

# A Code of Ethics for Supervised Ministry

Supervised Ministry at Columbia Theological Seminary seeks to prepare men and women for pastoral and public leadership in the Church and in society. Toward that end, theological students serve in internships with teaching congregations or agencies alongside approved supervisors to learn through direct practices of ministry. From personal engagements with God's people in context, interns seek to integrate expressed theology with lived experiences, private convictions with public actions.

We believe that pastoral responsibilities must be fulfilled through healthy means of relating to one another. Pastoral integrity is critical to ministry and to a process of theological education that honors Jesus Christ and that empowers disciples to engage faithfully in God's mission. *We, therefore, commit ourselves to the following "Code of Ethics for Supervised Ministry."*

## 1. Regarding the Vocation of Teachers and Learners.

- a. Interns and Supervisors will honor their educational responsibility to engage one another seriously in pastoral and theological reflection.
- b. Interns and Supervisors will avoid imposing their own theology upon those they serve or supervise.
- c. Interns and Supervisors will not abuse their relationship with each other to meet personal needs for affection, affirmation, or power.
- d. Interns and Supervisors will not look to the other for personal therapy, even if the other has counseling credentials, during an internship. Supervision involves attending to the intern's emotions, but therapy, if warranted, will be provided by a third person outside the supervisory relationship.

## 2. Regarding Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries.

- a. Interns and Supervisors will be faithful to their marriage and ordination vows.
- b. Interns and Supervisors will not engage in sexual, racial, or other harassment or exploitation of one another or of other people.
- c. Interns and Supervisors will not enter into non-marital, intimate sexual relations with parishioners or clients, even if the relationship is consensual.
- d. Interns and Supervisors will avoid conflict-of-interest relationships (e.g., seeking financial help from church members for personal gain, or using confidential information for personal advantages) that have the potential of impairing judgment or increasing the risk of personal or financial exploitation.
- e. Interns and Supervisors will seek to be truthful and honest in their dealings with others. They will refrain from spreading false or malicious gossip about persons who are not present.
- f. Interns and Supervisors will not disclose pastoral confidences to anyone *except* when (i) it is mandated by law, (ii) it may prevent a clear and immediate danger to someone, (iii) it is used for the purposes of pastoral supervision, or (iv) it is authorized in previously obtained written permission. Students will inform those encountered in pastoral care situations about these limits of confidentiality; and supervisors, more generally, will inform congregants about these limits.

**3. Regarding Other Matters of Pastoral Integrity.**

- a. Interns and Supervisors will be faithful stewards of funds entrusted to their care and shall avoid exploiting the trust of others for financial gain.
- b. Interns and Supervisors will practice pastoral care within the reasonable realms of their competence. More specifically, unless professionally trained and certified, they will not present themselves as “counselors” or “therapists.” When called upon to function outside their realm of competence, they will enlist the guidance of others or refer to other professionals.
- c. Interns and Supervisors will give appropriate credit for sources quoted publicly and shall observe copyrights laws.
- d. Interns and Supervisors will refrain from alcohol and drug abuse, and if it should occur, they will seek professional help to overcome the problem.
- e. Interns and Supervisors will not discriminate against or refuse to offer ministry to others because of their race, gender, age, national origin, physical ability or sexual orientation.

*Adopted by Faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary, November 7, 2002*

Students and supervisors are required to subscribe to this *Code of Ethics for Supervised Ministry* before beginning any internship under the auspices of Columbia Theological Seminary. This signed document is kept on file in the Office of Supervised Ministry as long as the student is enrolled in the degree program.

***I have read and agree to abide by the “Code of Ethics for Supervised Ministry.”***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Printed

**Columbia Theological Seminary  
P.O. Box 520  
Decatur, GA 30031**