Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia

Ministerial Code of Conduct

2013 Edition
Foreword

The Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia has been in existence since 1964 and its membership has been growing at a significant rate and now comprises large denominations, local congregations, faith based organizations, mission agencies and para-church organizations countrywide. The contribution of EFZ to the holistic societal transformation has widened over the years and the church has experienced phenomenal increase. Some of the significant impacts of our work have been evident in Church growth, spiritual transformation, interventions in HIV/AIDS, education, health, agriculture, natural resource management, humanitarian responses, political reforms, good governance, poverty reduction and child protection etc.

As Christian leaders, we continue to play a pivotal role in providing guidance to the nation in general leadership and support in ensuring that our people find hope in this life as well as in the life to come. When we play our role well, it means that the people we serve and lead can be better citizens and law abiding nationals. Realizing the critical role that we play in society, we find ourselves with challenges because of contradictions between the profession of our Christian faith and the conduct of some of our leaders. This code of conduct is providing a solution to the problem.

In order to ensure our personal integrity and corporate accountability to one another, this code of ethics has been developed to guide the clergy and our leaders in general with minimum standards for practice that we should follow in order to avoid bringing the name of our Lord into dishonor or bringing our ministries in disrepute.

As leaders, we should endeavor to use the guidance of the Holy Scriptures for instruction, correction and training in righteousness in order to be without reproach thereby being role models for spiritual and moral uprightness and personal integrity (2Tim.3:16,17). This code of conduct calls for humility and submission before one another so that we can enhance accountability, team ministry and transparency in our service to the Lord.

All leaders in our Evangelical fraternity should adhere to this code and make every effort to pursue the fear of the Lord.

May God bless us all as we unite in contributing to the expansion of the Lord’s Kingdom.

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1. Introduction

Oftentimes, there has been a feeling and a perception that most leaders are not transparent or accountable for their actions and therefore this has tended to erode the opportunity for trust by the members of local churches or their denominations. Confidence has been lost.

While the assertions may be true for some people, they may not be true for others because for some churches, there are clear systems and policies that guide the doing of ministry as well as how their leaders can be held accountable.

Because leaders are pace setters and therefore examples, they ought to be men and women whose lives are above board and whose reputation should be acceptable in order not to lead to the name of the Lord being brought into contempt or disrepute.

2. Purpose of this code of conduct

This ministerial code of conduct sets out the minimums of the behaviors and conduct of the church leaders such as pastors, reverends, bishops, overseers, superintendents and members of governing boards of local churches, denominations and faith based organizations that affiliate to the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ).

The standards that have been laid out in this code of conduct are acceptable norms for leaders’ conduct and style of leadership that allows for consistency for holy living as well as acceptable conduct so that a leader is without fault at all times. Given any departure from these behavioral minimums, may lead to the name of the Lord or of the church being ill spoken of.

3. Code of ethics

3.1 Giving honor to whom honor is due vs plagiarism

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to who is fear; honor to whom is honor” (Rom.13:7)

When using other people’s materials and information from published or unpublished works, such as books, sermon notes, illustrations, quotes or citations in oral or written communication, it is important (at all times) to make reference to the original sources of that information and to avoid portraying a message that you are the originator or the primary source of such information or ideas. Where the source is unknown or anonymous, you shall indicate accordingly (that the source is unknown). Plagiarism is professional misconduct and theft of intellectual property. It is unacceptable and deceitful.
to use other people’s materials without respecting their copyrights or acknowledging them. Our leaders should show integrity in handling other people’s materials.

3.2 Truthfulness vs deceit and dishonesty

You shall remain truthful in all that you do and you shall avoid deceitfulness, manipulation, coercion and cheating. The results of miraculous works shall not be falsified or testimonies manipulated in order to deceive or mislead the audience with the aim to legitimize your ministry through the works of miracles or ‘signs and wonders’ that are not genuine. Miracles should be founded on the word of God and should not contradict biblical truth and sound teaching of Holy Scriptures. The Bible urges us to maintain consistence in our ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and not to say one thing and yet mean the very opposite.

3.3 Self-control against sexual offences

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; against such there is no law” (Gal.5:22-23)

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body” (1Cor.6:18).

You shall not engage into any form of inappropriate sexual misconduct such as the following unnatural and sinful practices: lesbianism and homosexual practices, adultery, fornication, incest, pedophilia, rape, child molestation, sexual harassment, masochism, necrophilia, sodomy, co-habiting, sexual inversion, exhibitionism, sexting, lust, cybersex, transvestite, pornography, use of fetishes, misogyny, sadism, masturbation, bestiality or zoophilia etc. The Bible forbids such unnatural sexual practices.

3.4 Drug and alcohol abuse

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God” (1Cor.6:9-10).

Drugs abuse offences include taking illegal drugs, drug trafficking, alcohol abuse and drunkenness (intoxication) and trafficking in psychotropic substances such as marijuana, hashish and other forms of illegal drugs etc.

3.5 Confidentiality and management of information

As a minister, you come into contact with many people who share various types of information and some of which may be confidential. It is important that you refrain from making any public or private reference to the people who have shared confidential
information when they did so in order to seek your help regarding their problems. Such information of individuals whose personal reputation may be compromised or affected should not be divulged without their express permission to do so. Examples of such information may be the person’s medical condition or inappropriate conduct that may lead to other relations being negatively affected.

3.6 Healthy social relationship vs sexual abuse

As a minister, it is important to develop healthy social relations in order to avoid indulging into the failures of the people you are seeking to help. As a leader, seek to remain objective in finding solutions to people’s problems so that you avoid being engulfed into subjective involvement. Relationships involving persons of the opposite gender should not be secretive as this may lead to a serious compromise and possibility for indulging into sin.

3.7 Moral uprightness vs corruption

You shall pursue moral uprightness and personal integrity and avoid any form of bribery and/or corruption. It is unacceptable to offer or receive bribes and to be a subject of any form of corrupt practice including promoting nepotism, tribalism, giving inducements or gifts that are aimed at pervading justice or distorting fairness or promoting favoritism or any form of bias or favors that prevent other competitors from engaging in fair dealings involving jobs, promotion, procurement, tenders or handling of contracts etc.

3.8 Financial management vs fraud and money laundering

Prudent management is important for both personal as well as corporate finances. A leader shall avoid any form of financial misconduct, financial impropriety, fraudulent acts, money laundering, theft or being found to be in possession of counterfeit currency etc. You shall not collect money from the congregation or from an individual or from the general public under false pretense. You shall always return borrowed funds and property accordingly to the lender and you shall not misuse scriptures to avoid repaying borrowed monies either through manipulation or coercion. A leader shall not use scriptures wrongly with the intention to extort money or other services from the people or the general public.

You shall seek to manage personal or corporate finances in an acceptable manner with transparency and accountability using biblical stewardship principles for faithfulness in managing resources.

3.9 Personal integrity vs bribery and corruption

The Bible forbids corruption and bribery as this is a pervasion of justice and a distortion of righteousness. It negatively affects the poor and marginalized who may be deprived because of a perverted system.
3.10 Politics above partisan interests

As a minister, you may be compelled to issue political statements aimed at addressing some critical governance or moral issues in the nation or local community. In such times, you shall remain focused at issues without taking a partisan position in your action or communication. It is inappropriate for a clergy to toll partisan political lines as this undermines the opportunity for fair comment, objectivity in mediation and spiritual leadership. The clergy shall respect personal choices of the individual members of the congregation to belong to political parties of their choice without undue influence from their leaders.

The clergy shall avoid giving prophetic utterances by foretelling the results or the outcome of an election or sporting tournament and leave the matter to the providential acts of our Sovereign God.

3.11 Compliance with government statutory obligations vs tax evasion

Christian leaders shall remain obedient to the civil government and comply with all the statutory obligations established by the government. Leaders shall obey the laws of the land at all times and shall comply with the statutory payments such as taxes, annual returns or any form of obligations as demanded by the laws of our republic.

3.12 Conflict of interest vs manipulation and coercion

We urge all the clergy to declare interest in discussions or deliberations that involve personal relations or close friends in order to avoid exerting undue influence that would negatively affect fairness in the outcome of a decision such as in conflict resolution, disciplinary cases, job interviews, procurement, issuance of contracts, promotions etc. During such times, you shall declare interest and avoid participating in the discussions involving your personal interest in the matter.

3.13 Confession of sin vs self-righteousness

You shall take personal responsibility to confess sin to God and to others against whom you have offended. This will provide accountability to one another and ensure that you are helped with counseling and subsequent healing and restoration. In case sin or wrong doing has been discovered and made known by other persons before personal disclosure, it is important to exercise humility and accept the wrong and seek help from others – allowing time for healing and restoration.

3.14 Public life above reproach
The work we do is open to public scrutiny because we ought to set an example on how we conduct ourselves in public life. This should involve leading a life that is upright and not one that is questionable or a lifestyle that is likely to bring the name of the church into disrepute because of a poor conduct of a leader.

3.15 Respect for human dignity vs abuse of vulnerable persons

Many times, leaders are approached by various vulnerable persons that seek help of one form or another. During such times, the needy persons open up so much in order to provide the background information to their problems and in the process they may make themselves vulnerable. You shall not exploit the vulnerability of the persons that are seeking help by exerting unreasonable and inappropriate demands upon them such as requesting money or gifts as a requirement for their breakthrough or healing or marital restoration, or demanding any form of favors from them such as sex, etc.

3.16 Biblical wealth vs worldly materialism

The primary calling of any genuine clergy shall remain ‘the service to God and humanity’. In so doing, a Christian leader may make a lot of sacrifice that may include socio-economic sacrifices. Excessive pursuit of wealth at the expense of biblical mission and Christian calling should be avoided. Manipulation that demands for people to offer gifts or finances in order for them to experience financial or social breakthrough, extorting funds from individuals or general public as compensation for prophetic utterances, healing miracles or breakthroughs shall be avoided. The people that are ministered to or are served by preachers and other ministers should be allowed to exercise their personal will and volition to bless those that serve them.

3.17 Counseling ethics

You shall exercise confidentiality in handling people seeking help from you for any form of need. The physical environment should be carefully chosen when handling people of the opposite gender as well as exploring the opportunity of joint counseling with someone else whenever this is possible.

As a counselor, you shall treat all the information shared and disclosed during a counseling session as confidential and not to be shared with third parties (directly or indirectly). This will be a breach of confidentiality and can hurt the counselee who may in turn not trust you or others in future.

3.18 Prophetic and healing ministry vs false prophecy

Prophetic and healing ministries can lead to many people to develop a lot of anxiety for the future or for healing of their chronic illnesses or infirmities. It is an area that many false teachers and false prophets have erred. It is not appropriate to engage in a realm
of ministry in which you have no special grace or ‘anointing’ at any one time unless there is a clear indication of God’s communication about a healing miracle for any person.

3.19 Giving freely what you have received freely

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.” (Mtt.10:8)

The special ministerial abilities on leaders are given by the Sovereignty of God and therefore they are meant to be used for the edification of the body of Christ. Since these gifts are freely bestowed upon the leaders, they should be shared and given out freely too. There is no good biblical basis for requesting the audience or recipients of God’s word to pay for the Christian service such a prophetic word before a healing or miracle happens in one’s personal life. People that have received any help from any leader or pastor who may want to bless such preachers should do so freely and voluntarily bearing in mind that at times you may opt to not receive such gifts as in the example of Elijah who chose not to accept the gift from Naaman after he was healed of leprosy.

3.20 Taming the tongue vs malicious language

“And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.” (Jas.3:2)

The ability to tame the tongue is a sign of maturity. A leader should exercise caution in the use of the tongue to avoid hate speech, abusive language, derogatory remarks, malice, gossip, slander, cursing, proud utterances and any form of unwholesome talk.

3.21 Obedience to true doctrinal teachings vs heresy and false teachings

“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed with conceit and understands nothing…” (1Tim.6:3,4a)

The clergy of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) will ensure consistency to the doctrines of our evangelical faith at all times and shall remain focused on the biblical truths as espoused in our statement of faith. Any extremism away from the mainline teachings and practices of the evangelical truths will be considered to have departed from the core teachings and beliefs of the Bible and therefore may lead to serious reprimand. A clergy shall not read into scriptures by endeavoring to interpret the Bible falsely such as in prophesying about the second coming of Christ or making false prophetic utterances or in times of misusing scriptures in order to justify greed or selfish interests.

3.22 Matrimonial harmony
“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach… He must manage his own household well, with dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?” (1Tim.3:2-4)

Leaders are expected to be men and women that manage their homes and families well, whose spouses and children respect them and whose families are in harmony. A leader should endeavor to lead his/her family well and therefore relate such leadership to the bigger family of Christian believers and community in which we serve.

3.23 Personal accountability

“...Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble” (1Peter 5:5b)

It is important to submit before one another in order to be checked on our consistency in our walk with the Lord. A leader shall seek to be accountable to another person to seek help whenever in need such as a mentor or spiritually mature person that is available to provide the needed help at all times and on an ongoing basis.

3.24 Respect for other ministers

No one person or congregation or denomination has been given the wholesale mandate of accomplishing the Great Commission. Therefore many individuals and churches are participating in enriching and extending the Lord’s Kingdom.

You shall not speak ill of other ministers with the view to discredit them so that you appear “holier than they” by making disparaging remarks or making negative reference to their personal lives or their congregations or ministries. Even when other ministers have been found guilty of any form of misconduct, it is important to restrain oneself from any discussion that does not seek to help the erring person to receive forgiveness and subsequent restoration.

3.25 Kingdom interest vs denominationalism

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body…” (1Cor.12:12)

The Kingdom of God is one. Any leader should seek to promote the Lord’s Kingdom and participate in encouraging the genuine work and ministry of others bearing in mind that we are different parts of the one body. Therefore whatever we do is only a contribution to the overall purpose of extending the Lord’s Kingdom.

3.26 Ministerial etiquette
A leader shall seek to follow appropriate ministerial etiquette when dealing with protocols and personal conduct in the midst of other ministers or leaders. A leader shall exercise care to ensure that he/she follows the acceptable forms of conduct towards other leaders. Any departure from the acceptable norms will be treated as a breach of the ministerial etiquette and code of conduct.

3.27 Personal development and spiritual growth

“As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby”
(1Peter 2:2)

In order that you lead well, you should endeavor to show commitment to personal growth and spiritual development through formal or informal study thereby providing for greater opportunity for increased knowledge and understanding that will lead to rightly dividing the word of God and effectively and appropriately applying it to the varying circumstances and situations.

3.28 Humility

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” (1 Peter 5:6)

As God blesses your ministry or the work of your local church, you shall be careful to give glory and to acknowledge God at all times because without him, “we can do nothing” (John 15:5). The Bible encourages us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God because in due season, he shall lift us up.

3.29 Leading with accountability

As a leader you shall endeavor to submit with humility before another leader or before a team of leaders with regard to moral conduct, ministry activities, doctrinal matters, personal life and management of work and ministry.

3.30 Truthfulness

As a leader you shall desist from falsifying information regarding church growth, evangelism and conversion figures or other types of statistics with the intention to show or portray that you are successful by using such statistics as a measure of success. The results of prayer efforts or miracle works and signs and wonders shall be genuine and the leader shall not falsify such results or works in order to deceive people into believing a lie or misleading them.
3.31 Holding of annual general meetings

“...give an account of thy stewardship...” (Luke 16:2b)

Leaders of EFZ member churches and organizations shall ensure that their organizations hold periodic general meetings involving their members which may take the form of Annual General Meeting, General Conference, National Convention, General Assembly or General Council etc. where ministry and audited financial reports will be presented and discussed with the participation of the members of the church or ministry. The heads of EFZ members will send copies of their annual reports to EFZ Secretariat addressed to the Executive Director.

3.32 Governance

Heads of member church denominations, local congregations, faith based organizations and institutions of learning will ensure that they have functional executive boards, board of governors or board of trustees or council of elders or conference of ministers or national council to be responsible for governance in their organizations and that they ensure adherence to principles of corporate governance that are suitable for their ministry to demonstrate corporate responsibility and team ministry. This will foster accountability and transparency in the organization.

3.33 Treatment of church member transfers

It is imperative that pastors of local congregations exercise respect for another pastor’s flock and that any person or persons seeking to transfer their membership should be provided with a letter of clearance from their former church or the last congregation they attended. Whenever possible, pastors of the new and former churches of such members should endeavor to interact on the release of such persons before they are taken up into new churches as members.

4.0 Adherence to the ministerial code of conduct

All the members of the EFZ will adhere to this ministerial code of conduct and failure to comply will lead to appropriate disciplinary action taken against such a member by the appropriate organ of the Fellowship such as suspension or revocation of preaching or ministerial credentials or license.

5.0 Signing of the affirmation

It is mandatory that all the clergy under the EFZ churches, ministries and organizations sign the affirmation as evidence that they shall comply with this code of ethics in their
individual capacity as well as corporately on behalf of their church denominations, congregations or organizations. Once signed, the commitment will be binding.