

**TOWARD A THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF  
CORRECTIVE/RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE**

**Prairie Bible Institute**

2012 revision

## **I. Purpose and Definition of Discipline**

The theological construct of the purpose for corrective church discipline is centered in the mandate of discipling members as authentic followers of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus' self-imposed deprivations and sacrifice constitute the noblest forms of self-discipline (Lk 9:58, Phil 2:1-8). He willingly chose to live in submission to the will of His Father with no regard for selfish concern. It is the Lord Jesus who taught His followers that they also should deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow Him (Mt 10:37ff, Lk 14:25-32). Those who chose to submit to His teachings and lifestyle are called disciples. The Christian is one who no longer lives in the self-indulgence of the old nature but has chosen the discipline of the Lord Jesus. The fruit of the Holy Spirit working in the Christian produces self-discipline (Gal 5:22, 23). The Christian is to discipline himself/herself in godliness (I Tim 4:7b).

The words “disciple” and “discipline” originate from the same Latin root.<sup>2</sup> The Christian is a disciple, meaning a student or follower of Christ. The disciple of Christ is one who willingly follows Him and submits to His discipline (i.e. teachings and lifestyle). Illustrated as a word picture, the disciple is a believer enrolled in the school of Christ. The enrolled disciple willingly submits to the Person of Christ as the Master Teacher, and consequently also submits to His discipline. The discipline in Christ's school of discipleship includes the entirety of the training process utilized to develop disciples. The purpose of the discipline is for the disciple to become like the Master.<sup>3</sup> The responsibility for this training process is delegated, in part, to the church. The training process or discipline is both formative and corrective in nature.<sup>4</sup>

### **Formative Discipline**

Formative discipline includes teaching, preaching, prayer, and other ministries of the church useful to form the disciple in Christlikeness.<sup>5</sup> The disciplines of the Christian life such as study, prayer, solitude, simplicity, worship and service are to be willingly practised for growth into conformity to the Lord Jesus. In the context of Prairie Bible Institute this includes the many ministries both inside and outside the classroom designed to assist students in their spiritual growth.

### **Corrective Discipline**

Corrective discipline is likewise a ministry of discipling.<sup>6</sup> Corrective discipline is defined as the ministry exercised by the believer(s) to the fellow believer who is practicing sin for the purpose of discipling him/her. The Reformation church coined corrective church discipline as the “rule of Christ”, a catch phrase for addressing sin within the church, but doing so in the manner of Jesus presented in Matthew 18:15-20 as contrasted to the stake and sword.<sup>7</sup>

Corrective discipline is the gracious act of the Spirit working within the Body of Christ. This discipline ministry issues from the core of the character of God and requires the supernatural ministry of the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Corrective discipling is also a gracious action of the church when practiced according to Scripture and in the attitude of Christ. To participate in the Body where the “rule of Christ” is actually practiced is a blessing and privilege.<sup>9</sup> For the church to fail in this

responsibility is serious disobedience to Christ.<sup>10</sup> There is no substitute that will suffice or supplement for this disobedience. Corrective discipline is essential to effective discipling.<sup>11</sup>

Thus both types of discipline have exactly the same purpose of building disciples.<sup>12</sup> The two types of discipline complement one another in the training process.

## **II. Goals of Corrective Discipline**

Corrective church discipline, with a primary purpose of discipling, has four goals; reconciliation, purity, restoration, and freedom.<sup>13</sup> Below, each goal will be articulated theologically to provide a more precise understanding of the construct of corrective church discipline.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to note that a corrective process can easily degenerate to wrong/unbiblical motivations to discipline. Examples of these can be:

- To get rid of a problem or embarrassment
- To get rid of a difficult personality
- To exercise personal vengeance

### **A. Reconciliation**

The first goal is reconciliation, which means, “to exchange enmity for friendship”.<sup>15</sup> Reconciliation is theologically anchored in the character of the Trinity as love.<sup>16</sup> Because He is love the Triune God exists eternally in perfect community.<sup>17</sup> Issuing from His own character, God designed the created order for community.<sup>18</sup> What is true of creation and humanity in general is particularly true of the church, the called out disciples of Christ.<sup>19</sup> The eschatological reality will include God and the church in ideal community.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, community is not simply a pleasant sociological experience but more fundamentally an ontological and teleological necessity.

Sin splits community, humanity from God and consequently also human from human.<sup>21</sup> Sin is the Achilles’ heel of community.<sup>22</sup> Thus sin precipitates the story of humanity as the saga of enmity, which has unleashed a direct assault on the character and design of God. Through the work of redemption from sin, Christ makes possible reconciliation and peace with those who are at enmity with God and with one another.<sup>23</sup>

The church is called to partner with Christ in this ministry of reconciliation, one aspect of which includes corrective church discipline.<sup>24</sup> The occasion that demands corrective discipline is sin.<sup>25</sup> Of necessity sin causes enmity with God and within the church. Through the discipling ministry of corrective church discipline there is a beckoning to exchange enmity, caused through sin, for friendship. This reconciliation is described in the words of Jesus when he states, “If he listens to you, you have won your brother over...”<sup>26</sup> He depicts reconciliation between humanity and God but also reconciliation within the community of the church.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, corrective church discipline always has a goal of reconciliation that is sourced in the character of God’s love.

Such love is not only fundamental to the goal of reconciliation but also to the manner in which the process of reconciliation is implemented. His love mandates the church to the messiness of

deep relational love. "Living in community involves sacrifice, emotional investment, and pain. But living without it is worse. Christian community is the attempt of Spirit-filled believers to restore some of that perfect community known only to the Triune God and the first family before the fall."<sup>28</sup> Other-focused love for one another and for God is the required environment of the church for effective reconciliation to be realized. Spirit filled love conditions the attitudes and actions in which the reconciliation processes are to be exercised. These attitudes include gentleness,<sup>29</sup> humility, sorrow, forgiveness,<sup>30</sup> and brotherliness.<sup>31</sup> The posture of reconciling corrective discipline is sorrow for a brother or sister who is trapped, and not condemnation for an enemy who is to be injured.

## **B. Purity**

The second goal of the corrective discipling process is purity. Purity is anchored in the holy character of God.<sup>32</sup> The church is called to the moral responsibility of purity on the basis of God's holiness.<sup>33</sup> Christ is actively involved in purifying the church, His Bride.<sup>34</sup> She is currently being prepared as the pure community that will participate in the eschatological reality. The Bride is responsible to cooperate with the Bridegroom in His sanctifying work.<sup>35</sup> One aspect of this participation is through corrective discipline in which the believer caught in sin is called back to the life of personal purity.<sup>36</sup>

In this goal of purity, it is critical to understand the organic nature of the church, also described as the Body of Christ. The whole Body is always influenced and affected by the sin of the individual member. Thus sin is serious and destructive not only for the sinner but also for the entire Body.<sup>37</sup> The nature of the Body necessitates that sin can never be confined to a personal matter. Sin always affects the corporate church. In addition, this organic unity demonstrates why the Body cannot merely ignore the sin of the individual as if it has no effect on the whole.

The organic unity of the Body is also essential to the development of genuine accountability that contributes to practical purity. This accountability is not blind obedience to a group of dictatorial leaders but rather it involves taking seriously the truth of the Body as an interrelated, interdependent community of faith. Accountability means helping one another keep our commitments to God and each other, knowing that each believer can be an instrument of the Spirit's work in fostering purity.<sup>38</sup> What each believer does and how each one lives affects the entire fellowship.<sup>39</sup>

Purity directly influences the first goal of reconciliation. As already stated, sin fractures face-to-face community.<sup>40</sup> For fellowship to be re-established with a brother or sister, the Body must be pure.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, reconciled community is conditioned by the holiness of those who comprise the Body.<sup>42</sup>

## **C. Restoration**

The third goal of corrective church discipling is restoration. Restoration, through discipline, is the gracious action of God.<sup>43</sup> Restorative action issues from God's character of love and more precisely His particular love for the church.<sup>44</sup> God's restorative discipline is neither punishment nor judgement.

The church is called to partner with God in the ministry of restoration.<sup>45</sup> In fact, restoration within the church is the ministry of Christ working by the Holy Spirit through the church in perfecting the church. The believer who is "caught" (*prolambano*) in sin is "trapped," "bound by," or "in bondage to" to sin. Those that are spiritual are commanded to "restore" that individual. The idea of restoring is renewing someone to usefulness.<sup>46</sup> The verb "restore" (*katarizo*) in Galatians 6:1 is a medical term that was used in secular Greek for setting a fractured bone. The bone that is useless because of the break is set in order to renew it to usefulness. Thus the brokenness of life, caused by sin, is to be set straight to be renewed to usefulness.<sup>47</sup> As previously demonstrated it is not only the individual but also the entire body that is thus influenced by this restorative process. The ministry of restoring is purposed toward holiness that in turn enables genuine community within the church.

Godly corrective discipline always has restoration in view. This restoration must include repentance on the part of the person caught in sin. Repentance is a change of mind that involves turning away from sin.<sup>48</sup> Upon genuine confession and repentance the sinner is to be forgiven by the church.<sup>49</sup> Forgiveness involves releasing the demand for the debt of sin to be paid by the offender without exercising immediate or future punishment (punishment is to be distinguished from consequences).<sup>50</sup> Failure to forgive is disobedience that can have disastrous effects. However, forgiveness does not preclude the necessity of the church to assist, demand boundaries, implement restrictions, develop accountabilities, counsel, help and enable the sinner to be renewed to usefulness through actual deliverance from the sin in which he was caught.

#### **D. Freedom**

The fourth goal of corrective discipline is freedom. Sin always causes enslavement.<sup>51</sup> Alternatively, living in righteousness brings Christian freedom.<sup>52</sup> This freedom is not the right to do as one pleases as advocated by the individualism of Western culture.<sup>53</sup> Rather, freedom is the power and capacity both to will and to do as one ought. The freedom of Christian liberty is freedom from sin in order to be like Jesus Christ. Christian liberty is never freedom from responsibility. Rather, it is responsibility for choice and empowerment for right choice. Thus, through restoration of members who have been caught in sin there is a new liberty that is realized within the church.

Emanating from these four goals the following critical questions frame the corrective disciplinary ministry:

- 1) What sin has been committed against God? How has Scripture been violated?
- 2) What sin has been committed against a person(s)? That is, how has Scripture been violated and this person(s) offended?
- 3) Who has sinned? Who is the person(s) that has been sinned against?
- 4) Who needs to make confession? What confession needs to be made? Who does this confession need to be made to? How should this confession be made?
- 5) Who needs to repent? What needs to be repented of? What needs to be repented to?
- 6) What, if any, restitution needs to be made? By whom? To whom?
- 7) What needs to take place for genuine reconciliation to happen?

- 8) How should the person caught in sin be assisted to find freedom in Christ? That is, what responsibility is there to assist, counsel, help and enable him/her deal with the roots of sin.

These are the key questions to be used in each step of the corrective disciplinary process developed below.

### **III. Prairie and Corrective Discipline**

How then does corrective church discipline interface with the ministry of Prairie?

#### **A. Missional Effectiveness**

Prairie is not a congregation. However, as an arm of the church, the Institute has a responsibility to equip students for congregational life.

The church cannot continue indefinitely as the church if she harbours sin with impunity.<sup>54</sup> In order to be faithful the contemporary church within Western culture must recapture obedience to serious engagement in the theological and practical challenge of corrective church discipline.<sup>55</sup> In its mandate to furnish leaders and laity with competencies necessary for executing genuine change in congregational life this challenge must consequently be addressed by the Bible Institute.<sup>56</sup> That is, students must be enabled with both a theology and practice of corrective discipline that will equip them to actualize corrective discipline in congregational ministry.

For the Institute to prepare ministers and members as change agents for the contemporary church it must train students with a theological foundation that is taken seriously enough to be practised in the educational preparation. The Bible Institute, to effectively equip this generation of disciples, must become the school of Christ through practice of the discipline of Christ. This discipline includes the “rule of Christ” practised in the spirit of Christ to train disciples of Christ.

#### **B. Disciple Formation**

Disciple formation is ultimately the work of God by His grace. However, there is simultaneously a responsibility and sacred trust given to Prairie Bible Institute to develop disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Serious and consistent attention must be given to holistic formation in Christlikeness. Prairie's history is characterized by such disciples. Students have been marked by the "crucified life."

As already articulated in this paper, such formation in Christlikeness is the exact purpose for both formative and corrective discipline. If it is impossible for the discipleship process to be effective without corrective discipline in the church then likewise it is impossible within the Institution.

For the Institute to forfeit the practice of the “rule of Christ” is to forego the powerful goals of corrective discipling: Reconciliation, Purity, Restoration, and Freedom. The preparation of disciples who will become like the Master Teacher is rendered impossible because a critical component of the biblical training process is rejected.

### **C. Community Commitment**

The Prairie community is a community of faith and of disciples. It is a community of people in a process of growth and maturing into the image of our Master. In that process we anticipate and plan for mistakes, wrong choices, and sin. Those times can provide significant teaching opportunities for shaping students' hearts, minds, and character for God's glory. Corrective discipline is a critical ministry in developing authentic biblical community. Without corrective discipline the potential of authentic community is hampered and maybe even rendered impossible for the reasons as already stated within this paper.

### **IV. Process of Corrective Discipline**

How can Prairie practice this theology? The following develops a process of corrective discipline. This process outlined is thoughtful and deliberate. However, at the same time, it is tentative in the sense that it is assumed that we do not know perfectly nor we will practice perfectly. The intent is that we will learn and grow as we seek to live as faithful disciples.

It is, or should be enough, to attempt to reconcile, purify, restore, or liberate out of Christ-like love desiring to follow biblical processes. However, it is sometimes the case in the practice of discipline that the person being corrected chooses not to respond to the act of restoration. Often the person unwilling to grow or repent will focus on improper or unbiblical process as a reason to take offense. In order to be fair and to avoid this type of blame-shifting it is important that we endeavor to be as consistent as possible with the process we follow.

#### **A. Encouraging (Process 1)**

*“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”* (Hebrews 3:13)

Every Prairie community member has agreed to live responsibly within the Prairie community expectations as outlined in the Covenant. This agreement is signified by the signed commitment of each member. Within this community we are to exhort and encourage one another in the Christian walk. We are to be continually promoting, modeling, and encouraging right attitudes and behaviour. It is this context of formative discipline and loving relationship that creates the powerful environment for effective corrective discipline. True discipleship, including corrective discipline, cannot take place without a community of true other-focused love.

There are also intentional structures designed at Prairie to foster such real relational depth through accountability partners and small group ministry. However, these structures can only serve to facilitate but never replace significant relationship. Structures cannot substitute for individual and corporate commitment to enter into genuine “one another” love. This is the supernatural life only possible through the empowerment of God’s Spirit.

Generally, the more consistently effective exhortation is exercised, the less likely that the following steps of the process will be necessary. This exhortation process also sets up the type of relationships necessary for additional stages to carry any weight.

## **B. Personal Care-fronting (Process 2)**

*“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” (Matthew 18:15)*

*“...If your brother sins, rebuke him... (Luke 17:3)*

### **1. What “sins” demand care-fronting?<sup>57</sup>**

This question has been variously answered through the centuries. The debate is beyond the scope of this paper and only conclusions will be offered here so as to give direction for Prairie Bible Institute.

What “sins” does not include?

- 1) This does not include simply a difference of opinion, especially as it relates to non-essentials in doctrine (issues outside of the Prairie doctrinal statement) or debatable issues in Christian practice (issues that are not specifically directed by the Covenant).<sup>58</sup>
- 2) This does not include every experience in which a believer “feels” hurt by another believer.<sup>59</sup>
- 3) This does not include a category of sins that are “worse” than other sins.<sup>60</sup>
- 4) This does not include only sins “against you” personally. Many scholars believe that “against you” is not actually part of the original text. But even if it within the original, the organic nature of the body cannot allow us to disregard sin just because it does not hurt us in an individualistic sense.<sup>61</sup>

What “sins” include?

- 1) Paul states that "any" trespass is to be the subject of care-fronting (Gal. 6:1). "Caught" (*prolambano*) means "trapped," "bound by" or "in bondage to." "Trespass" (*Gk., paraptoma*) carries the idea of a fall or stumbling into sin. So when a believer falls and is caught in sin, the spiritual member(s) are to respond with action on the basis of Galatians 6:1-2.<sup>62</sup> Even if you yourself could overlook the matter you will have to raise the matter anyway.
- 2) This includes any conduct and/or attitude contrary to Scripture.<sup>63</sup>
- 3) This includes violation of the Prairie Community Covenant. This is not because this Covenant is equated with the authority of Scripture. But it does include and reflect the necessity of the believer living according to Scripture. In disobedience to matters that are specific to the Institute the issue becomes at least a breach of personal integrity which is a Scriptural issue.

It should be noted that the most obvious and observable sin(s), though still sin(s), may in fact be the result of more internal, deep-rooted, and less observable sin(s). In the entire process the concern must be for both of these sins. That is, the root should be identified and dealt with rather than the issue simply dealt with superficially and thus glossed over in such a way that the goals of corrective discipline are not met.

### **2. Is care-fronting judging?**

In order to care-front it is necessary to make a judgment/decision regarding sin.<sup>64</sup> Is such judgment, in itself, sin?



It certainly is possible to enter into care-fronting with a wrong attitude and spirit that Jesus categorically rejects as sinful.<sup>65</sup> However, because there is potential for sinful care-fronting does not exonerate the believer from the responsibility to care-front in a godly manner.<sup>66</sup> In fact, to refuse this responsibility is in itself sinful, a rejection of God's grace, and a refusal to offer grace.<sup>67</sup> This rejection of biblical responsibility should not be falsely masked as a sanctimonious holiness of refusing to judge a brother.<sup>68</sup>

### ***3. Who is to care-front?***

The Scripture mandates that the person who becomes aware of the fellow believer being caught in sin is the person who is to go to that person.<sup>69</sup> The responsibility for care-fronting cannot be relegated solely to a certain person(s) within the community (i.e. leadership). This is the responsibility of every believer. The believer is called to action of such responsibility when he/she becomes aware of a fellow believer who chooses sin.

### ***4. What about confidentiality in care-fronting?***

The person is to care-front personally. To go to another person first, other than the person caught in sin, with the matter demonstrates a lack of love and loyalty.<sup>70</sup> In this sense the matter is confidential.

However, this should not involve a commitment to absolute confidentiality.<sup>71</sup> Absolute confidentiality has possibility of becoming complicit with sin.<sup>72</sup> Adams recommends, "We ought to say, "I am glad to keep confidence in the way that the Bible instructs me. That means, of course, I shall never involve others unless God requires me to do so."<sup>73</sup>

It also should be understood that in order for a person to find freedom and purity other people may be brought into the situation. For example, if the person is struggling with roots of sin resulting in anorexia a professional counselor may be necessary to work through the process of help and healing. Normally, if the person is genuinely repentant he/she will welcome such intervention in order to assist in dealing adequately with the sin.

Likewise, because of our context of an educational institution it would be proper for a student to consult with a staff/faculty with respect to his/her responsibility and steps to take. However, this should be understood to be a consultation for education and not a responsibility shifting or gossip. Therefore, this type of consultation should be done anonymously.

### ***5. How are we to care-front?***

- 1) Prayerfully – Prayer should precede and accompany the entire process of discipline. The ministry of discipline in a student's life is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit. Prayer represents the total dependence on the Holy Spirit to do a work of God in the heart of the student. Only the Holy Spirit knows all the factors involved in His work. He alone has the wisdom to make the right decisions, and the power to carry them out.

- 2) With a right motive - "In corrective church discipline, motive is all important. We must go as reconciled reconcilers, newly purged and reconciled anew... Be sure that reconciliation is your first (though not your only) goal."<sup>74</sup>
- 3) Privately – see above under "confidentiality in care-fronting".
- 4) Personally - "And ideally the encounter should be face to face. Letters, documents, telephone calls keep the other person at a distance. We avoid being vulnerable."<sup>75</sup>
- 5) Provisionally - *Luke 17:3 states, "So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him."* The word *epitimao* means to rebuke tentatively. You may not have all the facts in terms of motive, intent, or even the actual act which you have perceived. "That is to say, he first goes and explains the situation as he has perceived or experienced it, saying something like this: "As far as I can see, you have wronged me in such and such a way, but if you have an explanation, I am ready to hear it before passing final judgment. The tentative rebuke allows for explanation."<sup>76</sup>
- 6) Pointedly – We are to "*go and show him his fault*". (*elengcho*) "...effective use of the objective evidence to convict a person of the crime of which he has been accused: the word comes from the law courts...you are to compile your case so that you are successful in proving the offence has occurred."<sup>77</sup>

The 8 critical questions articulated above form the framework for this and all subsequent steps in the process.

### **6. What attitudes are important in care-fronting?**

The spirit in which discipline is carried out is as important as or more important than the process itself. The right process carried out with wrong attitudes will merely separate the person further and create more problems than it cures.

- 1) Gentleness - Galatians 6:1 talks about restoration being done in a "spirit of gentleness". This would include a spirit that is not harsh and stern. It also includes a spirit that is humble enough to realize that it is possible for the care-fronter to fall into the same temptation as the person whom he/she is care-fronting.
- 2) Sorrow, with a readiness to forgiveness and love - The process of discipline is to be done in genuine love and with loyalty to a fellow Christian (2 Cor 2:7,8). The desire of the heart is to see him/her repent and find forgiveness. The spirit is one of sorrow for a person who has sinned, not of condemnation for an enemy whom I want to injure.
- 3) Brotherliness - "Do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess 3:15).
- 4) Humility - Galatians 6:1 concludes, "Looking to yourselves, lest you too be tempted." We are all tempted to sin. Spiritual people are very understanding because they know what it is to be tempted. Jesus was tempted like we are (Heb. 4:15), so He disciplines, chastens, reproves and restores us with an understanding heart. Since Jesus, who never fell into sin, is so understanding, certainly we who have fallen into sin can sympathize with those who have fallen as we have. So the spiritual never lord it over the fleshly. "looking to yourselves" means that those who think that they are spiritual must take a good look at their own temptability before trying to deal with sin in others. That's to prevent the

fleshly from trying to straighten out the fleshly.” (MacArthur)<sup>78</sup>

### **7. What are the possible responses to care-fronting?**

What might happen?<sup>79</sup>

- 1) He might admit the wrong but insist it is only his business.
- 2) He might admit the wrong and ask your help with his problem, thus opening the door to reconciliation.
- 3) He might confess the wrong and freely repent of it.
- 4) He might deny the wrong and satisfy you completely that you were mistaken.
- 5) He might lie in such a way that you know he is lying.
- 6) He might deny the charge, and leave you with unresolved doubts in your mind.
- 7) He might refuse to discuss it at all.

### **8. What is confession?**

Upon genuine confession and repentance the sinner is to be forgiven.

Sin necessitates confession (1 John 1:9). The word confession comes from the Latin: *com-* (together) and *fateri* (acknowledge). Confess literally means "to agree together with." Thus it is an agreement together with God about sin and also about His remedy for sin. Confession is the appropriate response to guilt and the only effective means of dealing with guilt. "Confession alone makes deep fellowship possible... (Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*)". Confession is critical to depth in our relationship to God. Conversely, sin that is allowed in our lives creates an ever-widening gap in our relationship with God. We cannot experience God's renewal and blessing at the same time as nurturing sin in our lives.

If the sin includes only God then confession need only be to Him. However, if the sin includes a person(s) then confession should also be made to that person(s). The general rule of thumb is "confession as broad as the offence".

Confession can be made that is not authentic or effective. Unfruitful confession includes:

- 1) a form of exhibitionism (this can take place in personal or public).
- 2) a type of competition for the most horrendous story of past sins and failures.

Confession is authentic and effective when:

- 1) it opens the way to deliverance and healing for the sinner.
- 2) it startles us into a deeper awareness of the sinfulness of sin.
- 3) it benefits the person or persons who hear the confession.

### **9. What is repentance?**

*Luke 17:3 – "...if he repents, forgive him."*

Repentance (*metanoia*) literally means "a change of mind." "It is not just feeling remorse about what one did, but discovering the insight and power to renounce that course of conduct and return to the Christian way. Repentance, properly defined, includes whatever measures are

needed to turn one's pattern of life around. That includes the determination to seek reconciliation, restore relationships, and offer restitution where appropriate....Changing the behaviours for which one is disciplined is the most important sign of genuine repentance. (Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20)<sup>80</sup>

### **10. What is forgiveness?**

*Luke 17:3 - ...if he repents, forgive him.*

“Repentance and forgiveness are linked in corrective discipline (Lk. 17:3-4), just as they are linked in the proclamation of the gospel (Lk. 24:46-47). Our failure to perceive repentance when it is present will hinder the progress of the church.”<sup>81</sup> Failure to forgive is disobedience that can have disastrous effects. “Accepting responsibility for the discernment needed to forgive with integrity is essential to the church’s ministry of watch and care for erring brothers.”<sup>82</sup>

“The church is not to forgive without the sinner repenting. The appropriateness of forgiveness depends on certain conditions.”<sup>83</sup> How then do we perceive such repentance?

- 1) We must spend time with the sinner.
- 2) There must be life-change (e.g. not trying to bargain, joy, restitution, sorrow, practical steps to deal with temptation)
- 3) Discernment by the Body – experience helps in such discernment.

There are errors that can be made in understanding and appropriating forgiveness:

- 1) “The lenient view - seeing forgiveness as a toleration of sin is a longstanding, popular, and harmful misconception in Western Christianity. It sees forgiveness as essentially dropping charges, “letting someone off,” declining to impose any penalty for wrongdoing. It assumes that forgiveness represents a change in the forgiver instead of in the one forgiven. It is as though those who forgive - including in the first place, God - succeed in getting themselves to condone continued failure...The indulgent view of forgiveness leaves the sinner a sinner. It may intend to magnify divine mercy, but its actual effect is to denigrate the character and integrity of God and the church. It insinuates that we do not need to take seriously God’s call to righteousness.”<sup>84</sup>
- 2) The legalistic view - “The other misconception of forgiveness is the strict or harsh or legalistic view, one that is inclined to demand punishment. Punishment, however, actually hinders repentance and forgiveness because it becomes a substitute for ethical transformation. Criminal offenders, for instance, assume their fine or prison stint “pays their debt to society” and excuses them from going to their victims and making right what they did wrong...Note well that this punitive misconception of forgiveness, like the indulgent one, still remains an offender to remain unchanged. The very fact that people accept punishment as a substitute for change shows that they have resigned themselves to the individual remaining a sinner.”<sup>85</sup>

What does forgiveness include?<sup>86</sup>

- 1) The repentant offender must be reinstated in love. 2 Cor. 2 (*kuraō*) – legal term that means to reinstate one to a position. “Formal reinstatement must be made as publicly as

dismissal was, and in the same manner if possible”. This is more than a routine confession and absolution on a Sunday morning.

- 2) Provision of appropriate help for those who need it in order to deal with sin. It can thus make legitimate demands – particularly as it relates to restoration. Forgiveness does not preclude the necessity of the church to assist, provide restrictions, develop accountability, implement boundaries, counsel, help and enable the sinner to be renewed to usefulness through actual deliverance from the sin in which he was caught. (“2 Cor 2:7 – *parakaleo* – comfort, help, assist, urge, persuade, counsel) “It refers to giving the returning brother or sister whatever help – and all the help – needed to be reestablished properly in the congregation.”
- 3) Forgiveness does forego the demand for punishment. Forgiveness involves releasing the demand for the debt of sin to be paid by the offender without exercising immediate or future punishment.<sup>87</sup> “...forgiveness is a promise in which one person goes on record as declaring he will never again bring up another’s offence and hold it against him. The past as a debt is discharged; he is no longer held liable. His offence may be remembered only to help him to learn to act differently in the future. The offence will not be mentioned to him, or to others, and will not be the subject of brooding on the part of those who granted forgiveness.”<sup>88</sup>
- 4) Decisively closes a case, even though it may well require the process of counsel and restoration.

It is important to understand that in all steps of the process care-fronting is in the context of on-going relationship with accountability. That is, there needs to be a relationship of accountability in which there is a responsibility to ensure the person caught in sin is actually restored. Responsibility of the care-fronter(s) is not simply to “say his/her piece” and then conclude that his/her responsibility is completed.

### **C. Group Care-fronting (Process 3)**

*“But if he will not listen to you, take one or two others along, so that every matter be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” Matthew 18:16*

A refusal of the person caught in sin to “listen” is the operative factor that moves the course of discipline along to the next stage. The matter, therefore, is not arbitrary, but it does require a judgment call as to when such a stage has been reached. Refusal to listen would involve an unwillingness to continue attitudes and actions that are calculated to bring about reconciliation. Adequate time must be given, and a sufficient number of attempts at reconciliation should be made to be certain that it is impossible to get anywhere without advancing to the next step.<sup>89</sup>

The care-fronter must now involve witnesses.

#### ***1. What value is there in witnesses?*<sup>90</sup>**

- 1) Added protection - Witnesses may become necessary to protect the accused as well as the accuser. Everything of contention in the Old Testament and early church was discerned by the testimony of more than the two involved in the dispute. The accused was always

allowed to face his accusers in the presence of others. Otherwise, the innocent person who is accused has no protection against a more influential brother. Likewise, the innocent person who is accused would otherwise have no defense against a spiteful deliberate character assault. At the same time, the accuser, if he is right, has others to verify and support his message. They witness not just the response of the accused but also the words of the accuser. "The witnesses are in one sense part jury, part defense lawyers."<sup>91</sup>

- 2) Added solemnity - The original matter/sin does not become more serious, but both the offended brother and the offending brother can see the seriousness when others get involved.
- 3) Added wisdom - There may be a perspective which neither accuser or accused has thought about. Thus, the witnesses may benefit both the offender and the offended with insight.
- 4) Added objectivity - Discern where both are at fault or throw light on matters which otherwise remained obscure.
- 5) Added assistance in restoration – They assist in helping the sinner in being restored. That is, witnesses should not be interpreted those who witness *against* the sinner in a condemning manner. The goal is never to condemn. Rather they are witnesses *to* the sinner in helping to disciple him/her. The goal of corrective discipline at all steps of the process is discipling.

## ***2. What responsibilities do the witnesses have?***

Their responsibilities include at least the following:

- 1) Assess the situation.
- 2) Clarify the facts to prevent false charges/accusation.
- 3) Discern attitudes of both parties and to discern the issues.
- 4) Prevent a mere personality clash.
- 5) Determine whether the problem is a matter of serious spiritual consequence.
- 6) Prevent hasty or biased action while providing a continued opportunity for a positive response.
- 7) Confirm an individual's impenitence.
- 8) Make sure that the concern for an individuals' restoration does not get stalled.
- 9) Discern and decide the steps of restoration.
- 10) Pray.

## ***3. Who should be selected as witnesses?***

Privacy on the matter should be maintained until the person asked to be a witness has actually agreed to be involved.

- 1) The Bible does not specifically teach that this process must include official leadership but it does teach that the ministry is for those who are spiritually mature (Gal. 6:1). These are wise and godly Christians whose reliability and wisdom have been tested by years of faithfulness. Within the Institute the application of this principle is that the respective Director of Student Development **MUST** be involved as this point if he/she has not already been involved. The DSD does not replace the role of the original care-fronter but

at the same time has authority for one or more of the following deemed necessary for the situation if it is in keeping with the goals of corrective discipline; teach/counsel, withdrawal of privileges, advise/warn, restitution requirements, behavioral contracts, written reprimand, fines, verbal reprimand, increased responsibility, accountability meeting, Suspension, Conduct Probation, campus restriction, remedial assignment.

- 2) A person who has struggled with the same sin that is at issue and has since found freedom from that sin may be a good person to be involved in helping the individual to be restored. Thus the nature of the issue would determine the person(s) called on as a witness.
- 3) The Scripture does not require that the person who is called as a witness has actually experienced personally or seen the person do the sin. The witnesses are rather pictured as actively participating in the reconciliation process. They become witnesses, not of the original sin, nor are they witnesses against the sinner, but they are witnesses of the words that happen in the reconciling process and witnesses to the sinner.
- 4) Persons respected by both parties (e.g. pastor, parent, elder, mentor, faculty). Serious consideration should be given to the pastor in the Three Hills congregation that the student identifies with.

#### ***4. How do the witnesses proceed?***

- 1) Make an appointment – To provide objectivity the witnesses should not have been “briefed” previous to both parties being present. If the sinner does not agree to such an appointment the group should try and try again, maybe even showing up unannounced. “His or her presence would not only be helpful but in everyone’s (including the sinner’s) best interests...But the sinner may refuse, and the church has no mandate to coerce them. The refusal to be present would constitute the sinner’s rejection of the church’s efforts at reconciliation. In the end the leaders may have to make a simple statement, call on the testimony of those involved in the case to answer questions and then let the church decide.”<sup>92</sup>
- 2) If there is no response warn the sinner of the next step of the process.
- 3) In the meeting, one witness should provide leadership through the following:
  - Prayer.
  - Both parties have opportunity to bring evidence.
  - Ask significant questions.
  - Go through steps thus far.
  - Indicate whether they feel the case is convincing.
  - Monitor conversation and feelings.
- 4) Recommend a resolution process and stipulations.
- 5) Set up reconciliation accountability appointments.

#### **D. Leadership Care-fronting (Process 4)**

*“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...” Matthew 18:17a*

The next step of the process is “tell it to the church”. This is to take place in the following situations:

- 1) The sinner refuses to repent when due process has been followed - “only called for when every other attempt to bring about repentance, restoration and reconciliation has been thoroughly explored and has failed.”<sup>93</sup>
- 2) “When an offence against an individual or the church is so open and apparent to all that it is a matter of public fame (in 1 Cor. 5:1 Paul puts it this way: “It is generally reported...”), then the officers of the church may begin disciplinary action here without going through the previous steps.”<sup>94</sup>

### ***1. What is meant by “the church”?***

This is variously interpreted and applied. Two of the main interpretations include:

- Membership of the congregation – This would mean all those who have a covenanted commitment within the congregation.
- Elders – An alternative understanding is that this involves the leadership of the congregation as those who represent and lead the church.

In application to Prairie Bible Institute “the church” will refer to the following leadership group:

- 1) The group that originally care-fronted the student.
- 2) The Dean of the respective College in which the student is enrolled (if not already involved).
- 3) The standing members of the Corrective Discipline Group including:
  - *Dean of Spiritual Formation (Chair)*
  - *Director of Student Development: Men*
  - *Director of Student Development: Women*
  - *Director of Student Development: Families*
  - *Student Union President*

The Chairperson is responsible for at least the following:

- Call and chair the care-fronting.
- To communicate the decisions of the Corrective Discipline Group to the student.
- To communicate the rationale for the Corrective Discipline Group decisions to the Appeals Committee as necessary and participate in appeals as necessary.
- To communicate the Corrective Discipline Group decisions to all necessary personnel for disposition of the decision (e.g. Ambassador leader, Registrar).
- To write correspondence of the Corrective Discipline Group.
- To appoint a secretary.
- Retain files/documentation of the Corrective Discipline Group.

### ***2. Why “the church”?***

The purpose of the involvement of “the church” remains the same as in all steps of corrective discipline, the discipling of the student involved in the sin. “Thus, in Christ’s plan for discipline an ever-increasing number of persons become involved in the helping process... The reason why the church is told is so that as a whole they may have an opportunity to help the offending, willful brother or sister come to repentance.”<sup>95</sup>



“The matter is to be brought before the whole church, so that the offender and the church alike will be brought face to face with the awfulness of sin and supreme value God places on holiness and on reconciliation.”<sup>96</sup>

“There can be no greater test of pastoral gifts than for the leaders to direct matters in such a way that the church is awakened to righteousness, to godly grief and to repentance, while at the same time the sinner is given a further opportunity to repent.”<sup>97</sup>

### **E. Dismissal (Process 5)**

*“and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” -Matthew 18:17b*

If the person refuses “to listen” the same leadership group must dismiss the student from the Prairie community. At this point, the offending student needs to be informed that he/she is being dismissed as a covenant member of PBI. The offending student will be informed that PBI will not tolerate him/her continuing to present himself/herself publicly as a fellow follower of Jesus since, in our opinion, their conduct shames the name of Christ and discredits the Institute’s integrity.

#### ***What sin calls for dismissal?***

This action taken is not exercised due to sin but *an unrepentant and hardened heart*. This involves the “...person’s resistance to reproof than the gravity of a particular sin. Does the sinner acknowledge sin? Is there a heart prepared to repent? Is there a willingness to change? An abhorrence of sin? Only sin that is not repented of, or else constitutes an ongoing moral danger in the flock, will call for extreme measures.”<sup>98</sup>

In Matthew and in Corinthians the real offense is not in the sin itself, but compromising with sin...the distinction Paul is trying to make is not that between sins calling for excommunication and sins to be tolerated. He is distinguishing between our treatment of Christian sinners and non-Christian sinners.”<sup>99</sup>

#### ***What is dismissal?***

Avoidance passages: Romans 16:17; 1 Co. 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6, 14, 15; 2 Tim. 3:2-5; Titus 3:10

- 1) Remove him from your midst (1 Co. 5:2)
- 2) Clean out the leaven (1 Co. 5:7)
- 3) Get him out of your midst (1 Co. 5:13) comes from O.T. (Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:24; 24:7)
- 4) Deliver this person to Satan (1 Co. 5:5) (1 Tim. 1:20) “The church confers protection from the malice of Satan. We are not immune from his assaults, but neither are we naked and helpless before them. He can attack, but he attacks us as members of an opposing army, the army of the victorious Christ. To be delivered to Satan means we no longer march in rank. Instead we are isolated and exposed so that this protection is withdrawn.”<sup>100</sup>
- 5) Treat him as a heathen and a tax collector (Mt. 18:17)

“The clue to the meaning of Jesus’ words about relating to excommunicated people is the conduct of Jesus himself [Mat. 9:9-13; Mat. 11:19; Luke 15:1-10; Luke 18:9-14; Luke 19:1-10]. If this is true, then avoidance treats such persons as prime candidates for the call of discipleship.”<sup>101</sup>

In application to Prairie Bible Institute, this means the student is dismissed from the PBI community.

### ***What is the purpose of dismissal?***

“...it is essential to see that excommunication does not represent a breakdown of grace or a departure from the gospel. Excommunication is a renewed presentation of the gospel message to impenitent persons in that it confronts them with the truth... Thus excommunication, rightly practiced, never cuts people off from grace. On the contrary, its function is to prevent persons from anaesthetizing themselves against grace. Excommunication is the form under which the church continues to extend the gospel to the impenitent. Excommunication is not, then, loveless condemnation. It does not represent a failure in church discipline. It is as necessary in spiritual life as candid diagnosis is in medical practice. Persons cannot find spiritual healing without facing the truth. Far from unloving, evangelical excommunication is the only loving and redeeming course of action possible toward impenitent individuals in given circumstances. It is also the only appropriate way for the church to preserve its integrity and its witness to the world.”<sup>102</sup>

“Alienation, true spiritual alienation, is actually present... Therefore, what has already taken place must be recognized openly for what it is. Earth must confirm what heaven has already seen and judged.”<sup>103</sup>

“The heart of God still reaches out to rebels and sinners, to those who are under discipline... We must still leave the door of forgiveness wide open, seeking to win, as Jesus did, those who have been cut off from fellowship by their sin.”<sup>104</sup>

“It is also instructive to note that when an individual or a church failed to exercise discipline, God Himself did (1 Co. 11:17-32)”<sup>105</sup>

### **F. Invitation to Reconciliation (Process 6)**

*“If anyone has caused grief...the punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him... 2 Corinthians 2:5-8*

It is important to note that the restoration attempt is initiated *by the leadership* after an appropriate period of time. The appropriateness of time is determined by the leaders and those actively engaged in the disciplinary process. It is also influenced by the severity of the offense and heart response of the one being disciplined. Even in the case of an unrepentant heart, however, the leadership must make the effort to reconnect with the offender “...in order that *Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.*” We don’t want to give

Satan any ground to accuse Christ's body of giving up on one who, at one time at least, sought after God.

## **V. Leadership Principles for Effective Corrective Discipline**

Prairie leaders have a vital role in implementing effective discipline. This responsibility includes at least the following:

### **A. Model submission to the disciplines of God and of Prairie**

People do not learn right attitudes and actions chiefly by being punished for failure. The right example of those attitudes and actions demonstrated by others is a more powerful influence than punishment. Therefore, it is important for faculty, staff and students to demonstrate in their lives the submissive and disciplined Christian life.

Therefore it is expected that each faculty and staff member will read, understand, and support in conduct the Community Covenant. It is appropriate for the lifestyle of the faculty and staff to illustrate the doctrine or teaching we set forth (Tit 2:1). The Bible instructs the teacher to 'in all things show yourself an example' (Tit 2:7). Teaching is not only telling but also involves modelling.

In cases where a faculty or staff member chooses to exercise personal freedom, great care should be taken that this freedom is not misunderstood by the student.

### **B. Instruct and apply God's Word**

It is important to be continually teaching the Word of God with specific application to lifestyle issues. The Word is powerful for "correction, reproof, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). This instructional discipline should take place formally (e.g. class, chapel), but also informally. Such tending of the "flock of God" should be preventative of much restorative discipline.

### **C. Communicate with clarity regarding expectations**

The student needs to have clear communication as to expectations, rationale, consequences and processes. Ambiguity in any one or more of these areas is a cause of frustration and resentment. Clarity of these issues should be continually addressed from the application process until the graduation of the student.

### **D. Help the student take responsibility for actions and attitudes**

The discipline process needs to be such that the student understands his/her responsibility for the biblical and community expectations of Prairie. The student has signed a commitment to live by these and needs to take full responsibility for that commitment. Excuses for irresponsibility are not helpful for development. Discipleship and servanthood is a process of giving up rights and assuming responsibilities. Students must learn to take those responsibilities as an integral aspect of their development as disciples.

### **E. Treat students as individuals**

Each student is unique in age, gender, family background, personality, health and maturity. The person must be understood and cared for as a unique individual. The same action may be a symptom of immaturity, ignorance or rebellion. That same action should be disciplined in different ways, depending on the root issues of the individual. Individualized discipline should not be equated with inconsistency. Rather it is using the biblical response to the individual's needs and issues.

**VI. Policies of Corrective Discipline**

**A. Appeals**

Appeals may be made by the students according to the following:

<b>Decision made by:</b>	<b>Appeal to:</b>
<i>Director of Student Development</i>	<i>Corrective Discipline Group</i>
<i>Corrective Discipline Group</i>	<i>Discipline Appeal Committee</i>

Appeals must be written and submitted by the student within 96 hours of the rendered decision being given in writing to him/her. Appeals submitted after 96 hours will not be considered.

The Discipline Appeal Committee consists of:

- 1) The Dean of Spiritual Formation - will serve as Chairperson of this Committee (voting member).
- 2) President of PBI or designate (voting member).
- 3) Management Team member as designated by the Dean of Education (voting member)
- 3) Chairperson of the Corrective Discipline Group (non-voting)

Appeals will only be considered if and when:

- 1) There is new information available that was not available to those who originally made the decision.
- 2) It is discerned that due process was not followed.

*The process of appeal includes:*

- 1) The student makes written appeal.
- 2) The Chair receives written documents pertinent to the decision.
- 3) The Chair sets the time and place of the Appeals meeting and informs the appropriate people in writing regarding this information.
- 4) The student(s) has opportunity to speak to the Appeals members personally and/or in writing. The student may bring legal counsel and/or witnesses.
- 5) The decision is communicated in writing by the Chair to the student and other appropriate personnel of the Institute.

**B. Files**

Written records of all disciplinary actions will be kept by the Directors of Student Development. These files are to be kept in secure places (preferably locked file cabinets). Copies of all disciplinary decisions will be forwarded to the student.

Disclosure of any case actions for students 18 years of age or older can only be done if and when the student has signed a "Consent and Authorization" waiver form. This policy applies to college, parental, and pastoral inquires. When permission for disclosure has been given, the names of others involved in the case must not be released.

Dissemination of information within the college will be done to the extent that it is necessary to carry out the decisions of the case. Details of the specifics of each case will be withheld except as necessary for disposition of the discipline. Student staff will be notified as necessary to carry out the discipline.

Confidentiality should be maintained. Each situation should be handled with care and discretion. Faculty and staff are not to make statements about the case to other persons (e.g. other staff, students, constituency). However, in a community working together, the necessary staff and faculty may be included in information for disciplining the student in this context.

A student may review his/her own file regarding disciplinary matters. This file will become part of the assessment when students make application for graduation.

All Student Development files will be purged three years following the departure of the student from Prairie. Faculty Advisor files will be forwarded to the Registrar's office to become part of the student's record.

### **C. Illegal/Criminal Charges**

In any case of illegal/criminal activity or abuse of various kinds, the Dean of Education must be advised, and a report made to the President. Where applicable, reports must also be made to the appropriate civil authorities.

Normally reports to civil authorities should be made by the Dean of Education.

In cases of alleged Harassment please refer to the Institute policy.

### **D. Parents/Guardians Contact**

Students are encouraged at all levels of discipline to share relevant information with their parents. Prairie assumes that all students are legally independent of their parents and thus by law Prairie cannot communicate academic or behaviour information to parents or guardians excepting if a student signs a "Release of Information" form.

When it is appropriate in cases of suspension, dismissal or expulsion, the student will be asked to contact his/her parents in the presence of the Chair. Should refusal be made, the student will be asked to sign a "Consent and Authorization" waiver to allow the Chairperson or designate to phone the parent/guardian.

### **E. Cooperation with Churches and Affiliated Agencies**

In the disciplinary process any disciplinary actions that may be effected upon a student by a church or affiliated agency with whom the student is involved will be considered. It is the desire

of the Institute to cooperate with said organizations to effect appropriate discipline within the bounds of jurisdiction and confidentiality.

### **F. Coming Forward Policy**

Because the Institute is committed to administering both justice and mercy, the Prairie community has a “coming forward” policy. Scripture states that when we keep silent about our sin, our body wastes away (Psalm 32:3), and also tells us “to confess our sins to one another, so that we may be healed” (James 5:26).

If a student violates college behaviour or academic policy, the College encourages the student to come forward and seek help in changing his/her behaviour. Prairie may consider voluntary confession to be a mitigating factor in imposing sanctions, provided that the student:

1. Voluntarily initiates confession to a college faculty or staff member.
2. Puts the confession in writing.
3. Complies with the assigned accountability or restitution set forth.

It is mandatory that this initiative occurs prior to any accusation or other discovery of the violation. Prairie reserves the right not to consider the confession a mitigating circumstance, if the student materially falsifies the confession, does not complete the assigned accountability, or continues to violate college policy.

### **G. Vacations**

Vacation periods (when students are not enrolled between semesters) provide opportunity for students to develop initiative in applying biblical principles to daily living. It is expected that students will pursue holiness in every aspect of their lives by obedience to biblical teaching and being good ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although students are not subject to the usual Prairie student discipline process of the college term, failure to observe the direct commands and absolute standards of the Bible will be addressed according to biblical teaching on admonishing one another and will have influence on character recommendations by the Institute.

### **H. Terms**

1) *Letter of Reprimand* - A written warning concerning future action/attitudes. Any further incident will normally result in Conduct Probation.

2) *Conduct Probation* - This permits a student to remain at Prairie under specified restriction. Normally, Conduct Probation restricts the student from participation in inter-scholastic competition, public ministry, campus leadership and the graduation line. It also normally restricts financial aid, cancels scholarships, restricts late curfew permission and may result in the loss of private residency status. Any further significant behaviour or attitude incidents occurring while on Conduct Probation will normally result in dismissal. Conduct Probation may include additional stipulations for each individual case.

3) *Suspension* - The student is involuntarily suspended from classes and possibly from campus for a time period.

4) *Voluntary Withdrawal*- The student is asked if they would prefer to withdraw from college classes and student life on the date requested. The conditions stipulated under “Dismissal” would apply in the situation.

5) *Dismissal* – The student is involuntarily removed from college classes and student life on the date set by the Committee. The student is required to leave campus on that date and is not permitted back without approval of the Director of Student Development. A full application procedure would be required for readmission and application would not be considered for at least one year (unless another time is specified). If readmission is allowed the student returns on Conduct Probation. If a student is readmitted and then asked to leave Prairie again, normally it will be by expulsion.

6) *Expulsion* - The student is removed from college classes and student life on the date set. The student is required to leave campus on that date and is not permitted back on campus without approval of the VP of Spiritual Formation. Expelled students are not eligible for consideration of readmission to the college, unless the following conditions apply:

- The student would need to be out of Prairie for a minimum of three years.
- the student would need to make full application
- the student would return on Conduct Probation

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<sup>1</sup> The term “corrective” is used in this paper to refer to the same concept as “restorative” in the PBI *Community Covenant*. There are many other terms that have been used in the historical church to refer to this notion, some of which will be noted in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Jeschke articulates the purpose of corrective discipline in the title of his book *Discipling in the Church*.

<sup>4</sup> John White and Ken Blue, *Healing the Wounded: The Costly Love of Church Discipline* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 1985), 19.

“Church discipline is anything the body of Christ does to train Christians in holiness, calling them to follow the Lord more closely.”

<sup>5</sup> “Formative discipline” is the term borrowed from Adams (Jay E. Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline*). Another synonymous term that is used is “instructional” discipline.

<sup>6</sup> God exercises corrective discipline of His people. (Deut 3:5; Ps 94:12; 1 Cor 11:32; Heb 12:1-12; Rev 3:19). God delegates some of the responsibility for both instructional and corrective discipline to human institutions. For example, in corrective discipline such delegation is given to the church (Matt 18:15-20; Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 5:7; Gal 6:1; 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:15; Tit 3:10). Other synonymous terms used for corrective discipline include *remedial*, *exceptional*, or *catastrophic*.

<sup>7</sup> Jeschke, 176. Jeschke states, “A familiar expression at the time of the Reformation was the phrase “the rule of Christ.” Any religiously informed person who heard it recognized it as virtually a code word for Matthew 18:15-20... The phrase *rule of Christ* carried two implications. First, it protested the drunkenness, false oaths, violence, and debauchery too often tolerated in the church at the time. Second, it protested, the church’s use of the sword and stake to impose what it considered to be the authority of Christ in dealing with offenders. The rule of Christ meant to do something about sin in the church but to do it in Christ’s way.”

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, for Galatians 6:1 “It is easy to talk about the fruit of the Spirit while doing very little about it. So Christians need to learn that it is in the concrete situations, rather than in emotional highs, that the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives is demonstrated.”

<sup>9</sup> Adams, 24. “In all its aspects, discipline must be seen as a blessing; it is a privilege of all believers that the church does wrong to withhold from them. Even in its corrective measures, discipline must be shown to be the privilege that it is—the privilege, when necessary, of having the informal care and concern of other members of the body and the care of Christ Himself working formally through the officers of His church, to bring a straying member back into the ways of truth and righteousness.”

<sup>10</sup> Jeschke, 53. “To neglect admonition may seem to some members of the church to be the high road of not “judging” others. In fact it is the heartlessness of not offering help. The problem Jesus was trying to correct was a judgmentalism that made no room for grace. Refusing to offer grace of release from sin is precisely like the neglect to make the grace of God available to unbelievers in evangelism. It is a misunderstanding of grace.”

<sup>11</sup> Frank E. Gaebelien, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Interactive) for Galatians 6:1 Quoting Stott, “If we walked by the Spirit we would love one another more, and if we loved one

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another more we would bear one another's burdens, and if we bore one another's burdens we would not shrink from seeking to restore a brother who has fallen into sin. Further, if we obeyed this apostolic instruction as we should, much unkind gossip would be avoided, more serious backsliding prevented, the good of the Church advanced, and the name of Christ glorified.

<sup>12</sup> Jeschke, 30. "Both have the same goal. Both seek the liberation of people from sin in all its forms to bring them into the way of Christian love, justice, peace, and joy. Both use the same method: the Word God and the power of the Spirit."

<sup>13</sup> The following is a representative group of Scriptures that deal with the ministry of corrective discipline:

1 Cor. 5:1-12; - "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. <sup>1</sup>But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup>God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

1 Tim. 5:19-20 "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning."

1 Tim. 5:1 - "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father."

Gal. 6:1-5 - "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load."

Mt. 18:15-20 - "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 'If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

2 Cor. 2:5-11 - "If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent--not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

2 Thess. 3:14-15 - "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Romans 14:13 - Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."

Mt 7:1-6 - "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do



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not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”

1 Cor 11:27-29 – “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.”

Tit 3:10-11 – “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. <sup>11</sup>You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”

2 Tim. 2:24-25 – “And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,”

Eph. 4:15 – “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Eph. 4:25-27 – “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”

James 1:19, 20 – “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

Proverbs 27:5-6 – “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”

Proverbs 29:5 – “Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet.”

Romans 12:17-21 – “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

1Thess 5:14 – “And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

<sup>14</sup> White and Blue. The authors propose these four goals of corrective church discipline.

<sup>15</sup> Adams, 53.

<sup>16</sup> 1 John 4:8 – “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” NIV

<sup>17</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 47. “The New Testament word “love” (agape) speaks about the giving of oneself for another... Through all eternity the Father loves the Son and the Son reciprocates that love. This love is the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of relationship of the Father and the Son. Through all eternity, therefore, God is the social Trinity, the community of love.”

Bill Hull, *Seven Steps to Transform Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 147. Hull articulates this concept in his statement, “God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have existed eternally in perfect unity and communion. Community and relationship form the core of the universe and creation.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 49. “God's ultimate goal for his creation is “community”. God desires that we enjoy fellowship with him, with each other and with all creation.”

Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 13. “Humanity as the imaged beings of God were created in community and called to live and mature in community.”

<sup>19</sup> Ephesians 4: 3-6 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” NIV

1 John 1:3 “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

<sup>20</sup> Grenz, 292. “Our eternal home will be characterized by fullness of community.”

Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 12. “It could be said that heaven may be the great perfect circle of the people of God gathered in the presence of the transcendent circle of the Father, Son and Spirit.”

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<sup>21</sup> Genesis 3:1-24 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.” NIV

<sup>22</sup> Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 372. “Cut off from God, the human community can choose to receive or reject God’s gracious offering to restore divine-human community. In rejecting intimacy with God, the human community continues in a state of sin, broken relationships and dying persons. Thus the fragmented human small group will reflect a shallow form of community, immersed in addictive and abusive behaviour and continuing in a struggle for control, identity, intimacy and meaning. Humanity tries to approach one another, but the approach is stifled in avoidance because God is not present to define, empower and complete the face-to-face meeting.”

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 2:14-22 “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” NIV

Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 372. “The ultimate and focused demonstration of God’s reconciling movement toward humanity comes in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, who, in his own being as both God and human, enters the human arena as a man who does the work of restoring community between God and humanity. The man Jesus, himself, is the divine act of intervention and reconciliation between God and humanity.”

<sup>24</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 “Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is

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for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." NIV

<sup>25</sup> Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently..."

Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault..."

1 Corinthians 6:7-8 "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 18:15

<sup>27</sup> Grenz, 51 "...the Triune God is the ultimate model and the standard for Christian living (Matt. 10:39)...As the doctrine of the Trinity indicates, the one God is the social Trinity, the community or the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Because God is a plurality-in-unity, the ideal for humankind does not focus on solitary persons, but on persons-in-community. God intends that we reflect the divine nature in our lives. This is only possible as move out of our isolation and into godly relationships with others."

<sup>28</sup> Bill Hull, *Seven Steps to Transform Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 147.

<sup>29</sup> Galatians 6:1

<sup>30</sup> 2 Cor 2:7,8

<sup>31</sup> 2 Thess 3:15

<sup>32</sup> Grenz, 49. "But his love is not a soupy sentimentality that indulges creatures to do as they please...God's love has a "dark" side. Or to use an older theological term, God's is a holy love. In this sense, our God is also a jealous, wrathful God."

<sup>33</sup> 1 Peter 1:15 – "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;" NIV

<sup>34</sup> Ephesians 5:25-27 "...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." NIV

<sup>35</sup> Grenz, 58-59. "God relates to the universe as the Eternal One, the one who is faithfully present to the world throughout time...The God who is faithfully present through time invites us to cooperate with him in the completion of the divine program for history through fervent petition and obedient action...Through prayer and action we seek to allow ourselves to be instruments of the Hands of the Holy Spirit to open the present to the in-breaking of the power of the future kingdom."

<sup>36</sup> White and Blue, 67. "Condoning the sin represents rebellion against God and His Word. To avoid the sinner is to abandon a brother in his sin – an abandonment which is sin against God and against the brother."

<sup>37</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:7-8 "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are."

<sup>38</sup> Grenz, 222.

<sup>39</sup> 1 Peter 2:12 "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

<sup>40</sup> Icenogle, 372. "Cut off from God, the human community can choose to receive or reject God's gracious offering to restore divine-human community. In rejecting intimacy with God, the human community continues in a state of sin, broken relationships and dying persons. Thus the fragmented human small group will reflect a shallow form of community, immersed in addictive and abusive behaviour and continuing in a struggle for control, identity, intimacy and meaning. Humanity tries to approach one another, but the approach is stifled in avoidance because God is not present to define, empower and complete the face-to-face meeting."

<sup>41</sup> White and Blue, 69.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 59. "Purity is a prerequisite to reconciliation, to the union of the bride and groom."

<sup>43</sup> Deut. 3:5; Psalm 94:12; Prov. 3:11,12; 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:1-12; Rev. 3:19

<sup>44</sup> Hebrews 12:4-11 "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's

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discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." NIV

<sup>45</sup> Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently..."

<sup>46</sup> The purpose of restoration is not to get rid of a problem, deal with an embarrassment, to handle a difficult personality, or to exercise personal vengeance.

<sup>47</sup> Zondervan NIV Bible Library. EBCNT for Galatians 6:1

<sup>48</sup> Jeschke, 68-69. "...repentance is an act...It is not just feeling remorse about what one did, but discovering the insight and power to renounce that course on conduct and return to the Christian way. Repentance, properly defined, includes whatever measures are needed to turn one's pattern of life around. That includes the determination to seek reconciliation, restore relationships, and offer restitution where appropriate....Changing the behaviours for which one is disciplined is the most important sign of genuine repentance. (Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20)

<sup>49</sup> Luke 17:3 "...if he repents, forgive him."

2 Corinthians 2: 5-11 "If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

<sup>50</sup> Adams, 92-93. "...forgiveness is a promise in which one person goes on record as declaring he will never again bring up another's offence and hold it against him. The past as a debt is discharged; he is no longer held liable. His offence may be remembered only to help him to learn to act differently in the future. The offence will not be mentioned to him, or to others, and will not be the subject of brooding on the part of those who granted forgiveness."

<sup>51</sup> Romans 6:16 "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

John 8:34 "Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

<sup>52</sup> John 8: 32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Romans 6:17, 18 "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

Galatians 5:1, 13 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free... You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

<sup>53</sup> Jeschke, 143. "Jeschke, quoting Haddon Robinson states, "Too often now when people join a church, they do so as consumers. If they like the product, they stay. If they do not, they leave. They can no more imagine a church disciplining them as they could a store that sells goods to disciplining them. It is not the place of the seller to discipline the consumer. In our churches we have a consumer mentality."

<sup>54</sup> Ron Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* (Baker Books, 2005).

In his book, Sider demonstrates that there is a current "immorality" crisis among evangelicals that encompasses both mind and heart. Evangelicals live essentially with a morality that is not distinctive from the world. His premise is supported by research of others such as Barna and Gallup.

<sup>55</sup> Marlin Jeschke, *Discipling in the Church: Recovering a Ministry of the Gospel* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1988), 141. Jeschke quotes Gerhard Ebeling who states, "Of all the problems that press upon the church today and demand solution I know of none so theologically complicated, and thus none whose solution is so urgent and of such fundamental and far-reaching significance, as the problem of church discipline."

<sup>56</sup> This is particularly true for Prairie Bible Institute that has a mission "...to educate Christians with excellent Bible teaching, biblically integrated under-graduate education, and graduate cross-cultural missions education, which

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challenges students to understand their connection and responsibility to the Body of Christ and its global mission, and for the purpose of preparing students for a God honouring life of service in his kingdom work.” One of the four core values of the Institute includes “*The Importance of the People of God: His Church* - We acknowledge the central position of the Church in God’s plan to build His kingdom and seek to build His people through intentional discipleship and accountability as they are prepared to assume their role in the Body of Christ. (Acts 2:42-47).”

<sup>57</sup>David Augsburger. *Caring Enough to Confront: How to understand and express your deepest feelings toward others*. (Ventura: Regal Books, 1981). The term care-fronting is used and explained by Augsburger. The term rightly identifies both the love and truth that comprise corrective discipline.

<sup>58</sup> Adams, 35. “But not all differences of belief or interpretation call for disciplinary action.”

<sup>59</sup> Adams, 55. “Do I have to go to my brother about every little offence? The answer is no. (Proverbs 10:12; Proverbs 19:11) But anything that creates an unreconciled state between us and another must be brought up and dealt with...any matter which is carried over to another day, any matter which makes you feel different toward that person for more than a passing moment, any matter that throws love’s covers off must be brought up...Of course, if the sin which your brother commits against you is debilitating to him and he is not dealing with it adequately in his own life, you may well have to raise the matter anyway, on the basis of Galatians 6:1-2, even if you yourself could overlook the matter.”

<sup>60</sup> Jeschke, 35-41. “Many writers in the history of Christianity have attempted to compile a catalog of sins that offers a reliable guide for when to initiate church discipline...”

e.g. mortal meant “unto death” – spiritual death (apostasy, immorality, murder)

venial – forgivable

Thus we should speak of an unforgivable sin but only of an unforgivable sinner. The essential nature of the so-called unforgivable sin resides not in the quality of a given act but in the attitude of the sinner. It is not that God cannot or will not forgive certain acts. Rather, some individuals simply refuse to accept the invitation to repentance.”

“Strictly speaking, then, there are not even two kinds of sin, forgivable and unforgivable. There is only one kind, that described in the most basic terms as the absence of faith.”

<sup>61</sup> Jeschke, 48. “Surely the occasion is not merely one of personal insult, as though we otherwise might not have to go.”

<sup>62</sup> Jeschke, 47. “The occasion for church discipline is any sign of danger to a fellow believer’s spiritual life or health...He may already have repented, he may repent in response to admonition, or he may refuse to repent. In any case, a recognition of the peril of the loss of faith prompts the invitation of the ministry of discipline. The church cannot determine in advance where such an initiated procedure will lead...”

<sup>63</sup> Jeschke, 17. “Writers have used many terms for the classical problem that invites discipline: to err, sin, transgress, or trespass. One can also speak of a violation of a covenant, of unfaith, of a lapse, even of apostasy. It can be a matter of conduct, behaviour, an act. Or it can be a spirit, an attitude, a lifestyle. It can be backsliding, as one old term had it. It can be a lack in attendance, interest, or association with the church through secularization, changed relationships, or geographical relocation.”

<sup>64</sup> White and Blue, 88. “One cannot approach a brother about sin without having made at least a preliminary judgment of some kind.”

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 7:1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”

<sup>66</sup> Adams, 47. “...Jesus leaves no options whenever sin separates brothers; He commands informal discipline to bring about reconciliation...Jesus does not suggest, he requires the use of informal discipline.”

<sup>67</sup> Jeschke, 53. “To neglect admonition may seem to some members of the church to be the high road of not “judging” others. In fact it is the heartlessness of not offering help. The problem Jesus was trying to correct was a judgmentalism that made no room for grace. Refusing to offer grace of release from sin is precisely like the neglect to make the grace of God available to unbelievers in evangelism. It is a misunderstanding of grace.”

<sup>68</sup> White and Blue, 89. John 7:24 “Thus Jesus teaches us two things about judging others. First, we must be very cautious about our attitudes to others and must avoid condemnation. On the other hand, we are taught to exercise discernment about the sins of our brothers and sisters, but to be cautious about jumping to hasty conclusions.”

<sup>69</sup> Adams, 48. “It is true that in Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus requires the offender to go immediately to any brother whom he may have offended and be reconciled to him – even leaving his gift at the altar...It is also true, however (just as it is also in Luke 17:3), that the offended party has the very same obligation. When discord between believers takes place, ideally they ought to meet each other on the way to one another’s house to seek reconciliation.”

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<sup>70</sup> John Howard Yoder, 90. "The reconciling approach is personal"

White and Blue, 115-116. "Christ's injunction demands that we go to the sinner once we know about a sin. This is step one. We go alone. We go without prior consultation with anyone. The matter at first remains solely between the two of us... There are any number of ways of avoiding Jesus' simple command by some form of preliminary gossip. But in them all we evade our Christian duty."

Adams, 45. "The principle followed in Matthew is that the matter must be kept as narrow as the event itself."

Adams, 52. "Before, during, and after the period when the second step is in force, the issue should not be mentioned to anyone else if reconciliation takes place." Adams 52

<sup>71</sup> White and Blue, 129. "Another problem concerns confidentiality... Godly, experienced counsellors make such issues clear at an appropriate point in their counselling. Early in their discussion with clients, they should explain that certain kinds of information cannot be kept confidential, such as a case where the welfare of the community overrides the privacy of the individual. Otherwise, confidentiality becomes complicity with sin."

<sup>72</sup> Adams, 30-31. "Frequently it is the practice of Bible-believing Christians to give assurances of absolute confidentiality, never realizing that they are following a policy that originated in the Middle Ages and that is unbiblical and contrary to Scripture (there is not a scrap of evidence in the Bible for the practice)... No vow must ever involve possible disobedience to God; the vow of absolute confidentiality always does."

<sup>73</sup> Adams, 33.

<sup>74</sup> White and Blue, 120, 117.

<sup>75</sup> White and Blue, 125.

<sup>76</sup> Adams, 50.

<sup>77</sup> Adams, 51.

<sup>78</sup> I (John MacArthur) was touched by what one writer said of his own experience. "I've often thought that if I ever fall into a trespass, I will pray that I don't land in the hands of censorious, critical, self-righteous judges in the church. I'd rather fall into the hands of bar keepers, street walkers, or dope peddlers because such church people would tear me apart with their long wagging gossipy tongues, cutting me to shreds."

<sup>79</sup> White and Blue, 91.

<sup>80</sup> Jeschke 68-69.

<sup>81</sup> JWhite and Blue, 157.

<sup>82</sup> Jeschke, 73.

<sup>83</sup> Jeschke, 61.

<sup>84</sup> Jeschke, 63.

<sup>85</sup> Jeschke, 64.

<sup>86</sup> Jeschke 61-68.

<sup>87</sup> Adams, 92-93. "... forgiveness is a promise in which one person goes on record as declaring he will never again bring up another's offence and hold it against him. The past as a debt is discharged; he is no longer held liable. His offence may be remembered only to help him to learn to act differently in the future. The offence will not be mentioned to him, or to others, and will not be the subject of brooding on the part of those who granted forgiveness."

<sup>88</sup> Adams 92-93.

<sup>89</sup> Adams, 32.

<sup>90</sup> White and Blue, 92-93.

<sup>91</sup> White and Blue, 125.

<sup>92</sup> White and Blue, 126.

<sup>93</sup> White and Blue, 95.

<sup>94</sup> Adams, 68.

<sup>95</sup> Adams, 71.

<sup>96</sup> White and Blue, 95.

<sup>97</sup> White and Blue, 96.

<sup>98</sup> White and Blue, 156.

<sup>99</sup> White and Blue, 107.

<sup>100</sup> White and Blue, 105.

<sup>101</sup> Jeschke, 93.

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<sup>102</sup> Jeschke, 88.

<sup>103</sup> White and Blue, 96.

<sup>104</sup> White and Blue, 97.

<sup>105</sup> Adams, 85.