

## POLICY STATEMENTS

This section contains the various policies that have been established over the years by the Allegheny Region Conference, and are compiled here for easy reference. Knowledge of a policy not herein stated please notify the ARC Director. New statements of policy will be added annually as they are established. Noted in parenthesis at the end of each policy is where the action creating the policy is recorded, if known, and/or where further information concerning the policy is located.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Allegheny Region Conference in General .....	C- 4
1.	Districts and Churches .....	C- 4
	a) Three Districts .....	C- 4
	b) Members at Large.....	C- 4
2.	Conference Material .....	C- 5
3.	Allegheny Region Conference Resource Manual.....	C- 5
4.	Newsletter .....	C- 5
5.	Minutes of Meetings .....	C- 5
6.	Pastor's Application for Ministerial Service.....	C- 5
7.	Recognition for 25 Years of Service in the Conference .....	C- 5
8.	Memorials .....	C- 5
9.	Expectations of Administrative Council Members.....	C- 5
10.	Attendance at Meetings .....	C- 6
11.	General Conference Delegates .....	C- 6
II.	Allegheny Region Conference Sessions .....	C- 6
1.	Reporting Number of Votes .....	C- 6
2.	Attire During Conference Sessions .....	C- 7
III.	Finances.....	C- 7
1.	Church Benevolences .....	C- 7
2.	Remittance Deadline.....	C- 7
3.	Remittance Verification.....	C- 7
4.	Designated Remittances.....	C- 7
5.	General Conference Pension Calculations and Payment.....	C- 7
6.	ARC Minister's Supplemental Retirement Fund.....	C- 8
7.	Meeting Expense Reimbursement.....	C- 8
8.	Keeping Financial Records.....	C- 8
9.	Honorariums and Travel Expenses of the ARC Director .....	C- 8
10.	Conference Financial Drives and Special Offerings.....	C- 8
11.	Intra-Conference Monies Borrowed.....	C- 9
12.	Individual Gifts to the Conference and/or Agencies.....	C- 9
13.	Annual Audit and Records Required for Audit.....	C- 9

14.	Camp Sonrise Mountain Endowment Fund .....	C-9
15.	Christian Loving Fund, Inc.....	C-9
IV.	Special Committees .....	C-9
V.	Churches.....	C-10
1.	Incorporation of Churches .....	C-10
2.	Building Project Approval.....	C-10
3.	Guest Speaker or Evangelist Approval .....	C-10
4.	Monthly Pastoral Reports .....	C-10
VI.	Church Property .....	C-10
1.	Property Reverter Provisions.....	C-10
a)	Allegheny Region Conference Policy.....	C-10
b)	General Conference Policy .....	C-11
c)	General Conference Constitution, Article 18 - of Property.....	C-11
2.	Joint Property on Circuits .....	C-12
3.	Standard Parsonage Rental Value and Utilities Allowance.....	C-12
4.	Parsonage Provisions .....	C-12
VII.	Pastoral Vacancies .....	C-12
1.	Intermediary Between Churches and Pastors.....	C-12
2.	Conference Pastors Given First Opportunity .....	C-12
3.	Churches Consider One Pastor At a Time .....	C-12
4.	Associate Pastors and Salaried Staff .....	C-13
VIII.	Pastors .....	C-13
1.	Monthly Pastoral Reports .....	C-13
2.	Secular and Part-time Employment.....	C-13
3.	Serving as a Guest Evangelist .....	C-13
4.	Serving as A Church Planter .....	C-13
5.	Conference and Ecumenical Services .....	C-13
IX.	Pastoral Care Fund.....	C-13
1.	Purpose.....	C-13
2.	Funding .....	C-13
3.	Administration .....	C-13
a.	Counseling Services.....	C-14
b.	Emergencies.....	C-14
c.	Other Pastoral Care Needs.....	C-14

4.	Accountability .....	C-14
X.	Group Insurance .....	C-14
1.	Group Insurance Coverage .....	C-14
2.	Insurance Premium Due Date and Late Fee.....	C-14
XI.	Camp Sonrise Mountain .....	C-14
1.	Prohibited on Camp Property .....	C-15
2.	Church Camp Discipline.....	C-15
3.	Visitors & Campers Leaving Camp .....	C-15
XII.	Withdrawal of a Local Church-CGGC.....	C-16
	Suggested Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct .....	C-19
	Suggested Policy and Procedures on Blood and/or Body Fluids .....	C-43

# I. ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE IN GENERAL

## 1. DISTRICTS AND CHURCHES

- a) The Allegheny Region is made up of three (3) Districts: The Northern District, the Southern District, and the West Virginia District. It should be noted that "Region" denotes of ministry area while "Conference" identifies our interworking relationship.

### Northern District - Churches North of US Route 22:

Barkeyville	Grange	Limestone/Reesedale
Brackenridge	Grove City	Maranatha
Congress Hill	Hickory Grove	Mt. Hope
Franklin First	Kennerdell	New Brighton First
Garman	Kittanning	Pine Grove
Goodridge	Lillyville	Templeton

### Southern PA District - Churches South of US Route 22 including panhandles of West Virginia and Maryland:

Breakneck	Indian Head	Mt. Carmel
Buchanan	Kecksburg	Mt. Nebo
Centennial	Keeler Glade	Mt. Pleasant
Center Bethel	Kingwood	Mt. Tabor
Clinton	Latrobe First	New Centerville
Colliers First	Littleton	Sand Spring
Fair Oaks	Logos Christian Fellowship	United Community
Fairview	McMechen First	West Newton First
Grandview	Markleysburg Union	

### West Virginia District - Churches formerly of the West Virginia Conference:

Highlawn	Mt. Tabor
Kimberly	South Charleston

## b) Members at Large Guidelines

1. Members at Large may be appointed by the ARC Director upon approval of the Administrative Council. Where applicable the District President shall serve as the Member at Large.
2. The purpose of the Member at Large shall be to serve as a contact person for the specific District to which he/she is appointed.
  - a. The Member at Large shall see that all information and prayer concerns given to him/her is passed on to the other pastors and/or churches in his District. This is usually requested by the ARC Director.
  - b. Churches and pastors within a given District may contact their Member at Large with concerns, advice or for information.
3. The Member at Large shall inform the ARC Director or proper Commission of any concerns he/she is made aware of regarding church relations and/or pastor relations.
4. A Member at Large has the privilege to seek the advice of the ARC Director or fellow Advisors at any time.
5. The Member at Large may arrange fellowship times with the pastors and wives in his/her District. These may be held monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, yearly or when a pastor enters or leaves his District, etc.
6. The Member at Large in cooperation with the other pastors in his/her District may arrange special programs to be held in the District.

7. The District Advisors shall meet at the call of the ARC Director to share concerns, information, support or inspiration. A District Advisor may contact the ARC Director and request a meeting.
8. Expenses incurred by a District Advisor to carry out assignments shall be cared for through the Conference Office travel fund.

2. CONFERENCE MATERIALS

Each year the Conference Materials will be provided to each delegate who attends the Annual Conference Sessions.

3. ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE RESOURCE MANUAL

Each year an updated Operations Manual will be provided to everyone electronically.

4. NEWSLETTER

Each month a newsletter published by the Allegheny Region Conference Office will be sent out electronically to all the subscribers.

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

A complete copy of the Administrative Council meetings is included each year in the Conference Materials and is also available upon request.

6. PASTOR'S APPLICATION FOR MINISTERIAL SERVICE

The Ministerial Training Commission and the Pastoral Guidance Commission shall have a combined Application for Ministerial Service. Completed applications shall be returned to the Office and copies sent to each Commission. The original will be filed at the Office. (1986 Journal, page 66). A pastor's application may be sent to churches seeking a pastor. Churches seeking a pastor (and information about pastors) are to work with the Pastoral Guidance Commission.

7. RECOGNITION FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE CONFERENCE

Pastors who have rendered 25 years of service in the Conference and lay persons who have given 25 years of service and leadership to the Conference shall be recognized at Conference Sessions with an appropriate gift of appreciation. The Ministerial Training Commission is responsible for caring for such recognition. (1976 Journal, page 46 and 1981 Journal, page 31).

8. MEMORIALS

The amount of memorials is \$50.00 and may be adjusted periodically. All memorials will be paid from the Administrative Expense Fund. The ARC Office will be responsible for administering this policy and notifying the family of the memorial. (1987 Journal, page 26 and 1997 Journal, page B-65)

9. EXPECTATIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Priority #1 - Lead with Integrity**

Give attention to personal spiritual growth; be a person who has honest principles and is above reproach with regard to matters of business, finance, etc.

**Priority #2 - Lead with Faith**

There will be times when the members of the Administrative Council will be required to risk. They must not be afraid to move forward, taking bold steps in order to communicate vision and faith to the Conference.

**Priority #3 - Lead with a Sense of Mission**

The Administrative Council is committed to making more and better disciples through more and better churches.

This is to be done with a proactive stance, with members supporting financially, and publicly the leadership. This means that members have a passion for souls, and a desire to communicate this sense of mission to the Conference and local church congregations.

**Priority #4 - Lead by Making New Leaders**

The members of the Administrative Council will strive to effectively communicate the mission and vision of the church, discipling new leaders. These members will be available to communicate this vision and mission with the rest of the Conference. Therefore, the make-up of the Administrative Council should be kept before the entire Conference.

**Priority #5 - Lead by Effective Management**

- a. Members shall attend the meetings of Administrative Council, making the necessary corporate decisions to carry on the mission of the church.
- b. All decisions are to be based on the facts and not on emotions. A member who is personally involved in or affected by the results of a decision should consider abstaining from voting.
- c. There will be times when issues are shared with the Administrative Council that must be kept in strict confidence. Such issues are not to be referred to or discussed with anyone nor within the hearing of anyone who is not a member of the Administrative Council. The commission may call for an executive session and place minutes from such in a confidential file in the ARC office.

**NOTE:** Servant leadership is the key to persons serving on the Administrative Council. All of the priorities include the word "lead". Looking for servant leaders, who have the ability to influence others. (1997 Journal, pages B-62 & 63)

10. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

When a person accepts an elected or appointed office/position they are agreeing to attend all of the meetings unless excused for a reason that is beyond their control. The Administrative Council may declare any office/position vacant due to lack of attendance and elect or appoint another person to fill the unexpired term. (1997 Journal, page B-59)

11. GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES

The Allegheny Region Conference Delegates to General Conference Sessions shall be appointed by the Administrative Council. The number to be elected is according to the General Conference Constitution, Article III, which summarized is: Ministerial Delegates must be Ordained for three (3) consecutive years - one (1) for every five hundred (500) conference members and any fraction thereof. Adult Lay Delegates - equal to the number of ministerial delegates and, as nearly as possible, an equal number of laymen and laywomen. Youth Delegates - three (3) persons (male or female) between the ages of 16 and 24 inclusive. All delegates attend at ARC expense.

One (1) Ministerial Alternate Delegate shall attend GC Sessions at ARC expense, so they will be present in case a pastor is called away due to an emergency.

**II. ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

1. REPORTING NUMBER OF VOTES

Shall the number of votes for each candidate for an office be reported? That is the question referred to the Constitution Committee by the General Conference in session in June 1986. (Also a matter of concern at the 1986 West PA Conference Sessions).

The answer is governed by the rules and usages of deliberative bodies as defined and stated in Robert's Rules of Order. The 1981 or 8th edition, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised at pp. 352-353, Section 44 answers with an unequivocal YES. Section 44 emphasizes that...

"Under no circumstances should this be omitted in an election or in a vote on a critical motion out of a mistaken deference to the feelings of unsuccessful candidates or members of the losing side."

General Roberts in his classic Parliamentary Law (Bicentennial edition 1975) at pp. 223-224 expounded this sound rule both for the tellers' report and for the chair's declaration of the election:

"Under each title should be written the names of the various candidates for that office with the number of votes cast for each, the list being arranged in order according to the number of votes received, the one receiving the highest number being first...When the president receives the tellers' report, it is again read...After the number of votes for each candidate for an office is read, the president should announce the election of the candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast for that particular office."

The soundness of this rule has been vindicated by long experience. It is a safeguard against legal challenges to the authority of the members and directors of the corporation of Churches of God, General Conference who serve by virtue of their election to the Administrative Council: General Conference Constitution amended and restated ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION. It identifies the candidate with the next highest votes who may thus be identified to fill a subsequent vacancy. (1987 Journal, pages 18-19).

## 2. ATTIRE DURING CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Casual attire is permissible during Conference Sessions, but the wearing of shorts in the Chapel during evening worship services is discouraged. (1995 Journal, page B-62)

### III. FINANCES

#### 1. CHURCH BENEVOLENCES

Each church is to pay 15% of their income for the Cooperative Budget Ministries. 5.3% of this will go to the General Conference Ministries and 9.7% will go for ministries in the ARC. Additional contributions over and above this are requested for the Designated Budget Ministries in both the General Conference and Allegheny Region Conference.

Each church is urged to earnestly seek the Lord's direction as to what He would have them designate as "income" knowing they will be accountable to Him for the amount they send.

#### 2. REMITTANCE DEADLINE

Financial remittances must be received in the Conference Office by the last day of each month to be credited for that month. (1978 Journal, page 43). Fiscal year will end on December 31 of each year. Final remittances for the year that are postmarked after Dec. 31 will be credited to the new year unless otherwise specified by the Conference Treasurer.

#### 3. REMITTANCE VERIFICATION

The verification of remittances and proper crediting of monies to accounts is of significant importance and where the Conference Office has a question on the remittance that the Church Treasurer be phoned for clarification. (1988 Journal, page 39). In addition, a monthly Ministries Report will be sent to each church treasurer and they have seven (7) days to contact the Conference Office to make any corrections. (1991 Journal, page 55).

#### 4. DESIGNATED REMITTANCES

Receipts from churches designated to special interests which are budgeted, such as Camp, Grove Manor, University of Findlay, Winebrenner, etc., be credited to that church's benevolences unless designated to specific projects which are non-budgetary. (1988 Journal, page 65.)

#### 5. GENERAL CONFERENCE PENSION CALCULATIONS AND PAYMENT

The Allegheny Region Conference requests the church to contribute the full 12% to the General Conference Pension

Plan for their pastor. The 12% contribution is calculated on the pastor's salary received as compensation for his service plus an amount equivalent to either (1) the fair rental value of a parsonage and estimated housing expenses, or (2) the actual value of a housing allowance.

Example:	\$ 15,000	-	Pastor's annual salary (including education, experience and social security supplements)
	+ 4,200	-	Rental Value
	+ <u>1,800</u>	-	Housing expenses (utilities, etc.)
	\$ 21,000		
	x <u>.12</u>	-	12% Pension rate
	\$ 2,520	-	Annual Pension contribution paid by the church

(General Conference Pension Plan)

The contributions shall be due on the first day of each month but may be paid either monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually in advance. In the case of any change in salary during the period for which remittance has been made adjustment shall be made in the succeeding remittance. (General Conference Pension Plan).

6. ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE MINISTER'S SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT FUND

This Fund is explained in Section "K" under "Pastoral Benefit Programs."

7. MEETING EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT

- a. Mileage: reimbursed according to annual Pastoral Guidance Commission guidelines.
- b. Expense vouchers are submitted to a Commission Chairperson, where applicable, for authorization and then forwarded to the Conference Treasurer. The Conference Treasurer issues funds only on the basis of an authorized order. (1988 Journal, page 44).

8. KEEPING FINANCIAL RECORDS

Financial records for any conference agency or commission, along with the canceled checks, ledger sheet, annual report, and the auditor's report are to be held for a 7 year cycle; the statistical report is to be held for a 3 year cycle; voucher sheets are to be held until such time that the audit is complete, then said records be disposed of except in cases of historical value. (1987 Journal, page 66).

9. HONORARIUMS AND TRAVEL EXPENSES OF THE ARC DIRECTOR

The ARC Director shall submit a Voucher to each Conference Commission and/or Agency (not churches) for the mileage and meal costs involved in attending their meetings or doing any work directed by them. (1986 Journal, page 91).

All honorariums and reimbursed travel expenses for all services relevant to the Conference Office and the ARC Director shall go into the auto expense fund for the office. (ARC Director's Job Description, and further defined: Advisory Committee Meeting on 2-13-87).

10. CONFERENCE FINANCIAL DRIVES AND SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Administrative Council must review plans and grant approval before any new financial drives are launched or before changes are made in the purpose/character of annual special offering days. (Allegheny Region Constitution: Article 6.06 and 7.01).

Where major capital expenditures, by any commission or agency of the Conference, are expected requiring a capital funds campaign to generate funds in advance or to liquidate any indebtedness, the specific plans for this must be approved by the Administrative Council. (Allegheny Region Constitution: Article 7.01).

Grove Manor may provide information and solicit funds via the Christian Loving Fund, and Camp Sunrise Mountain

may provide information and solicit funds, on a continuing basis to be used at the discretion of the respective board of directors. (1987 Journal, page 40).

11. INTRA-CONFERENCE MONIES BORROWED

Where intra-conference monies are borrowed, that the loan, if granted, provide for an interest rate on the borrowed funds being determined at the time of the loan and based upon what those monies are then earning in the particular fund from which the monies may be drawn; further, that where a loan is granted a schedule or plan for repayment of the loan be supplied; further, that where loans by a commission or agency are anticipated and/or requested, such request be approved by the Administrative Council. However, this does not preclude the Administrative Council acting without said review or referring, should the need arise. (1989 Journal, page 51).

12. INDIVIDUAL GIFTS TO THE CONFERENCE AND/OR AGENCIES

Taking into account certain IRS requirements on "gift by individual to non-profit religious organizations" and to avoid any difficulty an individual contributor might encounter in trying to verify the gift, it is recommended that gifts by individual contributors, to such agencies as the Camp, be made payable to the "Allegheny Region Conference" with the specific purpose of the gift noted on the check. (1989 Journal, page 52).

13. ANNUAL AUDIT AND RECORDS REQUIRED FOR AUDIT

The Treasurers of the various agencies (including but not limited to: Conference Office Accounts, Financial-Statistical Record, CGWM, Sr. Life Fellowship, Camp Board of Directors Treasurer, Camp Registrar/Treasurer and Ministers Wives Association) of the Conference are required to supply the following records to the Auditing Committee to audit their accounts. (1988 Journal, page 68 and Allegheny Region Constitution, Article 9.02a).

- a. An annual report that covers the Conference fiscal year, January 1 through December 31, of each calendar year, showing balances, income, expenses, and ending balances for that period of time.
- b. Include ledger books, deposit slips/books, bank statements with cancelled checks, current check book and/or deposit book.
- c. Reconciled bank statements for each month.
- d. Where treasurers only receive funds, record them and transmit them to Conference treasurer for holding/deposit, that record of such transmittal be made available also.

14. CAMP SONRISE MOUNTAIN ENDOWMENT FUND

This fund was started in 1976. All contributions to this fund are invested. The principal cannot be used for any purpose other than investments and only the interest is useable. Categories for contributions: "Camp Booster" - minimum \$100.00; "Living Memorial" - minimum \$25.00; "Church Honor Roll" - minimum \$100.00; "Bequest" - any amount from wills; and "Other" - any unclassified gift. (1977 Journal, page 15).

15. CHRISTIAN LOVING FUND, INC.

This Fund was started in 1981 with the purpose of receiving gifts, bequeaths and memorials to aid the elderly and infirmed. The Fund was incorporated in 2002 to provide for security and protection of assets. The funds are administered by the Board of Directors of the Christian Loving Fund, Inc. Details are available from Grove Manor Executive Director. (1982 Journal, page 37), and Christian Loving Fund Constitution and By-Laws (Section Q-9 through Q-16).

**IV. SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Administrative Council may appoint a special committee at any time they feel the need to address issues of the Region.

## V. CHURCHES

### 1. INCORPORATION OF CHURCHES

Attorney James Gaut (Allegheny Region Conference legal counsel) and Attorney James Booser (General Conference legal counsel) have both expressed opinion that the State of PA does not require churches to be Incorporated, but it does not hurt anything if they are as it would provide a clear declaration of title in a liability suit. Therefore, while it is up to each local church whether or not to be Incorporated, the Conference does look upon it favorably.

Further research has shown that laws of state of West Virginia does not provide for incorporation of non-profit religious organizations (i.e. churches). Therefore, churches in West Virginia are to follow guidelines of their state. ARC will assist as appropriate for this process.

### 2. BUILDING PROJECT APPROVAL

Any congregation having property Deeded to the Allegheny Region Conference and desires to buy, build or repair property with borrowed funds shall first obtain the consent of the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council before granting permission may appoint a Task Force to make sure the architectural and construction design have State and Local Government approval, and their financial plan is sound. (Allegheny Region Conference Constitution, Article 16.03).

### 3. GUEST SPEAKER OR EVANGELIST APPROVAL

Churches desiring to use guest speakers or evangelists more than one time who are not members of the Churches of God, General Conference, must get approval prior to their speaking from the Ministerial Training Commission. (See Section "J", Supplemental Material)

### 4. MONTHLY PASTORAL REPORTS

Church Councils have a right to hold their pastor(s) accountable for ministerial service and may request a monthly written report. (Sample Form approved by pastors at District Meetings January 1988. See "Section K, Supplemental Material").

## VI. CHURCH PROPERTY

### 1. PROPERTY REVERTER PROVISIONS

#### a. Allegheny Region Conference Policy

The following Reversion Clause is to be recorded in all deeds of church property. (1992 Journal, pages 76 and 77; Executive Commission Resolution dated March 13, 1992).

In trust that said premises shall be kept and maintained as a place of worship for the use of the Church of God, a constituent congregation of Allegheny Region Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference, subject to the ministerial appointments and laws from time to time made, established and declared by the lawful authorities of the Churches of God.

The authority of said local congregation over said premises shall not be otherwise limited so long as said congregation remains a part of the Churches of God and continues to be subject to its superior (Allegheny Region Conference) and supreme (General Conference) judicatories, and the constitutions, disciplines and other laws thereof as from time to time in force.

Otherwise, or in case the property is used for a purpose other than a purpose sanctioned by the denomination such as a use by those who have severed connection with the Churches of God, or in case the congregation has become extinct by reason of abandonment of its work, dispersal of its members, formal action by the Conference, or other cause, said premises shall revert to, become and be the property of the Allegheny Region Conference corporation, presently identified as the corporation whose charter, since restated, was originally

granted by special legislative Act of April 11, 1866, P.L. 1446. However, prior to the occasions for such reversion clause to become operative, for the protection of a mortgages or grantee the Conference Clerk may certify (and such certificate shall be conclusive) that no occasion has arisen for such reverter and then the ensuing lawful mortgage or conveyance shall no longer be subject to a later occasioned reverter.

b. General Conference Policy

The Churches of God, General Conference has reaffirmed the provisions for reverter promulgated August 12, 1968 under Section 5 of Article XXII of the Constitution. These provisions are declaratory of the presbyterial polity and representative form of government of this Winebrennarian denomination affirmed in *Winebrenner v. Colder*, 43 PA 244 (1862) and again confirmed in the Churches of God, General Conference Constitution, as currently revised in 1980, continuing the provisions of Article XXII, entitled *Guarding Against Schism*, including Section 5, supra and particularly including Section 3 spelling out the property implications of our presbyterial polity. Such property implications...as applied to local church property and a house of worship...mean that "It belongs to the...entire member-ship...governed and controlled by the organic law...the administration of which is lodged in certain judicatories rising in regular succession". The presbyterial property rights of the denomination, a significant development in American legal history...are epitomized in Section 5 of Article XXII of the General Conference Constitution, applicable in all states to all congregations belonging to the Churches of God.

The reverter provisions of August 12, 1968, implementing our Winebrennarian polity as developed by the courts and declared in Article XXII Section 3 of our General Conference Constitution, have been reviewed in the light of *Jones v. Wolf*, 99 S. Ct. 3020 where the Supreme Court in the last year (1980) in its majority opinion by Mr. Justice Blackmun particularized (at pp. 3025-3026) that "Through appropriate reversionary clauses and trust provisions religious societies can specify what is to happen to church property in the event of a particular contingency, or what religious body will determine the ownership in the event of a schism". These came within the approval (at p. 3025) by the Supreme Court of the United States of "provisions in the constitution of general church concerning the ownership and control of church property". Hence, whenever property of, or held for, a member congregation of the Churches of God denomination ceases to be used by that church in accordance with the Churches of God, General Conference Constitution, such property shall be held, used, applied, transferred, or sold as provided by its local or state conference or eldership as the appropriate intermediate judicatory of the Churches of God. This is another way (from excess of caution) of saying that the "property naturally and properly goes to the larger religious body of which the local church was a part": *Yahn, Polity of the Churches of God* (2nd ed. 1929) p.55. (1983 General Conference Journal, page 4).

c. General Conference Constitution, Article 18 - of Property

1. Matters pertaining to property are within the purview of this constitution and contract of association.
2. In the event that a Church of God becomes extinct, its property reverts to and vests in its superior Conference. Extinct is given a practical meaning that the membership (prima facie ten or less) is inadequate to function as a congregation. The superior Conference ipso facto has title to and ownership of property of a constituent congregation whose membership after schism, secession or withdrawal drops to such point of extinction.
3. The control and disposition of church property is subject to the applicable constitutional provisions, discipline, rules and regulation of this denomination with its three-tier broadening judicatories of local church, of superior conference and of supreme General Conference.
4. Whenever property of, or held by, a member congregation of this Churches of God denomination ceases to be used by that church in accordance with the Churches of God, General Conference constitution such property shall be held, used, applied, transferred or sold as provided by its local or state conference or eldership as the appropriate intermediate judicatory of the denomination.
5. The presbyterial property interests of this Winebrennarian denomination precludes use of church property for a purpose other than a purpose sanctioned by the denomination. All real and personal property held by or for the benefit of any congregation is held in trust for the Churches of God, General Conference and

for the intermediate judicatory or conference having jurisdiction. The existence of this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority of the congregation otherwise existing over such property as long as said church remains a part of, and subject to, this denomination, its constitution, and its regulation. The several Conferences may, at their election, further confirm the Winebrennian property principle of which the foregoing trust is declaratory by appropriate action, but no such action shall be necessary for the existence and validity of the trust.

## 2. JOINT PROPERTY ON CIRCUITS

All properties used in common of any circuits shall be held equally with all churches of that circuit sharing in the upkeep, use, and administered jointly. (1984 Journal, page 15).

## 3. STANDARD PARSONAGE RENTAL VALUE AND UTILITIES ALLOWANCE

The Conference sets a standard rental value for a parsonage and a utility allowance for uniform reporting of pastors' salaries and benefits. The standard rental value may also be used as a guideline for the self-employment tax report. (1974 Journal, page 16). However, under certain conditions, churches may adjust that amount to reflect accurate IRS reporting practices.

## 4. PARSONAGE PROVISIONS

Churches are requested to provide their pastor with housing, garage and all utilities (except personal telephone expenses). This may be done either by the church owning and maintaining property or by giving the pastor an adequate housing allowance for him to acquire housing and pay utilities. (a long standing policy).

Churches that provide a parsonage shall also provide drapes, curtains, carpeting and kitchen range. (Pastoral Guidance Commission and ratified by 1981 Conference Session in approving Projected Programs).

# VII. PASTORAL VACANCIES

## 1. INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN CHURCHES AND PASTORS

Churches seeking a pastor and pastors seeking a church must work through the Pastoral Guidance Commission. (Allegheny Region Conference Constitution, Article 13).

## 2. CONFERENCE PASTORS GIVEN FIRST OPPORTUNITY

Churches or circuits shall give consideration to pastors in the following order:

First, pastors presently on the roster of this Conference;

Second, pastors approved by the Ministerial Training Commission from the General Conference or Winebrenner Seminary;

Last, pastors approved by the Ministerial Training Commission from another denomination. (Pastoral Guidance Projected Program, ratified by 1993 Conference Sessions).

## 3. CHURCHES CONSIDER ONE PASTOR AT A TIME

Churches were given more say in the selection of their pastor with 1965 revision of the West PA Conference Constitution, but at no time has the Conference advocated a church consider more than one minister at a time.

To further define "consider" is to say that only one (1) candidate may be heard by the congregation. This does not prohibit a search committee from reviewing several applications in discreet confidence. This is further detailed in Section "K. 1-2" and Pastoral Search Guidelines Section K.

At the Consultation on Pastoral Ministries, held on November 21, 1986, the Allegheny Region Conference pastors affirmed they have a united ministry, not in competition against each other, and desire to be considered for pastoral vacancies on their own merits, rather than in comparison with a fellow pastor. Therefore, they agreed that if they learn a Conference Church is considering them along with one or more other pastors at the same time for a pastoral vacancy, they will withdraw their name as a candidate for the present time.

4. ASSOCIATE PASTORS AND SALARIED STAFF

This policy is explained in Section "K", Part I.

**VIII. PASTORS**

1. MONTHLY PASTORAL REPORTS

The completion and filing of monthly report forms are mandatory for pastors holding an annual license, new pastors from other conferences and new pastors out of seminary under the two year probation period. Failure to comply with this requirement may jeopardize future credentials or use in the Allegheny Region Conference.

All pastors shall make a written monthly report to their Church Council(s). (Sample form approved by WPC Pastors at District Meetings January 1988. See "Section K, Supplemental Material".)

2. SECULAR AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Full-time ministers serving in the Allegheny Region Conference are prohibited from accepting full or part-time secular employment. (1964 Journal, pp. 31 & 32). Any exception to this only by mutual agreement between local church, its pastor and Allegheny Region Conference Pastoral Guidance Commission.

3. SERVING AS A GUEST EVANGELIST

Pastors may serve as a guest evangelist after permission is secured from his local church council(s), but time spent in this area is not to exceed two weeks per year. (A long standing policy). This time is not to be considered as part of pastors' vacation time.

4. SERVING AS A CHURCH PLANTER

Pastors who are under the supervision of the Church & Ministry Development Commission as a Church Planter shall not hold any other position (elected or appointed), so they can devote all of their time to the church plant.

5. CONFERENCE AND ECUMENICAL SERVICES

Pastors are encouraged to make themselves available for conference leadership, offices, and camping programs of the ARC. Also, they are encouraged to represent their congregation through local ministerial and other ecumenical ministries, as agreed upon with their local church leadership.

**IX. PASTORAL CARE FUND**

1. PURPOSE

To have funds available for ARC clergy families to provide professional counseling, assist with emergencies and/or any other pastoral care approved from time to time by the Administrative Council. Special needs do arise and we are instructed by the Scriptures to love and care for the needs of our own.

2. FUNDING

Each pastor is encouraged to make a contribution to this fund. When additional funds are needed, a special request shall be made to the churches upon the approval of the Administrative Council.

3. ADMINISTRATION

The Pastoral Care Fund shall be a non-budget line item administered by the ARC Director.

a. Counseling Services

Counseling services shall be provided as noted below for ARC pastors, their spouse and their children under 18 years of age or under 23 years if a full time student.

Referral Methods:

Pastors or qualified family members shall be referred by the ARC Director.

The Pastoral Guidance Commission or the Church & Ministry Development Commission may request a pastor and spouse to receive counseling with the ARC Director making the referral. The pastor may appeal such requests to the Administrative Council.

A pastor or qualified family member may refer themselves for personal reasons.

b. Emergencies

Emergency situations within an ARC clergy family shall be made known to the ARC Director who will use his discretion in granting gifts. He may contact one or more ARC Officers if consultation is needed.

c. Other Pastoral Care Needs

All other pastoral care (besides counseling and emergencies) must be approved by the Administrative Council before they are paid out of this Fund.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

All records shall be kept confidential by the ARC Director and be made available to the ARC Officers if requested by the Administrative Council. (1996 Journal, page B-94)

**X. GROUP INSURANCE**

1. GROUP INSURANCE COVERAGE

Information and details of clergy insurance program is found in Section "K" of this Manual. Other information is available through the ARC Office.

2. INSURANCE PREMIUM DUE DATE AND LATE FEE

All insurance premiums (whether paid by a church or an individual) are due in the Conference Office by the 10th of each month preceding the month to be covered. (Example: For insurance coverage beginning January 1 the premium is due in the Office by December 10th).

Subscribers and/or Church Treasurers will be billed each month by the Conference Office. A \$25.00 late fee per month will be charged for any premium received after the 10th of the month. Make checks payable to: Allegheny Region Conference Office. (1994 Journal, page 44).

**XI. CAMP SONRISE MOUNTAIN**

In 1966 the West Pennsylvania Conference, having the vision to minister through an effective youth camping ministry, began Camp Sunrise Mountain located on Caney Valley Road between Friendsville, Maryland and Markleysburg, Pennsylvania. Over many years God prospered the camp with buildings, but more important with the building of Christian lives. The testimonies of many conversions as well as those called to ministries and service are numerous.

In 2001, Camp Sunrise Mountain incorporated as Camp Sonrise Mountain and is today identified as a subsidiary corporation of the Allegheny Region Conference.

The purpose of Camp Sonrise is to provide a camping facility where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in a Christian environment. While the camp is available for rent by other church and Christian organizations, its primary function continues to be to provide a camping ministry for the youth and churches of the Allegheny Region Conference, CGGC. As

is the case in all such ministries, certain rules and disciplines must be applied so that the programs may become true ministry.

1. PROHIBITED ON CAMP PROPERTY

Prohibited on camp property are travel trailers and campers, tents, smoking and chewing tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, firearms and firecrackers of any kind, sparklers, skates, skateboards, gambling, electronic entertainment (music, games, etc.), immodest swim wear, and any unchristian activity.

Also restricted is the use of motorized vehicles of all types beyond designated parking and driveway area. This includes all snowmobiles, ATV's, dirt bikes, golf carts, etc. Exception will be permitted for medically approved handicap mobility equipment. The use of such equipment is limited to walkways, buildings and parking areas.

2. CHURCH CAMP DISCIPLINE

The disciplinary action to be taken for unruly conduct or destruction of property is for the Dean to call his staff together and, if the majority of them agree, the Dean shall make a collect call to the parents or guardian requesting them to come take their child home and why.

3. VISITORS & CAMPERS LEAVING CAMP

The policy and procedures are explained in Camp Ministry & Programming Commission, Section I.

All policies of Sexual Misconduct and Blood and Body Fluids shall apply to our camping programs, and be applicable as further defined by the Camp Board of Directors under the guidelines of the State of Maryland.

Further information on Camp Sunrise Mountain is contained in Section "P" of this manual.

# **WITHDRAWAL OF A LOCAL CHURCH**

## **Churches of God, General Conference**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This document is presented for the express purpose and intention of maintaining and enhancing the harmony, unity, and peace (John 17:20-24) within the body of Christ, expressly within the Churches of God, General Conference, her conferences and congregations. To that end, the Churches of God, General Conference reaffirms that the Bible is our only authoritative rule of faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17).

We also reaffirm, based upon foundational biblical principles, that "the government and polity of the Churches of God is representative and presbyterial in character" (Art. 17.03, Churches of God Constitution).

Furthermore, we reaffirm that our Presbyterial Polity is adequately set in order for the promotion of doctrinal purity, the protection of local congregations, and the wholeness of the Churches of God, General Conference by addressing various issues including but not limited to:

- sound theology;
- three tier structure of representation;
- issuance of ministerial credentials;
- pastoral assignment and transfer process;
- matters pertaining to property.

Lastly, it is our expressed desire to protect the local church from the remote possibility that this denomination would stray from its foundational biblical teachings. With this being said, we have developed this document to address the issue of property ownership and reversion. As it relates to this matter, we also take into consideration the following principles:

#### **Our Witness in the Church and Our Communities**

The Holy Scriptures command us to be good stewards of God's resources and to be good witnesses in our community (I Peter 4:10). We are to do all things decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). We are to conduct our business with integrity as we establish a good reputation both in and out of the church (I Timothy 3:7). Furthermore, God's law is greater than humanity's and the ministry of grace is more effectual than expressed authoritarianism (I Corinthians 12:9).

#### **Lawsuits among Christians**

We uphold the biblical precepts that lawsuits are harmful to Christian witness, denominational endeavor and local ministry. In general, the use of legal recourse to resolve differences within the church will hinder its testimony. It is therefore our conviction that we should avoid such lawsuits by endeavoring to settle disputes within the body of Christ, as instructed by the Holy Scriptures (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

#### **The Relationship between the Churches of God and Her Local Churches**

The relationship between the Churches of God, General Conference and her local churches is one of mutual consent and support. Our spiritual and organizational relationship endows us with strength by adopting a system for cooperative effort. Unfortunately, even in the best relationships, misunderstandings can lead to a fracture in that relationship. In such cases, our first priority is to seek healing through reconciliation (Matthew 5:21-25, II Corinthians 5:19). However, because of human frailty, not all attempts for reconciliation are successful. In some cases fractured relationships may ultimately lead to a local church desiring to disassociate with the Churches of God, General Conference.

The procedure set forth in this document has been developed to protect the local congregation as well as the Churches of God, General Conference. It will promote the resolution of differences without resorting to lawsuits. This process seeks reconciliation first. Denominational representatives will have an opportunity to participate with a local congregation. Together they shall investigate charges from which a church may seek disassociation from the Churches of God, General Conference. In doing so, we hope to restore relationship and convince against disassociation. This process also allows for a gracious withdrawal of the local congregation as a last resort. In such case, being gracious provides an environment for potential fellowship and future reconciliation. This process is applicable only to those who perceive theological or doctrinal disparity with the ministries of the Churches of God, General Conference. This will provide recourse to those in seemingly irreparable disunity and also provide the

discipline of denominational self-examination.

It is our desire to work together in spiritual unity with all of God's people as was demonstrated by the apostles and the early church fathers and to remain obedient to the commands of our Lord. We pray that we may fulfill the mission of the Churches of God, General Conference by making more and better disciples, and more importantly, demonstrating lives that reflect the glory of God and the grace of His Son Jesus Christ.

## **WITHDRAWAL PROCESS**

Any local congregation considering the withdrawal from the Churches of God, General Conference or her conferences shall be guided by the following process:

1. Prior to calling a congregational meeting for the purpose of taking any action leading to withdrawal from the Churches of God, General Conference, the official local church leadership shall notify its local conference in writing of its intention to call such a meeting and provide written grounds for its intention.
2. The local conference, through representatives appointed for such purpose, shall respond to and meet with the official local church leadership within a period not to exceed six (6) weeks after receipt of the written notification. The purpose of this meeting is to hear the issues of concern and to seek timely reconciliation. Subsequent meetings may be called by mutual consent.
3. If the official local church leadership still desires to withdraw, said leadership will issue a written call for a congregational meeting in accordance with the local church's constitution and by-laws. The written call shall contain the local church leadership's recommendation. It will also contain the local conference's response in writing. Furthermore, the local church shall notify the local conference officials of any and all congregational meetings that are called to discuss withdrawal and allow them to participate.
4. During the congregational meetings, conference officials will be given ample opportunity to address the congregation and present their response and position. They will also be permitted to speak prior to any vote for withdrawal being taken.
5. Any vote for withdrawal will require an 80% affirmation of the voting members present at a duly convened congregational meeting. Said voting will be done by confidential written ballot. Local conference officials may observe the voting process and tabulation. They will also be permitted to inspect the ballots for written comments.
6. If the vote of the congregation favors withdrawal by the required 80%, the official local church leadership shall call an additional congregational meeting to be held not less than six (6) months in the future. During this period of time, all parties shall commit to fasting and prayer regarding the potential withdrawal.
7. At the subsequent congregational meeting an affirmation ballot will be presented. If said ballot reaffirms the previous action to withdrawal by an 80% affirmation of the voting members present, the following actions will be taken in a timely manner:
  - a. The local church and the local conference officials will contact their respective attorneys to prepare necessary documents and to gather and disburse any settlements that may apply.
  - b. The local conference officials will then present the appropriate documents which will release all denominational claims on the local church property. The local church will provide the appropriate documents that indicate they have satisfied any outstanding financial obligation to the local conference, the General Conference, or their related agencies.
  - c. Upon completion of this process, the formal severance of this church from the Churches of God, General Conference shall be complete. All parties will be released from any and all liabilities and obligations to the other.

8. During the time of potential withdrawal, the local church shall honor its obligations to the local conference, General Conference and their related agencies (i.e. tithing, mortgage payments, etc.)
9. Individual members of the local church who wish to remain in fellowship with the Churches of God, General Conference, will be placed on a roll and the local conference will arrange for the oversight of those continuing members.
10. If either vote is not satisfied by the 80% requirement for withdrawal, the local church and the local conference will begin a process of reconciliation.

In the event the local church fails to comply with the terms and conditions of this Withdrawal process, or fails to obtain the required 80% affirmative vote for withdrawal, then the Churches of God, General Conference (and the intermediate judicatory or conference having jurisdiction) shall retain and assert all of its rights, title and interest in and to the local church property as provided in the Constitution of the Churches of God, General Conference.

(This policy was approved at 2004 General Conference Session and adopted by the Allegheny Region Conference Delegates in Session, May 2005)

**SUGGESTED  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES  
ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

**ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE  
CHURCHES OF GOD, GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**PREFACE**

This constitutes the Allegheny Region Conference's Suggested Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct which was reviewed and includes recommendations by the General Conference, Attorney James R. Gaut, Greensburg, PA and the Legal Department of Church Mutual Insurance Company, Merrill, Wisconsin.

This document is not to be construed as the official policy for all Allegheny Region Conference churches and entities but only as a suggested model.

The Allegheny Region Conference Sessions held July 27-29, 1993 granted the Administrative Council the privilege of updating this Suggested Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct according to recommendations by legal counsel and/or changes in State law.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction .....	C-20
Policy Statement .....	C-20
Purposes of Policy.....	C-20
Standards of Conduct.....	C-20
Definitions .....	C-21
Prevention and Risk Reduction Measures.....	C-23
Screening Of All Workers .....	C-23
Supervision/Guidelines.....	C-23
Training/Education .....	C-24
Sexual Awareness Questionnaire .....	C-25
Procedures .....	C-26
Receiving Initial Reports .....	C-26
Subsequent Reporting.....	C-26
Designated Spokesperson .....	C-26
Sexual Misconduct Response Task Force.....	C-26
Restoration Process.....	C-28
Belief Statement.....	C-28
Basic Principles.....	C-29
Needs Of All Involved.....	C-29
References .....	C-32
Appendix 1 - Pennsylvania.....	C-33
Appendix 2 - Maryland.....	C-34
Appendix 3 - West Virginia.....	C-35
Appendix 4 - Screening Form and Criminal Records Form.....	C-37
Appendix 5 - Reference Contact Form .....	C-41

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

We believe and proclaim that all people are created by God. God values all human life and intends that everyone - men, women and children - have worth and dignity in all relationships.

We believe in justice for all persons. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of power and trust, therefore, unjust. A betrayal of trust is more than just a personal tragedy for the victim. It reflects a tragic breakdown in the character of the abuser that seriously threatens, not only those immediately affected, but the well-being of the church itself.

We believe that we have the responsibility to protect all persons whom we are called to serve. The expectation of persons served, is that church leaders will use the power and the intimacy of their roles with integrity, sensitivity, and caring. Any use of this relationship to gain sexual favors, or to sexually harass another is abusive, exploitative, unjust, and incompatible with the sacred nature of the role.

## **II. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Allegheny Region Conference proclaims that sexual misconduct is wrong and that charges of misconduct must be dealt with fairly, in timely fashion, and with compassion for both the accused and the victim.

It is the policy of the Allegheny Region Conference that all ministers, Conference and church officers, church members, youth leaders, camp staff, paid employees (members and non-members) and volunteers not engage in sexual misconduct as defined in this policy. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the principles set forth in scripture and is never permissible. Further, it is the policy of this Conference that charges of sexual misconduct be treated with the seriousness they deserve and dealt with promptly and fairly for the benefit of all parties concerned. In keeping with American law and tradition, the presumption of innocence regarding the accused must be respected.

## **III. PURPOSES OF POLICY**

The purpose of this Policy is to make clear the Conference's position on sexual misconduct and to establish the procedures to be followed in investigating and resolving an incidence where misconduct is alleged to have occurred.

The Conference is concerned and offers these guidelines that will assure that appropriate steps are taken to investigate and remedy incidents of misconduct, to care for all persons involved, and to provide information to help prevent future instances of abuse. We are also aware that we must consider not only the needs of accuser/victim and offenders, but also those in employment settings, where misconduct has occurred.

The Allegheny Region Conference seeks to offer guidance in the kind of behavior appropriate to the role and responsibilities of church leadership, to suggest procedures for accountability when allegations of misconduct are made, and to assure appropriate physical, emotional, and spiritual care for all involved.

## **IV. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT:**

But as the One who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.

Tend - nurture, guard, guide and fold - the flock of God that is (your responsibility), not by coercion or constraint but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits (belonging to the office) but eagerly and cheerfully. Not (as arrogant, dictatorial and overbearing persons) domineering over those in your charge, but being examples - patterns and models of Christian living - to the flock (the congregation).

For you know that we (teachers) will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity (than other people). - Thus we assume the greater accountability and the more condemnation.

Teach what is fitting and becoming to sound (wholesome) doctrine—the character and right living that identify true Christians. And show your own self in all respects to be a pattern and a model of good deeds and works, teaching what is unadulterated, showing gravity—[that is] having the strictest regard for truth and purity of motive, with dignity and seriousness. And let your instruction be sound and fit and wise and wholesome, vigorous and irrefutable and above censure, so that the opponent may be put to shame, finding nothing discrediting or evil to say about us.

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in and acknowledge and cleave to Me to stumble and sin—that is, who entices him, or hinders him in right conduct or thought—it would be better (more expedient and profitable or advantageous) for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for such temptations to sin and influences to do wrong! It is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the person on whose account or by whom the temptations comes!

I Peter 1:15, 5:2-3, James 3:1, Titus 2:1, 7-8, Matthew 18:6-7 (Amplified)

The ethical conduct of all who lead in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church, because through representatives, an understanding of God and the good news of the gospel is conveyed. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.

## V. DEFINITIONS:

**Accused** is the term used to represent the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is made.

**Accuser/Victim** is a term used to represent the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy or a person claiming to have been abused by a person covered under this policy. The accuser/victim may or may not have been the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct. A person such as a family member, friend, or colleague may be the accuser.

**Child Sexual Abuse** includes, but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always inappropriate whether or not consented to by the child.

1. The precise legal definition of child sexual abuse or molestation varies from state to state, but in general includes any form of sexual conduct or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. In a more common sense, child sexual abuse is:

*"Any sexual activity with a child - whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person known or unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim."* (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992)

State of Pennsylvania Definition and Reporting Requirements - See Appendix 1.

State of Maryland Definition and Reporting Requirements - See Appendix 2.

State of West Virginia Definition and Reporting Requirements – See Appendix 3.

"Child" means any individual under the ages of 18 years.

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse behaviors involving touching include: Fondling; oral, genital and anal penetration; intercourse or forcible rape. Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include: verbal comments, pornographic pictures or videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

2. Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse or Molestation:

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below (Sloan, 1983).

Physical signs may include: nightmares; irritation, pain or injury to the genital area; difficulty with urination; discomfort when sitting; torn or bloody underclothing; or venereal disease.

Behavioral signs may include: anxiety when approaching church, classroom or specific area; nervous or hostile behavior toward adults; sexual self-consciousness; "acting-out" of sexual behavior, or withdrawal from church activities and friends.

Verbal signs (younger child) may include the following statements: I don't like [a particular church worker]; [a church worker] does things to me when we're alone; I don't like to be alone with [a church worker]; or [a church worker] fooled around with me.

**Employee** is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for salary or wages.

**Entity** is the term used to refer to any program or office managed by a board, church, committee, council, or other body whose membership is chosen by a governing body.

**Governing Body** is a representative body composed of laity and/or clergy. A governing body may establish entities such as conference centers, camps, retirement centers, homes for older persons, groups for youth (CGYA), women (CGWM) men, etc.

**Persons Covered** by this policy include church members, church officers, ministers and non-members who are employees or volunteers under the supervision of governing bodies or entities. This includes those who are accused of sexual misconduct under circumstances in which access to the accuser/victim is related to some form of service to, or appointment by governing bodies or entities of the Conference.

**Response** is the action taken by the governing body or entity when a report of sexual misconduct is received. It may include inquiry into facts and circumstances, possible disciplinary action (administrative or judicial or both), pastoral care for accuser/victim and their families and others, and pastoral care and rehabilitation for the accused and care for their families.

Most states require that if you suspect abuse or neglect of children, you are obligated to report it. There are criminal penalties for failure to respond.

**Secular Authorities** are the governmental bodies, whether city, county, state or federal, who are given the responsibility to investigate, criminally prosecute, and/or bring civil charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or offenses against adults and children.

**Sexual Harassment** is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition of an individual's employment or their continued status in an institution. If submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment, it's considered harassment.

**Sexual Misconduct** is the comprehensive term used in this policy and its procedures to include child sexual abuse; sexual harassment; rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation; vicarious sexual conduct (such as offensive, obscene or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching, adultery, fornication and sexual abuse). None of these are ever appropriate behavior, whether or not consent is given or implied.

**Volunteer** is the term used for those who provide services for governing bodies and entities of the conference and church and receive no benefits or remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are treated the same as employees. Liabilities of the governing body entity may be the same for volunteers as for employees.

## VI. PREVENTION AND RISK REDUCTION MEASURES

Prevention is essential in dealing with the issue of sexual misconduct. An effective risk reduction program protects all people from personal harm and allows the vitality and effectiveness of the church to be undaunted. Therefore, the best line of defense is the preventive strategy.

#### A. SCREENING OF ALL WORKERS - BOTH PAID AND VOLUNTEER

To insure adequate legal safeguards, the Conference and Conference entities must follow an effective screening program. As an organization, the Conference depends upon both employees and volunteers.

Each component of the procedure shall be completed before the person begins work. This includes both paid employees and volunteer workers. These procedures shall be completed retroactively for current paid employees and volunteer workers. All components shall be kept on file indefinitely.

1. Formal Application - All applicants should complete an employment application whether the "job" is for pay or on a volunteer basis. It should include all previous employment, dates, titles, and reasons for leaving. Names and addresses of schools attended, and references from previous employers and organizations are necessary.
2. The Screening Form (see Appendix 4) shall be used with all applicants and workers, Conference or Camp, full-time or part-time, compensated or volunteers, clergy or laity, according to the guidelines set forth below.
3. Formal Interview - Interviews should be conducted by a responsible staff member or selection committee. Ask about the hopes, dreams, and fears of each candidate.
4. Reference checks - Make a written record of contacts with all references and previous churches or employers. Pay particular attention to prior experiences with women/men, children or youth.
5. Criminal History Check - State law may require a criminal history check when working with children. There must be compliance with the state and local laws regarding child care workers.
6. **BE AWARE** - it is strongly recommended not using anyone confirmed as a child sexual abuser. It has become accepted in the legal field that a pedophile is generally not treatable. A process of reconciliation or restoration may satisfy us, but not a plaintiff's attorney.

#### B. SUPERVISION/GUIDELINES:

Having a well-developed set of guidelines will protect most children and adults. These guidelines should apply to paid employees and volunteers as an effort to avoid a situation where sexual abuse could occur or allegations could be made.

1. The Two-Adult Role -- Never leave one child and one adult alone. This protects both the worker and the child. It is a safety net for false charges. One of the adults should be over 21 years of age. If two adults cannot be present, then the activity (including counseling) shall take place out in the open where they are visible to other people.
2. Windows in classroom & office doors -- All doors to classrooms or offices should have windows. If this is not possible, then the door should be left open during use.
3. Six-Month Rule -- Volunteers should actively attend church for a period of six months. This policy will help repel persons wanting access to children and gives an opportunity for an assessment of the volunteer.
4. Adequate Staff -- Make sure there is adequate staff at all youth and children's programs.
5. Parental Permission -- If the adult employee or volunteer has reason to be alone with a child or youth, parental consent is necessary.

6. Report Suspicious Behavior Immediately

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between a paid employee or volunteer worker and a child or youth shall be reported to the appropriate Conference authority and the person confronted immediately and the situation investigated. Prompt warnings shall be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The individual's services shall be terminated immediately for continued violation of such warnings, or for a single violation of sufficient gravity. Staff should note when a child or youth appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention.

7. The Molester who has had a "Born Again" Religious Conversion

Occasionally, an individual who has been guilty of child molestation in the past freely admits to a prior incident, but insists that they have since had a "born again" conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatever. Such an individual shall be encouraged to serve, but not in a position involving access to children or youth.

Permitting such an individual to work with children or youth, on the basis of a professed "born again" conversion, will put the Conference in a virtually indefensible position should another incident of abuse or molestation occur. The defense, "that the molester claimed to have been converted", would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Thus, placing a known child molester in a position involving access to children or youth is taking an enormous risk and shall not be allowed.

C. TRAINING/EDUCATION:

The goal of training and educating is recommended to provide a safe environment for the children and staff.

1. Answer the SEXUAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE on next page.
2. Define Sexual Misconduct by studying the definitions in Section IV of this Policy.
3. View the video "Reducing the Risk" and follow with discussion. (See Resource List)
4. Share portions of this Policy appropriate for your group.
5. Respond to the following discussion question.

What would be your response if a mother called and reported that her child had been sexually abused in one of the Conference programs? Discuss your reaction and how it would affect you, the Conference, the church, and this family. Remind the group that the purpose of this Policy and class is to reduce the risk of this situation happening.

## SEXUAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false

1. It has been said that because of the stringent rules with many volunteer organizations, sexual offenders are migrating to the local church for easier access to children and youth.
2. Civil lawsuits involving sexual abuse and sexual misconduct are almost commonplace today; yet, many churches, church schools, and other religious organizations still refuse to believe that it could ever happen to them.
3. Churches usually screen their workers for potential abusers.
4. Most child molesters are males.
5. Sexual abuse victims seldom suffer long term effects.
6. By age 18, one out of five abusers have begun their activity.
7. When an individual is terminated in one church or school, he will seldom seek employment in the same setting in a different state.
8. A child molester may have over 500 victims in a life time.
9. Church leaders may be liable for sexual misconduct cases.
10. In some states sexual child abuse is not a criminal offense.
11. Strangers make up the majority of child abusers.

### CORRECT ANSWERS

- |      |      |       |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. T | 5. F | 9. T  |
| 2. T | 6. T | 10. F |
| 3. F | 7. F | 11. F |
| 4. T | 8. T |       |

## **VII. PROCEDURES:**

### **A. RECEIVING INITIAL REPORTS**

Reports of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways. Because an individual church or entity of the Conference cannot control to whom the accuser of sexual misconduct will first speak, it is important that all church leaders and employees understand how reports of incidents are to be channeled to the proper person.

Reports of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused and of the Church. Reports should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as defined by this Policy and/or the law.

All persons covered by this Suggested Policy have a particular duty to report sexual misconduct and must comply with state and local laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected child sexual abuse.

The accused shall not be confronted until the safety of the child or youth is secured.

Allegations shall be taken seriously without prejudging the situation. The victim and the accused shall be treated with dignity and support.

The state has mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse. For PA see Appendix 1; for MD see Appendix 2; For W. VA see Appendix 3. In addition, check with state agency to obtain the up-to-date information.

### **B. SUBSEQUENT REPORTING**

The person receiving the initial report of sexual misconduct from the accuser shall encourage and/or assist the accuser in submitting a written report concerning the incident to the ARC Director, the Conference President, or the Chairperson of the Pastoral Guidance Commission. In cases where the incident is related to Camp Sunrise Mountain, the President of Camp Sunrise Mountain, Board of Directors, (hereinafter referred to as the Camp Board) shall be notified, and if the incident is related to the ARC sponsored camping program the Chairperson of the Christian Education Commission shall be notified.

After consultation with at least two of these designated persons - (named above) - to verify this written report does constitute a possible instance of sexual misconduct - a Sexual Misconduct Task Force will be appointed.

### **C. DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSON**

The ARC Director shall be the designated Spokesperson, under legal counsel, to speak to the media and the congregation regarding the incident in a discrete, informed and diplomatic way. If the ARC Director is unavailable or is accused, the Conference President shall be the designated Spokesperson, under legal counsel. A designated Spokesperson is to reduce the risk of conflicting and contradictory statements that could happen if there are several spokespersons, particularly when interviewed by the media.

The Spokesperson, with legal counsel, shall develop a clear position statement regarding our sexual misconduct policy and established safeguards for release to the media. It shall be made known that we take this risk seriously, and that we have acted responsibly.

This is no time for silence, "no comment", denial, minimization of an incident, blaming someone, or give out the details of an accusation. Care must be given to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

The Spokesperson shall always have our attorney present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies.

### **D. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESPONSE TASK FORCE**

The Sexual Misconduct Response Task Force (hereinafter referred to as the Task Force) is a group of people

appointed by the Conference to respond to reports of sexual misconduct. The Task Force will work with and be available to the accuser, the accused, the alleged victim (if not the same as the accuser), the families involved, the congregation and to the Conference.

The Task Forces' primary responsibility is to be an advocate to all parties and to meet their specific needs. Its task is not to decide guilt or innocence. That responsibility is left to secular authorities. The Task Force shall be as objective as possible, and do its work with sensitivity and loving care for the parties involved in the allegations, including respect for the presumption of innocence that is the right of the accused under American law and tradition.

The Task Force and its chairperson are appointed by the Conference President from a pool of qualified persons identified by the Administrative Council. If the President is accused, the Vice President shall appoint the Task Force.

The Task Force shall be composed of no fewer than five persons and, ideally, should include or be in close contact with a trained psychological counselor, a trained legal professional and a trained insurance professional. When possible, the Task Force should have both genders, but the majority should be of the same gender as the alleged victim.

The Task Force must be given a copy of this Suggested Policy and Procedures to respond to allegations of sexual misconduct. Task Force members must be familiar with the legal, administrative, and disciplinary procedures of the Church.

1. Responsibilities of the Task Force:
  - a. Document all efforts at handling the incident.
  - b. Meet on the call of the appointed chairperson as soon as possible, but not later than seven (7) days after receiving the report alleging sexual misconduct.
  - c. The Task Force shall receive a copy of the written report of the incident.
  - d. Confirm that civil authorities, our insurance company, our attorney, General Conference officials, and the parents have been notified.
  - e. The Task Force or at least two members from it will meet with the principal parties to the allegations in order to identify the ways in which the Task Force can be helpful and supportive during the process. All meetings with the accuser/victim and accused should be held with great sensitivity.
  - f. A local church council or entity shall be notified soon after the Task Force begins its investigation of alleged misconduct and prior to submission of the Task Force's final report.
  - g. If it appears that local mediation or counseling is appropriate and would bring justice and peace to the parties involved, this action may be recommended by the Task Force. A written report by the Task Force must be given to the ARC President and ARC Director (and President of the Camp Board if applicable) so that follow-up is assured. Caution must be exercised to assure that this provision of the Conference's policy is not used to make real problems just "go away."
  - h. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the initial complaint, a written report of the Task Force's findings (not conclusions on the guilt or innocence of the involved parties) will be submitted to the appropriate governing body (Administrative Council, Camp Board or Church Council) for action. The report will include the following:
    - (1) names of the parties involved;
    - (2) governing body of the parties involved;
    - (3) allegations made by the accuser;
    - (4) response made by the accused;

- (5) findings and conclusions;
- (6) suggested further actions to be taken by the governing body.

- i. Be available to the parties involved to hear their concerns throughout the inquiry and disciplinary process.
- j. Work within the established procedures for discipline in the Conference Manual.
- k. Recommend actions for the care and restoration of the accuser/victim, the accused, their families, and the congregations of all parties involved. See Section on "Restoration Process".

2. Released from Responsibilities/Positions

If the accused holds any responsibilities/positions in the Conference or its entity he/she shall immediately be released from all responsibilities/positions, (if a pastor, the employer shall continue to pay 100% of the salary and benefits for at least 60 days). The Task Force may at any time recommend that an employee's income and/or benefits shall be maintained, suspended or further adjusted until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

3. Record Keeping

The Task Force will keep all records confidential, including detailed records of its actions and minutes of its deliberations and its conversations with the accuser, accused and other parties involved. After the case has been resolved, all records will be forwarded to the ARC Director where they will be marked "**CONFIDENTIAL**" and securely stored. No separate records shall be maintained after the confidential material has been turned over to the ARC Director.

## VIII. RESTORATION PROCESS

### A. BELIEF STATEMENT

We believe we are so linked with each other and our God that we must use great care in approaching any member whose behavior has been called into question. "My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." (Gal. 6:1)

Through any proceedings designed to deal with unethical behavior, we must exercise mercy as well as judgment. Mercy needs to be the hallmark of our dealing with victims as well as perpetrators. One cannot use the guise of mercy to address serious victimization of another lightly and then ignore its damaging reality in the community of faith. To overlook abusive use of leadership positions would signal to victims and potential victims that the church condones such behavior.

No matter how earnest we may be in our desire to live fully ethical lives, we also may fall. We need only to recall how "Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.'" (Mark 14:29-31. Paul, too, cautioned us, "So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall." (Cor. 10:12). These scriptures call us to remember our covenantal relationship when dealing with one who commits an unethical act. How we correct one another is as important as verifying whether the alleged behavior took place.

Drastic measures may have to be taken because of the seriousness of the misconduct. Simon of Samaria aspired to leadership in the church, but demonstrated a dangerously abusive attitude toward authority and power. Scripture tells us he was challenged, describes his repentance, but then never mentions him again. Scripture intimates, however, that he remained part of the church (Acts 8:9-24). Some actions may make a leadership role unredeemable even though the person may be forgiven. Restoration in the body of Christ may not always include a restoration into formal leadership roles.

Not all ethical misconduct necessitates giving up leadership roles in the church, however. Defining the

differences in degree of misconduct will have to be contextually determined. Because we recognize that all of us are sinners, we also recognize that under circumstances of full repentance a leader might be restored and again be useful to Christ. "If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work" (2 Tim. 2:21 RSV).

Paul stated that a leader should be "blameless and above reproach" (I Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:7). This qualification refers to the leader's ongoing present status, not to his/her past or future. The issue is whether a person's past sins create a permanent effect on his/her character that cannot be erased, therefore disqualifying him/her from leadership. It's important not to deny the possibility of genuine repentance and forgiveness, as well as of progressive spiritual growth.

Another qualification is the leader's reputation with those outside the church (I Tim. 3:7). The world judges the church by the character and conduct of its leaders, bringing into play the past quality of a man's life, which in turn affects his/her present reputation. This passage does not mandate permanent disqualification of a leader, provided he/she corrects the deficiency and goes on to meet the requirements.

Sexual immorality is a very serious sin, to be sure, but it is not an unforgivable sin. Restoration to leadership, however, is more difficult. If his/her reputation cannot be rehabilitated along with his/her life, the person continuing in leadership brings dishonor to the church and to the cause of Christ. If both the life and reputation can be rehabilitated, though, the prospects for restoration are more promising.

## B. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Conduct guiding this policy are as follows:

- 1) Sexual misconduct is a violation of the role of pastors, employees, volunteers, counselors, supervisors, teachers, and advisors of any kind who are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship. It breaks the covenant to act in the best interests of parishioners, clients, co-workers, and students.
- 2) Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantages over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the parishioner, student, client, or employee initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the pastor's, counselor's, officer's or supervisors' responsibility to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship.
- 3) Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of children and persons who are less powerful to act for their own welfare. It is contrary to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. It violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

## C. NEEDS OF ALL INVOLVED

In case of sexual misconduct there are needs that have to be met for the good of all persons, groups and entities. To ensure that the governing body is ready to meet the variety of needs present, a Task Force shall be named and its membership clearly publicized (see pages CA10-11). This team will not investigate the allegation or in any way function as a special disciplinary committee, but should confine itself to coordinating a process that will meet the specific needs of the situation. In cases of sexual misconduct, these are the needs of accuser/victims and their families (if any), the accused and family (if any), employing entities, congregations, and governing bodies.

### 1. The Needs of the Accuser/Victim

The governing body, employing entity and Task Force shall assure that adequate treatment and care are available for alleged victim of sexual misconduct and their families. Sometimes, the victim or family is so angry and alienated from the church, that offers of help may be perceived as insincere or as attempts of a cover-up. If the accuser/victim or family at first refuses, the church should not act in a self-protective manner by ignoring the accuser/victim and their families.

The extent of the damage to the accuser/victim of sexual misconduct will vary from person to person, and is influenced by such factors as the degree of severity of abuse, the age and emotional condition of the victim, human dynamics, and the importance of one's religious faith. The governing body, entity, and Task Force is to assume in all cases that the accuser/victim has been wounded by the experience.

Feelings of guilt, shame, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are frequent injuries suffered by accuser/victims. It is important for the Task Force to be sensitive to the victim's pain and need for healing, and to act by making appropriate pastoral care available.

The accuser/victim needs to be heard and taken seriously. From the time that accuser/victim is first able to indicate that sexual misconduct has occurred, that person should receive immediate attention and serious consideration from all church representatives.

To receive pastoral and therapeutic support. The accuser/victim may require spiritual and professional assistance as a result of sexual misconduct. The Task Force should offer to help arrange for such support from a pastor and therapist, if the accuser/victim desires. Discussion with such people would be confidential, privileged conversations.

To be informed about the process and progress with regard to the accusation. One member of the Task Force should be the church contact person for the accuser/victim. Frequently, this contact person for the accuser/victim will give the accuser/victim information as to what is happening in the church as a result of the accusation.

To receive legal advice. The Task Force should suggest that the accuser/victim might benefit from independent legal advice. (Legitimate claims might be more effectively pursued and flimsy or false claims discouraged.) If requested, the Task Force should suggest ways in which independent legal advice can be obtained.

To be assured of an advocate of one's own choosing. An accuser/victim may need continuing moral support from one individual who is present while the Task Force deals with the accusation. This advocate may be a relative, friend, or someone suggested by the Task Force. The advocate could speak for the accuser/victim, if necessary.

To receive restitution. The accuser/victim may simply wish to report sexual misconduct, but often some form of restitution is wanted. The Task Force can suggest that the accuser/victim work out with the individual's pastor or therapist exactly what restitution is sought--for instance, financial compensation, removal from office of the accused, admission and apology from the accused, etc.

To be assured that justice will be pursued. The accuser/victim needs to be told by the Task Force, and shown by the processes of the church, that justice is being pursued through fact-finding, truth telling, confrontation, and agreement that may include removal or temporary exclusion of the accused from office.

To receive healing and reconciliation. In addition to specific forms of restitution mentioned above, the accuser/victim needs to receive a sense of healing and reconciliation with all concerned--the self, the family, the church and, ideally, the accused. The Task Force can help bring this about by using the church's process and resources. While the above are needs of the accuser/victim, one recognizes that all of these needs may also not be met through a reasonable handling of a specific case, but may only occur over a lengthier period of time. All of these needs, however, should be taken seriously and compassionately, and the rights of the accuser/victim respected.

## 2. The Needs of the Accused

The governing body or entity shall offer treatment and care for the accused as well as alleged victims and families. If the accused is a minister or other paid professional, it should be the responsibility of the Administrative Council in conjunction with the governing body of the local church to appoint a restoration team and design a process for restoration of the accused. (Resources to aid in designing a restoration

process are included in the General Conference document.)

Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, depression, unworthiness, and a feeling of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are often experienced by the accused. In addition, there may be fear of job loss, incarceration, and indignation if an allegation is false.

If a person is acquitted of charges, it is important for the governing body or entity to see that the acquittal is disseminated as widely as possible within their power, unless doing so would further injure the person falsely accused.

If the accused is clergy or other paid professional of the church and is found guilty, it is recommended that:

- a. The Administrative Council appoint a Restoration Team consisting of the following persons who are gifted and respected for his/her counseling abilities: a pastor who will lead in the restoration process of the individual, a maximum of two persons in leadership of the restoring pastor's church, and one member of the Administrative Council.
  - b. The offender will be assigned to the restoring pastor who will lead him/her through the restoration process. Attendance at the restoring pastor's church should be required.
  - c. All ministerial credentials must be surrendered and all services and compensation severed immediately. The offender will refrain from all leadership responsibilities for a minimum of two years. The reinstatement of credentials will only be considered upon the written request of the Restoration Team to the Administrative Council.
  - d. The leadership of the "restoring pastor's church" will be informed of the restoration process for reason of support to the process.
  - e. The offender and family (if any) will consent to professional counseling as needed.
3. The Needs of the Family Members of the Accused

The family members deserve attention and sensitivity to the hurt and pain that they are experiencing.

- a. During the investigation, the needs of the spouse and family members should be assessed and support provided, including referral to a competent professional counselor for the family.
  - b. Whenever possible, a follow-up meeting should be made available to communicate the continued support of the church and to assess whether there is more they can do to help.
4. The Needs of Hurting Congregations

When a decision is made regarding the offender the Administrative Council has the responsibility to prescribe and implement a restoration process for the hurting congregation. Following are some guidelines to begin the process:

- a. When a decision is made regarding the offender, the Administrative Council will appoint a committee of at least two persons to meet with and inform the leaders of the congregation and interpret that decision to them.
- b. The congregational leaders will be encouraged to deal with the issue openly and to discuss with its members such details of the case as needed to clarify the reasons for the Administrative Council's actions.
- c. The Administrative Council will also provide the congregation assistance in developing a program of healing and reconciliation and recommend professional resource people.

- d. The Conference will aid the local church in finding an interim pastor who is gifted in counseling and restoration.
- e. A 12 month follow-up session will be scheduled to assess the reconciliation process.

5. FINAL COMMENT

The church that is successful in its restoration process is God's design for restoring the body individually and corporately.

*"Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual--who are responsive to and controlled by the spirit--should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also." (Galatians 6:1, Amplified New Testament)*

### REFERENCES

Church Law and Tax Reports "Informational Support Program"

Hammar, Richard R.; Klipowicz, Steven W. and Cobble, James F. Jr. Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church. Church Law & Tax Report, Christian Ministry Resources, Matthews, NC, 1993.

Suggested Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct (see Resource List) Churches of God, General Conference, 1995.

## APPENDIX I

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### STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

#### I. DEFINITION

"An abused child is defined as a child under 18 years of age who is a victim of serious non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or physical neglect caused by the parents, a person responsible for the child's welfare, any individual residing in the same home as the child, or a parents paramour."

#### II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Child Protective Services Law requires mandatory reports from physicians, osteopaths, medical examiners, coroners, funeral directors, dentists, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, interns, both R.N.'s and L.P.N.'s and hospital employees, Christian Science practitioners, school administrators, teachers and nurses, social service workers, day-care center or child-care workers, mental health professionals, and officers of the law. The reports are to be made immediately by phone to the Department of Public Welfare to be followed in writing within 48 hours. The penalty for failure to make such a report is a summary offense before a District Magistrate for the first violation and a misdemeanor of the third degree for second and subsequent violations. There is a provision in the act regulating the hiring of all prospective employees of child-care services, day-care services, etc. These require screening by the Pennsylvania State Police and of a central register kept by the Department of Public Welfare.

"A report of suspected abuse may be made to the ChildLine and Abuse Registry, 1-800-932-0313, the toll-free 24 hour telephone line established by law to receive reports of suspected child abuse - or one of the county children and youth social service agencies. Mandated reporters, those persons who in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession come in contact with children, must report to ChildLine when they have reason to believe, on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them has been abused."

[Disclaimer: This information was received by the Allegheny Region Conference Office from the PA Department of Public Welfare, on April 3, 1993. Under no circumstances should it be relied upon to have the latest additions or reversions without the express, written advice of a qualified attorney.]

## APPENDIX 2

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### STATE OF MARYLAND DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

#### I. DEFINITION

1. "Abuse" means the physical injury of a child, under the age of 18 years, by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care of custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by an household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is significantly harmed or at risk of being significantly harmed."

2. "Sexual Abuse" means any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child, under the age of 18 years, by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member. 'Sexual Abuse' includes: incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree; sodomy; and unnatural or perverted sexual practices."

#### II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

"Each health practitioner, police officer, or educator or human service workers (i.e., any teacher; and counselor; any social worker; any caseworker; and any probation or parole officer) shall notify the local department of Family & Children's Services or the appropriate law enforcement agency; or if acting as a staff member of a hospital, public health agency, child case institution, juvenile detention center, school or similar institution, immediately notify and give all information required by this section to the head of the institution or the designed of the head".

"An individual who notifies the appropriate authorities shall make:

- (i) an oral report, by telephone or direct communication, as soon as possible:
  - 1. to the local department of Family & Children's Services or appropriate law enforcement agency if the person has reason to believe that the child has been subjected to abuse.
- (ii) a written report:
  - 1. to the local department of Family & Children's Services not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse; and
  - 2. with a copy to the local State's Attorney if the individual has reason to believe that the child has been subjected to abuse."

"Contents of report. - Insofar as is reasonably possible, an individual who makes a report under this section shall include in the report the following information:

- (1) the name, age and home address of the child;
- (2) the name and home address of the child's parent or other person who is responsible for the child's care;
- (3) the whereabouts of the child;
- (4) the nature and extent of the abuse of the child; including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of abuse; and
- (5) any other information that would help determine:
  - (i) the cause of the suspected abuse; and
  - (ii) the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse."

[Disclaimer: This information was received by the Allegheny Region Conference Office from the Office of Family & Children's Services, Family Preservation, 311 W. Saratoga Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; Phone 410-333-0221 on March 26, 1993. Under no circumstances should it be relied upon to have the latest additions or reversions without the express, written advice of a qualified attorney.]

## APPENDIX 3

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### STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

#### I. DEFINITION

"Child" means any person under eighteen years of age."

"Abused child" means a child whose health or welfare is harmed or threatened by:

- (1) A parent, guardian or custodian who knowingly or intentionally inflicts, attempts to inflict, or knowingly allows another person to inflict, physical injury, or mental or emotional injury, upon the child or another child in the home; or
- (2) Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

In addition to its broader meaning, physical injury may include an injury to the child as a result of excessive corporal punishment."

"Child abuse and neglect" or "child abuse or neglect" means physical injury, mental or emotional injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sale or attempted sale, or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a parent, guardian, or custodian who is responsible for the child's welfare, under circumstances which harm or threaten the health and welfare of the child."

"Sexual abuse" means:

- (a) As to a child who is less than sixteen years of age, any of the following acts which a parent, guardian or custodian shall engage in, attempt to engage in, or knowingly procure another person to engage in, with such child, notwithstanding the fact that the child may have willingly participated in such conduct or the fact that the child may have suffered no apparent physical injury or mental or emotional injury as a result of such conduct:
  - (i) Sexual intercourse; or
  - (ii) Sexual intrusion; or
  - (iii) Sexual contact; or
- (b) As to a child who is sixteen years of age or older, any of the following acts which a parent, guardian, or custodian shall engage in, attempt to engage in, or knowingly procure another person to engage in, with such child, notwithstanding the fact that the child may have consented to such conduct or the fact that the child may have suffered no apparent physical injury or mental or emotional injury as a result of such conduct:
  - (i) Sexual intercourse; or
  - (ii) Sexual intrusion; or
  - (iii) Sexual contact; or
- (c) Any conduct whereby a parent, guardian or custodian displays his or her sex organs to a child, or procures another person to display his or her sex organs to a child, for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of the parent, guardian or custodian, of the person making such display, or of the child, or for the purpose of affronting or alarming the child."

#### II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

"When any medical, dental or mental health professional, Christian science practitioner, religious healer, school teacher or other school personnel, social service worker, child care or foster care worker, emergency medical services personnel, peace officer or law-enforcement official has the reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused or observes the child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect, such person shall immediately report the circumstances or cause a report to be made to the state department of human services: Provided, that any person required to report under this article who is a member of the staff of a public or private institution, school, facility or agency shall immediately notify the person in charge of such institution, school, facility or agency or a designated agent thereof, who

shall report or cause a report to be made. However, nothing in this article is intended to prevent individuals from reporting on their own behalf."

"In addition to those persons and officials specifically required to report situations involving suspected abuse or neglect of children, any other person may make a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected in a home or institution or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect."

"Reports of child abuse and neglect pursuant to this article shall be made immediately by telephone to the local state department child protective service agency and shall be followed by a written report within forty-eight hours if so requested by the receiving agency. The state department shall establish and maintain a twenty-four hour, seven-day-a-week telephone number to receive such calls reporting suspected or known child abuse or neglect."

[Disclaimer: This information was received by the Allegheny Region Conference Office from the West Virginia Department of Human Services, State Office Building No. 6, Charleston, WV 25305; Phone 304-558-7980 on April 5, 1993. Under no circumstances should it be relied upon to have the latest additions or revisions without the express, written advice of a qualified attorney.]

**APPENDIX 4**

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**ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE  
CHURCHES OF GOD, GENERAL CONFERENCE  
SCREENING FORM FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Note: Numbers correspond to explanatory notes immediately following the application.

- 1/ This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. This is used to help provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

**Personal**

2/ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

- 3/ Identity must be confirmed by attaching a photocopy of a state driver's license or other photographic identification.

Present address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the type of youth or children's work you prefer \_\_\_\_\_

- 4/ Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, a crime?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes (If yes, please explain, attach a separate page if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_ No

- 5/ Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you prefer you may discuss your answer in confidence with the ARC Director rather than answering it on this form. If you answer yes, or leave the question unanswered, it will not automatically disqualify the above named applicant for children or youth work.

**Church History and Prior Youth Work**

6/ Name of church of which you are a member: \_\_\_\_\_

List (name and address) other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

List all previous church work involving youth (list each church's name and address, type of work performed, and dates)

7/ List all previous non-church work involving youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed, and dates)

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for children or youth work: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal References (not relatives)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Statement**

8/ To the best of my knowledge the information in this application is correct. I authorize any references or churches to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children/youth work. I hereby release any individual, church, organization, employer or record custodians from any and all liability for damages of any kind which may result to me, or my family, on account of compliance with this authorization. Unless deemed necessary by the Conference, I will not ask to inspect the information provided about me in this Application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to abide by the Constitution and policies of the Allegheny Region Conference, Churches of God, General Conference, and will model the image of Christ and will avoid the appearance of unscriptural behavior in the performance of my services.

**I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.** This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

9/ Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization

I hereby request the \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions or any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release said Police Department from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print maiden name if applicable

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print all aliases

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's date

Record sent to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPLANATORY NOTES TO APPENDIX 4

Note: The following explanatory notes correspond to the numbers on the sample screening form, Appendix 4.

- 1/ The purpose of this application form is to provide a safe environment for the children and youth who participate in a church program. It should be placed in a confidential place.
- 2/ The form should be dated. It is advisable to have all workers complete a screening form periodically (once every year or so). This would catch changes in the screening form that are suggested by the most recent court decisions.
- 3/ A photocopy of a photo identification is necessary to confirm the identity of the applicant. Also the license number can be given to the church's insurance company to check on the applicant's driving record.
- 4/ Any record of crime should strongly indicate that this person should not be considered for work with young people in the church. Any hint of a sexual offense would certainly disqualify the applicant from consideration.
- 5/ This question refers to litigation suggesting that it is negligent for a church to hire children's workers without asking them if they were themselves victims of child abuse. An answer yes to this question, or if unanswered, the person should not automatically be disqualified from further consideration. Rather, this information simply imposes on the church a greater responsibility of care. If there is no record of any child abuse or molestation, or any other disqualifying crime, and if there is no other indication that the applicant poses a risk (from references or previous churches), then there is no reason why the person cannot be used.

This question can be deleted from the screening form and asked during an interview of an applicant for children's or youth work. All applicants should be interviewed for children's or youth work prior to using them in any church program or activity. If asked during an interview, it is essential to use a standardized and written list of questions. It is also important to identify the person who will conduct these interviews. Following the interview, there should be written notations on the interview form identifying the person who conducted the interview, the applicant who was interviewed, the date of the interview, and a summary of the applicant's responses to the questions.

- 6/ The church history background and previous experience are necessary to check the suitability of working with youth and young children. Check both the church and non-church experience to determine the extent of the applicant's involvement with young people. Personal references should be called and interviewed about any information they might be able to share.
- 7/ It is important to know if the applicant has worked with minors in any other organization outside of the church. If so, you should contact the other organization to determine the applicant's suitability for working with children and youth.
- 8/ This statement is very important in reducing the legal liability of the church and any references. The form should be signed in the presence of a witness who will also sign and date it with the applicant.
- 9/ It is not necessary to do a criminal records check on every applicant and worker. While the authorization should be signed, checks should be considered as an extraordinary procedure. It will allow for a check should any questions be raised about a particular worker or applicant.

**APPENDIX 5**

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**REFERENCE CONTACT FORM - CONFIDENTIAL**

**RECORD OF CONTACT WITH A REFERENCE OR CHURCH  
IDENTIFIED BY AN APPLICANT FOR YOUTH OR CHILDREN'S WORK**

Note: Numbers correspond to explanatory notes immediately following this form.

- (1) Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Reference or church contacted (if a church, identify both the church and person or minister contacted) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Date and time of contact \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Person contacting the reference or church \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Method of contact (e.g., telephone, letter, personal conversation) \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Summary of conversation (summarize the reference's or minister's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legible Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## EXPLANATORY NOTES TO APPENDIX 5

Note: the following explanatory notes correspond to the numbers on the sample form reproduced as Appendix 5.

- (1) List the name and address of each reference you contacted. If you are reporting a contact with another church, list the name and address of the church you contacted, along with the name of the person you spoke with in the church. Be sure to prepare a contact summary for each reference or church you contact.
- (2) Identify by name the person in your church who contacted the reference or the other church.
- (3) List the method used to contact the reference or the other church. Did you speak directly with the other person, use the telephone, or write a letter?
- (4) This is the most important information on the form. The person who contacted the reference of the other church summarizes the results of that contact. The ultimate question is whether or not the applicant is suitable for work with children or adolescent youth. The person contacting the reference or the other church should ask this question, and summarize the response on the form. If the person refuses to comment, be sure to note that on the form.
- (5) The person making the contact with the reference or the other church should sign the form, and list his or her position in the church. The date the form is completed should be noted.
- (6) Summarize the remarks made by the reference concerning the applicant's suitability for youth or children's work. If the reference has reservations about the applicant's suitability, be sure to note the facts that support the reference's reservations. Facts are of much more relevance than unsubstantiated opinions. Ask for the names of other persons who could verify the facts identified by the reference. For example, if the reference is aware of an incident of inappropriate contact with a child, were any witnesses present? Who were they? Some references may hesitate to provide you with information, particularly if it is negative. Read the applicant's statement at the end of the primary screening form. This authorizes the reference to comment on the applicant and releases the reference from liability for statements that are made.

**SUGGESTED  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES  
ON BLOOD AND/OR BODY FLUIDS**

**ALLEGHENY REGION CONFERENCE  
CHURCHES OF GOD, GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Preface**

This Policy and Procedures on Blood and Body Fluids (B/BF) sets forth the guidelines to prevent the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Hepatitis B (HBV) and other infectious diseases. The contents of this Policy and Procedures has been adapted from Universal Precautions that were in effect as of June 1993 and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The information contained herein is for the protection of everyone in the Allegheny Region Conference and her agencies.

This document was reviewed and includes recommendations by Attorney James R. Gaut, Greensburg, PA and by the Legal Department of Church Mutual Insurance Company, Merrill, Wisconsin.

The Allegheny Region Conference Sessions held July 27-29, 1993 grants the Administrative Council the privilege of updating this Policy and Procedures on Blood and Body Fluids according to recommendations by legal counsel, the Department of Health, and/or revisions in the Universal Precautions.

**Outline**

- A. Introduction and Goals
- B. Benefits of Universal Precautions
- C. Transmission Modes
- D. Objectives and Procedures for Universal Precautions in all Departments
  - 1. Hand washing
  - 2. Gloves
  - 3. Gowns or Plastic Aprons
  - 4. Masks and Protective Goggles
  - 5. Contact with blood or Body Fluids
  - 6. Cleaning of Blood or Body Fluid Spills
  - 7. Preparation of Specimens for Transportation
  - 8. Bagging/Disposal of Infective Material
- E. Specific Universal Precautions for each Department
  - 1. Nursing/Medical Care
    - Applying and/or changing a dressing
    - Needle stick injuries and cuts
    - Ventilation devices
    - Reusable equipment
  - 2. Housekeeping
  - 3. Laundry/Linens
  - 4. Dietary Services

5. Activities/Volunteers
6. Maintenance

- F. Care Index Chart for Nursing/Medical Care, Dietary, Housekeeping, Laundry, Maintenance, Activity, Consultant and Volunteer
1. Categories
  2. Guidelines

# UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS MANUAL ON BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS (B/BF)

## A. INTRODUCTION AND GOALS:

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a deadly virus which threatens the Health Care Industry, as a result commonly used Infection Control Procedures have been expanded upon. These new procedures are called Universal Precautions (UP) and have been created to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. Universal Precautions are similar to some Infection Control Procedures; however the use of Universal Precautions does not depend on whether the person is in Isolation, infected with a contagious disease, or even infected with HIV or AIDS. The individual's condition or diagnosis will not determine whether Universal Precautions apply.

Universal Precautions are to be implemented:

AT ALL TIMES  
BY ALL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS  
FOR ALL PEOPLE

In effect, by practicing these guidelines, the admission of an individual with HIV, AIDS or Hepatitis B (HBV) to participate in Conference related activities will not alter infection control procedures or the manner in which we provide direct personal care, and perform supportive services. If able, an individual with the HIV, AIDS or HBV infection can move about freely, and shall not be discriminated against.

Throughout this manual, the Blood/Body Fluids (B/BF) will be understood to include the following:

Blood, blood products, body fluids containing blood and tissues of all individuals and/or employees are to be considered potentially infectious for HIV, AIDS and HBV.

Body fluids to which Universal Precautions apply:

1. Blood or other fluids containing visible blood (feces, vomit, urine, etc.)
2. Semen and vaginal secretions
3. Body tissues
4. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)
5. Synovial fluid
6. Pleural fluid
7. Peritoneal fluid
8. Pericardial fluid
9. Amniotic fluid

Universal precautions do not apply to nasal secretions, sputum, saliva, sweat, tears, urine and vomit, unless they contain visible blood. All other body fluids and tissues are to be regarded as potentially contaminated with HIV, AIDS, HBV or other non-blood borne pathogens and therefore treated as infectious.

If a person is known to have HIV/AIDS and is going to attend a function it is recommended that the State Health Department be contacted for specific guidelines.

By State law special care must be taken to preserve the confidentiality of a person with HIV, AIDS or HBV. Public relations and press communication issues will be referred to the ARC Director.

## GOALS OF THE UNIVERSAL PRECAUTION MANUAL:

1. Protect employees, volunteers, members and friends from becoming infected with HIV, AIDS, HBV or any other blood borne, infectious disease.
2. Prevent cross-transmission between individuals.
3. Provide guidelines to be used routinely as steps that protect the health of all.

### **B. BENEFITS OF UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:**

1. Reduce contact with blood and body fluids by health care personnel and other people.
2. Minimize likelihood of transmission of specific organisms, such as Hepatitis B (HBV) HIV, and AIDS.
3. Implement consistent precautions to prevent needle stick injuries and/or cuts, and to report all such incidents, should they occur.
4. Increase confidentiality for all, since these same precautions apply to all.
5. Emphasize consistent application of infection control principles by imposing barriers in the form of engineering controls (i.e., providing single use devices, puncture-resistant containers, work practices, and protective equipment.)
6. Reduce risk associated with the undiagnosed individual.

### **C. TRANSMISSION MODES:**

1. Sexual contact involving the exchange of body fluids (blood, semen, or vaginal secretions).
2. Sharing contaminated needles and syringes.
3. Transfusion of blood or blood products contaminated by AIDS/HBV or contact with HIV/AIDS/HBV contaminated blood to mucous membranes or non-intact skin.
4. Transmission from infected mothers to their infants.
5. Transmission from performing Category I procedures (Category I tasks involve any exposure to blood, body fluids, tissues, mucous, fecal matter, urine and purulent drainage) without using Universal Precautions. Contaminated blood, body fluid from individuals, equipment, soiled laundry, etc. can enter through cuts, open wounds, or skin rashes that you may have on your body (i.e. hands, arms, face.)
6. Splashing blood or other fluids into your eyes, nose or mouth while performing a Category I procedure.

HIV/AIDS infection is not easily transmitted. There is no evidence that HIV/AIDS is spread by casual contact (shaking hands). Although nosocomial transmission of HIV/AIDS is not the most common, emphasis must be placed on the health care workers' rigorous adherence to existing infection control recommendations for minimizing the risk of exposure to BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS FOR PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ISOLATION PRECAUTION STATUS OR DIAGNOSIS.

HBV on the other hand is more easily transmitted. Therefore, extra precautions must be exercised to minimize the risk of exposure to B/BF.

### **D. OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES FOR UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS IN ALL DEPARTMENTS:**

Universal precautions include, but are not limited to the following areas:

1. Hand washing
2. Gloves
3. Gowns or Plastic Aprons
4. Masks and Protective Goggles
5. Contact with Blood or Body Fluids
6. Cleaning of Blood or Body Fluid Spills
7. Bagging and Disposal of Infective Material

- D. 1. HANDWASHING POLICY: Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection and accumulation of bacteria on the skin.

Hand washing must be done in the following situations to prevent the transfer of harmful organisms from one person to another:

- a. Before and after direct contact.

- b. Before handling food.
- c. After personal care to him/herself.
- d. Before and after using equipment and supplies.
- e. Before and after contact with blood, body fluids or human tissue.
- f. Even when gloves have been used.

Hand washing is to be done only at the designated hand washing stations. Each station will have the following equipment:

- a. Sink with running water.
- b. Soap.
- c. Paper towels.
- d. Waste container.

#### HANDWASHING PROCEDURES:

##### Essential Steps:

- a. Turn the faucet on. Adjust the water to a comfortable temperature.
- b. Completely wet hands and wrists under running water. Keep fingertips pointed downward.
- c. Apply antimicrobial soap.
- d. Work up a good lather. Spread the lather over the entire area of your hands, under nails, and between your fingers.
- e. Using a rotating and rubbing motion, rub hands vigorously together.
  - Hold hands lower than elbows while washing.
  - Rubbing vigorously creates friction which loosens dirt and organisms.
  - Rub one hand against the other hand and wrist.
  - Rub between fingers by interlacing them.
  - Rub up and down to reach all skin surfaces on hands and between fingers.
  - Rub the tips of fingers against palms to clean finger nails.
  - Wash at least two inches above the wrists.
  - Scrub for at least fifteen seconds over every part of the hand.
- f. Rinse your hands well.
  - Rinse from elbows to hands. Hold hands and fingertips down under running water.
  - Holding fingertips down prevents bacteria from running onto forearms and becoming a possible source of infection.
  - Do not touch the sides of the sink with hands. If you do, wash hands again.
- g. Dry your hands thoroughly with paper towels.
  - Dry from fingertips to the arms.
  - Use a separate towel for each hand.
- h. Turn off faucet.
  - Use a paper towel held in hand to turn off the faucet.
- i. Throw the paper towel into the waste container.
  - Don't touch the waste container.

#### D. 2. GLOVES:

POLICY: Gloves should be worn when contact with B/BF.

##### PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:

- a. See the Care Index for determining when the use of gloves are necessary (Section F.2.)
- b. All personnel are to wear gloves when performing tasks that involve touching or handling B/BF.
- c. Gloves are to be used once and discarded in the appropriate receptacle.
- d. Gloves made of vinyl or latex are to be used. Rubber gloves are not regulated by the FDA.
- e. Gloves need not be worn when feeding individuals and when wiping saliva from skin unless saliva contains visible blood.
- f. Examination gloves will be used when in contact with mucous membranes and for procedures not requiring sterile gloves, which are listed in the Care Index (Section F.2.)

D. 3. GOWNS OR PLASTIC APRONS:

POLICY: Gowns or plastic aprons should be used when splattering and soiling of the infective matter is likely, (B/BF).

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:

- a. See the Care Index for determining which task may require the use of gowns. (Section F.2.)
- b. Personnel should wear a gown when performing a task that will soil ones clothing with infectious matter.
- c. After gowns are used, they should be discarded in the appropriate receptacle, however, if gown is soiled, place in a plastic bag before removing from the area (refer to Section D.8., Bagging and Disposal of Infective Material, page 8).
- d. If a gown should become wet during procedures, stop and change gowns. A wet gown will not provide adequate protection.
- e. Avoid brushing clothing with gown.

D. 4. MASKS AND PROTECTIVE GOGGLES:

POLICY: Masks and protective goggles should be worn if aerosolization or splattering is likely to occur, such as in certain dental and surgical procedures, and individual spitting or coughing.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:

- a. See Care Index for determining which task may require the use of masks or goggles (Section F.2.)
- b. All personnel must wear a mask and goggles when the splashing of blood or body fluids in the eyes or mouth is likely.
- c. Masks must be changed when they become moist or soiled.
- d. Soiled masks are to be placed in a plastic bag before removing from the areas and disposed of and incinerated. (refer to section D.8, Bagging and Disposal of Infective Material, page 8).
- e. Masks are not routinely necessary for the care of known HIV, AIDS or HBV infected individuals.

D. 5. CONTACT WITH BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS:

POLICY: All cuts, open lesions, or any skin conditions/rashes you may have must be covered with protective equipment when performing a Category I or II procedure. (Section F)

PROCEDURE FOR TREATMENT OF AN INCIDENT:

- a. All needle-stick accidents, mucosal splashes, or contamination of open wounds with B/BF should be treated immediately.
- b. Treatment for a significant exposure involves cleaning and treating the exposed area. To be effective, treatment must begin quickly and contact a physician as soon as possible.
- c. All known incidents will be investigated by the person in charge to establish the conditions surrounding the exposure and to improve training, practices, or use of protective equipment.
- d. Incident Reports concerning exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues must be maintained confidential to protect the privacy of the injured. Only those persons with a need-to-know status will be permitted access to such incident reports.

D. 6. CLEANING UP BLOOD OR BODY FLUID SPILLS:

POLICY: Spillage of B/BF are to be cleaned up promptly by trained personnel with a disinfectant solution such as Unicide 128.

PROCEDURES:

- a. Gloves will be worn when cleaning up all spills.
- b. Spills and/or splashes are wiped and absorbed with paper towels instead of a cloth or sponge. Soiled paper towels should be double-bagged, to avoid leaking, before removing from the area for incineration. Cleaning materials are bagged and discarded.
- c. Surfaces and equipment contaminated with spills of blood and/or body fluids must be cleaned up as soon as practical.

- d. After removal of visible spillage, wash surfaces with Unicide 128 solution (1 oz. per 1 gallon of water or 1 squirt per 1 gallon.)
- e. Gloves are removed, bagged, and discarded. Refer to Section D.8, Bagging/Disposal of Infective Material, for further instructions.
- f. Hands are washed immediately and thoroughly after gloves are removed.

**D. 7. BAGGING AND DISPOSAL OF INFECTIVE MATERIAL:**

**POLICY:** All disposable materials that are soiled with B/BF are to be double-bagged or tagged with warning stickers before removing from the area for incineration or disposal.

**PROCEDURE:**

- a. Disposable articles, such as dressings, tissues, gloves, etc. that are soiled must be discarded properly in a plastic bag. Before removing infective material tie the trash liner or twist shut. If leaking is likely, place in a second brown bag. Tie second brown bag. Then promptly take the double-bagged disposable material to the incinerator. Double-bag disposable items if they are soiled with fluids requiring Universal Precautions and leaking is likely to occur.
- b. All soiled disposable material is to be double bagged if the outside of the first bag is contaminated with fluid requiring Universal Precautions.
- c. B/BF are carefully poured down a drain connected with a sanitary sewer. Flush immediately (two times), if required, after pouring fluids into toilet.

**E. SPECIFIC UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS FOR EACH DEPARTMENT:**

**E. 1. NURSING/MEDICAL CARE:**

**\*\* APPLYING AND/OR CHANGING A DRESSING:**

**POLICY:** To limit the risk of transferring HIV, AIDS or HBV while applying or changing a dressing on any individual.

**PROCEDURE:**

- a. Your hands are to be thoroughly washed before and after performing this procedure; immediately after your hands come into contact with B/BF; and/or after handling soiled laundry or linen.
- b. Gloves are to be worn during a dressing change.
- c. Refer to section D.8 for proper bagging and disposal techniques.
- \*\*\* d. If laundry/linen is soiled with blood or infective material requiring Universal Precautions, rinse off in utility room, NOT IN REST ROOM (refer to Section E.3., Laundry/Linens).
- e. If spillage of blood or body fluids occur while disposing or bagging infective material, clean it up as soon as possible.

**\*\* NEEDLE STICK INJURIES AND CUTS:**

**POLICY:** Precautions are to be taken to prevent needle stick injuries and/or cuts.

**PROCEDURE:**

- a. Caution must be exercised when handling used needles or other sharp objects to reduce the possibility of needle stick injuries and/or cuts.
- b. Used needles are not recapped, bent, broken, removed from disposable syringes, inserted into their original sheath, or unnecessarily handled, because needle stick injuries are most likely to occur during these activities.
- c. Needles are to be discarded intact immediately after use into an impervious sharps box. Small sharps collectors will be located at easy accessible places.
- d. If administering injection take sharps collector to the area.
- e. All needle stick injuries and/or cuts received while performing a procedure must be treated as soon as practical after receiving such injury. (Refer to section D.5.)
- f. Full sharps containers are to be taken to custodian for proper disposal.

\*\* REUSABLE EQUIPMENT:

- a. All reusable equipment shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- b. Reusable equipment shall be cleaned in the utility room, NOT REST ROOMS.

\*\* VENTILATION DEVICES (i.e. Mouthpieces, resuscitation bags):

POLICY: To minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices are strategically located and readily available for use.

E. 2. HOUSEKEEPING:

POLICY: To provide housekeeping services for everyone safely and to limit the risks to housekeeping personnel when they are confronted with B/BF spills.

PROCEDURE:

- a. Environmental surfaces such as walls, floors and other surfaces are not associated with the transmission of HIV and AIDS infections to individuals or personnel. Extra attempts to disinfect or sterilize such areas are not necessary. However, cleaning and removing of soil must be done routinely.
- b. If confronted with a fresh B/BF spill clean up the spill according to Section D.6.
- c. If B/BF are found open and exposed in the trash notify person in charge to seal and tag with a warning sticker.

E. 3. LAUNDRY/LINENS:

POLICY: To limit the risks to Laundry personnel when handling potential infectious material.

PROCEDURE:

- a. Gloves and Aprons should be worn by laundry personnel at all times when sorting laundry and loading the washers.
- b. Rinse off linens and laundry if soiled with B/BF spill, urine or feces in utility room, NOT REST ROOM.
- c. Keep soiled linen from touching ones clothing.
- d. Soiled linen is to be handled as little as possible.
- e. Avoid shaking soiled linen to prevent splattering of infectious material.

E. 4. DIETARY SERVICES:

POLICY: To provide dietary services in an environment where Universal Precautions are used regularly.

PROCEDURE:

- a. When confronted with a blood or body fluid spill notify person in charge.
- b. Keep blood or body fluids from touching your clothing.

E. 5. ACTIVITIES/VOLUNTEERS:

POLICY: To provide safe activities and care for all people using Universal Precautions.

PROCEDURE:

- a. If B/BF are noticed while at an activity notify the person in charge.
- b. Keep blood or body fluids from touching your clothing.
- c. Good hand washing techniques will be followed after contact. (Refer to section D.1. Hand washing).

E. 7. MAINTENANCE:

POLICY: To provide maintenance services while using protective equipment as required by the Care Index (Section F.)

PROCEDURES:

- a. If confronted with B/BF while doing repair work use Universal Precautions.
- b. When handling garbage take extra care to ensure that bags do not break open. If bags are punctured and leaking has occurred, make sure to wear a protective gown.
  - \*\* Gloves are to be worn routinely.
  - \*\* Gowns are to be worn when burning garbage.
  - \*\* Wash hands thoroughly after incineration is completed.
- c. Maintenance staff are to use Unicide 128 to clean B/BF spills while handling or incinerating garbage.

**F. CARE INDEX FOR NURSING, DIETARY, HOUSEKEEPING, LAUNDRY, MAINTENANCE, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:**

F. 1. CATEGORIES:

All job related tasks have been classified into three categories.

Category I - Includes all tasks that involve any exposure to B/BF.

Category II - Includes tasks that involve NO exposure to B/BF, but service may require performing unplanned Category I tasks.

Category III - Includes tasks that involve NO exposure to B/BF.

These exposure categories have been created in order to increase awareness and identification of where precautions apply. It is the Allegheny Region Conference's goal to determine the risk exposure for all routine and reasonably anticipated job related functions. This Care Index should help everyone find out the type of protective equipment and special techniques needed for most Category I job related tasks, thus reducing the risk of infection for all. However, all possible tasks are not listed in this index. All persons should be able to identify the risk category his or her procedure falls into and which protective equipment and techniques are required. Keep in mind that this chart is not to be viewed as a job description, merely as a listing of the most common tasks requiring Universal Precautions.

F. 2. GUIDELINES:

Use the following general guidelines to determine the kind of protective equipment or techniques that are needed for procedures not listed on the chart.

- a. Any type of care with "hands on" treatment requires good hand washing techniques. (refer to Section D.1) This should be done routinely before and after care is provided.
- b. Gloves should be worn while providing all Category I tasks.
- c. Gowns are necessary if soiling of your clothing and splattering of blood, body fluids or tissues is likely.
- d. Masks and Goggles are necessary if splashing of blood or other body fluids into your eyes or mouth is likely.
- e. If you cannot protect yourself properly (i.e. wearing a splint on a finger may prevent staff from wearing gloves), then you must notify the person in charge, who will see that the situation is cared for.