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Denominational Code of Conduct

Accept the following code of conduct as a moral guideline for minister/ elder/ deacon/ deaconess/ board member and other church workers.

Preface

Before you is a code of conduct for minister/elder/deacon/deaconess/board members/ and other church workers of The Church of Pentecost”, instituted by the church council. In the development of various provisions in this code of conduct, the Bible has fulfilled a searchlight function.

By applying them especially to the profession of a minister/elder/deacon/deaconess, moral guidelines specific to them automatically arise. The element of self-protection is therefore of great importance here.

It must also be realized that the Scriptures draw the 'teacher' as one of the many gifts of God in a church. Less than with other professional groups, therefore, the moral aspects of the minister/elder/deacon/deacon can be separated from the moral guidelines that apply to every Christian. Nevertheless, pastoral and eldership exhibits characteristics that allow it to be characterized as a profession within the current social context. That justifies a separate code.

This last consideration also determines the structure of the code. Although the Scripture has fulfilled a searchlight function in uncovering moral guidelines, the presentation is in line with what typifies the 'profession'.

In theory this can be done in two ways: from the task fields of the minister / elder/deacon/deaconess and from the relationships in which he works.

The task fields would bring us to the different views on the minister/elder/deacon/deaconess that the code indicated above does not address. That is why we have chosen an approach from the perspective of relationships. It also brings us more directly to the moral dimension of the minister/elder/deacon/deacon.

Finally: With some of the provisions aimed at minister/elder/deacon/deaconess, conclusions can be drawn by analogy with regard to other office holders or church workers.

The relationship to God

1. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must know that he has been called by the LORD to his work. He must love God above all else. This love should motivate him noticeably so that he does not refer others to himself or to other authorities, but to God alone.
2. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must accept that his calling puts him in an exemplary position towards others. He must recognize the guidelines that the Bible gives in this regard (for example in 1 Timothy 3) and allow himself to be molded into God's image in imitation of Christ in such a way that he can lead others.

3. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should not give the impression that he is not a sinner himself, but rather be honest about his own failure, guilt and struggle against sin and be completely dependent on God's grace. In concrete terms, this means, among other things, that he longs for continuous sanctification of life that fills his life and especially his ministry with the meaning of Christ. He must show that he is not perfect in himself, but finds rest and joy in Christ. In his zeal for God, God's grace must manifest. Therefore, he must also be willing to admit shortcomings and mistakes in his work and ask forgiveness from God and people.

4. If a minister/elder/deacon/deaconess knows of himself that he is no longer right before God, he may not simply continue his ministry. This may be the case with unbelief, great doubt, or unconfessed and persistent sins. He is then obliged to seek targeted pastoral help and to express himself to a third party.

5. When the honor of God's name is damaged by the actions of a minister/elder/deacon/deaconess, he must reckon with the fact that he can no longer exercise his office for good or for a certain time. He may not then try to protect his position or cover his actions.

6. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should avoid associating God's name with what does not fit with the name. He must speak boldly from God's Word. At the same time, he is not naturally be allowed to present his own actions, words, admonitions, judgments, exhortations and opinions in the name of God.

The relationship to oneself

1. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must recognize that God employs his whole person to be an instrument for the gospel. Therefore, he must undertake the obligation of continuous formation of his person. This training concerns his mental state, his personal characteristics, his social and other skills, and his knowledge of the field and the field of work.

- He must be open to well-founded criticism of his office or style of action.
- He must also be responsible for ensuring that he himself regularly receives pastoral care.
- He must have his work and his actions regularly reviewed by the church board.
- He must make use of opportunities for further training and further training.

2. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should be aware that his actions affect the image of God and His Son Jesus Christ. He must therefore guard against one-sidedness in his speaking about God and allow himself to be corrected if his own spirituality affects others in a harmful way.

3. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should strive to ensure that the style and attitude in which he does his work best serve the cause of the gospel.

- He must not misuse his office for purposes of honor, career, or material advantage.
- He should pursue a union of surrender and zeal, showing that the power that surpasses all things comes from God and not from us.
- He should not be a slave to his work, and should take adequate rest and leisure time. At the same time, he must deal with his time schedule with such flexibility that he can make room for unforeseen and urgent situations for which the civil service may put him.
- He should not be guided by the wishes of men but by the Word of God.

4. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should know self-control and not give in to lusts and addictions.

The relationship with the Church

1. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should strive for a healthy balance between distance and closeness in his dealings with church members. He must prevent pastoral relationships from becoming characterized by interdependence in intensive relations with members of the congregation. He must remain aware of God's calling in such relations and maintain his independence from each other. When this is no longer possible for someone, he must transfer the pastoral care to a third party not assume responsibilities given to others.

2. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should not be guided by sympathy and antipathy when dealing with members of the congregation.

- he must be impartial, and not participate in party formation.
- he must not hide among the strong but must stand up for the weak

3. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should be aware of the asymmetry in his relationships with church members. In this, exhibit characteristics of care relationships. There is often a dynamic in which power and intimacy can play a role. In principle, the minister / elder / deacon / deaconess is in a stronger position due to expertise, and position of trust. In addition, deep feelings and existential realities can emerge, both in the minister/elder/deacon/deaconess and in the other. The minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should be aware that their own problems influence communication and can be activated by it. The pastoral relationship is characterized by a special intensity.

- A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess as a result, must recognize that there is an increased risk of border crossing. With his expectations, the church member can wrongly involve the person of the minister/elder/deacon/deaconess in his own problem or the desired solution. The minister/elder/deacon/deaconess can go beyond the limits of his calling and competence, for example by trying to live up to those expectations and thus intruding too much into the private life of the church member.
- The minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should be aware of such realities surrounding pastoral relationships.
- He must continue to realize the inequality in position, just when a member of the congregation gives the impression of voluntarily and on an equal footing to invite certain actions.
- He must prevent transgressive behavior in himself and parry with a member of the congregation.
- He should be reluctant to visit persons only when he encounters affective attraction in himself or the other. If possible, he transfers the care to a fellow official.
- He also strives to have conversations with such persons in an environment that offers protection.

4. Any form of sexual advances or intimidation is a serious and harmful form of transgressive behaviour. It makes no difference whether the other party agrees or even takes the initiative. In

the light of the Bible, this crossing of boundaries damages the honor of God and the ministry. This concerns: words, allusions, looks or actions that express or may evoke affective, sexual or erotic feelings; undressing or encouraging the other to do so (also if desired by the other) having sexual intercourse.

5. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must also respect the integrity of the other person in other respects (argumentative, physical, emotional).

- He must not manipulate - in conversation, meetings, or otherwise - by trying to achieve or propagate goals using the weight of his position, by behind-the-scenes pressure, or generally by pursuing spiritual goals by carnal means.
- He must avoid church politics.
- He may not invoke his office to rid himself of criticism, justify wrongdoing, or demand forgiveness and reconciliation when he has made a mistake.

6. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must remain within the abilities, powers and limitations of his office. He should not take on any tasks - for example in the case of psychological, physical, social and societal problems - and arouse expectations in matters that fall outside his competence and belong to the competence of other professional groups.

7. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should strive to lead in the style of Christ. That leadership must be limited to that area that falls within his calling.

- He must not act authoritatively.
- He may not dominate the activities of the congregation, but must give space to the multi-coloured gifts of the Spirit in the congregation, on which he is also dependent for the performance of his function.

8. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should be silent about what has been said to him in confidence.

When he is in the habit of sharing matters from his office with his wife, members of the congregation should be aware of this.

- He may not disclose confidential information at a later date (memoirs) without the consent of those involved.
- He must ensure that such information does not reach third parties via his archive either.
- A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should also not pass on non-confidential information, unless it has a constructive purpose.
- When on Biblical grounds the care for someone has to be shared with one or more other office holders or with church members, confidential information may be passed on. The person concerned must be informed of this in advance, and the municipality must be aware of this right. Even in the case of non-confidential information, the minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must, if possible, inform the person concerned what he wants to pass on (for example to a successor). He must act with restraint in this; in case of doubt, he should seek advice from an independent adviser (e.g. a colleague).
- In the context of advice or consultation, a minister/elder/deacon/deaconess is allowed to share confidential information (preferably anonymously) with third parties, provided that the latter, like him, has a duty of confidentiality.

9. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should strive to be consistent and reliable in his utterances. He should not speak to one differently than to the other. He must be reluctant to make promises in the context of his official work, which it is not certain whether he will be able to keep them.

The relationship to other

1. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must, if he is married and/or has children, regard his responsibility towards his wife and his family as primary. Good care for the congregation must be based on good care for his family. If his marriage fails, it is not self-evident that he can continue his ministry. (1 Timothy 3:5,8). His own share in the debt, if any, can lead to (possibly temporary) suspension of the official service.

2. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must show respect for and submit to persons or bodies in church and society that have authority over him (officers, church assemblies, governments, judges), unless obedience to God demonstrably requires otherwise.

3. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess must accept that sexual harassment and violation of boundaries will always have consequences for his ministry:

He must distinguish between the fact that the message of grace for sinners restores one's personal status before God and people, and the fact that sin nevertheless continues to affect the ministry. Therefore, he must also be able to accept measures such as reprimand, suspension, temporary dismissal or removal in the case of personal acknowledgment and reconciliation.

He must accept that after a suspension or temporary dismissal, the official service can only be resumed once the discredit in and outside the church has been removed and disturbed relations have been reconciled. There should be no more pressure on his service to the gospel in any way. A condition for return is also that precautions have been taken to prevent recurrence, for example therapy, work and procedure appointments.

4. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess may not be guided by a greed for money when dealing with fees and extra earnings, especially in professions.

He must be honest with regard to his tax obligations and not support others in dishonesty (eg in undeclared work).

5. A minister/elder/deacon/deaconess should speak respectfully of church members, colleagues and fellow ministers and should not lightly dismiss them in front of others.

- In general, he should avoid light judgment in his oral and written utterances. He may and should provide appropriate criticism, not only of colleagues but also of the Church, Church members or others.
- He should express this criticism lovingly and constructively.
- Where possible, he should first discuss this criticism personally with others, to avoid unnecessary public polarization.
- He should always strive to hear each other.

6. A minister /elder/deacon/deaconess may not protect colleagues or office holders from the cost of injustice to church members or other third parties. He may not cover up, trivialize, or behind-the-scenes missteps of colleagues at the expense of the honor of God or the rights of third parties.