THST 550-001

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

JULY 8-12, 2012

Davide Sciarabba, M.A.(Ph.D. Student)

InMinistry Center Intensive
In philosophical ethics, two types of theories are outlined in response to the problem "why right is right": formal (or deontological) theories which regard rightness as an intrinsic quality of the action itself; and teleological theories which consider morality to be determined by the ends, goals and objectives of that action. Kant's ethic of duty is an example of the former; the Utilitarianism of Bentham is a representative of the latter. Characteristic of both, however, is the fact that they both have a human reference. Christian ethics with a Biblical foundation view the right conduct as being the appropriate, ethical response of the total human to divine revelation.
More specifically, an examination of biblical and theological sources suggests that the righteousness of God is the "plumb line" for human goodness. What we are in relation to God reflects on what we do, but Christianity affirms that we cannot be good by thinking "good", nor do good by trying hard. Rather, goodness is "a fruit of the Spirit"; it stems from our response to the status conferred upon us by a sovereign, loving Creator and Savior. “But solid food is . . . for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble, and what is evil and contrary to divine or human law.” Heb. 5:14 (Amplified)

CLASS OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this class are to:

The main purpose of this introductory course is not to provide answers to moral questions, but rather to consider how a Christian can find such answers and why one answer is to be preferred over another. In addition to this, and as an extension of it, the following objectives may be mentioned:

- To stimulate the conscience and alert the minds of the participants to the principles and the way of life as presented in the Word of God, the Bible.
- To assist in a brief evaluation of the current ethical theories, trends, and systems and to help in the assessment of their impact on the life and conduct of the Christian.
- To equip the participant with adequate and up-to-date resources as he/she faces modern ethical dilemmas.

Secondary objectives include:

Upon the completion of this course, the student will:

- Know/understand:
  a. The various theories of ethics and their strengths and weaknesses.
  b. The relevance and importance of Biblical foundation for moral life, and the science of ethics.
  c. The basics of method in Christian ethics, and reasons for Biblical standards.

- Be able to:
  a. Accept the challenge to be like Jesus both in private and public life.
  b. Adopt the Christ-like scale of moral values.
  c. Lead by word and example towards a life of integrity and commitment to follow God’s will.
  d. Discern the difference between good and harmful influences of culture and society.

- Know how to: (skills)
  a. Make proper decisions in dealing with moral dilemmas and issues.
  b. Teach and motivate the members to be faithful to God in their moral lives.
  c. Foster sensitivity to Christ-like lifestyle and loving church discipline.
  d. Develop a program of teaching and preaching on the crucial and pressing moral issues in church and society.
TEXTBOOKS, RECOMMENDED READINGS AND CLASS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required:


Essential Reading:

   41: “The Fiery Furnace”
   43: “The Unseen Watcher”
   44: “In the Lion’s Den”

Recommended:


Class Bibliography:

*See the selected bibliography in Appendix 2 of the syllabus.*
Criteria for Grades
Criteria for each grade are listed in the *Criteria for Assessment Guidelines* which is attached as Appendix 1 of this document.

Testing and Evaluation
This course is offered to SDA professionals. Professionalism is a requirement in this and all other classes within SDA Theological Seminary. Promptness, punctuality, participation, and presence (mental and bodily) are expected. To sign the attendance sheet and then to leave the room, or to come, sign the sheet and use a computer for absenting the mind, will be treated as cheating and will result in a lower grade or class failure.

NB: **Seminary Policy on the use of class notes:**

A student is encouraged to take notes for his/her own personal and private use. Portions of these notes may be shared with fellow students taking the same class at the same time who have missed class lectures. These notes may also be used to compare learning with fellow students of the same class in group study situations. In no case shall such notes be sold, bartered, traded, or distributed.

Seminary policy does not sanction the use of any recording device in the class room. Everyone needs to feel free to speak and spontaneously participate in discussion.

The instructor reserves all author rights to the lecture material.

Assessment Submission
The Critical Book Reviews must be turned in hard copy. The Research Paper has to be submitted in PDF format by e-mail, unless you can bring a hard copy to Melanie Beaulieu, secretary of the Theology Department of Andrews University.

Late Submission
The following penalties will be applied for late submission of assessment items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delay up to due date</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Delay up to 60 days:</td>
<td>(no better than an A- grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay up to 90 days:</td>
<td>(no better than a B+ grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay up to 120 days:</td>
<td>(no better than a B grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay up to 150 days:</td>
<td>(no better than a C grade)</td>
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Grading

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Critical Book Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sermon or Conference</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

5
BEFORE CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. **Critical Book Reviews.** Read the two textbooks and write a five-page (full pages), single-spaced critical book review per each textbook (New Times Roman, 12). In the first part (2 pages) of the review summarize the contents. In the second part (2 pages) write your critique (positive or negative), then end with concluding remarks (1 page). The reviews are due at the first class meeting on **July 8, 2012**.

DURING CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance to the class. Presence in the lectures is essential. Remember that one day of absence translates into seven hours of missing the class engagement and that exceeds the three hours maximum allowed according to the University Bulletin. Active listening and engagement results in better learning for all of us.

2. **Final Exam.** The final exam will deal with the material from lectures, class discussions, the handouts and the textbooks. It will be administered on **July 12 at 2:00 p.m.** Reading and studying the handouts and the textbooks always results in better grades and a greater grasp of the subject matter. Every student can earn up to a B by memorizing and repeating the content. Graduate thinking involves more than memory. Superior grades reflect independent thinking and integrated knowledge.

AFTER CLASS REQUIREMENTS

1. **Expository Sermon or Conference.** A ten-page (double spaced) sermon or conference on one of the subjects listed below is due **October 1, 2012**. Please email your sermon (preferably in PDF format) to Davide Sciarabba’s e-mail address: sciarabb@andrews.edu or davidesciarabba@hotmail.com

List of suggested topics for Sermons

- Ethical usage of scripture
- Integrity (i.e. Is it ever OK to lie?)
- Ethics of forgiveness
- Love as a moral principle
- Love and justice
- Situation ethics
- If the law is the law, why exceptions?
- Motives in decision-making
- Habits for a Christian behavior.
- Ethical implication of Obedience
- Rewards
- Conscience
- Will of God and human will
- Nature of moral values
- Issues such as:
  - Race relations
  - Sexual ethics
  - Homosexuality
- Students may agree with the teacher on another topic.

## CLASS POLICIES

### Classroom Seating
Give a statement about your policy on classroom seating (e.g. To facilitate the instructor in learning each student’s name, please select a permanent seat (for at least the first half of the semester) in the classroom.)

### Disability Accommodations
Give a statement about how you will fulfill disability accommodations (e.g. If you qualify for accommodations under the American Disabilities Act, please see the instructor as soon as possible for referral and assistance in arranging such accommodations.)

### Late Submission of Assessment
The following penalties will be applied for late submission of assessment items:

- Assignments received by due date: (possible A grade)
- Delay up to 60 days: (no better than an A- grade)
- Delay up to 90 days: (no better than a B+ grade)
- Delay up to 120 days: (no better than a B grade)
- Delay up to 150 days: (no better than a C grade)

### Emergency Protocols
Andrews University takes the safety of its students seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout the buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

### Other Policies
Include additional statements about any other policies relevant to your class.

### Class Attendance
“Regular attendance at all classes, laboratories and other academic appointments is required for each student. Faculty members are expected to keep regular attendance records. Whenever the number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may give a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.”
Academic Integrity
Andrews University takes seriously all acts of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) falsifying official documents; plagiarizing; misusing copyrighted material; violating licensing agreements; using media from any source to mislead, deceive or defraud; presenting another’s work as one’s own; using materials during a quiz or examination other than those specifically allowed; stealing, accepting or studying from stolen examination materials; copying from another student; or falsifying attendance records. For more details see the Andrews University Bulletin 2010, page 30.

“Consequences may include denial of admission, revocation of admission, warning from a teacher with or without formal documentation, warning from a chair or academic dean with formal documentation, receipt of a reduced or failing grade with or without notation of the reason on the transcript, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university.”

Andrews University Bulletin 2010, page 30
# OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>Presentation of the Course and Syllabus</td>
<td>Critical Book Reviews</td>
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<td>Questions about the final exam and paper</td>
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<td><strong>INTRODUCTION:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Lecture 1: Debate over Ethics, Ethics and Science of Human behavior.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>July 9</td>
<td>Lecture 2: Understanding Morality</td>
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<td>Lecture 3: Understanding Ethics</td>
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<td>Lecture 4: Christian Context of Ethics</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>July 10</td>
<td><strong>ANATOMY OF CHRISTIAN MORAL BEHAVIOR:</strong></td>
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<td>Lecture 5: Structure of Ethics</td>
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<td>Lecture 6: Use of Scripture in Ethics</td>
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<td>Lecture 7: Moral Beings</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>July 11</td>
<td><strong>BOUND FOR FREEDOM:</strong></td>
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<td>Lecture 8: Moral Values</td>
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<td>Lecture 9: Teleological Ethical Theories</td>
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<td>Lecture 10: Moral Norms</td>
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<td>Lecture 11: Challenges to Deontological Ethical Theories</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Lecture 12: Virtue Ethics Theories</td>
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<td>Lecture 13: The Free Fall of Faith</td>
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<td>Lecture 14: Moral Freedom and Moral Virtues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2:00-4:00 pm</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</table>
Davide Sciarabba is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor who served the church in Italy, France and Spain as pastor, young adult pastor, evangelist, chaplain, boy’s dean and professor. In 2006 he was called to serve as chaplain at the winter Olympics in Turin (Italy) and in 2009 at the Track and Field World Championship in Berlin. He earned his bachelor degrees in Theology and Physical Education in Italy. Then he obtained an M.A. degree in Theology at the Saleve Adventist University (France) and a M.A. in Education from the Plata Adventist University (Argentina). He is currently earning a PhD in Theology with emphasis in Ethics under the mentoring of Dr. Miroslav Kis. He is happily married to Sonia Badenas and together they have two children: Flavia and Marco.
APPENDIX 1

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

THE B GRADE

We start with the B grade for a very specific reason. It is because a B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is an excellent grade and demonstrates a high level of knowledge, insight, critique competence and professional written presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional pastor.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is only given when a student not only fulfils the criteria stipulated above for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide a perfect opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade exhibits a limited level of knowledge, insight and critique and poor written presentation standards. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, they may have difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, English may be their second language, or they may be experiencing a personal issue that is affecting their concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling centre, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

FAIL

The Fail grade is given when very limited or no demonstratable competency has been observed.
**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

- You cannot be graded on the type of paper you could have turned in if you had had more time.
- You cannot be graded or given credit in this class on extra-curricular activities you may be involved in.
- It is unreasonable to expect a better grade because you are a nice person or are friends with the lecturer.
- It is unreasonable to demand a good grade because you believe you have been called by God, and thus, should automatically be given good grades despite poor performance.

Your assessments have been specifically designed to measure and provide evidence of your competency with relation to the subject matter. This is to meet University accreditation standards. Thus, you will only be graded on the content of the assessments you submit. If it is not in your assessments, your lecturer will not have adequate evidence of your competency and will have to grade you accordingly.

**PLAGIARISM**

Replicating writing, cutting and pasting or moderately paraphrasing text from publications, internet sources, books, friends papers or publications, family members papers or publications, ghost writers papers or publications with the intent of passing it off as your own work, is strictly prohibited and unacceptable. Students found to be plagiarising the work of others will receive an immediate Failing grade. Your actions will be reported to the University and your sponsor (if sponsored). You may even face expulsion from the University. Your lecturer will randomly sample sentences, phrases and paragraphs from your paper and compare them with papers from past students and with content on the internet. Your lecturer is also familiar with a lot of the publications and sources you will be using for your assessment and will also be able to identify any potential plagiarism.

**LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR**

There is an expectation that a person who holds a Master’s qualification will have advanced written language skills, particularly in the language in which their Masters was taught. Thus, no special consideration will be given to students who speak English as a second language or native-English speakers who struggle with written English. Such students are advised to seek the assistance of the campus writing lab or seek the services of a professional academic editor prior to the submission of their assessment.

Students are encouraged to have someone else read their assessments aloud to them prior to submission. This practice will provide you with immediate feedback as to how your written assessments sounds/reads to another person. You may even want to have a friend or a professional academic editor look over your assessments to identify any typing, spelling or punctuation errors too.
## Criteria for Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>A Range</th>
<th>B Range</th>
<th>C Range</th>
<th>D Range</th>
<th>F – Fail</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title and Paper Presentation</td>
<td>The title is creative, succinct, one that also hints at the scope, method and argument of the paper. The appearance and word-processing of the document is of a high professional standard.</td>
<td>The title is succinct and hints at the scope, method and argument of the paper. The appearance and word-processing of the document is of professional standard.</td>
<td>Contains elements of the topic, scope and purpose of the paper. The appearance and word-processing of the document is adequately presented, but lacks a professional standard.</td>
<td>Describes little about the content. The appearance and word-processing in the document is poor.</td>
<td>Does not describe the content. The appearance of the word-processing in the document is very poor and demonstrates a lack of commitment to the professional standards required of Masters recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Thesis</td>
<td>Presents the topic and purpose of the paper very clearly and succinctly. It is objective and demonstrates a high level of critical scholarship.</td>
<td>Presents the topic and purpose of the paper clearly and succinctly. It is objective and demonstrates critical scholarship.</td>
<td>The topic and purpose lacks some clarity. It tends to be overly wordy. Critical scholarship is lacking in some places.</td>
<td>The topic and purpose has limited clarity. It is not easily apparent what this paper is about. Critical scholarship is lacking in some places.</td>
<td>The topic is not clearly described nor is the purpose of the paper expressed. Critical scholarship is nonexistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Your thesis is succinct, insightful, sophisticated, even exciting. It demonstrates independent insight and comprehensive reading and research of the topic. All ideas in the paper flow logically; your argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. You have excellent transitions. Your paragraphs have solid topics and each sentence clearly relates to that topic.</td>
<td>Your thesis is clear, insightful and demonstrates extensive reading and research of the topic. All ideas in the paper flow logically. Your argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. You have very good transitions. Your paragraphs have solid topics and each sentence clearly relates to that topic.</td>
<td>Your thesis is unclear at times, your references to scholarly literature is limited or, are irrelevant. Not all ideas in the paper flow logically. Your argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. You have very good transitions. Your paragraphs have solid topics and each sentence clearly relates to that topic.</td>
<td>Your thesis is unclear, your references to scholarly literature is very limited or, is irrelevant. Ideas in the paper flow illogically. Your argument is difficult to identify at times. Your transitions require improvement. Paragraphs do not stay on topic.</td>
<td>Your thesis is frequently unclear, your references to scholarly literature is nonexistent or is irrelevant. Ideas in the paper flow illogically. Your argument cannot be identified. Your transitions require significant improvement. Paragraphs do not stay on topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Supports every point with examples from a wide range of academic literature. Quoted material is expertly integrated into the body of your work. Your analysis suggests new ways to perceive the material or identifies gaps or shortcomings in the literature.</td>
<td>Supports every point with examples from a wide range of academic literature. Quoted material is well integrated into the body of work.</td>
<td>Does not support every point with examples from academic literature. Uses only old or out of date sources. Quoted material is sometimes irrelevant or poorly integrated into the body of work.</td>
<td>Points are not supported by academic literature. Uses non-scholarly sources or old, out of date sources. Quoted material is often irrelevant or poorly integrated into the body of work.</td>
<td>Does not support any point with examples from academic literature. Uses only non-scholarly sources. Quoted material is often irrelevant or poorly integrated into the body of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Language</td>
<td>Is very interesting, thought provoking and exciting to read. Uses language appropriately and artfully. No more than one spelling, grammatical or style mistake per page.</td>
<td>Is interesting and holds the reader’s attention. Uses language appropriately and artfully. No more than two spelling, grammatical or style mistakes per page.</td>
<td>Paper is generally well written, but sometimes lacks purpose or relevance to the topic. Has up to four spelling, grammatical and style mistakes on every page.</td>
<td>Paper is generally well written, but often lacks purpose or relevance to the topic. Has up to 10 spelling, grammatical and style mistakes on every page.</td>
<td>Paper is poorly written, lacks purpose or relevance to the topic. Has multiple spelling, grammatical and style mistakes on every page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Your conclusion is succinct and very persuasive. It is strongly evidence based, and your inference very sound.</td>
<td>Your conclusion is persuasive. It is evidence based and your inference is sound.</td>
<td>Your conclusion may have some merit but some of your evidence is weak or inference questionable.</td>
<td>Your conclusion is not very persuasive. Your evidence is very weak and your inference very questionable.</td>
<td>Your conclusion is not very persuasive at all. Your evidence is scant or non-existent. Your inference is highly questionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referencing/Bibliography</td>
<td>Perfectly adheres to SBL Style or Andrews University Standards for Written work. No mistakes are permitted</td>
<td>Adheres to SBL Style or Andrews University Standards for Written work. No more than three mistakes permitted.</td>
<td>Often adheres to SBL Style or Andrews University Standards for Written work. No more than 7 mistakes permitted.</td>
<td>Seldom adheres to SBL Style or Andrews University Standards for Written work. No more than 10 mistakes permitted.</td>
<td>Does not adhere to SBL Style or Andrews University Standards for Written work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DOCUMENTS USED TO SOURCE CRITERIA:**
- Derek Bok Centre for Learning Teaching and Learning, Harvard University.  
- Nancy Langston and Steve Kantrowitz from the University of Wisconsin “Writing Across the Curriculum”.  
  [http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~WAC/page.jsp?id=101&c_type=article&c_id=4](http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~WAC/page.jsp?id=101&c_type=article&c_id=4)
- Chris Mayda from the Eastern Michigan University, “Grading Criteria”.  
  [http://www.emich.edu/public/geo/geography/Mayda/gradecriteria.htm](http://www.emich.edu/public/geo/geography/Mayda/gradecriteria.htm)
APPENDIX 2

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

General


APPENDIX 3
CODE OF ETHICS

Minister’s Code of Ethics

The General Conference Ministerial Association, with counsel from pastors and church administrators around the world, has prepared and recommends to every Adventist minister the following code of ethics:

Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Code of Ethics

I recognize that a call to the gospel ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not for the purpose of bestowing special privilege or position, but rather for living a life of devotion and service to God, His church, and the world. I affirm that my personal life and professional activities shall be rooted in the Word of God and subject to the Lordship of Christ. I am totally committed to the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I am dedicated to the maintenance of high standards of professional conduct and competence in my ministry. I purpose to build relationships based on the principles expressed in the life and teachings of Christ.

I shall, by the grace of God, apply these standards in my life so as to include the following:
1. Maintain a meaningful devotional life for myself and my family.
2. Give full time and attention to the ministry as my only vocation.
3. Commit myself to continuing professional growth.
4. Initiate and maintain supportive professional relationships with fellow ministers.
5. Practice strictest professional confidentiality.
7. Manage church and personal finances with integrity.
8. Perceive and treat my family as a primary part of my ministry.
10. Relate with propriety to those of the opposite sex.
11. Respect the personhood of every individual, without bias or prejudice.
12. Love those to whom I minister and commit myself to their spiritual growth.

MINISTRY/NOVEMBER/1994
How to protect your ministry from an affair

Just this week we lost another one. A super-effective, caring pastor gave it all up for an affair of the heart. How can we stop this tragic loss to the cause of God? Implement this 10-point plan and don't deviate from it.

1. Men, don't counsel women without someone else present, preferably your wife. Keep your office door open. Encourage women's ministries to start a peer counseling program for women.

2. Never go anywhere alone with a woman. Talk is cheap. An accusation is as good as the truth as far as "Screwtape" is concerned. Both are deadly as far as your effectiveness in ministry.

3. Don't allow lingering eye contact. This is the beginning of bonding.

4. Never touch a woman if you find yourself alone with her. Avoid a lingering touch in public.

5. Don't meet a woman outside regular business hours when you are unaccompanied by a visitation pastor. Don't visit her home without your wife.

6. Never disclose private details about your life or marriage.

7. Don't keep appreciation notes from women to read when life gets tough. Have your wife write you a few, so your thoughts go to her for comfort, not another.

8. When a woman comes on to you, stop her immediately. Don't flirt with danger because you enjoy her admiration.

9. Establish an accountability group of two or three co-professionals. Share honestly any questionable behavior and take their counsel.

10. Talk to your wife intimately for at least 15 minutes a day.

Suggested Reading List:
- *Hedge*, by Jerry B. Jenkins (Wolgemuth & Hyatt).

Ellen G. White references: