

## Outline

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## Counselling

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## COUNSELLING

### Introduction

At the ordination of an office-bearer the congregation prays that the person(s) involved may receive wisdom in order to function as office bearer for the benefit of the congregation. This wisdom is necessary because we live in a broken world, which can make the lives of God's children difficult. When as servants of the Lord we have to deal with and help in these situations, we need wisdom. We receive this wisdom from the Holy Spirit and the Word. In this chapter we will reflect on this task to help those members who struggle with difficulties in their lives. The word "counselling," used in the title, is not used in a professional sense. The office-bearers are to watch over the "souls" of the members entrusted into their care. This care may involve giving counsel.

### 1. Scripture

The Bible uses the image of shepherd and sheep in connection with the care office-bearers have to show towards the congregation. This image brings us back to who our God is. The LORD God is the Shepherd of His people. He takes care of the needs of the sheep.

Ps 79:13

Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

Ps 95:7

for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Ps 121:7

The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life;

Ez 34 : 11

For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them

1 Pet 2:25

For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

He counsels His people.

Ps 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

Ps 73:24

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Isa 11:2

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD--

This care for His sheep shows most wonderfully in the sending of the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Matt 15:24

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Matt 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Before his ascension Christ in turn appoints people to shepherd His flock.

Matt 9:36-38

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matt 10:6

Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

Luke 22:32

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

John 21:15

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

The apostles took care of the flock and appointed overseers to continue this task.

Acts 14:22

strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Acts 15:32

Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.

Acts 18:23

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and travelled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Heb 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1Thes 2:12

encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

1Thes 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

This care is needed because God's children can go through difficult times.

1 Sam 1:10

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.

1 Sam 1:16

Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

2 Sam 19:2

And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son."

Ps 6:3

My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long?

Ps 23:3-4

he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

Ps 42:1, 11

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ... Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Ps 88:9

my eyes are dim with grief. I call to you, O LORD, every day; I spread out my hands to you.

Lam 3:20

I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

The Lord gives overseers to bring His comfort to His people in need. This will give rest in their lives.

Ps. 23 : 2, 6

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ... Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD, forever.

Ps 131:2

But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

2 Cor 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

1 Pet 5:10

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

The overseers need wisdom in order to give good pastoral care.

2 Chron 1:10

Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people,

## 2. Confession - Church Order - Forms

### 2.1. Heidelberg Catechism

The theme of the Heidelberg Catechism is formulated in Lord's Day 1, and summarized in the word "comfort." In using this theme the Catechism is aware of the hardship which we may face in life and the strength we receive in the promises of the Lord. The Catechism elaborates on this theme in more Lord's Days.

Q/A 1

What is your only comfort in life and death?

That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

Q/A 26.

What do you believe when you say: *I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?*

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father.

In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow.

He is able to do so as almighty God, and willing also as a faithful Father.

Q/A 44

Why is there added: *He descended into hell?*

In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony, which He endured throughout all His sufferings but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

Q/A 53.

What do you believe concerning *the Holy Spirit?*

First, He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God. Second, He is also given to me, to make me by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits, to comfort me, and to remain with me forever.

### 2.2. Canons of Dort

The Canons of Dort openly address the fact that believers at times struggle with what they receive from the hand of the Lord. Assurance of faith is not to be gained by prying into ourselves, but by holding on to the Word of God.

Chapter 1, Article 16 - Responses To The Doctrine Of Reprobation

Some do not yet clearly discern in themselves a living faith in Christ, an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ; nevertheless, they use the means through which God has promised to work these things in us. They ought not to be alarmed when reprobation is mentioned, nor to count themselves among the reprobate. Rather, they must diligently continue in the use of these means, fervently desire a time of more abundant grace, and expect it reverently and humbly. Others seriously desire to be converted to God, to please Him only, and to be delivered from the body of death. Yet they cannot reach that point on the way of godliness and faith which they would like. They should be even less terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, since a merciful God has promised not to quench the smoking flax nor to break the bruised reed. Still others disregard God and the Saviour Jesus Christ and have completely given themselves over to the cares of the world and the lusts of the flesh. For them this doctrine of reprobation is rightly fearsome as long as they are not seriously converted.

Chapter 5, Article 5 - The Effects Of Such Serious Sins

By such gross sins, however, they greatly offend God, incur deadly guilt, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, very grievously wound their consciences, and sometimes for a while lose the sense of God's favour — until they return to the right way through sincere repentance and God's fatherly face again shines upon them.

### 2.3. Church Order

According to the Church Order it is the task of the office bearers to help and encourage.

Art. 22 - The Office of Elder

The specific duties of the office of elder are .... faithfully to visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God

Art. 23 - The Office of Deacon

They shall encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's love

## 2.4. Forms

The sacraments have been given to strengthen us, because the Lord is mindful of our questions and struggles.

Form for the Baptism of Infants

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

But all this, beloved brothers and sisters is not meant to discourage broken and contrite hearts ....

By all this He has taken our curse upon Himself that He might fill us with His blessing

## 2.5. Prayer

Prayer # 9, A prayer for the sick and the spiritually distressed

Prayer # 10, A prayer for the sick and the spiritually distressed

## 3. Goal

The goal of counselling is that as servants of the Lord we show Christ's liberating rule over the lives of his people who are in danger of getting stuck in the brokenness of life.

## 4. Pastoral Care and Counselling

Historically the Reformed churches have connected the pastoral care to the use of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, the preaching of the gospel and the administration of discipline. In the proclamation of God's Word the free grace of God is administered to each and every one in the congregation. The administration of discipline is aimed at bringing sinners to repentance and so functions in the sanctification of life. In connecting the pastoral care to the keys of the Kingdom of heaven we confess that the greatest misery of mankind is the guilt we have before God and His wrath over our sin. Thus the greatest gift is the forgiveness of these sins for in this way our communion with the Lord and with each other is restored. The church is the gathering "of the true Christian believers, who expect their entire salvation in Jesus Christ, are washed by His blood, and are sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit" (Art.27 Belgic Confession), not a club of people who all have overcome psychological problems.

It is all the more important to maintain this in light of modern approaches to counselling which are based on anthropological ideologies. These approaches usually place man in the centre and demand unconditional acceptance of the person. We have to accept each other as we are. Man is no longer seen as a sinner before God and has no guilt before God. As a result there is no place for the wrath of God, for discipline, for forgiveness, or even for the Bible. As Reformed believers we must continue to speak of our guilt before God and the brokenness of this life because of our fall into sin. Only then can we continue to administer the grace of God to "broken and contrite" hearts.

The fact that the Reformed Churches connected the pastoral care to the keys of the kingdom, also means that these keys include more than preaching and discipline, they also include the direct contact between the overseer and the members in the congregation. Human life is always in danger of getting stuck in the complications of sin and the brokenness of life. God's people can have the feeling that they are going through a valley "of the shadow of death". There may seem no way out to them. The overseers may help them in showing them the way, that is, in teaching wisdom. Christ's rule by His Word and Spirit sets people free. The Spirit who equips the overseers for their task is the Spirit of wisdom. The pastoral visit is a wonderful gift in this regard.

Knowing ourselves to be servants of the Lord teaches us that we must do our work with respect and humility before the face of God. This sets limits to our work. We do not know everything. There are times when we have to admit that we don't know why something is happening. There are situations when we

have to step back. The ultimate deliverance from sin is God's work, not ours. This implies that there can be situations in which an overseer cannot help and/or does not have to help, because professional help is in place. This brings in focus the relation between pastoral help and professional help. The pastoral help is not a replacement of professional help, nor does professional help have to be an attack on pastoral help. They should work hand in hand. As overseers we must be aware that we are not social workers, nor should we be ashamed of our calling. Christ has entrusted us with the keys of His Kingdom. This determines our relationship with the members and thus differs from a client and social worker relationship. Dr.C.Trimp points to three elements in this connection (Zorgen voor de Gemeente, chapter 7.)

1. The relationship between office bearer and member goes deeper. It touches the heart and the relationship with God. In the pastoral relationship the command of God and His promises are proclaimed for all of life.
2. The relationship between office bearer and member lasts longer, it continues for our whole life on earth, whereas the relationship between social worker and client is only for a time.
3. The relationship between office bearer and member is anchored in the communion of Christ through the Holy Spirit. This is why a social worker only helps when asked, but office bearers will seek the members in order to find out whether they need help.

Because God's Word recognizes the reality of a broken human life, we should not be afraid to have professionals involved. A good professional should respect, or even direct his client to the help of the overseers.

## 5. Counselling Service Network

The Counselling Services Network Committee has as mandate to assist office bearers in directing members of the Canadian Reformed Churches in remediating and reconciling broken relationships, and to promote among members of the churches biblically sound and confessionally faithful approaches to the use of available counselling services. The committee is also mandated to publish and maintain a handbook for a counselling services network. All the office bearers should have a copy of this Handbook.

## 6 Abuse

The recent attention for abuse has its good sides and its bad sides. The good side is that we have become more aware of the way abuse operates and what it does to those affected by it. It helps us to detect it, to deal with it, to try to find a way out of it. The not so good side is that it becomes fashionable to deal with it which may lead to overreaction. This means that on the one hand we must be realistic, there is abuse, and it is terrible, but on the other hand we need not accept everything that is said by our society about abuse. We must be aware of our position as believers in all this, and without denying the reality the solutions can be totally different.

Two comments are in place here. In the first place we acknowledge that abuse happens also in our community. And, just like society, as a whole, is becoming more and more aware of it and trying to come to terms with it, so do we. There is no reason to believe that within our community the abuse is worse than in other circles. Secondly, we can only deal with abuse in this handbook in a general fashion. Every situation is different, every type of abuse is different. In Appendix 2 you will find a further explanation what abuse is and what it does.

### 6.1. Abuse and Power

"Abuse" is abuse of power. Power is misused in order to gain control over the other. Power is misused to keep the other in control. We will begin our evaluation then by looking at what the Bible says about power, or rather, authority. The Bible teaches us that all authority comes from God. This means that authority is never a purpose in itself and may never be used for selfish purposes. He who has authority has received it from the Lord and will have to give account to the Lord how he has used it.

In abusive situations this power is divorced from the Lord and seen as a tool to serve the abuser. Therefore abuse is in the first place an insult to God. The abusive husband who tells his wife that he is her head should first of all realize that he has Christ as Head. The parents who want to control their children should realize that their position is one given by the Lord. Ephesians 5 and 6 and Colossians 3 clearly speak of all relationships of authority as in the Lord.

Here we see then the difference between the way we look at abuse and the way this world does. This world operates from the idea that man is a power unto himself, man has rights which may not be infringed upon. Therefore the injustice and hurt of the victim stands in the centre, even runs the danger of being idolized. We acknowledge that all authority comes from God, is to be received from Him in faith and used in loving obedience to Him. His love, His justice and right stand in the centre. Both abuser and victim will find their help in the Lord, that is, in God's saving love in Christ.

It is remarkable that Paul stresses in Ephesians 5:22-33 that the position of authority of the husband is to be ruled by Christian love. This love reflects the self sacrificing love of Christ for His Bride. Therefore, the love of the Christian husband, his position of head of the family, may not be a matter of selfish domination. Rather, it is a matter of giving, sacrificing and caring love in which the wife and child is safe, can feel safe and is protected.

The same message we find in Colossians 3. The position of authority in the relations between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between masters and slaves, is placed under the theme of the loving and giving care of Christ. In the vs.12-17 we read: "Put on ...compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience, ... And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts; ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." In this context children are admonished to "obey their parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." This context also leads to a warning for the fathers, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." Here is spoken of fathers who seek the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of their children in the light of Christ's caring and self-sacrificing love.

## **6.2. Old and New**

Is abuse something new of the 20th century? No, abuse is as old as sin is old. All through the centuries there has been abuse. For abuse is the abuse of power. Man has from the beginning rebelled against the authority of God. We all have abused His love. The consequences of this disobedience is also that human relationships can become abusive. Already in the O.T. we find references to and warnings against alcohol, abuse of power in marriage, sexual abuse and incest. The N.T. also warns against being filled with wine, instructs husbands to deal wisely with their wives, as their own body, and commands fathers not to provoke their children to anger. The Bible certainly warns for the abuse of power and also realizes that abuse can and does happen.

There is nothing new under the sun, also when it comes to abuse. What is new compared to 50 years ago, is our awareness of the effects of abuse, and that we are prepared to say that abuse cannot be tolerated. The husband who abuses his wife has broken his vows and his marriage, and the wife is justified to leave him if he makes it impossible for her to live a Christian life. The rule to be more obedient to God than to men also applies to marriage and the relationship parent-child.

Though this openness in itself is good, yet we should be aware of possible over-reaction as well. You see such an over-reaction in our society. In fact, because our society does not want to acknowledge that all authority comes from God it is unable to give the proper answer to abuse. This leads to contradictions and aberrations. For is not abortion a most terrible form of child abuse? Or, to give another example, a child can with one malicious allegation destroy the name and career of someone he does not like. And the media which highlight cases of abuse also feed society with violence, selfishness and sex. Similarly, our world wants to give the victim the feeling of self-worth. In doing this they replace the power of the 'other'

with the power of 'self'. But how can a person receive a proper selfworth, except before the face of God? In Father's eyes I am person, for He calls me by name.

This contradictory reaction of our 20th century society is a result of not wanting to accept the authority of God. Abuse can only be dealt with from the perspective of God's will and His claim on man.

### **6.3. Sickness or Sin**

This brings us to a question we cannot escape, namely is abuse a matter of sickness or sin. Is the alcoholic, the wife beater, the sexual abuser a sick person, or do we regard his actions as sin? Some say it is a sickness, it is a condition not an act. Give medication and professional help and that should solve some of the problems, or perhaps it will never be solved. Others say no it is sin. Confess and repent from your selfishness and you will be healed.

Abuse is sin. Abuse involves a wrong use of power, thus the person who abuses wants to take the place of God. The abuser has in his own view absolute power and imposes this on the other. This is sin. The Bible shows that every relationship is in the Lord. All authority we receive is delegated to us, and must be used in submission to God. The Bible also indicates that the body, also the victim's body, is a temple of the Holy Spirit. There is no excuse for abuse. Both victim and abuser must know this.

To see the sinfulness of abuse we can refer to the Ten Words of the covenant, the law of God. The LORD introduces His law in proclaiming our redemption by His power. God's power is a power manifested in redemption. With regard to the first commandment we can say that the abuser has made power into an idol. The second commandment says that we must serve the LORD according to His will, not according to our own will. The abuser does it on his own terms. And does not God say in the fifth commandment that all authority comes from Him? In the sixth commandment the LORD forbids dishonouring and injuring others by thoughts, words, gestures much less by deed. Does not the seventh commandment say that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? It is even remarkable that in the O.T. to steal, forbidden in the eighth commandment, also applies to stealing people. Dt 24:7 "If a man is found to have kidnapped a fellow Israelite, enslaving him or selling him, that kidnapper shall die; thus you will sweep out evil from your midst." (JPS transl.) See also Ex.21:16. Abuse is evil in the eyes of God.

While maintaining that abuse is sin, we should not close our eyes either for the fact that the abuser himself has a distorted view on reality, or the possibility that the one who abuses has certain things in his life that may prevent him from seeing his sin clearly. There can be trouble or even abuse in childhood, there can be an inferiority complex, there can be many different things. Abusive behaviour has a pattern and a history. This is important in dealing with the victim because the victim has put on the blame on himself. The victim supposedly could have prevented the abuse. This is also of importance in dealing with the perpetrator. It may take much to make him see his sin.

We say this not to excuse the sin but to be able to focus on the repentance. The abuser must repent, but that repentance must not be outward or superficial. When you see that abusive behaviour as sickness, then part of the responsibility goes away. Can he help it that he is sick? The solution is then professional help, and as elders we can perhaps function as helpers who stand by the sideline. But if it is a sin for which repentance must be shown, then we have a function as elders. For then also the use of the keys of the kingdom comes into the picture.

How should we use these keys? They must be administered so that the sinner, by the power of the Holy Spirit, comes to repentance. He has to acknowledge his wrong and do his utmost to seek help. Not forgetting that the goal of all discipline is to reconcile the sinner to God.



#### **6.4. Abuse and Faith**

Within our community the effects of abuse can be deepened by a misuse of what Scripture teaches us about authority. The abusive husband will point to the command that women must be submissive, and abusive parents often use the commandment "Honour your father and your mother." The Bible is read with a view to what the other has to do. The name of the LORD is used to gain or maintain control over the life, the emotions or the body of someone else. Such use of the name of the LORD is abuse of His name. For it is used to condone or cover up sinful practices. In addition a tremendous burden is placed on the shoulders of the victim. For in the mind of the victim to oppose the abuse becomes equal to opposing God. In such circumstances we may tell the victim that God is a loving Father, who forbids abuse. The life of the victim is in His hand.

God reveals Himself to us as a Father. He uses a title that we are all familiar with. For this reason, abuse in the earthly relationship, e.g. of father and child, can have consequences for the victim's relationship with the LORD. If the earthly father is unpredictable and abusive, then it can become difficult to address God as Father. It is therefore important to keep in mind what we confess in Lord's Day 9, namely that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is for His sake my God and Father. God's fatherhood cannot be separated from the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This shows that Father in heaven is not a tyrant, but a loving Father who gives what is most dear to Him in His love for us. When the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5 says that the relationship between parents and children is one in the Lord then this element is certainly included. The calling of parents with regard to their children is to show this love. They may instill in them the understanding that their mutual relationship is one in the Lord. Not the parents give the children their place, nor do children give their parents a place, but both receive their place from the Father in heaven through the Lord Jesus Christ. Abusive parents by their controlling attitude tend to obscure this grace of God and can thus seriously hurt the relationship of the victim with the heavenly Father.

At times Scriptural concepts are used to reinforce abuse or to ignore its effects. The abusive husband will tell his wife that she must be submissive to her husband, and an abusive parent will tell the child that children must honour their parents and have patience with their weaknesses and shortcomings. These statements are indeed true, only the situation in which they are used and the purpose for which they are used make them so "poisonous". For in the eye of the victim to go for help or even to go against the abusive husband and parent is nothing less but disobedience to God's command. It puts a tremendous burden of guilt of the victim and undermines a proper understanding of what forgiveness is. For in this use of God's law repentance means to be forced to do what the abuser wants you to do. This is a total caricature of the biblical understanding of repentance and forgiveness.

The relationship between abuse and faith comes to the fore also in other ways. Many victims ask themselves the question, Where was God when this happened? If this is wrong why did He not stop it? These questions are already difficult to deal with. It becomes, however, more difficult yet when the abuser comes to the victim to ask for forgiveness while the abuse continues. Not only can this lead to a warped understanding of the Lord forgiving our sins, it can even bring about hatred against the Lord. In addition, the feeling of guilt makes that the victim feels that he or she has no "right" to the promises of God. There are victims who were able to endure much because of their faith, this is true, but it is equally true that abuse can distort one's view on the promises of God and destroy the certainty of faith.

#### **6.5. Help and Healing**

Helping, of both the victim and the abuser, begins with taking abuse seriously. Helping begins with listening and being open for the thoughts and fears of the other. But it will not stay there. It must progress from there, though that may take a lot of time. For all the defences which we mentioned above must first be broken down. The denial, the guilt the fear need to be addressed. That can take a long time. For the victim these defences give a measure of security. What they don't realize is how these defences do not help but rather make it more difficult for the person. These defences have also covered the main issue. Therefore what you will see once the defences come down that the pain and the hurt comes up. That is to

be expected. But it will make the victim say, "Why did I do this? Not telling and living with the lie was nicer than dealing with this pain." This is not true. To live with a lie is not life. The victim must become aware of what has to happen in him or her. Help is possible.

Who can help? Do you need to be an expert in order to help? There are two things we need to stress. In the first place we have to know our own limitations. Abuse runs deep and is cunning. Wife abuse is not just a marital disagreement, child abuse is not just a minor incident. Therefore we should not reject professional help off hand. Such help can be instrumental in dealing with the abuse. In the second place we should not think little of what we can do in being a hand a foot to each other in the congregation. With the word of God we can be of help also in these situations. The grace of God is sufficient also for situations of abuse. A professional counsellor has only 1 hour in the three weeks, but we can deal with each other on a much more frequent basis. Certain scars may never go away, but we can help each other to live from the grace of God.

That brings us also to the question what task the office bearers in the church have. The officebearer is not a professional counsellor. I would say he is more, he is charged to take care of the souls of congregation. The minister is not a professional counsellor either. His task is to be pastor and teacher. As pastor he has to deal with the difficulties in the flock, including abuse. Officebearers also have to know their limitations and not be afraid to make use of professional services. On the other hand they should not relinquish their task to counsellors. For the officebearers have something what the counsellor do not have, the keys of the kingdom of God. Abuse is sin against God, it is God who forgives sins, who also heals and helps. He has given us His servants, the office-bearers, who, with all shortcomings, are called to take care of the members. They may do this with the Word of God and the help of the Holy Spirit.

It is here that the difference in approach to abuse is very significant. I said this society puts man in the centre and his hurts. In order to solve that you need experts. We place the justice of God in the centre, and that gives the office bearers a place. The grace of God and the mercy of Christ comes to us through them. Both victim and abuser must see their place before God, only then healing is possible. God's grace and Spirit are more powerful than the forces of darkness. And in this life that is seen in part, after this life it will be completed, for we are on the way to a kingdom without abuse.

## **7. Reporting**

The information for the following two paragraphs is gleaned from A Handbook for the Prevention of Family Violence published by the Community Child Abuse Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (page 1.18).

The Child and Family Services Act of Ontario (1984) charges the Ministry of Community and Social Services with the responsibility of defining and legislating procedures for the handling of all child abuse cases, whether suspected or confirmed. These services are administered by the Children's Aid Societies, also known as Family and Children's Services. The Child and Family Services Act is intended to ensure professional, consistent and effective practices in serving abused children and their families. Its paramount objective is to promote the best interests, protection and well being of children. The Child and Family Services Act also recognizes a family's culture, heritage, tradition and the concept of extended family.

It is the duty of the general public to report to the Children's Aid Society a belief "on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection." A person acting in their professional capacity is mandated to report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse. It is the direct responsibility of the individual who suspects abuse to make the report. Even if other protocol exists in a place of employment it is still the responsibility of the person with the initial information to ensure that such a report has actually been made. This portion of the Child and Family Services Act applies to every person in Ontario. Failure to report a suspicion of child abuse is an offense under the Child and Family Services Act.

The implication of this is that if an overseer believes "on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection" he has to report this to the authorities. The decision to inform the family involved should be made in consultation with the Child and Family Services. If an overseer is told that a child is being abused he has the obligation to report this to Child and Family Services or the police. If the victim involved is 16 years or older there is no obligation to report. The person involved has to make this decision. A Policy for Child Abuse Prevention is added to this chapter.

In reporting the matter to the civil authorities there is no need for the overseers to investigate or to judge whether the accusation is credible. They can instead focus on the pastoral care for victim and/or perpetrator and if possible on reconciliation. If the accused admits to wrongdoing, the elders have to look for willingness to admit guilt and show true repentance.

## 8. Literature

- Allender, Dan B., *The Wounded Heart*, NavPress, 1990
- J.R.Sittema, *With a Shepherd's Heart*, Granville, MI, 1996
- C.Trimp, *Zorgen voor de Gemeente*, van den Berg, Kampen, 1982
- J.Visscher, "Child Abuse and the Duty to Report", in *Diakonia*, Vol. V, No. 1 (September, 1991)
- A Handbook for a Counselling Services Network, by The Counselling Services Network Committee of the Canadian Reformed Churches, 1998

## 9. Evaluation

1. Do we agree with the Scriptural and Confessional basis and goal?
2. Do we agree on the difference between office bearer and social worker? Is there good cooperation with local professionals?
3. Are we clear on our duties with respect to the civil governments?
4. Do we have a Policy for Child Abuse Prevention? If not, should we look for one. If we do, is it functioning well?
5. Are there items that need follow up? Why? How will we do this?

## MARANATHA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH AT FERGUS

### Child Abuse Prevention

Whereas we acknowledge that the abuse of children (sexual, physical, and emotional) can happen anywhere, including in the Church or in other facilities used by the Church in children's and youth programs;

And whereas we understand that the effects of such abuse have a profound short-term and long-term impact on the victim;

And whereas we understand that, as members of this Church, we must seek to ensure that our children and youth who participate in any programs offered through the Church, may do so without fear of abuse;

And whereas we acknowledge that a person who would prey upon children may see the Church as a place where he/she may have access to children or youth;

And whereas we understand that any abuse, or allegation of abuse, can seriously compromise our witness for Christ within our community and beyond;

We, the Council of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus, solemnly agree to adopt the following Policy for Child Abuse Prevention, this day of .

### Policy for Child Abuse Prevention

1. All persons desiring to work with children/youth through programs (current or future) of this Church must first meet the following qualifications:
  - Be a member in good standing of the Canadian Reformed Church for at least 6 months;
  - Upon request submit a copy of a recent criminal reference check. A record involving any abuse of children will, in all cases, disqualify the individual from working with the children or youth through this Church.
2. At no time will young children be left alone in an individual's care behind closed door or in an isolated and private location.
3. When teens are involved in children's or youth programs, they will be supervised or will always meet with children in a classroom or area equipped with a window or open door.
4. All classrooms will be modified so that, if there is no other way to view the room easily, a window will be installed in the classroom door.
5. Individuals who work with children or youth will be reminded of the importance of avoiding potentially compromising situations in which an allegation of abuse could be made.
6. We will strive to ensure that parents are aware of the precautions being taken to protect their children. Parental consent forms will be used for all special activities or events, and for any event, which requires an overnight stay.
7. In the event that any allegation of abuse of a child or youth is made, it will be reported immediately to the appropriate police authorities and to the minister. The process will be carefully documented, including dates, times, and content of all conversations pertaining to the alleged abuse. If the minister is accused of abuse, the consistory will be notified and deal with the complaint forthwith, in accordance with Art. 71 of the Church Order.
8. Any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well being of a child under the care and supervision of our Church will be taken seriously and may be investigated.

Adopted:

## Appendix 2

**ABUSE****1. What is abuse?**

The term abuse is used in different circumstances and situations. We speak about

- substance abuse, alcoholism and drug addictions;
- physical abuse, physically hurting someone, a child, a spouse, or an elderly person;
- sexual abuse, then we are dealing with an abuse of sexuality, incest, date rape;
- emotional abuse, then the scars are inside, in belittling and ridiculing a person.

They are all different, and yet they have many things in common, the way the abuse starts, what it does to both the abuser and the victim, how it is maintained and how it destroys relationships. We will look at three types of abuse, alcohol, wife and child abuse. There are more types of abuse but we use these three to show the patterns and consequences of abuse.

The best way to start is to look at a very general definition of abuse. "Abuse is any behaviour that is designed to control and subjugate another human being through the use of fear, humiliation and verbal or physical assaults." To put it very shortly, abuse is abuse of power. Someone misuses a position of power, and doing this gives the abuser a good feeling and/or an excuse to continue in the abuse. It starts small, but has to grow in order to be satisfactory for the abuser. There is a process, a cycle.

**2. How it starts****2.1. Alcohol abuse**

When we then look at alcohol abuse, as an example of substance abuse, then we can say that at one point in time, for whatever reason, this person cannot stop going back to the alcohol. An alcoholic is not one who is always drunk. Some alcoholics are hardly ever drunk. But an alcoholic feels the need to go back to the alcohol because of what it can do for him. He may try to hide the use of alcohol, but cannot do without it. The alcohol puts him on top of the world. It makes that he forgets all the tensions, difficulties or his own mistakes. That feeling justifies for him the act of taking the alcohol. It was worth it. However, in sobering up the alcoholic is confronted with reality and the results of his behaviour. Often he is confronted with the blame. This is where the people who live around him come in the picture, they also see and feel the results of his behaviour. They can cover up, do as if nothing was the matter, and the alcoholic thinks everything is perfectly alright. Or the people around him by their angry reactions give him an excuse for further drinking. The alcoholic can manipulate the situation, and use his power and/or anger to make the others angry so that he has a reason to drink again. In all this the alcoholic does not see the real problem.

**2.2. Wife Abuse**

The terms "wife abuse" and "wife assault" are used when a man hurts or threatens a woman he is in relationship with. Today, in our society that means they may be married, living together, dating or former partners. Wife assault includes:

- Physical assault: hitting, slapping, shoving;
- Sexual assault: forcing a woman to have sex against her wishes, making her do sexual acts she doesn't like;
- Emotional abuse: threatening to hurt her, threatening her badly in front of others, controlling where she goes and what she does, degrading her. (From a pamphlet produced by The Haldimand-Norfolk Coordinating Committee to End Violence Against Women)

Wife abuse starts already at the very beginning of the relationship (from: Forward, Men who hate Women). Already in their dating and engagement times there were incidents which point in this direction.

To give some examples:

- he thinks she must do what he says and will not tolerate that she has a different opinion,
- he can buy her and her love and thus she belongs to him.
- he makes her to be perfect with the result that she is bound to fail. Every failure is a reason that she deserves to be hurt
- Often there was no meaningful communication.

These symptoms were ignored. The girl is so flattered by his behaviour, or is afraid she will end up without husband that she decided to push certain bad symptoms to the background, whereas, the positive things she over-emphasized. Thus you end up with an unrealistic picture. Or, if she sees the negative element, she sees it as her mission to rescue him. She feels sorry for him. She fools herself and does not see him as he is.

An added element is that in such a relationship the physical aspect plays an important role. It is not unusual that already from quite early in the relationship there is a sexual relationship and the marriage is not based on mutual respect and trust.

A related topic is dating violence or, date rape. The teenager who takes a girl out on a date demands sexual favours, physically hurts or threatens. Often alcohol or drugs are involved as well. The girl is intimidated and afraid to talk about it.

### 2.3. Child Abuse

"Generally speaking, child abuse (which also implies serious neglect) encompasses those non-accidental situations in which a child suffers physical trauma, deprivation of basic physical and developmental needs, or mental injury, as a result of an act or omission by a parent, caretaker or legal guardian." (Child Abuse, A handbook for Social Workers in Ontario, 1983, page 4) It is usual to distinguish between three categories:

- Physical maltreatment: beating, wounding, burning and poisoning; actions which result in non-accidental injuries such as fractures, bites, bruises, cuts, burns and internal injury.
- Emotional/mental maltreatment: results from psychological aggressive actions, this includes overt rejection, repeated belittling, open 'disowning' of the child, unreasonable demands for competence, repeated threatening.
- Sexual maltreatment: the use of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult, or the allowing of such use of a child by a parent, caretaker, or legal guardian, exploitation of the child for pornographic purposes. This last category also includes what is called incest. The criminal code defines this as "intercourse with a blood relative". Today it is used for any sexual contact with a relative, or even any sexual contact that has to be kept secret.

Child abuse is a difficult subject to address. If it is for, how much more is it difficult for those who were or are abused to speak about it. Child abuse usually provokes in the victim a horrible sense of shame, therefore the best thing to do is to leave it covered and deny it. The typical response of a victim is, "Why would I tell about it?" Why suffer again all the pain and shame? How is that going to help? It will only hurt others. The abused child does not realize that to deny the past leads to a life of denial, which is no life.

In explaining this type of abuse it might be helpful to begin with a question which invariably comes to mind when dealing with physical and emotional abuse, Where does the boundary lie between proper discipline and abuse? How do you know that you are dealing with a situation in which a child is rightly punished or a situation where abuse is taking place? Some say that physical punishment should never be used. As soon as the parent spans the child we can call Children's Aid. We would not agree. There is a place for punishment. But the punishment must be within bounds, not out of proportion with the offence. And the punishment should also be accompanied with speaking to the child, explaining why certain actions or words are unacceptable.

Abuse occurs when parents or those take care of children use their position to control the child and in the process inflict harm. Every parent at times punishes a child, that does not have to be abuse, nor does this have to cause lasting wounds in the life of the child. Every parent makes mistakes too, also that does not have to lead to abuse.

"All parents are deficient from time to time ... No parents can be emotionally available all the time. It is perfectly normal for parents to yell at their children once in a while. All parents occasionally become too controlling. And most parents spank their children, even if rarely. Do these lapses make them cruel and unsuitable parents? Of course not. Parents are only human and have plenty of problems of their own. And most children can deal with occasional outbursts of anger as long as they have plenty of love and understanding to counter it. But toxic parents inflict ongoing trauma." (Forward, Toxic Parents, page 5)

Abusive parents want to control their children completely and any indication of independence, be it as baby or teenager is seen as rebellion and a personal attack on the power of the parent. Therefore what do you do? You squash that rebellion and make sure they do not challenge you. With the help of physical force, humiliation or intimidation the parent wants to control the child. The punishment is not at all in proportion to the offense is unpredictable. Though the child knows the abuse will come, he doesn't know when and what will trigger it. In trying to control, the parent takes away every feeling of self-worth in the child.

Child abuse therefore can be done physically, as well as emotionally or verbally. Just because we see no bruises, the hurting is no less and the damage is just as serious. Words can be just as destructive as deeds. Insulting names, degrading comments, belittling criticism will have consequences for the well-being of the child when done frequently and systematically. The child can only survive in constantly denying its own will or opinion. The child is not allowed to have his own personality.

Sexual abuse and incest is the most destructive and bewildering category of abuse. Sexual abuse most often happens between a child and someone he knows or trusts, a family member or trusted friend. At times the child is confronted with the abuser. The abuser has a face, a voice and a smell, which when met, even in totally different circumstances, trigger off the painful memories of the abuse. This leads to a unbearable tension in the child's life. There is this terrible secret the child does not dare to speak about.

Sexual abuse is an event or a series of events that occur in a context. There are several stages. Though in each case the time and situation is different, yet it all works basically the same way. There is first of all the stage in which intimacy and a sense of being appreciated is created. The victim is made to feel special, for example, she is the only one who really understands him. This is followed by repeated violations of the child's boundaries. It is in this climate that abuse occurs. Next the abuser subtly changes the child's feelings and reactions. They are not right, or non-existent. The final stage is that the abuse is maintained by means of threats and blackmail.

### 3. How it continues

Why is it that the cycle of abuse is so hard to break? Why is it that people who live in abusive situations seem to be unable to walk away from it? One answer given is:

"Alcoholism is like a dinosaur in the living room. To an outsider the dinosaur is impossible to ignore, but for those within the home, the hopelessness of evicting the beast forces them to pretend it isn't there. That's the only way they can coexist." (Forward, Toxic Parents, p.73)

If you cannot change the problem, then change your perception of it. Say to yourself it does not exist, or that it has a reason, or it is not that bad. The victim begins to rationalize and minimize the existence and effects of the abuse.

Some of the things that play a role in the lives of those who live with abuse which prevent them from dealing with it are (from Murray, Loving an Alcoholic, part I):

- There is shame: for a long time you think it is only a little problem, but as time goes on you become aware that it is much greater. You feel ashamed of it. You feel the condemnation of the whole community.
- There is anger: you realize the situation and the frustration makes you angry. Usually the anger is deflected. There is anger at self, because you made a mistake; anger at the abuser, if he really loves me he would quit; and anger at others, such as the parents of alcoholic.
- There is the feeling of guilt: I have caused the whole thing. This ingredient is one of the most powerful things to keep a person in a situation of abuse. The abuser puts initially the blame on the victim. After some time the victim comes to believe it as well: "It is my own fault, I deserve it, if only I had been better it would not have happened." And because the victim fails to solve the problem the only way she can carry the burden of guilt is by seeing it as the punishment she deserves. The abuser knows how to control this guilt feeling very cunningly. He will use the guilt feeling to manipulate the victim and remain in control.
- There is denial: you tell yourself, he had a reason to do this, or it is only temporary, and he is really trying to quit the drinking. The victims easily fall for false promises and hopes. Denial is one of the most basic defence systems of a person. The denial can become so great that all other problems in the relationship are subjected to it, e.g. that all the other problems will go away if only the drinking problems will be over. This is not so, for, once the substance is gone then the other problems will rear their heads even more painfully. The abuse has hidden all these relationship problems.
- Last but not least there is fear: fear of being discovered, of taking actions, of reprisal from your family, and friends, being afraid of the future, ending up alone, or making the same mistakes again.

In making up excuses the victim accepts the abuse. Therefore these excuses do not help on the contrary they make the abuse worse, for they convey to the abuser, it works and he goes on.

### **3.1. Alcohol Abuse**

The alcoholic so manipulates and controls the situation by his drinking that all involved in his life have to serve him. At the same time he uses their service as an excuse to continue his drinking. He has two mighty weapons to maintain his power. He can arouse the anger of the others, which in turn justifies his drinking, and he can arouse the anxiety of the others. Thus the family members become his slaves. As long as they give in and make up excuses for the alcoholic, the family reinforces the alcoholic's conviction. In his point of view it works.

### **3.2. Wife Abuse**

When the first warnings of abuse come, then it may be a seemingly insignificant incident which sets off a fit of anger and the victim is subjected for no reason at all to an unreasonable attack on her character. The anger is not at all in proportion to the mistake made. At that time the victim often chooses to rationalize his behaviour. He could not help it, because he had a busy day, or, he is right the house is a mess, I should have cooked a better supper etc.

There are certain factors that help this rationalization, for instance the unpredictability of his behaviour. Between bouts of anger he is liable to be as charming as in the beginning. To the outside world the abuser can be a very friendly and considerate person. Such change makes her think that the bad is only a dream, not the real him.

Another factor in rationalizing the situation is that the victim blames herself. If he can be so wonderful at times, then his anger must be her fault. Thus she accepts responsibility for what he does. She has stepped into his system of thinking.



A woman stays in such a relationship for several reasons:

- She has come to think that by not questioning his behaviour she loves him. For her to love him means to do as he tells her.
- Because of psychological abuse: scare tactics, insults, yelling temper tantrums, constant criticism, implied threats, verbal attacks, unrelenting criticism. In addition, subtle manipulation: I don't remember it, or denial: no that is not how it happened, rewriting history and shifting the blame, it was you who did it. If that is kept up she will believe this in the end.
- Because of physical abuse: usually the result of extreme jealousy and possessiveness. Such an attitude spells danger and should be taken seriously.
- There is the hope that one day it will change.
- There is the fear, and the guilt, she believes she deserves it, and she believes his version of reality. He is only doing it for her improvement.

In explaining the abuse she accepts these attacks the door is open for more and more serious ones.

### **3.3. Child Abuse**

What keeps a child hooked to such a situation and what prevents it from speaking about it? In answering these questions we come upon the same symptoms as in the previous points. The child has come to rationalize and minimize the abuse.

There is, in the first place, the blame, I deserved it. Once a child has accepted the view that the parent is always right, the situation deteriorates. For if the parents is right, then the child can only blame the abuse on itself. The child believes it deserved the abuse. The abuse is explained accepted as normal. "My parents do it for my good."

Next, is the fact that a child has a great sense of family honour, you do not betray your family. Often this type of abuse occurs in families where there are more problems, where there is no communication. The children are afraid of what talking about the abuse because of what this may do to their own family. They will be blamed for the possible break-up of their family.

Further, there is distrust for all grown-ups and the question of credibility. Who will take the word of the child when it comes to his word over against the word of the parent? And do not underestimate what the unpredictability or ambiguity does. There are good times between the bad. These good times cause uncertainty. Abuse and love is a bewildering combination.

The abuse is maintained by threats and blackmail. These threats can be that the abuser will take the life of the victim, or that the abuser will take its own live, or that the family will fall apart. To the child, to talk about its pain will cause pain for others.

## **4. How it destroys**

All these elements we just mentioned tend to become a vicious circle, or a downward spiral. The abuser must more and more abuse his power in order to get satisfied, the victim must more and more live in the defense systems. This makes that neither abuser nor victim can see the real issues. What both sides do not realize is that in the long run this destroys the family, the relationships.

### **4.1. Alcohol Abuse**

The family allows the abuser to be the "little god" he wants to be, and so the situation gets worse. The alcoholic has placed the guilt on the other side, the people living in that situation must accept that guilt and accept the abuser's system of thinking or life will become impossible. The victims do not realize that in accepting this blame they open themselves up for more and worse abuse. There is here yet another

element. It is a recognized fact that mood altering substances as e.g. alcohol and drugs will in the long run do physical damage to the person. It effects the brain and can also lead to death.

#### **4.2. Wife Abuse**

Once the abuser has control he will systematically curb her life and make her dependent on himself, destroying her self-esteem in the process. He criticizes and belittles her abilities as a housewife or mother. He criticizes her behaviour, her dress and physical appearance, often in front of others. He may use his earning power as a weapon to control his partner, she gets only so much and if she spends it in a way he does not approve of she will be punished, or, she must beg and beg for a bit of money. She is only allowed to have certain friends of which he approves. He will make social contact so unpleasant that you prefer to stay home rather than go out and get hurt again. He will also control contact with family. He takes her personality away. She has to renounce her own feelings if she wants to have any peace at all, thus opening up herself to more and worse abuse again. Keep in mind that 85% of domestic murders is men against women.

#### **4.3. Child Abuse**

Also with regard to this type of abuse we see how in the long run the personality of the child is destroyed. It is not allowed to have its own personality.

Sexual abuse is even more destructive. We can point to two elements. It is the betrayal of trust between a child and an adult and it makes use of legitimate feelings. The first one will be obvious. A child trusts an adult, it depends on an adult, and therefore when the adult slowly but surely does what causes pain and confusion and the child is told not to tell anyone, the child's world is turned upside down.

The other element is that sexual abuse involves legitimate physical feelings and reactions. The Lord has so made our bodies that we have sexual feelings that can be stimulated and enjoyed. In situations of sexual abuse these feelings are misused. The child cannot stop its own feelings and is confronted with emotions it cannot handle, thus it starts to distrust its own body. For the women and men abused the enemy is certainly the abuser, but the greatest enemy is the longings of their bodies. Their bodies betrayed them.

We can now see some of the damage done by this abuse:

- There is the feeling of powerlessness: The sexual contact was never wanted or invited. It seems impossible to stop what has begun. This in turn leads to doubts and despair.
- There is the sense of betrayal: the one who was betrayed assumes that she could have prevented the betrayal if she was less needy and naive. In her opinion nobody can be trusted, especially not herself. It leads to loss of hope and intimacy. A relationship can neither be enjoyed, trusted nor expected to last.
- There is the sense of ambivalence, that is, feeling two contradictory emotions at the same time. How is it possible to experience pleasure in the midst of agonizing physical pain and crushing relational betrayal. The very thing that was despised also brought some degree of pleasure. As a consequence the child makes pleasure suspect and dangerous, and develops a hatred towards longing and passion. They can begin to have contempt for the body.

This damage makes it extremely difficult for a child to speak about it. The child does not trust its own feelings, even denies it has happened. The safest thing is to hide it all. The child has been told all along that its feelings are wrong and nonexistent, so why tell someone else? In addition, who believes a child, when his word stands over against the word of the abuser? To minimize what the child says can mean for the child to be send back to an abusive situation which in turn can lead to suicide.

There is no excuse for sexual abuse. In God's eyes it is a terrible sin.

## 5. Summary

In summary we note two things. In the first place, abuse runs deep, and in the second place, abuse is cunning. The first, that abuse runs deep forces us to take it seriously. Abuse is not just a disagreement between a husband and his wife, or between a parent and a child. Simple solutions, such as, "she is not an easy woman to live with," or, "the child must have deserved it," do not solve the problem but only harm the situation. It is better first to listen and try to understand the situation before coming with our answers and solutions. Abuse is cunning. It can remain hidden for many years. In opening up the victim takes a tremendous risk. If the abuser finds out, worse abuse will follow. The abuser can present himself as a very pleasant person to others, but as soon as the others are gone things are different.

Note: Material for this Appendix is taken from:

Allender, Dan B., *The Wounded Heart*, NavPress, 1990

Forward, Susan, *Men Who Hate Women & The Women Who Love Them*, Bantam Books, 1987

Forward, Susan, *Toxic Parents, Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life*, Bantam Book, 1990

*A Handbook For the Prevention of Family Violence*, Developed by the Family Violence Prevention Project of the Community Church Abuse Council of Hamilton-Wentworth , eds. Suzanne Mulligan

More information is easily available from public agencies as e.g. Addiction Research Foundation.

