

Póliza de Conducta para Delincuentes Sexuales Convictos que Desean Asistir a la Iglesia



POTOMAC CONFERENCE CORPORATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
606 Greenville Avenue, Staunton, VA | 540-886-0771 | www.pcsda.org

“Existimos para crecer iglesias saludables que hacen discípulos”

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Aprobado por el Comité Ejecutivo, 05-23-17

Introducción

Es una responsabilidad moral y legal de toda congregación dentro del territorio de la Conferencia de Potomac de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día de tomar medidas razonables que garanticen un ambiente seguro para todos sus miembros en relación a avances y comportamientos sexuales inapropiados durante las actividades de la iglesia. Dichas actividades incluyen eventos regularmente programados así como actividades sociales menos formales. Aunque se desea atender a las necesidades espirituales de los agresores sexuales, es imperativo que nuestras iglesias provean un ambiente seguro a los miembros y visitas dentro de los predios de la iglesia o cuando estos participan en las actividades regulares.

Como Adventistas del Séptimo Día, creemos que la salud espiritual debe estar a disposición de todo individuo, y nuestra esperanza y oración es que todos *“crezcamos en la gracia y el conocimiento de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo”*. (2 de Pedro 3:18). Siempre y cuando la persona que haya cometido uno o más delitos sexuales continúe siendo honesta y se comprometa con Dios y con los demás, la iglesia local debe demostrar su apoyo, animándole a buscar tratamiento y a lograr una recuperación.

La iglesia debe comprometerse a crear una red de individuos que se asegurarán de que el delincuente sexual convicto sea responsable de sus actos a la vez que crece en su relación con Cristo. Si la congregación es muy pequeña y no cuenta con los medios para ofrecer este tipo de ayuda o cumplir con los requisitos de esta Póliza de Conducta, el delincuente sexual convicto deberá ser referido a otra congregación que cuente con los medios para proveer apoyo y protección como se establece en este documento, luego de haber consultado con la Conferencia de Potomac.

Las Iglesias que ofrecen ayuda espiritual a los delincuentes sexuales deben procurar que los miembros de la junta de iglesia, ancianos, diáconos y parejas de responsabilidad reciban adiestramiento adecuado. Si la Conferencia de Potomac no puede ofrecer dicho adiestramiento, referirá estos comités a uno o más grupos comunitarios u organizaciones gubernamentales.

Si la persona en cuestión no ha sido convicta de delitos sexuales pero se sabe que los ha cometido, los líderes de la iglesia deben consultar con la Conferencia de Potomac para recibir consejo e instrucciones sobre el nivel apropiado de restricciones y supervisión.

PARA MAS INFORMACION O ASISTENCIA CONTACTE AL:
Vicepresidente de Administración | Conferencia de Potomac
606 Greenville Avenue, Staunton, VA 24401 | 540-886-0771

Condiciones de Asistencia a la Iglesia para Delincuentes Sexuales Convictos

La iglesia de _____ reconoce que el asistir a la iglesia puede ayudar a un delincuente sexual convicto en su búsqueda de sanidad y recuperación. Sin embargo, se debe ejercer extrema precaución al permitir a los delincuentes sexuales convictos asistir a la iglesia debido a su historial criminal de victimizar individuos. Aquellas personas que han cometido delitos sexuales y que llenan los requisitos que aparecen en este documento, deberán seguir estas pautas si desean asistir a la iglesia.

- I. Antes de que un delincuente sexual convicto pueda asistir a la iglesia
 - A. Todos los delincuentes sexuales convictos que deseen asistir a la Iglesia de _____ deben contactar al Pastor de la iglesia o al Primer Anciano antes de asistir.
 1. El delincuente sexual deberá informar que él/ella cometió un delito sexual y debe revelar la naturaleza de dicho delito. La iglesia, en consulta con la Conferencia de Potomac, debe de analizar si esta preparada para la asimilación de dicho agresor sexual y si el candidato constituye un riesgo aceptable.
 2. El delincuente sexual deberá llenar y firmar un formulario de consentimiento para autorizar la verificación de antecedentes penales (ver formulario adjunto). La Conferencia de Potomac esta dispuesta a procesar esta verificación de antecedentes penales. El costo por dicho documento será de \$32.00. Hay un cargo adicional de \$12.00 dependiendo del número de estados a verificar. El delincuente sexual es responsable de estos costos.
 3. Si el delincuente sexual convicto esta requerido a registrarse con el estado, o completar cualquier otro documento tal como condición de libertad condicional, él/ella debe mostrar prueba de conformidad de todos los requisitos impuestos por el Estado.
 - B. Se espera que todo delincuente sexual convicto cuente con un terapeuta certificado y tenga reuniones regulares con el/ella. El delincuente sexual deberá firmar un documento de autorización el cual permita que la iglesia se comunique directamente con el terapeuta o cualquier otro consejero relacionado con el tratamiento.
 - C. Cualquier delincuente sexual bajo supervisión del estado deberá firmar un documento de autorización el cual permita que la iglesia se comunique directamente con el Oficial de Correcciones Comunitario (OCC), oficial de libertad condicional, o cualquier otra persona que este cumpliendo la función de un oficial de condición de libertad.
 - D. Todo delincuente sexual convicto tendrá un Reglamento de Conducta individualizado, detallando los requisitos que tiene que cumplir cuando asista a las funciones de la iglesia.
 1. Un delincuente sexual convicto bajo supervisión comunitaria tendrá que:
 - a. Reunirse con un terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de agresores sexuales, su Oficial de Corrección Comunitario (OCC), el oficial de Gestión de Riesgos (si aplica) y la Junta de Iglesia, para

determinar el nivel apropiado de participación y para redactar un Reglamento de Conducta individualizado.

- b. Firmar el Reglamento de Conducta individualizado, en conjunto con un terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de delincuentes sexuales, el Oficial de Corrección Comunitario (OCC), el oficial de Gestión de Riesgos (si aplica) y el Pastor de la Iglesia o el Primer Anciano.
- c. Renovar el Reglamento de Conducta individualizado cada año en conjunto con un terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de delincuentes sexuales, el Oficial de Corrección Comunitario (OCC) y la Junta de Iglesia local.

2. Un delincuente sexual convicto que no se encuentra bajo supervisión comunitaria deberá:

- a. Reunirse con un terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de delincuentes sexuales y la Junta de Iglesia local para determinar el nivel apropiado de participación y para redactar un Reglamento de Conducta individualizado.
- b. Firmar el Reglamento de Conducta individualizado, en conjunto con un terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de delincuentes sexuales, el Pastor de la Iglesia o el Primer Anciano.
- c. Renovar el Reglamento de Conducta individualizado cada dos años en conjunto con el terapeuta certificado para el tratamiento de delincuentes sexuales y la Junta de Iglesia local, o como lo determine el terapeuta certificado.

E. Si se requiere de una Pareja de Responsabilidad en el Reglamento de Conducta, la Junta de iglesia local identificará, seleccionará y aprobará estas personas.

1. La Pareja de Responsabilidad no deberá ser un pariente cercano del ofensor (excepto en casos excepcionales aprobados por la iglesia, el terapeuta, y si se aplica, el oficial de libertad condicional).
2. Se informará a la Pareja de Responsabilidad el delito cometido y la naturaleza de la ofensa sexual.
3. La Pareja de Responsabilidad deberá recibir expectativas definidas con respecto a sus funciones como supervisor del agresor.

II. Cuando un delincuente sexual convicto NO debería asistir a la Iglesia.

A. Debido a que la Iglesia de _____ desea ser sensible y protectora de las víctimas y futuras víctimas de abuso o agresión sexual, se les prohíbe a los delincuentes sexuales asistir a la iglesia por las siguientes razones:

1. Si una víctima del delincuente sexual asiste a esta iglesia.
2. Si el delincuente sexual convicto tiene precedentes de no cumplir con los acuerdos establecidos con otras Iglesias.
3. El delincuente sexual convicto no sigue las directrices y estipulaciones de este documento y del acuerdo de contrato aprobado.

- III. Asistencia a la iglesia
 - A. El Reglamento de Conducta debe cumplirse en todo momento. El incumplimiento de este contrato tendrá como consecuencia que se prohíba la asistencia a la iglesia.
 - B. El delincuente sexual convicto no ejercerá ningún cargo ni tendrá posiciones de liderazgo en la iglesia.
- IV. Aviso sobre delincuentes sexuales convictos asistiendo a la iglesia
 - A. No hay necesidad de notificar a la iglesia en pleno de la presencia de un delincuente sexual convicto, siempre y cuando existan normas de conducta bien establecidas para delincuentes sexuales convictos que quieran asistir a la iglesia y que se haya informado a la junta de la iglesia así como a los ancianos y a los diáconos y que la iglesia cumpla con todos los requisitos establecidos en este documento.

Requisitos para Parejas de Responsabilidad

DEFINICIÓN DE PAREJAS DE RESPONSABILIDAD: Para propósitos de este acuerdo la Pareja de Responsabilidad debe ser una persona madura, del mismo sexo del participante, mayor de 25 años, nombrado por la junta de iglesia local, sin antecedentes de delitos sexuales y sin lazos familiares con la persona definida en este acuerdo. Se le otorgará una copia de este contrato a la Pareja de Responsabilidad notificándole sobre el contenido y el protocolo a seguir en caso de que surjan problemas. La Pareja de Responsabilidad debe estar dispuesto a tomar esta responsabilidad con mucha seriedad.

PROTOCOLOS PARA PAREJAS DE RESPONSABILIDAD

1. Los miembros de la Junta de Iglesia, los Ancianos, los Diáconos y las Parejas de Responsabilidad asistirán a sesiones de adiestramiento con material provisto por la Conferencia de Potomac. La Conferencia de Potomac también tiene la opción de referir estos grupos a uno o más grupos comunitarios u organizaciones gubernamentales para recibir adiestramiento.
2. Se nombrará a un líder de equipo de Parejas de Responsabilidad que estará a cargo de las otras Parejas de Responsabilidad.
3. Si el participante se encuentra bajo libertad condicional, la persona asignada como Pareja de Responsabilidad estará al tanto de los términos de dicha libertad condicional y coordinará con el oficial de libertad condicional o el encargado del caso, según aplique.
4. La Pareja de Responsabilidad vigilará al delincuente sexual convicto todo el tiempo que éste se encuentre en los predios de la iglesia. Hasta donde le sea posible, no permitirá que el participante se quede solo con otros miembros de iglesia que no sean Parejas de Responsabilidad o el pastor de la iglesia.
5. Si por alguna razón la Pareja de Responsabilidad no puede supervisar, otra Pareja de Responsabilidad designada hará la supervisión.
6. La Pareja de Responsabilidad acompañará al participante cuando éste necesite utilizar los baños.
7. Cualquier conducta inapropiada por parte del delincuente sexual se notificará al líder de equipo de Parejas de Responsabilidad, al oficial de libertad condicional o al encargado del caso (según aplique) y al participante. Si el comportamiento inapropiado es grave, el asunto será referido a la Conferencia de Potomac y, si es necesario, a las autoridades correspondientes.

EQUIPO DE PAREJAS DE RESPONSABILIDAD

LÍDER: _____

Lista de Parejas de Responsabilidad:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

MUESTRA DE REGLAMENTO PARA ASISTIR A LA IGLESIA PARA DELINCUENTES SEXUALES CONVICTOS

Reconozco el interés y la responsabilidad de la iglesia de garantizar un ambiente seguro para los miembros, y es mi intención cumplir con las siguientes condiciones que me permitirán participar en las actividades de la iglesia.

1. No me relacionaré o estaré cerca de ningún menor que asista o participe en ninguna de las actividades de la iglesia/escuela.
2. No me sentaré al lado de ningún niño(a); y si un niño(a) se sienta a mi lado, me sentaré en otro lugar. Trataré de sentarme en el asiento que da al pasillo al lado de la Pareja de Responsabilidad.
3. No estaré en áreas donde se dan clases a los niños y no me acercaré a las áreas donde se llevan a cabo actividades para menores, o algún otro lugar que mi Pareja de Responsabilidad me prohíba entrar.
4. No formaré parte, ni aceptaré ningún cargo de liderazgo ni participaré en ninguna actividad que pueda afectar o influenciar a los niños.
5. Bajo ninguna circunstancia llevaré a un niño(a) a casa conmigo o lo transportaré a otro lugar en ningún momento, ya sea caminando, manejando o por otros medios.
6. No entablaré amistad con niños menores ni con sus padres.
7. No visitaré el hogar de un miembro de iglesia con hijos presentes sin consentimiento completo y previa aceptación por escrito de los padres, pastor y patrocinadores.
8. No ejerceré ningún cargo, no hablaré ni participaré en ninguna función de la iglesia, ni subiré a la plataforma.
9. Estoy de acuerdo en mantener contacto permanente con los individuos asignados por la iglesia y me aseguraré de que ellos sepan donde me encuentro cuando asisto o participo en las actividades de la iglesia.
10. No asistiré a ninguna función en otra iglesia o congregación sin una Pareja de Responsabilidad; y si asisto a otra congregación o iglesia, cumpliré en su totalidad con las condiciones de este acuerdo y los requisitos de la Pareja de Responsabilidad.
11. Autorizo a la iglesia a obtener información con respecto a mí persona de mi oficial de libertad condicional, del encargado del caso, de las agencias gubernamentales y de otras personas que posean información vinculada a mis antecedentes criminales.
12. Estoy de acuerdo en cumplir con las restricciones, condiciones, tratamientos y/o requisitos de mi libertad condicional o los mandatos de la corte y reconozco que estos tienen prioridad sobre las condiciones de este acuerdo.
13. Entiendo y estoy de acuerdo en que la iglesia, está cumpliendo sus responsabilidades de garantizar un ambiente seguro para sus miembros y visitas, y por lo tanto tendrá derecho de revelar detalles de mi comportamiento pasado o antecedentes criminales a los padres, a los líderes de la iglesia y a otras personas que necesiten dicha información para ejercer sus responsabilidades de padres y de supervisión.
14. Entiendo que los reglamentos de este Acuerdo de Participación no crean ningún derecho personal y/o legal contra la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día (Corporación de la Conferencia de Potomac), la iglesia local o congregación o alguno de sus miembros, oficiales, empleados, agentes, directores o voluntarios (en conjunto, la "Iglesia"). Por este medio renuncio a mis derechos y libero y exonero a la iglesia de toda

demanda y toda causa de acción de cualquier índole que tenga ahora o en el futuro en contra de la Iglesia y que surjan o estén conectadas con mi participación en las actividades de la iglesia o que resulten de mi incumplimiento de este acuerdo.

15. Consiento para que se comparta cualquier información personal, incluyendo información relacionada o como resultado de alguna de mis actividades en la iglesia durante el término de este acuerdo, a cualquier persona que la Iglesia considere necesario, a su sola discreción, con la intención de hacer cumplir este acuerdo o para proteger a cualquier persona. Estoy de acuerdo en dar mi consentimiento para que la iglesia se comunice con mi oficial de libertad condicional, trabajador social, consejero, o terapeuta, y disseminar cualquier información personal sobre mi a terceras personas, siempre y cuando esta sea solicitada por escrito y confirmada por mi ya sean en forma oral o escrita.
16. Este acuerdo estará vigente hasta que sea terminado mutuamente por escrito entre la iglesia y un servidor. Los reglamentos estipulados en este acuerdo sobrevivirán terminación, siempre y cuando la Iglesia lo considere necesario, a su sola discreción, con el propósito de proteger a cualquier persona. En caso de que desee transferir mi asistencia, participación o cambiar mi membresía a otra congregación, se le enviará una copia de este documento a ellos.
17. Confirmando que he revelado a la iglesia, al pastor y a la junta de iglesia todos los aspectos de mi historial personal, incluyendo todos los detalles relacionados con mis antecedentes criminales, las sentencias relacionadas con dichos delitos y tratamientos o consejería recibidos. Estoy de acuerdo en que si se descubre que no he revelado completamente todos los detalles, la iglesia podrá cancelar mi participación en todas las actividades de la iglesia.

Además, he leído y he entendido todas las condiciones estipuladas en este contrato y estoy de acuerdo en cumplirlas. Si en algún momento violo alguna de estas condiciones, entiendo que no se me permitirá asistir a las actividades de la iglesia en la Conferencia de Potomac y que seré reportado a las autoridades gubernamentales, policía o a las autoridades de libertad condicional correspondientes.

Fecha el _____ de _____, 20_____.

Firma del Participante

Nombre del participante

Nombre de la Iglesia Local

Firma del Representante de la Iglesia Local

Para Uso Exclusivo de la Iglesia

Entrega de copia de reglamento al participante el _____.

Entrega de copia de reglamento a la Corporación de la Conferencia de Potomac el _____.

Entrega de copia de reglamento a la Pareja de Responsabilidad _____.

Nombre del Representante de la Iglesia Local

Firma del Representante de la Iglesia Local

SOLUTIONS

Providing Solutions to Minimize Risks
SEPTEMBER 2007 • VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 9

Sex Offenders in Church

Inspiration

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers."

Psalms 1:1

Motivation

"Be alert, be aware and be alive, and also be proactive—not reactive—toward safety. To safeguard the safety of our children is everyone's responsibility."

Naval Safety Code

Several weeks ago, National Public Radio's program *All Things Considered* broadcast a story about a congregation in Southern California struggling with whether to allow a child molester to worship with them and whether they should open their arms of welcome to this black sheep. The debate that followed exposed the deep divide that all denominations struggle with when it comes to this subject matter. They are after all conflicting ministries. Churches try to reach out at the same time to the sinner and to the survivors of abuse. Many pastors have sought advice on how to deal with sex offenders who had returned from prison and have wanted to return to church. How does a congregation deal with this very sensitive subject? In this issue of *Solutions* we, too, will try to address this issue and offer some legal and practical advice on how to best serve, and, at the same time, protect.



In our world of faith which speaks of forgiveness and the offer of a sanctuary for all sinners one would think the welcome hand of fellowship would be extended to all but even the most accepting and affirming of congregations are struggling when a sex offender arrives at the door. We are admonished by Christ to forgive. On numerous occasions He told his disciples that if they *"forgive men their trespasses,*

your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6: 14-15) The apostle Paul counseled us to *"be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:32) How do we reconcile the counsel of Paul and the admonition of Christ as we deal with these individuals? While every sinner needs an opportunity to recover and lead productive lives, a balance needs to be drawn between recovery and living in the real world.

As a church we need to be smart about having safety measures in place.

Having a policy to deal with sex offenders before the crisis arises is the best way to avoid congregational turmoil. The policy has to start with a developed set of rules about how an individual should conduct themselves

in church. These rules should include having limited access to church property, staying away from children, being accompanied by escorts while on church grounds, and holding church offices.

We have been entrusted with an overwhelming responsibility to provide for the safety of our children and young people. We must continue to be vigilant in strengthening existing safeguards and establishing new measures to ensure the safety of God's gift to us.

*Karnik Dc
agement,
Risk Place*



www.adventistrisk.org

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The Struggle

There are sex offenders in your local congregation. Some are known, but some labor with a secret sin and remain unknown. The time to consider these issues is before the sex offender appears in the pew. Before that day arrives, you should think about and develop a plan on how you will manage the issue. Such pre-planning will serve you well.

The initial question every congregation must answer is whether it will attempt to include known sex offenders or will direct them elsewhere. Each choice has consequences and the choice is not as easy as it

sounds. There are legitimate reasons for excluding the offender even though, on the surface, it appears to be contrary to Christ's teachings. Not every congregation is equally equipped to manage the issue. If, after prayerful consideration, a church determines that

it cannot meet the needs of its members, including the offender, it should not attempt to do so. If, on the other hand, the congregation determines that it has the resources and will to manage the struggle, the next question is – how?

The goal of this article is not to supply specific answers to specific situations, but rather to provide a framework for thinking about the issue and preparing for this inevitability. It focuses on the known sex offender.

What We Hope to Achieve

The goal we must reach is inclusion

with verifiable limitations. As with most things, ideas conceived in the abstract do not always work in real life. There is no substitute for flexibility and sound judgment. Not all sex offenses are equally risky. An adult man convicted at 19 of sexual contact with his 16 year-old girlfriend presents a far different set of risks than a life-long pedophile with many victims. The former may not be an issue for the church's consideration; the latter is a high risk individual. How we manage these two extreme situations will showcase how flexible we are and the soundness of our judgment.

With many sex offenders, strict limits are completely appropriate. Limits serve to protect the congregation from the offender's potential sin and shield the offender from his or her weakness. Limits have little to do with forgiveness. They are merely the means to safely allow the offender access to worship and fellowship. Ideas and techniques must remain flexible and good judgment must be in place with each decision.

Sometimes, the idea of forgiveness may be used to justify a lack of vigilance in this area. Such a perversion of forgiveness is neither appropriate nor Biblical. Scripture is filled with examples of flawed, yet godly, people who were forgiven, but suffered the consequences of their respective sin. David and Moses are two clear and familiar examples with whom most are familiar.

There is also an idea that springs from secular culture into church life that impacts decisions on how to manage *The Struggle*. The idea is this: we should not judge the behavior of others. Without delving too far into the theology, we do and must judge behavior without judging the heart of another.

Process Points to Ponder

There are a number of different techniques by which to manage an offender's presence in a congregation. Some sugges-

tions follow. This is not an exhaustive list and there are many variations of each idea. The common thread throughout is that the limits must be consistently enforced as a condition of an offender participating in worship. Deviation or violation by the offender should, in most situations, act to disqualify him or her from further worship.

1) Conditional Membership

We all hold church membership conditionally. At a minimum we must accept the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and be baptized or enter by profession of faith. Sex offenders who wish to worship in a given congregation will, as a consequence of their wrongdoing, have additional conditions placed upon them. Explaining that conditional membership applies to all may help persuade those who resist limits.

2) Covenant

This is the heart of managing *The Struggle*. Before allowing offenders to attend services, ask them to commit to a covenant designed to set forth the conditions of membership or participation in services. Such a covenant should clearly state the level of participation the congregation will permit. Typically, it would prohibit contact with children. Prohibition of participation in youth or children's ministries, such as Pathfinders, Adventurers, and Children's Sabbath School, would be appropriate. It may also prohibit the offender from attending functions such as church potlucks and other social events in which children are likely present. This should be reduced to written form, and signed and dated by the offender. Some conferences are using this technique with success.

3) Accountability Partner

I call this the guardian angel solution. This person would be responsible for assist-



ing the offender in honoring the promises made in the covenant. You may want to have two or three people involved in this to avoid burnout or lapses in supervision. The Accountability Partner should stay within sight of the offender. In addition, this must be well coordinated to avoid lapses in responsibility (“I thought it was Bob’s turn.”) You may wish to consider having this person report to the church board or executive committee annually or semi-annually to discuss any problems with the offender or with the process.

4) Disclosure to Church Members

This is a delicate situation requiring a high degree of skill. Do we disclose that a sex offender is worshipping with us? If so, how and to whom? These are all tough issues to work through.

First, disclosure is appropriate and necessary. It gives congregants fair warning, particularly those with children or other vulnerable family members. Second, a one time disclosure is not effective. In time, membership rolls change and those who need to know may change. Departing pastors should advise incoming pastors of the presence of a sex offender in the congregation. Third, the content of the disclosure should be factual, respectful, and true. Disclosure should avoid opinion, speculation, or pseudo-analysis. Lastly, prior to making such a disclosure, it is important to consult with local legal counsel to obtain guidance on the appropriate legal limits of such a disclosure.

5) Contact with Children

Many churches have a policy or a practice of conducting criminal background checks on all people working with children. Any policy or practice should clearly state that anyone with a history of sex offense forfeits the privilege of working with young people and children, and as a condition

of membership is prohibited from contact with them within or outside of church or its functions.

As with many things, success lies with the people responsible, in this case, for enforcing limits. Those responsible for enforcement, including the offender, must be committed to the idea and the process. It is important to stress that these limits are not punitive. Instead they make it possible for the offender/believer to participate in corporate worship and fellowship.

6) Flexibility

Within your policies, allow some flexibility and discretion. Whatever guidelines or policies you adopt, make sure you have sufficient discretion to address individual situations. Such flexibility will include some assessment of whether or not the offender is truly repentant or merely seeking an opportunity to approach the vulnerable. The truly repentant may be provided with conditional membership which includes appropriate limits and safeguards. Those offenders who seek access to the vulnerable should not be permitted access, under any circumstances, limits, or conditions. How to determine who is and is not truly repentant is a huge challenge, but the attempt must be made. Speaking to probation officers, observation, and other background data gathering may assist you in assessing the offender.

Impact on the Congregation

My mother once told me to avoid discussing religion and politics. This is because such discussions rarely bring out the best in us. The same can be said for addressing *The Struggle*. You will find, within most congregations, that any attempt to deal with this problem will polarize the members. Some will line up on the law and order side and others will stand squarely under the umbrella of grace. Few are able to see that both can be achieved. Further, the uncharitable

tone of many discussions of this subject offends some believer’s scriptural beliefs. No matter how this is managed, it is likely that some will leave and worship elsewhere. That should not deter you from working hard to manage *The Struggle*. Simply understand that this issue brings out strong opinions and no matter how you manage it, you will have some who strongly disagree with you.

You are Not Alone

As a local pastor or church leader, it is easy to feel overwhelmed when facing *The Struggle*. Please know that you are not alone. There are many resources you can call upon, including the staff at Adventist Risk Management. There is no single source of information on this topic. Some places where you can seek help include your local police department, probation officers, mental health care professionals, and social workers. Such professionals can assist you in evaluating your processes and help you assess the risk of a given individual. Beware, however, of the self-proclaimed experts in this field. With the problems of sex abuse within faith communities making national headlines in recent years, many are now profiting in the prevention field. You need to beware of such experts and stick with sources offering sound advice and proven techniques.

Conclusion

This is hard work. Developing the right processes and getting people in your congregation to commit to unwavering diligence will stretch your leadership ability to its limits. *The Struggle*, however, requires your best efforts. The sin of sexual abuse ripples throughout the lives of individuals and creates burdens for our churches and institutions. But this is work that must be done as it enables our objective – spreading the Gospel. If you have ideas on this subject

Educating Church Members to Recognize and Deal with Sexual Predators

When church members and their children come to worship or attend other church functions, it should be with the understanding that there is no bubble that encapsulates and protects the participants from all danger. Yes, there is always the possibility of a miraculous deliverance from some evil that may have otherwise befallen someone, but the Lord has given us the ability to think and to plan on ways to protect those that need protection.

Sure, we need to continue to run fin-



gerprint cards and do background checks on adults that minister to the children and youth of our church, but that will only screen out those

that have already been caught. There may be individuals in your congregation that have never been caught by the law and have engaged in sexual abuse with children, perhaps even those whom you see from week to week in your church building.

Leaders of our local churches need to equip the adult members by educating them to recognize the symptoms of sexual abuse in the children they minister to.

There are several physical symptoms that may indicate sexual abuse in a child: difficult to walk/sit; pain/itching in genital area; bruises/bleeding in private areas; STDs; abrupt change in personal care/child fails to bath, comb hair, brush teeth, etc. When these types of symptoms are seen, an adult should feel an obligation to act to protect the child and to clarify what is going on with the child. Local laws may require that mandatory reporting of what you see to either the police or some other social services agency. Your church may also develop a protocol of other individuals you should contact with your concerns (pastor or parents/guardians of the child).

Church members also need to be able to recognize inappropriate interaction by other Sabbath School leaders or other adults with children. Some danger signs could include any of the following: adult always alone with the child; adult giving child lingering full frontal hugs instead of side hugs; expensive gift by adults to children that are not the natural objects of their affection by family line; adult always wanting to take the child places; adult and child stop talking when others are near; unusual amount of time spent together or an unusual amount of physical contact between adult and child. Again, if something suspicious is noticed, you may be under an obligation to have the professionals look into the matter for the protection of the child involved.

In a perfect world, there would be no predators in our midst. But Jesus has warned us that the devil will come among us like *a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*. Can that illustration be stretched to encompass the thought that it would be very wise to prepare our paid and volunteer staffs in our local churches with the education that will allow them to

more effectively recognize predators and perhaps prevent the harming of young worshipers?

From the count of actual claims being brought against churches and schools in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, there are a number of children each year who have encounters with sexual predators. Either the numbers of events that are occurring per year are increasing, or victims and their families are becoming more inclined to report the encounter to the authorities. There may still be some in the church that resist the thought that in most jurisdictions it is the law that sexual abuse of a minor must be reported to the local government (police or social services). Mandatory reporting by our churches happens most of the time when it should happen.

A good way to approach the mindset that seeks to prevent sexual abuse and protect the children would be by educating three different groups in a nearly simultaneous and overlapping fashion. First the local church leaders would have to be educated. This would target not only the paid leaders, but also the volunteers that deal with church management or with the children's programming. They need to recognize that there is a sexual abuse problem throughout society in general and even specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist community. Education is a resource that can be an effective measure to help the local church better protect the children. When this administrative group buys in to the concept they can create a consciousness throughout the church that will empower the other two types of educational programs.

The second type of educational materials would be targeted to the parents of the children in the church to share

with them ways to better protect their children and to help the children recognize behaviors that they should not allow. The families should be the primary place for children to learn about the beautiful, God-given gift of sex and how it has been perverted in this sinful world. However, it is possible to provide programmed teaching packets and visual aids for the parents to use with their children in such a way that both the parents and the children learn survival skills in this area of life.

The final educational thrust would be aimed at directly helping the children themselves understand the difference between a good and bad touch. They also need to know what their best options could be when they are faced with a potential sexual abuse situation. This is a fallback way to help the children if their

parents are too busy, too unengaged in the usual childrearing responsibilities or are otherwise unable to talk about this topic. Some of the same teaching packets discussed in the above family education paragraph may be useful here also. The object is to create awareness so that children will not be tricked by a sophisticated predator. There may need to be some parental authorization for this direct training of the children.

Unfortunately, the above three-way educational thrust has not yet been produced for use by ARM. It is under consideration and may be produced by December 2007, if similar, already developed products cannot be located.

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Risky Business

By John J. Dougan, ARM, ALCM



“Yes, we allow sex of-fenders membership. We just have a few conditions here that need to be met.”





Internet Addiction Disorder

More than 160 million Americans are regular Internet users. According to researchers from Stanford University, over 1 in 8 adults may have signs of Internet addiction. The issue of Internet addiction is starting to be recognized as a legitimate object of clinical attention, as well as an economic problem, given that a great deal of non-essential Internet use takes place at work.

Description

The typical Internet addict is male, white, has a college education, and is in his 30's. He spends over 30 hours each week on the computer for non-essential use. The American Psychiatric Association may include Internet addiction in its next guidebook, while experts debate whether the issue constitutes a psychological problem. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is a theorized disorder coined by Ivan Goldberg, M.D. in 1995.

- Some experts believe the problem is a disorder and not a true addiction. Addiction is defined as a compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance. According to one researcher who focuses on Internet communities, addiction is impossible because the Internet is an environment and the problem lies with the Internet user's priorities.
- Some mental health professionals recognize Internet addiction as a disorder. They are treating it as a dependency that can be as destructive as alcoholism and drug addiction.

Symptoms & Consequences

Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is characterized by seven basic diagnostic criteria. These include increasing tolerance of long online hours, withdrawal, and

unsuccessful efforts to control Internet use. Other signs of addiction can include compulsive checking of e-mail and chat rooms, as well as habitually looking on web pages.

- The Internet has properties that, for some individuals, promote addictive behaviors and pseudo-intimate, interpersonal relationships. Many are suffering the consequences of obsession with the online world. They are unable to control gaming, sexual and shopping behaviors. As a result, they miss meals/sleep, have lowered grades, incur debt, suffer job loss and increase isolation.
- Alcoholics Anonymous is considering setting up a separate division of their organization to work with people addicted to browsing the Internet. Research has found that many use the Internet to escape a negative mood, much in the same way that alcoholics might, as a way to self-medicate. According to one study, eight percent are so obsessed they hide their habits from their partners; 14 percent find it hard to abstain from Internet use for several days. Over percent said the Internet was a means of escape from the real world.
- Online marital infidelity (cybersex) can lead to divorce and harm personal relationships. Individuals who seek out sexual partners online also appear to be at higher risk for sexually-transmitted diseases. Such behaviors can lead to cyber sexual addiction. Previous studies

have reported that approximately nine million people (15 percent of Internet users) accessed a top adult Web site in a one-month period.

- Web sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook* are reputed to occupy users for periods in excess of five hours. In March 2005, a government clinic for Internet addiction was opened at the Beijing Military Region Central Hospital in People's Republic of China. It treats patients, mostly youths between the age of 14 to 24, who suffer from anxiety, depression, and lack of sleep, often due to long hours online. Treatments include counseling, physical activity, and enforcement of strict regular sleeping patterns.

Sources: Medical News Today, Stanford School of Medicine, Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, New Scientist Tech, Wikipedia, Physorg, University of Albany - Dept. of Psychotechnology, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals.

The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.



Women's Health Series: Coffee Drinks

Coffee Drinks Can Pack on the Pounds. According to a clinical dietician with the University of Washington in Seattle, many people don't count the calories they drink and some coffee drinks might be the difference between losing half a pound per week or not.

Having one large coffee frappuccino is almost like drinking two McDonald's Quarter Pounder burgers, according to a study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. A 24-ounce double chocolate chip frappuccino blended drink with whipped cream has, on average, 750 calories, 28 grams of fat, and 111 carbohydrates. Drinking a Starbucks Caffé Mocha has been compared to sipping a Quarter Pounder with Cheese through a straw. Both have about 500 calories.

Depending on the kind of milk and ingredients used, a large latte can contain from 250 calories to as many as 570 calories.

- A Dunkin' Donuts Mocha Almond Hot Latte (16 oz) has 464 calories, 16 grams of fat, 73 carbohydrates, and 72 grams of sugar.
- A Starbucks Java Chip Frappuccino contains 650 calories and 25 grams of fat. That's similar to a regular coffee with 11 creamers and 29 packets of sugar.

Some information on 16-ounce "grande" drinks at Starbucks:

- Vanilla latte with whole milk – 280 calories, 10 grams of fat
- Mocha with low-fat milk and whipped cream – 302 calories, 16 grams of fat
- Caffé Americano – 16 calories
- Latte with low-fat milk – 210 calories, 6 grams of fat
- Strawberries & Crème Frappuccino with whipped cream – 600 calories,

- 17 grams of fat
- Chai latte with nonfat milk – 230 calories, 0 grams of fat
- Cappuccino with low-fat milk – 135 calories
- Light Caramel Frappuccino without whipped cream – 180 calories, 1.5 grams of fat
- Caffé au Lait with whole milk – 145 calories

If you have a non-fat cappuccino and a biscotti for breakfast instead of a 24-ounce mocha latte and scone, you could lose 20 pounds over the coming year.

- Large muffins and scones can have around 500 calories. A biscotti contains about 100 calories.
- Coffee in its purest form has no fat and no calories.
- Two tablespoons of flavored nondairy creamer adds 80 calories and 4 grams of fat
- One tablespoon of half-and-half has 20



calories, 2 grams of fat

- Two tablespoons of flavored syrup adds 80 calories, no fat
- One teaspoon of sugar is 15 calories
- Whipped cream can add about 120 calories and from 7-12 grams of fat

Sources: CDC, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Women's Health, Newstarget, KOMO TV, HealthAtoZ, Mayo Clinic, WebMD, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Women's Fact Sheet of the Month is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.



Berry Applesauce

Makes 2 cups

Serve this applesauce hot or cold.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups peeled, cored and chopped apples
- 2 cups strawberries, blueberries or raspberries, fresh or frozen (unsweetened)

- ½ cup frozen concentrate or ¾ cup fruit juice, such as apple, grape, or pomegranate
- Cinnamon

Directions:

In a medium-sized saucepan combine all ingredients. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook over very low heat for about 25 minutes, or until apples are tender when pierced with a fork. Mash lightly or puree in a food processor, if desired. Sprinkle with cinnamon to serve. Serve over soy vanilla ice cream (optional).

The Cancer Project
Recipe adapted from *Foods That Fight Pain* by Neal Barnard, M.D.; recipe by Jennifer Raymond



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OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 1, 2007

A North American Division pre-meeting
"One Church, One Mission"

Sponsored by Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

one CHURCH,

Neal Wilson Auditorium
Columbia Union Conference
5427 Twin Knolls Drive
Columbia, MD 21074

This is our 4th year of collaborating with the North American Division in sponsoring the annual meeting for church executives. We welcome you again to Maryland. Join us for a day-and-a-half meeting discussing issues relating to your role as a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and issues affecting your organization.

Special dinner is planned for October 31, bring your spouse or a guest.

RSVP BY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12
301-680-6806, Gwen Ashley.

one MISSION.