



RESTORATION OF MINISTRY IN ADULT MISCONDUCT CASES

CMSM National Pre-Assembly ~ July 2026

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Risk Assessment
- Evaluation of Suitability
- Assignment Considerations
- Best Known Practices
- Challenges
- Policy Considerations





RISK ASSESSMENT

Objective determination of the facts:

What's happening (happened) that needs to stop happening?

What's not happening that needs to start happening?

What is the concrete, realistic plan for repairing the boundary violations and/or changing behavior patterns?

SUITABILITY

- Suitability determined concurrently with **competent canonical review** and advocacy:
 - For the Order
 - For the accused
 - For the accuser
- Due process and presumption of innocence has been practiced
- Documentation must follow proper canonical procedure: this is critical
- Wellness plan is in place, with monitoring indicating strong adherence to the plan (body-mind-spirit)



ASSIGNMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Finding a welcoming bishop
- Determination of Residency: where, and with whom, should the man live?
 - *part of both accountability and support*
- Pastoral considerations: optics, care of the accuser, etc.
- Utilizing a “step-down” model; a gradual return to full-time ministry and within the ministry setting(s), moving from more restrictions to less restrictions (this can occur across a number of ministry settings or within one ministry setting).



ASSIGNMENT, CONTINUED

- **“Step down”:** begin with ministry settings where limits can be imposed, and when wellness and resiliency benchmarks are realized, gradually reduce the limits
- **Non-Parochial ministry settings:**
 - **Prison chaplain**
 - **Hospital chaplain**
 - **Convent chaplain**
 - **Chaplain to the priests living in retirement or in assisted living facilities**
 - **Formation work**
 - **Province office (finances, pension, facilities management, mutual insurance, etc.)**

BEST PRACTICES

- Create and implement a wellness plan that is concrete, measurable, realistic; have accountability measures that are consistently enforced
 - Not temporary, but a living, evolving document
- Evaluation of wellness markers: monitoring, accountability, and compassionate support (behaviors that promote balance and integration)
 - *must be reviewed regularly by the ministry support team*
- Have regular team meetings with key players: spiritual director, therapist, the man, support person, etc.
- Have policies that address the process and expectations
- Have a communication plan in place; do not neglect the care of the rest of the province while also respecting the man's right to privacy



CHALLENGES

- Returning to a ministry too soon
- Assignment context not thoughtful
- Unrealistic wellness plan
- Lack of substantive accountability
- Not enough collateral feedback (therapist, spiritual director, persons in ministry setting, etc.)
- Enmeshment/enabling/co-dependency from family, friends, parishioners, brothers
- Lack of substantive support from leadership
- Publicity





CHALLENGES: EVOLVING QUESTIONS

- Are **all** adult allegations (regardless of how minor) presented to the Adult Review/Consultative Board prior to the abbot/provincial's determination on the allegation? What are the criteria?
- Does the inherent power differential make *everyone* a vulnerable adult? Dioceses have started weighing in and adjusting their policies on this.
- Information sharing with various parties, including the victim/survivor. Who gets told what information and when?
- Bishop's response; again, is there criteria in place that they are using, or is it a zero tolerance policy?



COMPLEXITIES OF VULNERABILITY

Vos Estes →

adapted definitions →

interpretations of these
definitions

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

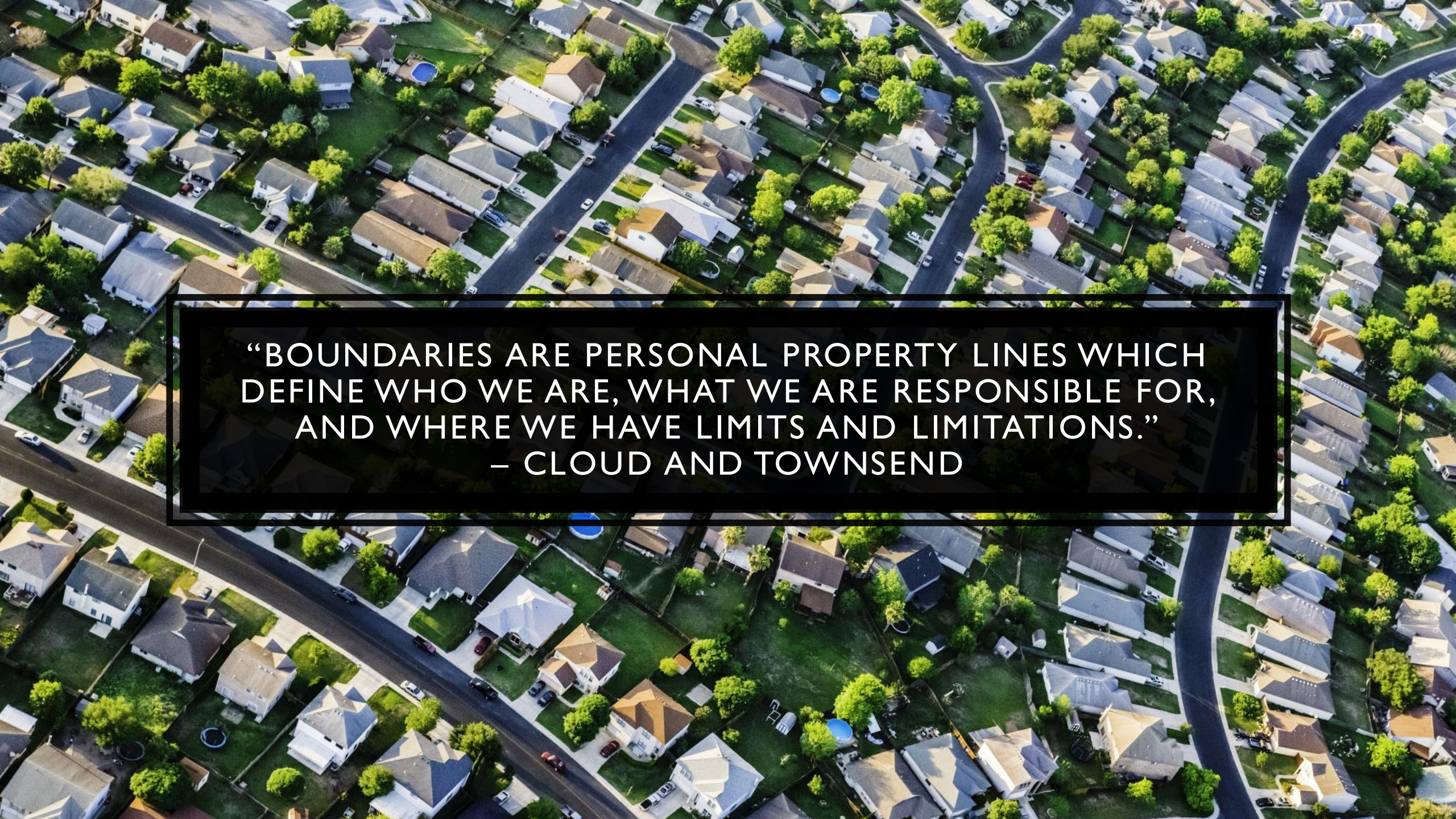
- Best practices as known today
 - Naming the inherent power differential
 - Separate policies, detailing the process as much as possible
 - Consistent, established consultative body
 - Care of the man *and* of the individual who has come forward
 - Recognition and management of member-on-member misconduct
 - Canonical consultation to ensure all parties are appropriately represented
- Updated language and definitions (more than just sexual misconduct...)
- Awareness of cultural dynamics





NEED CLEAR PROCESS IN PLACE

- Leadership cannot do this in a vacuum; needs a multi-disciplinary team to consult with, to grapple with these questions. Not just members or those in leadership.
- These cases are so much “greyer”, can have so many more layers and complications than Charter cases.

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The image shows a grid of streets with houses on either side. The houses are mostly single-story with varying roof colors (brown, grey, white). There are many green trees scattered throughout the yards and along the streets. Some houses have swimming pools in their backyards. The overall scene is a typical suburban residential area.

“BOUNDARIES ARE PERSONAL PROPERTY LINES WHICH
DEFINE WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR,
AND WHERE WE HAVE LIMITS AND LIMITATIONS.”
– CLOUD AND TOWNSEND