there must be advice and counsel given in sufficiently clear terms that all measure of risk is avoided.

I believe that there is a good parallel to this and the attitudes toward this to those that we find toward people who have a problem with alcohol. It is very difficult to get over that. This problem that we are speaking about today is also extremely difficult one to get over and one that carries with it an extremely high incidence of reoccurrence or re-offense.

In the matter of those who have a problem with alcohol, amongst them there is sometimes a willingness to acknowledge the problem and to seek help for the problem. It is a very courageous step and one which the community at large applauds, strongly, a willingness to accept that there is a problem and to address the problem with the help of others. And furthermore, when a person takes steps to address the problem they are supported wholeheartedly by everybody and there is an immense feeling of respect and admiration for the courageousness of those who are able to confront the problem and do something about it. That is the community attitude toward that particular thing.

But this particular problem about which we speak today, whilst it has a certain parallel to that, it has the much much more serious side to it that the effects of the problem impact on others, very directly and very damagingly and for that reason also, very clear steps must be taken. Where there is willingness for openness and willingness to courageously confront a problem and address it with necessary help that is available to make effort to overcome it, there is a great fund of goodwill and support for those who will do that, and a great willingness to assist in whatever way is possible.

We are speaking of cooperation. When we speak about a necessity for openness and avoiding risk we are speaking about cooperation. We are not speaking about vindication or vengeance or any such thing. We are speaking about cooperation whereby someone who may have a problem is able to have the benefit of everybody's support and help, that opportunities are not created or allowed, but that encouragement and support is given in every way possible.

So we come to the question then of how do we move forward and work toward an acceptance that there is rehabilitation. There are some guidelines for that in scripture. Let's look at II Corinthians 7 where Paul refers to problems that were amongst the Corinthians and he has done so in very clear terms. 8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

In the last verse of that chapter he has these words I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things. There had been a problem. The problem had been addressed. The problem had been dealt with. We see the kind of marks that Paul could see or were evident in those who were moved toward repentance. Very clear marks, very heartfelt things, very sure signs that their attitude of dealing with things, not trivialising matters, not pretending to minimise things but rather the opposite ability, to maximise the application to oneself that it may be treated as it ought to be treated. He speaks of these things: indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal, revenge. We will speak on that word in a minute. The words speak of very very strong feelings and very very concrete measures taken that there might be a change. Not trivialising matters—rather the opposite.

Indignation, the very same word here that Jesus used in the first verse we read when he said he was much displeased. Strong emotion. Greatly stirred. Jesus when He said that He was really telling the people 'that is not me, that is not my position'. He strongly put His case that 'That is not me'. And where it says the same thing that this people amongst whom there had been a problem and now they had cleansed themselves, not by denial, but by acceptance and addressing the matter, dealing with the desire for revenge. Looking at the meaning of that word, it is an unfortunate use of that word really, although it was no doubt apt when this bible was translated, because we are inclined to think of the word as get back or pay back. It doesn't mean that at all in this case. It is not used in that way. It means simply, the even handed and effective application of justice. Even handed and effective just treatment, of everything and everybody.

So Paul was able to say to them 'I have confidence in you'. Steps had been taken which would allow the rebuilding of confidence. It's not easily done but it can be done.

Repentance is much more than just verbalising a statement that "I am sorry."

This matter of mistreatment of children, there are 3 components to it. One is that it is criminally wrong. Another is the mental health aspect as well. The other is that it has an element of spiritual health aspect. Those three things, differing as they do, need to be addressed by those who are competent to do so. We are faced as shepherds and pastors of the flock, with the help of God and with the aid of His spirit, we seek help in matters of the spirit and in spiritual welfare for individuals of the flock but we are not equipped for those others and they need to be left where they belong. Matters that relate to criminally breaking of the law need to be dealt with by the law, and matters that relate to mental health and those sorts of concerns need to be dealt with by those who are competent to deal with them.

Repentance, the thought or suggestion or feeling of repentance will have no value at all unless all those matters have been addressed, and there is a willingness for the law to be followed and the penalties to be faced and accepted without appeal. I don't understand how anyone who could appeal against a penalty could consider themselves to be fully remorseful. There must be a willingness for the acceptance of penalty. There must be a willingness to seek help that is necessary and effectively from those who are clinically equipped and enabled to deal with matters of process and proper mind, and there must be very clear and definite and concrete steps that speak of change from the depths of the heart and then, and only then, can there be a feeling that there has been repentance. Then, and only then, can there be the possibility of beginning, rebuilding confidence. It is possible, if the process is followed.

We are thankful that we have the example of Jesus, to strengthen us and teach us and guide us in all that is acceptable to peace. May God help us that in all matters and at all times that we are allowing Christ to be our guide and teacher, that He could be dwelling in us, and that He would be stronger than us to make us like Himself, and that He would be manifesting Himself through us, that in this world God's people may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world and speak of things that belong to Christ.

Dale Shultz CSA Guidelines for California Workers – July 2006

GUIDELINES REGARDING INCIDENTS OF CHILD SEXUAL MOLESTATION

- (1) According to California law, workers fall into the legal category of "mandated reporters" and have a legal obligation to report any sexual abuse inflicted on a minor (person 17 years of age or younger) if she or he is still a minor at the time the information comes to us.
- (2) There is no legal obligation to report a case where the victim is no longer a minor at the time the information comes to the worker (even though the abuse happened when the victim was still a minor), but there may be a moral obligation in some cases if there is reason to believe that other minors remain at risk.
- (3) If you receive such information as a younger companion, take it to your older companion.
- (4) The companions in a field are advised to take the matter to your regional overseer(s) or to your general overseer.
- (5) The regional overseer(s) and general overseer will discuss the matter with the local workers who received the information with the option of bringing in any other consultants whom they agree may be helpful at arriving at decisions.
- (6) We will discuss here four different directions to go with this information that comes from a victim, an offender or from a third party concerning the abuse. The selection of one of these or possibly a combination of two of these will depend on the particulars of the case you are handling and the level of cooperation you are receiving from the victim or offender. We need to remember that we have a legal responsibility as "mandated reporters" to report such cases and that the victim and offender would benefit from therapy. It is possible that other family members would benefit from therapy as well. While California law stipulates that a "mandated reporter" is required to report a case of child abuse within 36 hours of learning about it, we believe that the law would be flexible regarding the time factor. However, this stipulation does indicate the importance of dealing with the matter as soon as possible. Following are the four options regarding handling such information when it comes to us:
 - (a) There is a definite advantage in getting the victim and the offender to a certified counselor for help. This provides help for the victim in learning to deal with the experience. Therapy provides help for the offender in managing and overcoming his or her abusive tendencies. It also can transfer the responsibility of reporting the criminal conduct from the workers to the certified counselor. We are not freed from the responsibility of reporting a case simply because we have referred the victim or the offender to another "mandated reporter," which in this case is the counselor. We should visit with the counselor and come to an understanding that he or she will assume the responsibility of reporting (if the case warrants it) rather than ourselves. The counselor has training and resources to

better determine if the case should be reported. Also, it puts us in a better position to help people on both sides of the issue if we have not done the reporting.

(b) It would be possible to go to a counselor alone without the victim or offender and convey the information that has come to us. This would work best in cases in which the counselor already has had some experience with our group and has reason to trust us. In this way, the counselor (a mandated reporter) is receiving information from a third party (in this case, the worker also being a mandated reporter) and then there would need to be an understanding and agreement that the counselor accepts the responsibility to “report” or “not report” rather than the worker continuing to have that responsibility. This is one of the optional routes in cases where the victim or offender is unwilling to see a therapist.

(c) Another option is to report the incident to Child Protective Services which is part of the county Social Services Department. They will keep the name of the reporter confidential. There is a difference in reporting the case to Child Protective Services rather than directly to a law enforcement agency. The difference is that Child Protective Services will send a social worker to evaluate the case and determine its severity. This is one step removed from the law and does not put the responsibility of determining the validity or severity of the case on the workers. Child Protective Services has “mandated reporter status” and will report the case to the law if the decision is made that way. Child Protective Services will also refer the victim and/or offender to therapy (counselors). However, the victim or offender would also have the option of seeking out therapy on their own.

(d) The fourth option is to report the incident to the Police Department, the Sheriff’s Department or the County Probation Department. The initial report can be by telephone or in person followed up by filling out a required form issued by the California Office of the Attorney General.

Options (a), (b) & (c) would usually be the preferred ones – and sometimes a combination of two of them. In more severe cases, there may be instances when option (d) seems preferable.

(7) An offer to help the victim, victim’s parents or the offender in selecting a certified counselor would be in order unless they choose to let Child Protective Services look after that. We have friends who can help us in making these choices because of their associations in the work place. There may be instances where it would be helpful to offer to accompany the victim or the offender on their initial visit to a certified counselor.

(8) If a police report is filed, the family can apply for help with expenses through the California Victim Witness program. If their request is approved, the state of California will pay for counseling sessions for the victim and each member of the victim’s family plus other services and reimbursement for certain costs related to the incident, to the extent to which they are not otherwise covered by insurance.

More information is available online at www.boc.ca.gov or by contacting
California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board
Victim Compensation Program
P.O. Box 3036
Sacramento CA 95812-3036

(9) People who fall into the broad category of “clergy” can receive information of criminal conduct from a person of their congregation which could be legally classified as “penitential communication” and the failure of the clergy member to report this can be legally excused. There is quite a bit of grey area here and room for private interpretation. If an offender brings information about himself/herself to us in a spirit that we deem to be truly repentant, this would be the most clear cut category of “penitential communication.” On the other hand, if a victim brings information to us but doesn’t want it to go any further for reasons that seem valid to us, this could also be classified as this type of communication. If either a victim or an offender asks you to be completely confidential, it would be well to press the point that you would really prefer to discuss it with a very confidential fellow-worker or fellow workers. You may be in a position where you would say, “I cannot keep this completely confidential and still have a clear conscience before God.” That is something you would need to weigh up prayerfully, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Your decision may be influenced by the age of the victim as well. You may be more inclined to respect the plea for confidentiality from a 16-17 year old and less inclined to respect the plea for confidentiality from a 5-10 year old.

(10) Proverbs II: 14 “In the multitude of counselors there is safety.” There is an element of safety involved in a small group of people evaluating any such case. At the same time, it is very important that these matters (along with many others) be handled in a wise and confidential manner so that sensitive matters are not spread indiscriminately among people who do not need to know. We would soon lose the trust of the Lord’s people if we are not wise in this area.

(11) If information comes to us from a third party (neither the victim nor the offender), there is still an obligation (legally and morally) to follow through if there is “reasonable suspicion” that the abuse has occurred.

(12) As workers, we are trusted with our friend’s homes, children, spouses, cars, financial gifts, etc. It is a serious and damaging betrayal of trust if our conduct inflicts the kind of damage described in this paper on any person and family. We also need to recognize that parents may have apprehensions regarding their children being with workers – particularly, in a one on one situation. We should be sensitive to “appearances” and sensitive to the particular apprehensions that some parents may have. Of course, there are other areas of betrayal of trust that can be equally damaging. We need to live within safe parameters. We want to preserve our consecration as workers and the testimony of this ministry.

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