

Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards for EMNR (M.E.D.S.)

PREAMBLE

In 1982, EMNR was formed to become "a consortium of Christians in North America, seeking to help people distinguish authentic from in-authentic Christianity and strengthen evangelical Christian ministries to new religionists and cultists." The founders of EMNR adopted the Lausanne Covenant as the governing document which would apply to both member organizations and individuals. EMNR was born in an effort to practically implement Affirmation 7 of the Lausanne Covenant: "We urge the development of regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the Church's mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of resources and experience." (The full text of the Lausanne Covenant appears in Appendix 1 of this manual.)

Though EMNR was conceived as an umbrella group for ministries to the cults and new religions, our founders and current board members have no wish for EMNR to assume a magisterial role, nor to become a closed guild which might diminish the validity of other ministries who are not part of EMNR. We recognize that many devoted and Spirit-led Christian ministries and missionaries will never affiliate with EMNR, and that in the providence and timing of God, both our own ministries and EMNR itself will one day be drawn to a close. We pray that while we are now active in the service of Jesus Christ, we will acquit ourselves in honorable work and strive for moral integrity in all we do.

As in any coalition, we expect to find believers with varying levels of competence, maturity, and ministerial experience. Some Christians have not developed the skills and knowledge necessary to present a balanced approach to this difficult field. Some of us have engaged in unjust or superficial judgments against others. On occasions some have judged presumptuously, making nonessential matters a test for Christian fellowship.

Because Christians still struggle against fleshly desires and ambitions (Eph. 4:20-32), there are occasions when Christians sin against one another by attitude, tone, timing, or delivery in their attempt to correct. As a result, some have earned the label "witch hunter" or "heresy hunter." We need to be sensitive of such adjuration, and be ready to be instructed and corrected when the charges are valid. The founders of EMNR recognized these issues and addressed them in seminal form in the "Statement of Purposes" to which every EMNR member must agree in order to accept membership. They read: Statement of Purposes of EMNR

1. Missions - Facilitate mission to new religious movements through networking and the stimulation and formulation of mission strategy to new religions as frontier mission to unreached people groups.
2. Accountability - Maintain worthy theological, ethical and missiological standards among members.
3. Scholarship - Stimulate the scholarly and popular production of research and

writing on neglected aspects of strategies, methods and materials important to reaching these unreached people groups.

4. Recognition - Recognize the qualified and credentialed ministries reaching the unreached in the new religions and cults.
5. Networking - Encourage mutual understanding and cooperation among evangelical Christian agencies and individuals, as well as secular organizations where appropriate.
6. Referrals - Recommend to the public, churches and schools those agencies and materials which meet quality standards and may help as a protective to involvement with a non-Christian or pseudo-Christian religious movement.

Because of an increasing number of disputes and unhealthy divisions which weaken the effectiveness of our mission, the EMNR Board has recognized a need for clarification and clear guidelines in implementing purpose statements 1 through 5. We believe the ministerial and ethical standards we are presenting are biblically sound; this does not mean compliance will be easy. It is our prayer that all ministers to cults and new religious movements who have affiliated with EMNR will covenant together to abide by these guidelines for the strengthening of the body of Christ to the glory of God.

Members of EMNR with grievances regarding the conduct of other members which occurred before the ratification of this document shall apply the terms of this Manual in resolving past offenses.

Committee on Ethics, EMNR

BOARD MEMBERS AND CORPORATE OFFICERS

This section applies to EMNR's Board of Directors and its corporate officers: the Executive Director, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and others who may be defined as officers at a later time. General and Associate members of EMNR should also be aware of these principles and guidelines incumbent on the Board.

Due to the high degree of responsibility entrusted to the EMNR Board, and in our desire to represent ourselves as servants of God unstained by reproach, it will be expected that Board members not only keep "short accounts" with God-namely, in regular, frequent private worship and devotions, and in personal confession of sin and repentance as God requires-but it will also be expected of them to keep short accounts of their struggles, temptations, and failings in order that Satan not receive the upper hand and that we do not become puffed up in pride and secure in our ability to conduct the "business of the ministry" without the presence of the Holy Spirit. We must especially beware of becoming expert in biblical knowledge and yet poor in practical Christian graces.

The Board members recognize not simply the theological truth of the essential unity of the body of Christ but also the sore reality that we need one another and are placed together in ministry-albeit separated by distance-to give one another

balance, perspective, objectivity and loving input to stabilize us on the Christian path. The correcting influences and counterpoise offered by others, even where they may contradict our own natural inclinations, are something we are obligated to provide one to another.

Members of the EMNR Board are expected to follow the guidelines offered for the General and Associate Members, below. Moreover, being circumspect about many temptations which have caused some of God's servants to stumble as well as of the ethical commands of Holy Scripture, we give our unflinching consent to honesty and candor in the areas enumerated below, to diligently follow them to the best of our ability.

(1) Marital status. Serious personal conflict with our spouse, specifically, any problems of a severity which threaten the marriage or may lead to a separation, will be confessed to the elders of our local church before any separation occurs, while there is time for remedial ministry by other Christian counselors and ministers. Believing that the sanctity and divine institution of marriage outweighs any personal commitments to EMNR, we will withdraw from EMNR either temporarily or permanently rather than jeopardize our family union.

(2) Parental responsibilities. Inasmuch as we also have divinely mandated obligations both to our own parents (Exod. 20:12, Lev. 19:3, Matt. 15:3-6, 1 Tim. 5:4) and as parents of our children in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:14, Eph. 6:4, 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 5:8), we agree not to give our duties and obligations as Board members excessive priority over our duties to our own parents or children. Clearly, every family in ministry must adapt to the additional demands on our time-and no EMNR Board member is likely to have much free time-nonetheless, the business demands on an EMNR Board member or officer must not take precedence over the mandate to provide financial and physical support to our natural families.

(3) Church changes. The Board members should be close enough with one another to have some familiarity with the church affiliation of the other Board members. When any Board member changes his church affiliation and attendance, either within the same denomination or from one denomination to another, and the transfer of membership is conducted with the Board member being in good standing with the church he or she is leaving, the name and address of the new church affiliation, together with the name of the new pastor, should be communicated informally to the other Board members and communicated in writing to the Executive Director. We strongly urge Board members to obtain a signed and dated Letter of Transfer in Good Standing from the pastor of the congregation they are departing, even if the pastor normally does not issue such letters or recognize their importance.

If a member of the Board leaves a church, not in good standing at the time of departure, or is expelled, or leaves due to aberrant behavior or doctrine on the part of the church he or she formerly attended, this must be communicated in writing to

the EMNR President and the Executive Director, and should be communicated orally to the other members of the Board within 30 days. The written statement to the EMNR President and the Executive Director should state the basic facts which led to this separation, but need not go into exhaustive detail. If the circumstances warrant, some further inquiry into the situation may be called for.

(4) Occupational changes. Similarly, if a member of the Board changes his or her primary occupation or employment, the facts should be communicated informally to the other Board members and noted in a brief memo to the Executive Director. However, if a Board member was terminated by his or her employer, or left due to serious improprieties by the employer, a memorandum should be sent to President and the Executive Director, stating the basic facts of the case; and oral communication should be made to the other members of the Board within 30 days.

The rationale for this action falls under the basic principles of accountability and open communication among Board members.

(5) Potential conflicts of interest. Each Board member and each corporate officer shall disclose in writing to the Board of Directors the nature and extent of all interests he or she may have in any corporation, business, or organization having a business or fraternal relationship with EMNR. They shall also disclose any and all interests they have (be they legal, financial, or fiduciary) in any organization, ministry, church, or association (here defined as a "Related Entity"), including but not limited to that of director, officer, shareholder, partner, trustee, beneficiary, employee, agent, spokesperson, or designated representative.

This disclosure shall occur within 30 days of their election or appointment to EMNR, or within 30 days from the date any new interest in a Related Entity is acquired. Mailing this information to the Executive Director, and having this information announced at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors, is sufficient to constitute disclosure to the Board; such statements need not be mailed to each of the Board members individually. The information provided shall be kept on file with the Executive Director of EMNR.

In any Board meeting where the discussion centers or largely focuses on a Related Entity, each Board member or officer having an interest in a Related Entity shall remind the Board of this fact. Then, after briefly expressing their concerns and answering questions directed to them by the remaining Board members, they shall excuse themselves from the room during further discussion and any subsequent vote which pertains to the Related Entity. However, this rule may be set aside and the member(s) permitted to remain for both further discussion and voting if, in the judgment of the majority of the remaining Board members, the best interests of EMNR would be served thereby.

(6) Lawsuits. Board members and corporate officers must notify the Board if they are involved as defendants in a lawsuit with another professing Christian or a

Christian institution. If Board members have any contemplated or real actions as plaintiffs in a lawsuit against other professing Christians, they will be subject to the stipulations regarding General and Associate Members, section on Lawsuits Among Members, below. Board members and corporate officers will make a bona fide attempt to resolve such actions out of court, under a Christian process of mediation, arbitration, reconciliation, or another type of adjudication, in the spirit of obedience to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6.

(7) Potential embarrassments. If a Board member or corporate officer has done anything which, if discovered at a later date, could potentially embarrass EMNR and bring disrespect to the Board by this action, a summary of this information should be given to the President and at least one other Board member. Ideally, this should be done prior to election to the Board, but if a potentially embarrassing action occurs later, the other Board members should be candidly informed. Such actions would include past instances of criminal charges, plagiarism, lawsuits involving other Christians or Christian organizations, multiple marriages, unbiblical divorce, termination by a former employer for a serious cause (incompetence, negligence, theft, waste of company resources, etc.), or any heterodox or highly speculative theological viewpoints.

(8) Relationships to former and honorary Board members. EMNR Board members are expected to maintain a cordial and respectful demeanor towards all honorary and former Board members, in all oral and written communications in any way relating to EMNR or its affairs. Former members of the Board should not be sent copies of internal Board correspondence, progress reports or memoranda after they depart from the Board, unless they are currently acting as corporate officers or designated agents. At the present time, EMNR has two honorary Board members: Dr. Gordon Lewis and Dr. Vernon Grounds. Although not voting members of the Board, Honorary Board members may receive copies of ongoing correspondence and memoranda about current EMNR projects and matters of concern.

(9) Covenant to support one another. Because of the spiritual attacks sure to be leveled at Christian leadership, Board members are to support one another in both word and deed through prayer, encouragement, honor, and exhortation. If approached by another Board member in a sincere attempt to correct or aid our Christian growth, we will weigh their words respectfully, prayerfully, and with gratitude.

In normal circumstances EMNR Board members should have one another's home phone numbers (even if unlisted) and home addresses (even if not usually available). This is to create trust among the Board members and a supportive atmosphere where we willingly put ourselves in a position to be admonished and contacted by our brothers and sisters on the Board. Being known only through a public PO Box or business phone can be a way of shutting others out of our personal lives and affairs.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All qualifications and standards which apply to the General and Associate Members of EMNR will also apply to its Executive Director, who should read and review the Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards at least twice a year, in order to be prepared to answer questions from EMNR members, the media, and the general public regarding these standards. The role of the Executive Director is to implement the policies set forth by the Board. The following provisos apply to the Executive Director:

(1) Representation of EMNR with the media. Since the Executive Director of EMNR is often already involved in Christian countercult ministry, upon accepting the directorship of EMNR he or she must recognize that they now represent the interests and the concerns of EMNR in addition to the interests and concerns of their own ministry, church, or other associations. In this light, the Executive Director must be circumspect in conducting him or herself in interviews with the media, since that person will now be identified as EMNR's chief spokesperson.

The Director must understand that his or her actions and statements in fact do represent EMNR, even if the Director disavows speaking on behalf of EMNR to an interviewer or public figure. Statements to the media, to Christian leaders, and to audiences or congregations must be done in a manner which honors EMNR's purposes and goals. Questions from public or private interviewers about disputes regarding EMNR members, or about matters of investigation before the Board, should be answered discreetly so as to preserve the respect of all parties and the unity of EMNR. The Director may answer whether a matter is before the Board or the Committee on Membership, but beyond that little else is to be said, other than the fact that EMNR will follow the procedures outlined in this Manual in any matter of public controversy. If a matter has already been resolved, the Director may tell the questioner the outcome of the case at issue.

(2) Mailing list. The Executive Director shall keep the EMNR mailing list separate from any other ministry mailing list to which he has access. The term "mailing list" includes General, Associate, and prospective members, donors, and any and all names delivered in database format to the Director by his predecessor.

The EMNR mailing list, or any subset of it, shall not be combined or merged into the Director's personal or ministry mailing list at any time.

As the Director obtains new names during the course of ministry, a careful distinction must be maintained between names and addresses obtained for EMNR's mailing list and for the Director's own mailing list. Specifically, if the Director has distributed a "sign-up" sheet at a speaking engagement or convention for new names to go on the EMNR mailing list, those same names shall not be added to the Director's ministry list. However, if the Director circulates two "sign-up" sheets (one for EMNR and one for his/her own ministry), and a person signs both address sheets, in this case there may legitimately be a duplication of names and

addresses. The mailing list must remain the sole property of EMNR and may not be sold nor lent to any other entity, without a vote allowing this action by the Board of Directors.

GENERAL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Our primary moral and ethical obligation is to glorify God and serve the Lord Jesus Christ according to his word as expressed in the New Testament. That all of our life, our character and ambitions, our hidden motives and overt deeds be conformed to God's will is our constant prayer. Our biblical mandate to maintain Christian integrity and honesty was eloquently expressed in the Manila Manifesto:

Nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life, and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We are charged to behave in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, and even to 'adorn' it, enhancing its beauty by holy lives. For the watching world rightly seeks evidence to substantiate the claims which Christ's disciples make for him. A strong evidence is our integrity

Our challenge to others to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ will be plausible only if we ourselves have evidently died to selfish ambition, dishonesty and covetousness, and are living a life of simplicity, contentment and generosity.

We deplore the failures in Christian consistency which we see in both Christians and churches: material greed, professional pride and rivalry, competition in Christian service, jealousy of younger leaders, missionary paternalism, the lack of mutual accountability, the loss of Christian standards of sexuality, and racial, social and sexual discrimination. All this is worldliness, allowing the prevailing culture to subvert the church instead of the church challenging and changing the culture. We are deeply ashamed of the times when, both as individuals and in our Christian communities, we have affirmed Christ in word and denied him in deed. Our inconsistency deprives our witness of credibility. We acknowledge our continuing struggles and failures. But we also determine by God's grace to develop integrity in ourselves and in the church.

(from the Manila Manifesto, section 7, "The Integrity of the Witnesses")

In light of the foregoing statement, the areas named below identify our major concerns for promoting Christian integrity. The contents of this Manual are not exhaustive and are subject to revision by the Board. We believe that attention to these critical trouble spots of ministry in North America will be especially helpful to EMNR members and to others involved in parachurch ministry and missionary activity.

Members of EMNR who are in violation of these ethical standards must

demonstrate efforts made to resolve them to remain members in good standing. If these weaknesses are known to exist in Associate Members, they must be satisfactorily resolved before they can achieve Full Member status.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH. We exhort all members to cultivate a devotional life with the Lord Jesus Christ, to reserve special times for prayer and study of the Scriptures. We will prepare ourselves for ministry not only by careful study of the Bible, but also by expanding our knowledge of Christian doctrine and Church history, by interaction and fellowship with other believers, and by the exchange of information in our field of work with other ministries. As temporary stewards (not owners) of our bodies, we will show due concern for our physical health, that we may serve God many years upon the earth, and for our mental health, by eschewing unwholesome entertainment or unedifying diversions.

Recognizing EMNR's mission as one aspect of a global effort of evangelism, we will also strive to stay abreast of various aspects of world mission; to remain interested in and somewhat familiar with the affairs of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization; and to pray for unreached people groups around the world.

In line with EMNR's unique calling, we will seek accountability and relationship with other EMNR members. As much as feasible and practical, we will preserve fellowship and establish relationships with our colleagues, financially contribute to other ministries, and be an encouragement to our peers. As the Lord enables and circumstances allow, we will try to attend EMNR conferences and other peer functions, not only to grow in knowledge but also to show ourselves to be friendly and accessible to our co-workers who labor among the new religions.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. All Christians should be in a close relationship with a local church which should provide direction, counsel, and prayerful support in their Christian growth. EMNR members are required to be members, or the functional equivalent thereof, of a church which meets regularly. One's local Christian church should be the primary source of nurturing, teaching, care, and personal ministry. EMNR is a secondary association, not a replacement for a full life of congregational piety and worship.

This principle of active involvement in a local church or congregation is so important to us that (barring unusual circumstances) failure to be involved in a church congregation of some form for a period of more than two months shall itself be grounds for a Letter of Admonition.

PLAGIARISM. EMNR members must always give proper source credit to works published under their name. For our purposes, plagiarism shall be defined as:

The act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. To be liable for plagiarism it is not

necessary to exactly duplicate another's literary work, it being sufficient if unfair use of such work is made by lifting a substantial portion thereof . . .
(Black's Law Dictionary, 5th ed.)

We recognize that plagiarism can be committed unintentionally, such as when the original source for a stream of ideas and concepts has been forgotten and the source text is not physically before the writer as it is worked into the new document. Quoting clichés, catchphrases, or data of common knowledge (which can be found in three or more reference sources) is not cause for action. However, plagiarism of substantial portions of another writer's material is grounds for disciplinary action within EMNR. Sustained or repeated instances of plagiarism in a member's career, followed by no acknowledgment of regret or remorse, may result in Expulsion or Temporary Suspension of Membership.

SELF-REPRESENTATION. The way EMNR members represent themselves in terms of background, experience, testimony, education, and expertise is to be honest at all times. This affects us in a variety of ways:

(a) Educational degrees and ordination. EMNR members shall not advertise themselves as having degrees of higher education unless the degree has been legitimately earned at an institution requiring in-class instruction or through an accredited "distance education" facility. Honorary degrees and degrees from correspondence schools may be advertised provided there is no effect of deceiving the reader through ambiguous description. Degrees obtained from "diploma mills" must not be listed on a member's resume or biographical summary. Ordination obtained through mail-order institutions should be omitted from one's list of credentials.

(b) Authorship. EMNR members should not claim authorship of any book, article, essay, pamphlet or other literary work which in fact has been "ghostwritten" or largely composed by someone else. Joint and composite authorship is permissible if the names of the authors are identified in the copyright and publication data section of the work in question. Members must refrain from employing ghostwriters for the duration of their membership.

(c) Testimony. All testimonies given either orally or in other forms by EMNR members must be strictly true and capable of standing the test of investigation by impartial observers. EMNR members must never embellish testimonies of their backgrounds or life experiences by adding events which never transpired or magnifying the importance of their actions, enemies, or friends beyond what is fair and true. If an EMNR member makes extraordinary or highly unusual claims about his life and background, the member must also make special steps to see that this testimony can be corroborated by external or multiple sources.

EMNR members must also not use common terms to simplify things for an audience if the term used would be likely to cause misunderstanding by an

informed listener. This means, for example, that one must not refer to herself as "Mormon" if in fact she was RLDS; one must not claim to have been a "Catholic priest" if he was ordained in the "Old Catholic" movement, etc.

(d) Employment. EMNR members must be scrupulously honest about their employment. In resumes, biographical sheets, and other materials which describe the titles and positions they have held in the past, the nomenclature they use must match the nomenclature of the originating institution (e.g., an "associate editor" is not an "editor-in-chief"; and one should not claim to be a "lecturer" at a college if one is not regularly employed at this profession by the college). Any literature advertising EMNR members as campus speakers must not give the impression that they hold formal, paid positions on staff with a campus unless this is indeed the case.

(e) Accomplishments. Regardless of the temptation, EMNR members must not inflate their accomplishments or Christian service, including such things as statistics regarding conversions, numbers of people ministered to, countries preached in, book sales, ministry growth, or other matters where pride may find an opportunity in us.

If members of EMNR are questioned or challenged about the truth of their credentials, testimony, or accomplishments in the five areas listed above, they will make a sincere effort to respond to these questions by presenting reasonable evidence.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE. This is one of the most difficult areas to determine. We recognize that churches of our members do not agree on what constitute legitimate, biblical conditions for divorce and remarriage. In general, we suggest the following:

(a) Persons divorced under recognized biblical grounds may remain as EMNR General or Associate Members. We recognize no greater latitude than the following causes: infidelity, physical abuse, or desertion. If their local church authorities have no objection to their continuing in public ministry, they may continue as active members of EMNR. It is our recommendation that persons recently separated or divorced should step out of the limelight, removing themselves from prominent roles as speakers, teachers, talk-show hosts, or church officers to permit adequate time for emotional recovery.

(b) Persons who have initiated a divorce from their mates must not be known to "rationalize" the divorce to other parties (that is, by claiming the divorce to have been God's will, that they were unavoidably overcome by temptation, etc.). Though EMNR does not have the means or interest to investigate all its members on such matters, we do ask divorced members who are rationalizing or excusing sinful behavior to show repentance to the satisfaction of their local church.

(c) Persons whose divorce occurred over five years ago, who show evidence of sorrow and repentance over the divorce (if they initiated it and were biblically wrong to do so), may apply for or continue in membership without restriction.

SEXUAL SIN AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR. We suggest that a member of EMNR who is guilty of fornication, adultery, rape, incest, homosexuality, or other unbiblical sexual behavior committed in the recent past should withdraw from EMNR voluntarily for a minimum of three years. Sexual sin and physical violence upon people is particularly egregious for Christian leaders. Unrepentance of sexual sin or a pattern of physical violence upon others will result in expulsion from EMNR.

To prevent the false accusation of sexual sin and to limit possible temptations in this area, EMNR members will refrain from counseling or disciplining members of the opposite sex alone in private rooms or secluded places (except in formal counseling offices where other safeguards are in place).

DEPROGRAMMING. Members of EMNR will not engage in nor promote any form of deprogramming or "exit counseling" which involves illegal activity (kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, abduction, involuntary restraint, or violation of civil rights).

REPORTING AND CRITICISM. Members must display tact and courtesy in how they minister to, report on, and publicly criticize other groups and fellow Christians. (Regarding how EMNR members should report their own background or accomplishments, see the section on Self-representation, above.)

Christian apologists to the cults and to new religious movements are, by their particular calling, divisive. Scripture instructs them to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2); they must speak with a prophetic voice, condemning sin and error where it occurs. At the same time, they must also "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15) in a spirit of peacemaking, humility, and patience (2 Tim. 2:24-26, James 3:13-18). This is a delicate balance, and none of us will always walk this tightrope perfectly. God's desire for Christian ministry is to bring about the restoration of both sinners estranged from God and brothers estranged from one another.

(1) Public critique of fellow Christians in a public forum. We generally hold that when persons are disseminating a testimony or a point of view- whether by book, lecture, newsletter, media broadcast, or other form of group communication -the statements expressed by the speaker are fair game for critique, investigation, or open rebuttal. The steps in Matthew 18:15-18 requiring initial private confrontation are not mandatory in these cases, due to the very nature of public discourse. However, there are cases where private contact beforehand with a Christian leader or author is wise, even though it is not mandatory. It allows us to extend professional courtesy to other Christians and allows them opportunity to revise errant views or misjudgments (Matt. 7:12).

Ethical conduct here, especially if the speaker or writer is a professing Christian, requires that public responses of EMNR members be made with honor and grace toward the one criticized; not with sarcasm, rancor, ridicule, debasement, judgmental attitudes, nor any attempt to impugn the speaker's motives (only God knows the hearts and minds of mankind: 1 Sam. 16:7, 1 Ki. 8:39). Criticism should not be done to shame or embarrass the other party. We should have a deep love, not only for the body of Christ and its protection, but also for the offender.

EMNR members must understand Christian doctrine from the viewpoint of a variety of orthodox Christian traditions. They must recognize that other Christians will differ on matters of doctrine and evangelism, and be willing to tolerate such differences among fellow EMNR members without casting doubt on their salvation or Christianity because of them. Division has been occasioned among us on the issues of Calvinism and eternal security; deliverance or exorcism for Christians; theonomy; generational Satanism and ritual abuse; and the proper stance toward Roman Catholicism. In a practical sense, this means that verses such as Galatians 1:8-9 ("another gospel") and Philippians 3:18-19 ("enemies of the cross") must not be applied to fellow EMNR members who have signed the Lausanne Covenant in good conscience. Public castigation of fellow Christians, where their stance on a doctrine not essential to salvation becomes a test used to deny or cast doubt on their own salvation, is unacceptable behavior.

EMNR members should sincerely pray for those they criticize, display a teachable attitude if the one criticized objects to their analysis, and make no boasts of their own discernment or education over against their neighbors. As a courtesy, members should try to send a copy of any published criticism to the author, speaker, or organization they may criticize.

(2) Public critique of private misdeeds. Where EMNR members wish to admonish, correct or criticize a fellow member or member ministry for character flaws and misconduct, or should they wish to "investigate" complaints lodged against a fellow EMNR member, special care is needed. The private lives and actions of members are not in the same public forum as are their books or published articles. Although EMNR is interested in the moral probity of its members, EMNR should not take the place of a "church court" to investigate allegations of wrongdoing.

In cases of individual moral misconduct, a member with questions or complaints about another EMNR member must follow the stages of personal, limited, and public confrontation described in Matthew 18:15-17 and other passages of Scripture. We suggest that practical guidelines regarding how such confrontation and reconciliation might be accomplished appear in chapters 7-12 of *The Peacemaker*, by Ken Sande (Baker Book House, 1991). If one of us knows that a colleague is engaging in behavior that is damaging to himself or others, it is our duty to either speak the truth in love to that person or, if for some reasons we cannot do so, to find someone else who can and will.

EMNR members should bear in mind the difference between public and private misdeeds. In the words of Augustine, "Those sins which are committed before all must be reproved before all, that all may fear. [1 Tim. 5:20] Reprove in secret those who offend you in secret. For if you alone know the guilty person, yet you desire to reprove him before others, then you are not a corrector but a betrayer."

For this reason, EMNR members must properly distinguish between the two kinds of transgressions. Allegations of private misdeeds must first be conveyed to the individual and later (if needed) to the pastor or ruling elders of the local congregation of the EMNR member being complained against. If it reaches this second level, the process of investigation, discipline, and restoration should be conducted by the local congregation or church body, using its own prescribed standards for discipline. If the brother or sister responds satisfactorily with evidence of repentance, the matter is ended and the misdeed should not be made public by the outside party. The burden of "public disclosure" (if any) of the transgression should rest with the person's home church and his/her personal conscience.

On rare occasions, the denomination or church which ought to investigate the matter may be compromising due to sin, complacency, or fear of man. If the accused is part of such a church, or is not in good standing with a church, or is otherwise not accessible to the normal channels of church discipline, then the accusation against an EMNR member should be carried first to an outside body of conciliators such as the Institute for Christian Conciliation (address on page 24) or a similar group. If the conciliatory process is refused or abandoned, then the accusation may be brought to the Committee on Membership of EMNR under the terms set forth in the section on Enforcement, below.

Failure of the complainant to follow the procedure outlined in the preceding five paragraphs means that the complainant has no "standing" with EMNR to request that action be taken. This means that unless these guidelines are followed by the accusing party in approaching the EMNR member he seeks to correct, the EMNR Committee on Membership is not obligated to rule or take further notice of the complaint itself.

This does not mean that EMNR cannot rule on a case brought before it improperly. Rather, EMNR is not obligated to respond to such a request. EMNR members cannot violate due process in accusing or criticizing other members, and expect EMNR to ignore their own misbehavior in the process.

(3) Public critique of non-Christians. In the public treatment of non-Christians, members must also possess Christlike virtues. The same sacred Scripture which allows for the prophetic rebuke and denunciation of sin also commands the preacher to "be gentle unto all, . . . in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Tim. 2:24-25, NKJV). Bear in mind the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12, and avoid the use of harsh language where possible (Eph. 4:29).

Members must also beware of presuming to discern the motives, intents or inner thoughts of non-Christians. Though unbelievers are slaves to sin and possessed of a darkened, rebellious nature toward God, we have no warrant for impugning their motives in all cases. The unbeliever may simultaneously possess a sincere desire to find God (as an act of God's prevenient grace) even while having sinful rebellion against God. Since the unregenerate may be in the process of making steps which will eventually culminate in their conversion, we must especially beware of rhetoric which totally denies any good works or worthy motives which may already be at work in the unbeliever.

In public criticism of non-Christian religions and systems, we must bear in mind that our goal is to win them, not to alienate them; to reach them in humility, not to repel them in haughtiness. In our printed and oral presentations against error, EMNR members must recall that a "bad witness" can sometimes undo months or years of "seed-planting" on the part of others. We must avoid the use of "loaded language" or emotional terminology which will breed contempt in the audience rather than compassion. After our presentation of another religious movement, listeners should be incited to prayer and evangelism rather than moved to pity or revulsion by our manner of portrayal.

LAWSUITS AMONG MEMBERS. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 clearly warns that Christians should not sue one another in civil courts. The Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, instructs us that Christians have the moral obligation to make judgments between disputing brethren, and since we shall even judge the angels, a fortiori we are more obliged to make sound judgments in things pertaining to this life. For us to place disputes within the Church before the world is "to our shame" (verse 5). This spectacle weakens the testimony of Christ before the world and before the Church herself.

At the same time, Christians are expected to follow the apostolic example of forbearance and self-denial, even if it leads to defamation, slander and financial loss. "Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?" (verse 7). Paul lived by this standard: ". . . when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we conciliate" (1 Cor. 4:12-13, NASB). The agape love of the Holy Spirit "is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered" (1 Cor. 13:5). Likewise, Christians are not to take worldly retaliation: "To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead . . . keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." (1 Pet. 3:8-9, 16; see also Col. 3:13)

In this light, it is contrary to our standards for one member to threaten or initiate a lawsuit against a fellow EMNR member unless all biblical remedies have been pursued and exhausted. The threat of lawsuit before a civil court will result in a Letter of Admonition. A subsequent threat to the same party will result in a Letter of

Rebuke, with Probation. Initiating the lawsuit will result in a temporary Suspension of Membership on the part of the member plaintiff, including announcement of this discipline to the general membership of EMNR.

If an EMNR member threatens or actually initiates a civil lawsuit against a professing Christian or Christian organization who is not a member of EMNR (the substance of their profession not being in doubt, as it would be in the case of pseudo-Christian cults), the Committee on Membership will need to see a letter from the EMNR member's pastor or materially significant peers (not the member's attorney), reasonably justifying the propriety of such action. Failure to produce such a letter within 30 days of the action or threat of action or the lack of urgent and credible rationale for the plaintiff's actions will be grounds for discipline of the EMNR member plaintiff, as specified above.

GOSSIP AND SLANDER. The Bible speaks often of the sins of gossip, tale-bearing, revealing private secrets, spreading rumors, and slander (Lev. 19:16, Ps. 50:20, Prov. 11:13, 20:19, 2 Cor. 12:20, Jas. 4:11). The word gossip includes the idea of idle talk, conveying rumors and behind-the-scenes information of an intimate and personal nature, and especially (for our purposes), the act of passing on an evil report about one or more people, whether true or false, for the primary purpose of injuring their reputation. In a more serious vein, the word slander denotes "speaking evil of someone, a malicious false report that injures their reputation or brings reproach to their good name."

Gossip can include passing on true information, and it is one of the most common sins among Christians today. Slander is a violation of the Eight Commandment ("Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," Ex. 20:16), and many people falsely believe slander has not been committed unless it has been proven in a court of law.

While members of EMNR are encouraged to form close relationships of mutual accountability, entering into fraternal concern and friendships, the danger still exists that what begins as "shop talk" about the activities and accomplishments of our colleagues can degenerate into gossip, tale-bearing and worse. To forestall this possibility, we offer the following admonitions:

- (a) Never pass on information about a colleague that would embarrass them, or make you feel awkward if they were to discover that you had passed on this anecdote.
- (b) Never talk about colleagues in order to simply impress others, or to "puff yourself up" as one who is in a special circle of acquaintance or who is "in the know."
- (c) Beware of passing on critical, unflattering, or negative information, even if true. If God has forgiven the sins or shortcomings of those whose flaws you are discussing

(and who are we to know that He has not?), then we are acting presumptuously to assume that we should raise them once again to a third party.

(d) In private conversation critical of a colleague's beliefs or personal habits, members will always speak responsibly and temperately.

Two ethical exceptions exist to item (c), above. The first exception is made if an injustice would almost certainly occur to someone if we were to fail to speak. For example, if minister A is known for failing to pay his bills, and minister B is about to enter into a business dealing with him, unaware of his past record of financial irregularity, then minister B needs to know about this past circumstance and it would be improper for you to hide it. (At the same time, you must be ready to be identified by minister B as the source of this information, should minister A request it of him.) If Ministry C tells you they have just hired Dr. D for a time-critical writing assignment, but you know from personal experience that in ten years he has never met a deadline, then the production manager for Ministry C needs to know this. Other people who may legitimately "need to know" a person's secret faults would be those to whom the person is structurally accountable, or who would be in a pastoral position to directly confront them or counsel them.

On the other hand, if a woman has a child out of wedlock or a colleague was fired for sleeping on the job, most people are not in a "need to know" position that these embarrassments should be conveyed to them. A common excuse used by Christians to justify conveying gossip is that the listener "needs to know" so they can "pray more effectively" for the party they are talking about. This is a rationalization, not a valid excuse. The speaker should repent of this desire to pass on the private details of another person's life.

The second ethical exception to item (c), above, obtains when a person has been the object of church discipline or public exposure for fraudulent practices, and their sins have been made known to the church as an example to avoid (1 Tim. 5:20). In this case, conveying news about them which has already been made public knowledge to a large body of people could be gossip (depending upon our own motives or attitudes) but may also be legitimate conversation. For this reason, we must carefully examine our hearts lest a secret delight in the fall of others may creep in.

In summary, EMNR members are not to "pass on" gossip or slander (either by voice, fax, or electronic mail), and not to passively "listen to" or participate in gossip or slander. Past actions of gossip should be repented of and brought before the Lord. If one is told gossip, we suggest that as soon as you begin to recognize the direction the conversation is going, gently admonish the gossipier of his or her actions and remind them of the biblical injunctions in this regard.

CONFIDENTIALITY. Many EMNR members act in the role of Christian ministers, evangelists, and counselors, even if not formally ordained to a church office as

elder, deacon, etc. The statements made to an EMNR member during counseling or evangelism (e.g., confession of sin, spiritual struggles) are to be considered confidential, even if at the time the concept of confidentiality was not expressed or mentioned. The purpose of confidentiality is to protect the counselor, the counselee, and the relationship between them. At the same time, the counselor is obligated to protect innocent people from the counselee's deviancy if he should persist in criminal behavior. EMNR members are normally forbidden from disclosing the private confessions of their counselees, with the following exceptions:

(a) If the details are so generalized as to become generic, and to totally hide the identity of the counselee from any possible speculation. Saying that you spoke last month with a Christian leader who said he was addicted to masturbation is permissible. Saying that this leader was pastor of the largest Baptist church in a particular city would enable many people from that city to identify this man, and thus speech of this sort is forbidden.

(b) If there is a likelihood that the person may physically endanger himself or others, perhaps through suicide or violence. In this case, confidentiality may be broken to warn his relatives or law enforcement authorities of the impending danger.

(c) If they have confessed to incest, physical child abuse, or the sexual abuse of children. Use good judgment to weigh the circumstances: an event that took place 25 years ago may be beyond the statute of limitations, and a hard spanking is not in the same category as broken ribs or deliberate scalding. Many states require clergy and counselors to report cases of sexual contact with minors, even if it happened two or three years ago. EMNR members would be wise to be conversant with the laws on this subject in their home states.

If someone confesses to sexual relationships with minors or children, the counselor should tell the person at the time that they are legally obligated to report this to the authorities, urging them to cooperate in making the report, rather than saying nothing and calling authorities while the counselee does not expect this action.

(d) If the counselee has committed a major crime such as arson, embezzlement, or murder, the circumstances may or may not require a violation of confidentiality. At this point, we believe the circumstances should dictate the response by the counselor. The counselor in any case should urge the person to turn himself in, seek some way to undo the wrongs done, and make restitution to whatever degree is possible.

COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION. The Bible instructs us to be at peace with our brothers and sisters, and so to display the love of Christ. Indeed, according to Jesus, the act of reconciliation with our brother (whether or not his division with us is well-founded) is a duty which comes even before the formal act of worship.

"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty [enough to go] into the fiery hell. If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering." (Matt. 5:22-24, NASB)

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." (Rom. 12:18)

"And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things [put on] love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." (Col. 3:12-15)

"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting [Himself] to Him who judges righteously." (1 Pet. 2:21-23)

"To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing." (1 Pet. 3:8-9)

"A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression." (Prov. 19:11)

The above instructions from God must guide us in dealing with disputes. The overarching issue is that we should realize that God deals with us with boundless mercy and grace. He does not deal harshly with us every time we sin. His love and forgiveness are everlasting. So, we too ought to deal with each other. But these principles do not mean that we are never to confront one another. To point out another's sin to prevent them from damaging themselves or others is the loving thing to do.

Sometimes the injury by another to yourself is so grievous that it can significantly hinder the work of Christ. Rather than overlooking it, it may be better to confront the issue. If the sin or accusation against another is very public, then it is important to confront and peacefully resolve the issue, with restitution. In any event, both the attitude and the manner of addressing the issue are crucial for the cause of Christ and the sanctification of the Christians involved.

Matthew 5:22-24 and 18:15-18 are principles that should govern our meetings with one another. First we should go to our brother or sister privately, after first examining ourselves and our motives (Gal. 6:1, Matt. 7:1-5). Be quick to listen and slow to speak (Jas. 1:19), so that both sides may clear up any misunderstandings of fact or intention. Whether the dispute or concern be a personal sin, an injury against another, a theological dispute, or some combination, these steps should be followed. So far, everything should be conducted privately.

If there is still an honest disagreement of facts, consequences, or the issues involved, then other witnesses can be brought in who are directly aware of the issue. The "witnesses" need not be people who can testify to a fact or event (as in a legal court) and should not be people who will "back up" your side regardless of the circumstances. Rather, they should be people whom you respect and whose opinions and whose advice is normally weighty enough to get you to change your mind. (In theological disputes, each side bringing in others who already agree with their point of view could serve to escalate the problem.) Participants must have a real commitment to display love and grace toward one another, and to follow the instruction of 2 Tim. 2:23-26. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, you are to go to the church body for remedy. Some denominational structures have mechanisms for accountability and discipline; others do not. The pastor and/or elders should be called in for a denominational resolution. If the disputants are from different churches, the churches should appoint a panel of objective and mature believers to hear and settle the dispute. On occasion, one or both churches may refuse to get involved.

If the dispute should need to be taken a step further or if the churches of the disputants are unequipped to give counseling for reconciliation, EMNR recommends the following ministry which can provide such services:

Institute for Christian
Conciliation
PO Box 81130
Billings, MT 59108

2590 Holman Avenue
Suite A
Billings MT 59102
Phone: (406) 256-1583
Fax: (406) 256-0001
[Website](#)

Mennonite Conciliation Service
21 South 12th St.
PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
Phone: (717) 859-3889
Fax: (717) 859-3875
css@mccus.org
[Website](#)

In the event that conflict with or problems regarding an EMNR member cannot be resolved because all efforts at conciliation are rebuffed, the dispute may be brought to the Committee on Membership.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY. As servants of God and representatives of Jesus Christ, EMNR members must be responsible not only in their handling of money but also in their attitude toward wealth, possessions, and earthly gain.

Members must always consider their service for Christ primary and their concern about remuneration secondary, avoiding the suspicion of a love of money and never measuring their work by the size of their salaries. They must be scrupulous in the prompt payment of bills and careful in the incurring of financial obligations. If the ministry is separately incorporated or corporately distinct, EMNR members shall not use ministry funds or resources for private advantage or enrichment.

Any finances raised for specific purposes shall be reserved or spent entirely for those purposes. Letters of appeal for finances must be honest and never portray false accomplishments or ministry "crises." Members must, to the best of their ability, live up to the terms of any business or ministry contracts; and, if a reversal of providence and circumstance should prevent this, show a good-faith effort to meet these obligations or humbly ask their partners for a contractual amendment or rescission.

Since covetousness and love of money is named in the Scripture so frequently as a cause of sin and offense (Ezek. 33:31, Mic. 2:2, Hab. 2:9, Luke 12:15, Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5, 1 Tim. 3:3), we vow to share our goods and property with others who have need, to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10), and to contribute to other Christian ministries and churches.

Corporate and institutional members of EMNR are admonished to remember that as the amount of money that passes through your hands increases, your responsibility to provide financial reports and audits available for public inspection becomes correspondingly greater. Ministry in the service of Christ should always take precedence over fundraising.

UNJUST TECHNIQUES IN EVANGELISM. The use of fear, intimidation, pressure, group processes, or incentives for conversion must be avoided. Apologists and evangelists within EMNR should never be involved in efforts to manipulate a person into making a profession of faith. While we are certainly within our calling to exhort and persuade sinners to come to Christ and to "flee from the wrath to come" (Luke 3:7), tactics which use people's fears or personal afflictions as leverage against them must be shunned.

As stated in the Manila Manifesto, "Christians renounce unworthy methods of evangelism. Though the nature of our faith requires us to share the gospel with others, our practice is to make an open and honest statement of it, which leaves the hearers entirely free to make up their own minds about it. We wish to be sensitive to those of other faiths, and we reject any approach that seeks to force conversion on them." (sect. 12)

We also must shun any hiding the "cost" of discipleship, by failing to tell the prospective convert that he will have to repent from sin, forsaking unbiblical practices, as part of his Christian commitment. While only God can give a person the power to live a holy life, performing moral renovation and regeneration, it is nonetheless improper for ministers to omit the call to moral purity and holiness, which must characterize the Christian and is part of the New Testament message.

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENTS. Members of EMNR have an obligation to inform the EMNR Committee on Membership in the event that their conduct might pose an embarrassment to EMNR as a whole. This obligation is primarily understood to cover behavior or belief on the part of a member or the member's close associates which would very likely bring a reproach upon EMNR or upon themselves if this information were widely disseminated. EMNR affiliation must not be used as a cover for unrepentant gross sin, false doctrine, financial misdealing, felony convictions, or any other actions which are not befitting to a person in public Christian ministry.

We must never attempt to excuse, ignore, minimize, or deny sin using theologically-based rationalizations (e.g., "God knew that I was going to do it anyway"; "it's all covered by the blood"; "even if I sin this way a hundred times, God still forgives me"; or "you're a sinner too, so who are you to judge my sins as worse than yours?"). It is expected that the confession of sin will be accompanied by true repentance, orally acknowledged by the contrite person.

RESTORATION. It is a general principle that even persons who have been expelled from EMNR for gross misconduct may someday be reinstated or restored to membership. It is the general consensus of many that there are certain types and degrees of sin which forever exclude a person from a role as a Christian pastor, congregational leader, or as a leader in the public eye (such as child molestation, incest, sodomy, repeated adultery, etc.). We do not deny that this can be the case occasionally; however, we also believe that even persons who have sinned in this way can be restored to private ministry of an unobtrusive nature. We believe one of the general principles of discipline is for the reclamation, not the destruction, of the individual to proper functioning as a servant of Christ.

Persons who have been expelled or suspended from EMNR membership who wish to be reunited with EMNR should clearly show evidence in their lives of the principles of open repentance and restitution. We recommend the advice of D.L. Moody, that if you have sinned before God and man, your repentance should be as notorious as your transgressions. If one's sin has affected other members of the body of Christ and become known unto the world, his confession of sin, public repentance, and open acknowledgment of wrongdoing should be noised abroad and promoted.

This evidence and correspondence must be made to the EMNR Committee on Membership.

Likewise, members wishing to reaffiliate with EMNR must demonstrate the biblical principle of restitution. They should repay (ideally and most desirably, repay with interest) the parties they have taken advantage of, or they must provide other forms of recompense in a meaningful way to undo whatever damages they have done.

In the event of a Removal from Corporate Office, a Temporary Suspension from Membership, or an Expulsion from Membership, a person who is restored or returned to full affiliation with EMNR shall receive a special Letter of Restoration and Welcome, in addition to their general membership papers, signed by the Committee on Membership.

APPLICATION TO CORPORATE MEMBERS

EMNR's structure allows membership for both individuals and corporations (groups, ministries, churches, committees, etc.). The standards in this Manual apply to corporate as well as to individual membership. However, since corporations can have many secondary and tertiary associations as well as staff persons or volunteers who may be near or remote to the corporation or ministering entity, the terms of this Manual are qualified for corporate entities.

A corporation may have staff members who function as directors, speakers, writers, or field representatives. Further, it may have a board of directors, prayer partners, secretaries, artists, mail and shipping clerks on staff. It may also have a board of reference, a church home or sponsor, an overseas division, and other affiliations not related to cult evangelism or new religious movements. Thus, a large number of persons with a wide range of callings and vocations may be somehow related to a corporate member of EMNR.

While maintaining high ethical norms are a divine charge given to all Christians everywhere, EMNR does not intend to apply the terms of this Manual with equal force to all persons who may be associated with a member ministry or corporation. We recognize that some staff personnel or volunteers to a corporation which is a member of EMNR will never have heard of EMNR, will never attend a single EMNR function, or read any of our publications. We cannot expect them to responsibly follow a Manual they are unacquainted with.

However, corporations are responsible to uphold moral standards among their own ranks, and to present an untarnished or (at least) disciplined picture of Christianity to the watching world. Therefore, our general rule in applying the terms of this Manual to the members or staff within EMNR member ministries is this: The closer a person within the corporation is to EMNR, and especially to this Manual, the more stringently the terms of the Manual will be applied to the corporation in the case of infractions.

The following four hypothetical examples will show how this rule will be applied to corporate members:

(a) "Helmet, Sword and Shield" is a cult outreach and study group sponsored by First Church. This study group has joined EMNR. The pastor of First Church is not a member of the study group. The church choir director commits adultery with the organist; both of them divorce their spouses and marry each other, never leaving their positions with the church. The facts are common knowledge to insiders within the church, but the pastor does not discipline or remove his organist and choir director.

Since neither the organist nor the choir director are members of the cult outreach, at most, EMNR would privately communicate the unsatisfactory nature of this neglect of discipline to the ministry leader (this would be even lighter than a Letter of Admonition). If the pastor of First Church were a member or leader of the study group, the group as a whole would receive a Letter of Admonition, and the pastor should be sent a book on the importance of church discipline.

If the sinning church members attended the study group once or twice while the pastor was not involved at all, nothing would be done, but if they had had a leading role in the group (especially while the adultery was going on), the study group would receive a Letter of Rebuke, with Probation. Likewise, if First Church had joined EMNR as a church (not as a study group), even if the adulterous members were not part of the study group, then the church would warrant a Letter of Rebuke, with Probation, for this conduct. (The assumption here is that if First Church joins EMNR as a church, then its pastor should have had contact with our Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards.)

(b) "Missionaries Against Satanic Heresy" is a parachurch ministry with three affiliated chapters in other parts of the country. The ministry accountant reveals that the national director has been skimming off indeterminate amounts of money from speaking engagements while on the road, and raising money for projects which never seem to materialize. The national director fires the accountant, denies the claims, and refuses to discuss the charges against him.

EMNR would hold the affiliated chapters unaffected, since chapters must join EMNR individually. If the accountant was able to provide prima facie evidence that something was amiss with the funds, and if the director still refused to discuss the matter with a personal delegation from EMNR, the ministry should be Temporarily Suspended from Membership until a more satisfactory reply comes from the director. If the accountant's evidence was debatable or ambiguous, and the director nonetheless refused to discuss the questions brought to him by EMNR, the director would be sent a Letter of Admonition (or more, depending on circumstances) for failing to resolve the (presumed) misapprehensions of his staff member and failing to make himself accountable to others as they try to help him to resolve the accusations.

(c) "Defenders Tract Service" is a publisher of several tracts on cults and a member

of EMNR. There are 4 people in the ministry (two married couples), although "DTS" is in fact directed by one of them, Pastor Bob. The other man associated with the ministry, Rev. Rick, has a particularly nasty tongue and has spread many hurtful stories about other Christian ministries, which he posts on the Internet. Pastor Bob continually apologizes for Rick's language, who knows only that his ministry is a member of EMNR but otherwise has never had contact with EMNR. Pastor Bob is a wonderful brother, and we are reluctant to censure Bob for the actions of his friend.

Since DTS is such a small ministry, and since Rick is involved with it, it is incumbent both on Bob to have told his friend, and on his friend to have inquired, about what is involved in EMNR membership. If the name of Rev. Rick was listed as "staff" on the EMNR Membership Application Form, then this would clinch the case that the friend had a duty to know (yet even if Rick were not listed, DTS would not therefore be exonerated). A Letter of Admonition is sent to both Bob and Rick, warning them that they are not advancing the cause of their ministry by this language. Their postings on the Internet will be monitored to insure that Rick improves his manner of speech.

(d) "The Brighter Light" is a national parachurch ministry to Jehovah's Witnesses. One of the fourteen members of its board of directors committed a serious moral compromise. Their board knows little of EMNR, and was formed only to give financial backing to the ministry, which in fact is run largely by the ministry's president. It was the president's idea to join EMNR.

Sometimes a "Board of Directors" doesn't really direct, and the persons involved with it are practically invisible. In this situation, the offender seems much more "remote" from the day-to-day operations and identification with the ministry than was Rick in the previous example. Though the board member was wrong in his moral failure, he is less responsible to maintain EMNR standards than Rick was. A Letter of Admonition is in order, but no attempt to monitor the composition of the board of "The Brighter Light" should occur thereafter.

ENFORCEMENT

Members shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the sections on Reporting and Criticism and Commitment to Reconciliation, above. The following procedures will govern the treatment of complaints regarding the violation of these guidelines by an EMNR member.

(1) The Committee on Membership. Complaints shall be addressed in writing via U.S. mail to the Committee on Membership, EMNR, at its national office. The Committee on Membership shall be a permanent, standing committee for EMNR, consisting of three members, at least one of whom must be a member of the Board of Directors. A letter of acknowledgment must be returned by a member of the Committee on Membership, postmarked no later than 5 working days from the date the complaint was received.

In the event of illness, vacation, or other unavoidable absence of one member of the Committee on Membership during an urgent time when the Committee's work is needed, the other two members of the Committee are authorized to appoint a replacement member until the absent regular member is able to return. There must be at least one member of the Board of Directors on the Committee at any time.

(2) Interpretation. Complaints shall be addressed and resolved by the Committee on Membership, using this Manual and general biblical principles. The Committee on Membership has the authority to summon the Committee on Ethics to clarify ambiguous statements in the Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards which may apply to a case before it. The Committee on Ethics must reply within 14 days of the receipt of the question. These clarifications automatically are incorporated into the text of the next published version of the Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards, unless the Board of Directors votes to reword, amend, or delete the proposed statements.

(3) Nature of proof. The importance of clear and convincing proof in resolving accusations against members cannot be overstated. We will follow the words of Richard Baxter (writing in 1656), "No accusation, not even from the most respectable and best people in the church, shall be accepted without clear proof. And this must not be rashly received, nor should the minister make himself a party until he has sufficient evidence in the case. It is better to let many vicious persons go unpunished or uncensored if we lack evidence, then to censure one unjustly. And this we may easily do if we go upon presumptions. These, in turn, will be sure to bring on the pastors the scandal of partiality and of unrighteous and injurious dealing. Then all their reproofs and censures will become contemptible in the eyes of others."

(4) Date of resolution. Complaints brought to the Committee on Membership must be resolved in writing within 100 days from the date postmarked on the letter mailed to the Committee. All questions, interviews, fact-gathering, and other investigations shall be accomplished by this time. The resolution must be succinctly written, and addressed to both the complainant(s) and the accused member(s). If litigation is involved which would impair the finding of fact, the Committee on Membership may issue a temporary declaration, stipulating that the matter may be reviewed and possibly reopened after the litigation has ended.

(5) Consensus. The determination of the Committee on Membership must be agreed upon by unanimous consensus; a majority vote will not be sufficient. In the event that the Committee on Membership is deadlocked, an emergency session of the Board of Directors will be called and all three members will be replaced, and the evidence they have collected thus far will be turned over to the new Committee. The Board member(s) on the first Committee will abstain from nominating or voting for their replacements.

If a Committee member is the subject of a duly-registered complaint, that member

will be replaced by a vote of the Board until such time as the complaint is resolved, after which the member will resume his or her former position with the Committee.

(6) Funding. If the Committee on Membership incurs expenses during the course of its investigation, the entire membership body of EMNR will be subject to an ad hoc dues increase, sufficient to offset up to 90 percent of the cost of investigation. The remaining 10 percent will come out of the pocket of the Committee on Membership as their contribution to EMNR. The Committee on Membership will keep receipts of all its expenses, which will be kept to a minimum.

The general membership of EMNR must be informed annually of the possibility of ad hoc dues increases, which may be imposed without warning to pay for investigations of members.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Five measures of correction will be available in the event of infractions of the ethical standards of EMNR.

(a) Letter of Admonition. A kindly and friendly warning will be privately sent to the member, exhorting him to refrain from misconduct in the future. A copy shall be retained in EMNR's membership files, and be discarded two years from the date of issuance.

(b) Letter of Rebuke, with Probation. A strongly worded letter of reprimand will be privately sent to the member, expressing disapproval with his actions and behavior, which shall be specified. The member will be notified that this letter initiates a six-month probationary period. A copy shall be retained in EMNR's membership files, and be discarded five years from the date of issuance.

(c) Removal from Corporate Office. If the member is an officer, agent, or formal representative of EMNR, he will receive a private letter removing him/her from the EMNR corporate office or position, specifying the offense. That person may still remain a General member of EMNR, but will also be on probation for a period of six months. A copy of this letter will be retained in EMNR's membership files, and be discarded five years from the date of issuance.

(d) Temporary Suspension of Membership. If a member violates a probationary period, or commits a more serious offense after being on probation twice in a two-year period, their membership in EMNR will be terminated for a period of two years. A letter specifying the offense causing this action will be sent to the member. Two years from the date of temporary suspension of membership, a letter shall be sent to the member, welcoming them to return.

(e) Expulsion from Membership. For gross offenses of moral turpitude or obstinate, repeated offenses of EMNR standards, a member may be expelled for five years or longer. A letter of correction will be sent to them, and to the organization or church

of their current affiliation. A copy will be kept of file in EMNR's membership records. They may not reapply for EMNR membership for at least five years, and upon returning they shall rejoin as Associate Members with a one-year probationary period, becoming General Members thereafter.

APPEALS PROCESS

An appeal is a formal process by which a member who has been found guilty of an offense by the Committee on Membership and sanctioned by a Removal from Corporate Office, a Temporary Suspension of Membership, or an Expulsion from Membership may request a rehearing of his or her case. The actual rehearing is called an Appeal Hearing.

Appeals to the decision of the Committee on Membership must be made within 10 days of the date of the Committee's final decision. The effects of the Committee's decision (including removal from office or membership) shall be in force until the date the Appeal Hearing is decided. Valid reasons to request an appeal might include receiving invalid evidence by the Committee on Membership; inconsistency in applying the statements within this Manual to the accused party; bias by one or more members of the Committee; failure to hear pertinent testimony; or other reasons.

Appeals will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee, which will consist of two EMNR Board Members and one General Member, none of whom may have been on the Committee on Membership which heard the case of the appellant. The members of the Appeals Committee are chosen by the Board at its annual meeting, or may be revised by the Board in an emergency session (via telephone conference call) in the event that one of the Appeals Committee members is unsuitable or biased in the case.

The Appeal Hearing must occur within 40 days of the decision of the Committee on Membership; it may last no longer than 8 consecutive hours; its location will be determined by the Appeals Committee. All evidence gathered by the Committee on Membership shall be turned over to the Appeals Committee, which shall review the case prior to the hearing. The appellant should send additional documentation (if any) to the Appeals Committee by mail as early as possible. At the Appeals Hearing, the appellant may bring up to three additional witnesses to appear in person.

The decision of the Appeals Committee must be rendered within 24 hours of the hearing, by unanimous consensus. Failure to achieve a unanimous consensus will result in a reversal of the decision of the Committee on Membership. The written decision of the Appeals Committee will be promptly conveyed in person or by mail to the appellant.

Because appeals are very likely to be an expensive drain on the resources of EMNR (and potentially could be used frivolously by someone justly expelled with

very clear evidence), the location of the Appeal Hearing will be at a place convenient to the Appeals Committee. The Appellant may appear in person or by proxy, with or without the additional witnesses. If the Appeals Committee finds in favor of the appellant or fails to reach a consensus verdict against him, the appellant will be fully reimbursed for his flight and food expenses, and one night's lodging for himself (or his proxy), out of the EMNR general operating fund. Additional witnesses brought by the appellant, if any, will pay their travel expenses out of pocket.

SOURCE CREDITS

Some of the statements in the Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards have been taken from the Codes of Ethics of a number of churches and ministerial societies. Concepts and principles used in this Manual been adapted and suggested by the following books, which we recommend and whose authors we thank:

A Biblical Standard for Evangelists, by Billy Graham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984).

The Christian Counselor's Manual, by Jay E. Adams (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973). See especially chapter 8, "The Reconciliation/Discipline Dynamic," and chapter 9, "Reconciliation."

Due Process, by Dan Juster (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1992).

Ministerial Ethics, by Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter ([Nashville]: Broadman & Holman, 1993).

Models of Accountability, by Dan Juster (Gaithersburg, Md.: Tikkun Ministries, n.d.).

The Peacemaker, by Ken Sande (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991).

The Reformed Pastor, by Richard Baxter; abridged and edited by Jay Green (1656; reprint, Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971). See especially chapter 2, on church discipline.

Sexual Misconduct in Counseling and Ministry, by Peter Mosgofian and George Ohlschlager (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1995). See especially chapters 11-14.

"Truth and Consequences: Exposing Sin in the Church," by Bob and Gretchen Passantino, an Afterword to Selling Satan: The Evangelical Media and the Mike Warnke Scandal, by Mike Hertenstein and Jon Trott (Chicago: Cornerstone Press Chicago, 1993).

The "Book of Discipline" within The Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (Greenville, SC: General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1976).

"Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal," section E7 of the Manual of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (Colorado Springs: The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1995).

"The Rules of Discipline" within the Book of Order (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, USA, 1994).