

## Definition of Professional Misconduct

### Professional Misconduct:

*Professional misconduct is conduct which is disgraceful, dishonorable, improper or unbecoming a pastoral leader in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. A pastor's conduct may be considered to be professional misconduct if it is established that the pastor has engaged in immoral or unethical behavior which transgresses standards of Scripture, examples of which include but are not limited to the following:*

#### **Abuse of any kind**

Harm or threatened harm to a person's health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury.

#### **Abuse of pastoral power and position**

Pastoral power and position are abused in order to exert and maintain control over others to accomplish one's goals or for personal gratification. Pastoral abuse of power comes in many forms, including misusing one's position of power and trust to:

- Cultivate relationships that are immoral or destructive.
- Attack an individual or individuals deliberately and personally from the pulpit.
- Seek personal financial gain, such as personal loans and other benefits.
- Disseminate false information and rumors to discredit those who are opposed to one's vision and plans for the future of the church.
- Threaten eternal consequences to maintain one's control over the life decisions and the support of their congregants.
- Set oneself up as the sole channel through whom God speaks to the congregation, and charging those who dissent with disobedience to God and calling for their removal from the membership.

#### **Criminal activity of any kind as defined in the Criminal Code**

#### **Gambling**

#### **Improper influence of Pastoral Search Committees**

The use of one's influence to interfere with the process of a pastoral search committee for personal gain or to promote a favored candidate.

#### **Racist comments or conduct**

#### **Sexual Misconduct**

- Marital Infidelity
- Sexual Intercourse outside the bonds of marriage.
- Sexual Harassment: Comments or conduct that is known, or ought to be known that has the effect of undermining, coercing, intimidating, humiliating or demeaning an individual on the basis of sex ( gender). Such behavior would include but not be limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, taunting about a person's body or sexual orientation, distribution by mail or

electronic means material of a sexual nature which potentially could be offensive, unnecessary physical contact such as patting or pinching.

- Sexual Exploitation: Taking advantage of the vulnerability of a person with whom there is a fiduciary and/or pastoral relationship through any form of sexual contact or invitation to sexual contact whether or not there is consent.
- Sexual Assault: Any intentional use of force or threat of force involving some form of sexual activity.
- Use of Pornography

**Substance Abuse**

**Theft, fraud and or embezzlement**

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