

Suggested Robust Procedures for Complaint of Clerical Sexual Misconduct

(From within the Methodist Tradition)

Firstly a complaint is made to an uninvolved parish minister. The fact of the complaint and the alleged clergy person complained about, are then made available to the General Secretary.

The General Secretary will immediately put the clergy person on leave, with pay, whilst there is an enquiry. The clergy person and family would be asked to isolate themselves and not discuss the issue with anyone.

An interim minister would be appointed, with accommodation and salary for an indefinite period.

An Enquirer would be appointed who would then interview the victim and hopefully their family. A victim impact statement would be made and made available to ongoing procedures. Assurances would be given that the complaint was being taken seriously. Pastoral support would be arranged to ensure the feeling of safety and increase well being for the victim.

The Enquirer would now focus on other parties who may have knowledge, other people potentially affected. A picture of the pattern of offending would occur. Discrete enquiry would be made in any previous parishes if deemed necessary, to gain a fuller perspective.

At the end of the enquiry a report would be made to the General Secretary who would meet with the clergyperson, with the Enquirer and give the outcome of the investigation to the person concerned.

The General Secretary would likely pass matter on to the police for action, with the documentation gathered and the pastoral committee of the Church would be notified.

The clergy person would have the right to a house and salary whilst this was happening but when there was an outcome and charge from the police action, the Church would be ready with their public statement. It would probably be that "The person in question had breached the trust of the Connexion and the parish and was, as from now removed from being in 'Full Connexion' and was no longer in ministry. From this moment on- salary would stop but the Church house may be made available until the next stationing round.

The congregation would be formally told of the outcome of the investigation when or just before the outcome of the now 'criminal charges' being made. The interim minister would continue until the next stationing round.

RE the victim. \$5000 would be made immediately available to cover increased medical bills, counselling surcharges and any marriage guidance costs and other healing remedies. A support group of wise people would be offered during this time if needed. The victim would be kept informed of all developments of the investigation, with rights offered for formal and supported presence at court proceedings, etc.

Any compensation may be awarded by the Courts and the offender liable and/ or the Church.

The outcome from a procedure like this robustness, would

- a. Enable action that is consistent with societal expectations.
- b. The congregations would grow in confidence re the standards expected in ministry and the wider Churches because of the active responsibility taken in response.

- c. There would be less ability of the parish minister being able to denigrate and 'trash' the victim.
- d. The community would restore and recover healthily as well as the victim.
- e. The sentencing through the public domain would try and educate and rehabilitate. However it is notoriously hard to accomplish getting an offender to take responsibility for their behaviour but the wider community now assists in keeping communities safe from such predatory behaviour.

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