

Afterpastor 101:

Serving Congregations with a History of Clergy Misconduct

The harm clergy misconduct causes congregations pervades the whole culture of a congregation and persists for decades. Consistently afterpastors, those clergy serving in the aftermath of misconduct, describe their experience as unduly challenging. The organization's chronic dysfunction, reactivity and suspicion toward ministers, and frequent crazy-making behavior commonly present lead afterpastors to experience extreme stress, vocational crises, and short tenures. Some estimate as many as 50-66 % of all congregations may have histories of misconduct; others note that, whatever the actual number, media coverage has been widespread and the public's trust in clergy in general has dramatically diminished. All clergy, regardless of their ministry setting's unique history, have been affected and likely will experience similar challenges.

We will seek to understand the nature of misconduct and how it harms individuals, congregations, and relationships with subsequent ministers. We will outline the essential tasks of the afterpastor, consider what perspectives and strategies best serve those tasks and clergy wellness, and identify ways to address misconduct's harm and move a congregation in the direction of health.

Our six units include:

- 1-What to Expect in Congregations with a History of Clergy Misconduct
- 2- What is Clergy Misconduct and How Does it Cause Harm
- 3- How Not to Make It Worse: Essential Tasks of the Afterpastor
- 4- Ministerial Relationships: Even Broken, The Basic Tool of the Trade
- 5- How, When, Why & Why Not to Talk about a History of Misconduct
- 6- How to Change Culture and Grow a Healthier Congregation

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