



With great authority must come great responsibility

Around the globe, God has invested gifts in men and women, for which we are very grateful. Mostly these gifts have been faithfully used to equip the saints for the work of ministry, sadly on occasions that has not always been true!

Last year in Orlando, Florida over fifty senior North American Charismatic leaders met for two days to tackle the issue of moral failure in the ministry. They produced a document which may be helpful in bringing some accountability into their world (see link below).

We in Salt and Light have thankfully experienced relatively few examples of this failure over the last thirty years but in the last two years there have been some moral failures that have left us both shocked and saddened.

We already have guidelines that we use for the restoration of a fallen leader, should that unfortunately happen, but when the International team met in Teesside in 2003 we realised that we had no guidelines to help us with a Church, or its leadership team, should this

failure happen to the senior leader.

After prayer, and releasing a smaller group to draft some clear thoughts for us, we agreed to the following guidelines that we now wish to make clear to those churches amongst whom we serve apostolically. We enclose them here and trust that you will find them helpful in instructing your team and those serving you translocally, should this ever happen amongst us in the future. May the Lord protect us from our Enemy!

Please would you place this in your leadership files after you have discussed and reviewed this as a team.

We would love to have feedback from you concerning these guidelines. Some of us have already opened up this issue together and found it both helpful and sobering. May the Lord help us all to steward the gifts and ministries that He has graciously entrusted to us wisely!

Dave Richards, on behalf of the European Apostolic Team

 www.ministriestoday.com/specialreport.html

The pic is Bill Clinton, in case you're wondering!

Guidelines for responding to serious moral failure of church leaders, drafted by the Salt and Light International Council

We recognize the difference between, on the one hand, the ongoing adjustment process of growth and maturity as a leader and, on the other, the need for church discipline where moral problems occur.

The restoration process should be guided by Christ's redemptive love towards all involved.

Leaders in a local congregation should be aware of the serious consequences of moral problems and what general guidelines will be followed. The purity of the Lord's Church is of prime importance.

If the local congregation was not founded by the current apostolic ministry, then it is imperative to clearly define the relationship between the local elders and the apostolic ministry.

1. Build into the foundations of the congregation the right of appeal of the elders to apostolic ministry to address moral problems that may emerge with a senior leader.

2. If a congregation joins the Salt and Light family of churches with local elders and senior leader already in place, then this practice of the "right of appeal" needs to be clearly stated and understood.

3. If an apostolic ministry perceives a serious problem with a senior leader then he or an appointed delegate has the right to contact the local elders to discuss concerns.

4. When serious accusations arise against a senior leader and the senior leader is reluctant in response, then the apostolic ministry should make a face-to-face personal visit to the leader as soon as possible. The apostolic ministry may choose

to have others accompany him for this initial visit.

5. It is highly recommended that the elder's team of a local congregation, as a plurality, have a relationship with an apostolic team, as a plurality. When the relationship between a local congregation and an apostolic ministry is limited to the senior leader's relationship, as a one-to-one, with an apostolic ministry, it can complicate the handling of serious difficulties and therefore is not recommended.

6. Restoration and the healing process needs to include the following considerations: Public disclosure should be proportionate to the senior leader's ministry influence. It is also recommended that prompt and clear communication of the process be regularly made available to all involved parties.

- The senior leader and family
- The victim and family
- The local congregation
- The family of churches
- The wider Body of Christ

7. All action in response to accusations concerning serious moral problems must be based on unequivocal fact and not on unsubstantiated perceptions or suspicions.

8. In some situations the offense might be considered a criminal act and/or subject to litigation. Therefore, the establishment of fact is essential.

9. If an apostolic ministry is in a moral problem or doctrinal error, it is recommended that the matter be handled by the apostles and prophets in the context of the International Council.