

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

**C-2**

It is the purpose of this policy statement to give a clear mandate to all ministers and other church employees that they must report all child abuse or neglect (hereinafter referred to as "offenses") when the threshold factor as defined herein is determined. This policy is meant to serve as a clear directive in order to dissipate the ethical dilemma faced by those who must decide whether or not to report. The act of reporting under this policy is not an act of discretion but is rather a mandated duty.

WHEREAS, in all three jurisdictions encompassed in whole or in part by the Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, (hereinafter referred to as "Conference") those being the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia, it is the law that ministers are not required to report said offenses if the knowledge of such came to them in their professional capacity, and

WHEREAS, while ministers are not, under certain circumstances, required by law to report such offenses, yet they retain the right to do so at their discretion, and

WHEREAS, ministers or any others who report such offenses shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability in connection therewith so long as such persons acted in good faith and without malicious intent, and

WHEREAS, other conference employees such as educators or other persons employed by a kindergarten, nursery school or child care center are not exempt under current law from the duty to report such offenses, and

WHEREAS, the threshold factor in determining whether that duty has arisen is whether there is reason to suspect or believe that such offenses have taken place, and

WHEREAS, it is the legislative policy of the jurisdictions hereinbefore named to mandate reporting in order to protect children who have been subject to offenses, prevent further offenses, and preserve family life of the parents and children.

Now, THEREFORE, be it resolved that it is the policy of the conference to comply with the legislative policy expressed herein, and

THEREFORE, be it further resolved that it is now the policy of the conference that all employees shall report offenses and all employees of the conference are hereby instructed to do so, where there is reason to suspect or believe that such offenses have taken place. Reports shall be made to the appropriate governmental agency or law enforcement division as prescribed by the law of the jurisdiction in which alleged offenses have occurred. Any questions regarding the duty to report, confidentiality or conscience should be directed to one of the officers of the conference who may direct you to legal counsel.