

LEADERSHIP FAILURE STATEMENT

This is a statement given in relation to the two following questions in articles V. and VI, in the "Bishop Committee Report" at Stuarts Draft on April 7, 2005

V. How do congregations work with Pastors who are failing significantly in their role as Leaders?

VI. How do we deal with moral failure in the life of a Leader?
(We are defining "moral failure" as sins of a sexual nature).

This statement is intended to give direction in an effort to keep the church pure, not to bring judgment on any situations that have been resolved in the past.

Response to Article V.

"Significant Failure in the Role of a Pastor"

When correcting a failing Pastor, (Bishop, Deacon, or Minister) the following scriptures should be considered;

Matt. 18 steps of appeal,

I Tim. 5:1; 5:19 - 22 also Gal. 6:1

1. Entreat with respect
2. Confirm the accusation with two or three witnesses
3. When sin or significant failure is confirmed, a clear explanation should be given to the congregation.

If the Pastor does not demonstrate genuine repentance he needs to be dealt with in the same manner as any other erring member.

(We believe I Tim. 5:19-21 is specifically addressing erring Pastors)

When a situation can not be resolved internally, we encourage seeking help from other local congregations and/or the constituency until resolution is achieved.

If the Pastor has been open to correction and has demonstrated genuine repentance, before he continues in his office consideration should be given to the following

- His original ordination charge
- Is he willing to come back to the things he said "yes" to at his ordination?
- Has he made restitution for his wrong?
- Does he now meet the biblical qualifications for the office?

Response to Article VI.

"Moral failure in Pastors"

When there is moral failure, (sins of a sexual nature) the effects, and consequently the correction, will be much more significant.

When a pastor has fallen sexually;

- He has dishonored the Lord (Gen. 39:9; II Sam.12:13-41)
- He has disgraced himself (Proverbs 6:32; ICor.6:18)
- He has shamed his family
- He has debased his office
- He has betrayed a public trust

Sexual sin is generally not a "stand alone" sin. It is more typically the tip of an iceberg of other sins. Because of this, those attempting to resolve the situation should carefully and thoroughly explore the roots of the sin.

One fallen minister, many years after his own failure, writes:
 "In my case, moral failure was the sin which was visible to the church.
 There were, much to my chagrin, other issues which were perhaps more heinous to God than that which was visible to man.
 It takes time to root these out and replace them with godly characteristics."

We believe that effects of "sexual sin" by an ordained Bishop, Deacon, or Minister are significant enough that he should be dismissed from office.

We believe that forgiveness and restoration to Christ and the Church, for the repentant Pastor, should be separate from the restoration to office. Where involvement was minimal and restoration to office is considered, the following points should be taken into account;

1. How will it affect those who were deeply hurt and betrayed?
 - o The Pastor's wife and children
 - o The other sexual partner and family members
 - o The local congregation and constituency who formerly had respected him as a pastor
 - o The testimony of the church in the community
(the list could go on and on).
2. Will he be able to minister effectively to the above and others?
3. Will he be able to serve with integrity?

Recognizing that the prevention of significant failure is far better than correction; we offer the following suggestions;

- During pre-ordination interview, give significant attention to character concerns such as pride, covetousness, integrity, moral purity, etc.
- That Pastoral teams be courageous enough to help each other in areas of weakness.
- That Pastoral teams hear, and readily consider together, concerns about the way they are leading brought to them by members of the congregation
- Establish directives for prevention of moral failure. (such as)
 - o Maintaining a proper emotional reserve with those of the opposite sex,
 - o Maintaining a healthy marriage,
 - o Encouraging accountability for moral purity and healthy marriages, with our fellow ministers or other brethren,
 - o Not counseling a person of the opposite gender unless a third party is present. (Preferably a spouse)

Within the parameters of the biblical principles stated above, we must also accept that each situation is unique and will need to be considered individually.

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