



Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®

# Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse

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# Partnering With You

**Our Ministry:** We protect the ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist® Church with insurance and risk management solutions.





# What Is Sexual Abuse of Children ?

Sexual abuse of a child is a sexual act against a minor committed by a parent, care giver, or other person in a position of trust (even though s/he may not care for the child on a daily basis). This involves inappropriate touching up to rape and is never accidental. Sexual abuse of a child always harms a child's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.



# Child Protection is Our Duty

**More than a LEGAL duty**

**We have a MORAL duty**

*“Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”*

MARK 9:42 KJV



# Our Duty in Three Goals

1

Show God's love to everyone we meet—especially children.

2

Keep our children safe.

3

Ensure that sexual abuse of children is prevented, but if it occurs, is dealt with swiftly with law enforcement involved.



# 7 STEPS To Protect Children From Sexual Abuse



## 1 Learn the Facts

Understand all Potential Risks



## 3 Talk About It.

Encourage honesty.



## 2 Minimize Opportunity



## 4 Stay Vigilant and Alert.



# 7 STEPS To Protect Children From Sexual Abuse

**5**  **Make a Child Abuse Prevention Plan** and enforce it.

**6**  **Act on Suspicion.** Don't stay silent.

**7**  **Get Involved.** Become pro-active in protecting children. Educate and respond.





# Spotting and Reporting Abuse





# Signs of Sexual Abuse and Behavior Requiring Intervention

- ✔ Change in modesty
- ✔ Genital pain, itching, discharge, bleeding
- ✔ Stomach aches, headaches
- ✔ Sleep disturbances, bed wetting
- ✔ Unexplained fears—refusal to go to places or with people
- ✔ School problems, peers, excessive crying/depression
- ✔ Clinginess, aggressiveness
- ✔ Escape behavior—drugs, alcohol, runaway, isolation
- ✔ Age-inappropriate understanding of sex
- ✔ Overly sexualized behavior
- ✔ Fears touch of a certain person
- ✔ Fire setting
- ✔ Abuse of animals



# Disclosing Abuse

## Disclosure can be difficult for children because of:

- ✔ Sense of shame associated with the maltreatment
- ✔ Sense of loyalty to the abuser
- ✔ Fear of not being believed
- ✔ Fear of negative consequences—to the child or to family members



# When a Minor Discloses Abuse

- ✔ Listen carefully.
- ✔ Don't overreact.
- ✔ Repeat back what you heard.
- ✔ Don't promise to keep it a secret.
- ✔ Reassure the child.
- ✔ Write it down.
- ✔ Don't investigate.
- ✔ Notify proper parties.
- ✔ Keep the information confidential.



# You Must Report Abuse. **Period.**

- ✔ If it is an emergency situation, **call 911**. If it is not an emergency situation, report the abuse allegation immediately to the proper authorities for your state/province.
- ✔ Each state/province has its own reporting hotlines—**use them**.
- ✔ If in doubt, in the U.S. use the **Childhelp National Abuse Hotline:**

**1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453)**



# Reporting Abuse—Arizona

## Who is a mandatory reporter in the state of Arizona:

Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature, or who reasonably believes that there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under A.R.S. Â§ 36-2281, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace officer or to Department of Child Safety, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only.



# Reporting Abuse—Arizona

- Phone: 1-888-SOS-CHILD
- How to Report: <https://dcs.az.gov/report-child-abuse>
- Training: <https://dcs.az.gov/report-child-abuse/mandated-reporter-overview-training>

## MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING VIDEO FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS



# Reporting Abuse—Follow Protocol

Once you have made the report, it is the responsibility of law enforcement and child services to investigate and take proper action. Do not take the law into your own hands.

- ✔ Report suspected abuse to local department of social services or to local law enforcement agency.
- ✔ Contact the local conference/ARM.
- ✔ Fully cooperate with the authorities with the information available.
- ✔ Put conditions in place for the alleged perpetrator while authorities are making their determination on whether abuse occurred.



# Reporting Abuse— Churches Are Not Exempt

If the allegation was made against one of your members, volunteers, or a church employee, **notify your conference promptly** so they are aware of the situation.

Place the employee or volunteer on administrative leave until the investigation is complete. This protects the children under your care, the suspected abuser, and the church until the situation is resolved.

**The accused cannot continue to serve while an investigation is underway.**







# The Mindset of Abusers



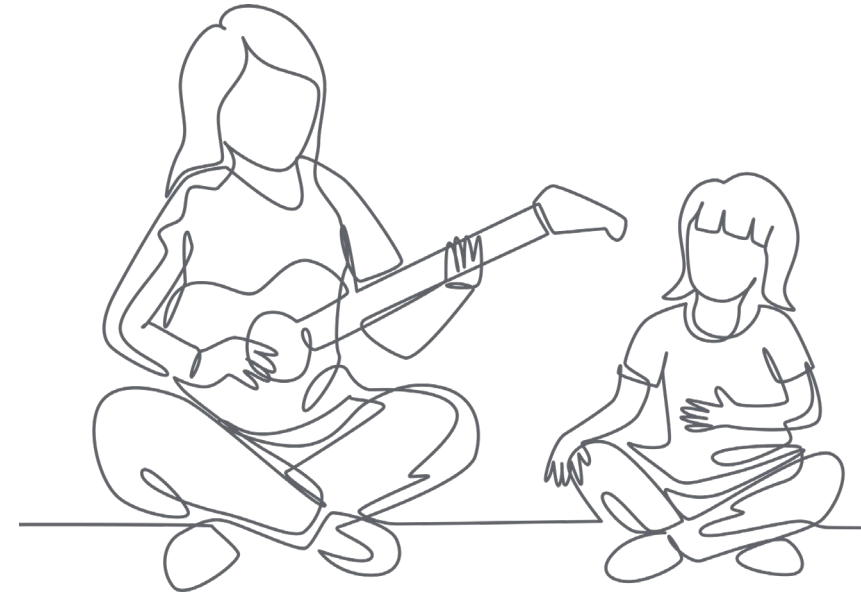
# Myths About Child Sexual Abusers

- Child Sexual Abusers are:
  - Intellectually disabled
  - Drug abusers or Alcoholic
  - “Dirty old men”
  - Homosexual
- Child sexual abusers are easily identifiable by behavior and looks.



# How Offenders Target a Community

- Neighborhoods, churches, and family-friendly centers of activity offer access to children.
- An offender's past behavior is probably unknown in a new setting.
- People in a new setting are often:
  - open, trusting, friendly, tolerant, accepting, and naive
  - poorly informed and may have lax boundaries.
  - unwilling to confront questionable behavior.
  - indiscriminately trusting of people to watch their kids.



# How Offenders Groom Children

- They study and befriend their victims
- They become friends or act like a same-age friend
- They treat child as if older
- Get physical (wrestling, tickling, hugging, kissing, massages, backrubs)
- Get physical in front of parents
- “Accidental” touching of private parts
- Make sex jokes and may share pornography
- Take care in the timing of how they progress their abuse
- Test the child’s ability to keep a “secret”



# How Offenders Keep Children From Telling

- Most don't have to tell children not to tell.
- An offender is often someone the child and family are close to.
- Some children are afraid they won't be believed.
- Children may believe someone will get in trouble or that their family will be harmed.
- The more incidents that occur, the less likely a child will come forward.



# What Are Red Flags?



A warning signal or sign



Something that indicates or draws attention to a problem, danger, or irregularity



Something instinct tells you is “off.”



**Don't Ignore Red Flags!**



# Red Flags in Adult Behavior Toward Kids

- ☑ Appear hyper-sexual.
- ☑ Seem pre-occupied with child sexual development.
- ☑ Make sexual comments to or about children.
- ☑ Act “flirty” around children or teens.
- ☑ Act jealous of children or are jealous of teen relationships with one another.
- ☑ “Accidentally” touch private parts.





# Red Flags to Never Ignore

- ④ Adults engaging in frequent physical contact with children (wrestling, tickling, horseplay, hugging or lap sitting).
- ④ Don't allow children privacy, such as "walking in on them" while they are dressing or using the restroom.
- ④ Behave like children or allow children to do questionable or inappropriate things.
- ④ "Override" parental authority.
- ④ Are liked by children for reasons that parents don't understand.







# Red Flags in Adult Lifestyle

- ④ They work with children and spend their free time doing “special” things with children.
- ④ Do not have children but seem to know a lot about current trends or music popular with children and teens.
- ④ Volunteer with youth groups, but do not have children in those groups.





# “Too Good To Be True” Red Flags

- ☑ Buy children special gifts for no reason.
- ☑ Want to take children on outings that include their being alone with those children.
- ☑ Seem able to infiltrate family and social functions or are always available to baby-sit.
- ☑ If someone/something seems “too good to be true,” it probably is.





# In the Experience of Convicted Sex Offenders Things Parents Do That Make Kids Vulnerable

- ④ Thinking no one you know is an offender.
- ④ Depending on children to protect themselves.
- ④ Expecting children will readily tell someone.
- ④ Not having close relationships with your children.
- ④ Not having adequate rules about supervision.
- ④ Ignoring children's sexual acting out.
- ④ These sayings: "Stranger Danger," "No-Go-Tell," and "Good Touch, Bad Touch"



# Sex Offenders in Your Churches

- ✔ Acknowledge there may be sex offenders in your church.
- ✔ The idea that “Adventists don’t do that” is a delusion.
- ✔ Tight and effective controls must be in place to ensure they do not have the opportunity to abuse another child.
  - There is a “Church Attendance/Participation Agreement” document (see your conference) that outlines a plan with expectations and limits to participation and attendance. Deal with this issue and use this resource.
  - **You are allowed to prohibit someone from attending your church.**





# Bullying



# What Does Bullying Have To Do With Child Sexual Abuse?

- Understand there is a correlation between bullying behavior and vulnerability to sexual abuse.
- It is often the most hurt among us that commit acts of bullying toward those they perceive as weaker than they are.
- If there are instances of bullying, investigate what may be going on with the aggressor and the victim.
- Bullying harms self-esteem, safety, and confidence—priming a child to become a victim.
- Address bullying head on and work to bring help and healing to all children involved.



# Long-Term Effects of Bullying

- ✔ Vulnerability to abuse
- ✔ Anxiety disorders
- ✔ Low self-esteem
- ✔ Depression
- ✔ Eating disorders
- ✔ Gang membership
- ✔ Teen pregnancies
- ✔ Suicide
- ✔ Dropping out of School
- ✔ Continuing the cycles of bullying and abuse



# Create an Actionable Plan

- ④ Make sure there is understanding of a clear definition of bullying.
- ④ Have a firm stance on bullying in place and refer to it often.
- ④ Establish a protocol for handle bullying incidents utilizing the following:
  - Counseling
  - Fostering a safe meeting situation with parents.
  - Positive behavior support system
  - If no positive change is created—remove the aggressor from the possibility of inflicting further damage to the victim and others.







# The Church Manual

Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual

DESCRIBES THE  
CONDITIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF

## WHY DOES THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH HAVE A CHURCH MANUAL?

God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption. Consequently, order belongs to the essence of His church. Order is achieved through principles and regulations that guide the church in its internal operations and in the fulfillment of its mission to the world. In order for it to be a successful ecclesiastical organization at the service of the Lord and humanity, it needs order, rule, and

### Our Beliefs

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs are meant to permeate your whole life. Growing out of scriptures that paint a compelling portrait of God, you are invited to explore, experience and know the One who desires to make us whole.





# What Does the Official Church Manual Say?

**Safeguarding Children**—Church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved with children who are minors must meet all Church and legal standards and requirements. In order to safeguard our children, churches are encouraged to adopt policies that would provide a measure of safety and protection for children.—p. 174–175



# Two-Adult Policy



At least two adults must be present in children's classrooms or activities.



# Open Door



Discourage private or one-on-one contact and encourage an open-door policy in all situations. Where an open door is not possible, station a second adult at the door.



# Volunteer Screening



Have all volunteers complete a volunteer information form, check their references, and if required by law, do a police background check.



# Screening Is Extremely Important.

- 1 Require applications for volunteers.
- 2 Conduct criminal background screenings.
- 3 Conduct reference checks.
- 4 Provide training for employees and volunteers on:
  - Code of Conduct
  - How to Spot Abuse
  - How to Report Abuse





## ADVENTIST SCREENING VERIFICATION

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Seventh-day Adventist® Church  
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

<https://www.nadadventist.org/asv>





# North American Division Working Policy

All volunteers referenced in this section include **all adults, over the age of 18, involved in any capacity in children and youth ministries and activities, and all church ministry leaders and officers voted or appointed by the local church** consistent with the Seventh-day Adventist<sup>®</sup> Church Manual; volunteers voted or appointed by the conference, union, or the North American Division and its affiliates, as well as all registered volunteers either from within or outside the North American Division voted or appointed to serve in the territory.





# Six-month Policy



Require a waiting period of six months for newly baptized or transferring members who have indicated a willingness to work with children. Use this time to get to know them.



# Training



Provide regular training for leaders and volunteers to help them understand and protect children and while nurturing their faith.



# In a Digital World



- Digital communication can be a gateway to sexually abusive situations for minors.
- Adult leaders should have no individual contact with children via text/email/chat.
- When digitally communicating with a child, use email and copy the parents on all messages.
- Keep parents in the loop about phone usage when on activities—especially if you notice excessive texting, etc.



# What Are Your Next Steps?

- ④ Define an official **Child Protection Plan** for your church/school. Be transparent and vigilant about it.
- ④ Ensure **screening processes** are happening. Again, vigilance.
- ④ Be ready to **report** when necessary
- ④ **Share** what you've learned—be open.
- ④ Continue **learning**. There are always improvements to make.





# CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Seventh-day Adventist Church

## 1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1. The \_\_\_\_\_ Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms its acceptance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Statement on the Nurture and Protection of Children
- 1.2. Statement on the Nurture and Protection of Children<sup>1</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists place a high value on children. In the light of the Bible they are seen as precious gifts from God entrusted to the care of parents, family, community of faith and society-at-large. Children possess enormous potential for making positive contributions to the Church and to society. Attention to their care, protection and development is extremely important.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church reaffirms and extends its longstanding efforts to nurture and safeguard children and youth from persons - known and unknown - whose actions perpetrate any form of abuse and violence against them and/or sexually exploit them. Jesus modeled the kind of respect, nurture, and protection children should be able to expect from adults entrusted with their care. Some of His strongest words of reproof were directed toward those who would harm them. Because of the trusting nature and dependence of children upon older and wiser adults and the life-changing consequences when this trust is breached, children require vigilant protection.

### Redemptive Correction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places a priority on church-based parent education that helps parents develop the skills necessary for a redemptive approach to correction. Many children experience harsh punishment in the name of a biblical approach to discipline. Correction characterized by severe, punitive, dictatorial control often leads to resentment and rebellion. Such harsh discipline is also associated with heightened risk for physical and psychological harm to children as well as increased likelihood the youth will resort to coercion and violence in resolving their differences with others. By contrast, examples from Scripture as well as a large body of research confirm the effectiveness of more gentle forms of discipline that allow children to learn through reasoning and experiencing the consequences of their choices. Such milder measures have been demonstrated to increase the likelihood children will make life-affirming choices and espouse parental values as they mature.

<sup>1</sup>Approved and voted by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) and released by the Office of the President, Ted N. C. Wilson, on June 23, 2010, and released at the General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, June 24-July 3, 2010.

## Making Church a Safe Place for Children

The Church also takes seriously its responsibility to minimize the risk for child sexual abuse and violence against children in the congregational setting. First and foremost, church leaders and members must themselves live by a strict code of ethics that precludes even the appearance of evil as regards the exploitation of minors for the gratification of adult desires. Other practical measures toward making church a safe place for children include attention to the safety of the church facility and its surroundings and the careful supervision and monitoring of children and their environment during all church-related activities. Education regarding what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate interaction between adults and children, the warning signs of abuse and violence, and the specific steps to be followed should inappropriate behavior be reported or suspected are vitally important. Pastors and church leaders who are visible and approachable play an important role in prevention as well as in responding well to the needs of children whose safety may have been jeopardized. Regular updates are needed regarding their moral and legal responsibility to report child abuse to appropriate civil authorities. The designation of trained personnel and specific protocols at wider levels of Church organization will help to ensure appropriate action and follow-through when abuse is reported within the church setting.

Because of the complex nature of the problem of child sexual abuse and violence against children, intervention and treatment of perpetrators requires resources beyond the scope of ministry provided by the local church. However, the presence of a known perpetrator in a congregation calls for the highest levels of vigilance. While perpetrators should be held fully responsible for their own behavior, the supervision of persons with a history of inappropriate behavior is necessary to ensure that such persons maintain appropriate distance and refrain from all contact with children during church-related activities. Provision for alternative opportunities for perpetrators to grow spiritually in settings where children are not present greatly enhances child protection.

## Fostering Emotional and Spiritual Healing

Children who have been personally victimized or who have witnessed disturbing events need the care of adults who treat them with sensitivity and understanding. Practical support that helps children and families maintain stability in the midst of turmoil empowers victims and their families and promotes healing. The Church's commitment to breaking the silence frequently associated with child sexual abuse and violence, its efforts toward advocacy and justice for all victims, and deliberate action to safeguard children from all forms of abuse and violence will contribute much toward the emotional and spiritual recovery of all concerned. The Church regards the nurture and protection of children as a sacred trust.

(This statement has been informed by the principles expressed in the following biblical passages: Lev. 18:6; 2 Sam. 13:1-11; 1 Kings 17:17-23; Ps. 9: 9, 12, 16-18; 11:5-7; 22:24; 34:18; 127:3-5; 128:3-4; Prov. 31:8-9; Is. 1:16-17; Jer. 22:3; Matt. 18:1-6; 21:9, 15-16; Mark 9:37; 10:13-16; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 1Tim. 5:8; Heb. 13:3.)

- 1.3. In recognition of its desire to nurture and protect children, the \_\_\_\_\_ Seventh-day Adventist Church adopts this Child Protection Plan, which incorporates and expands, as appropriate,



# Why Is Child Protection From Sexual Abuse So Important?

- You represent something larger than yourself.
- “Care, Custody, and Control matter.
- You have a “sacred duty” to protect children.
- Your leadership role demands it.





# How Can ARM Help Further?

# See us here for:

## AdventistRisk.org

- Guides
- Forms
- Resources

The screenshot displays the website's navigation bar with links for Home, Contact Us, Login, USA - English, and a search icon. The main navigation menu includes ABOUT US, INSURANCE, EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, RISK MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES, SAFETY RESOURCES, and FILE YOUR CLAIM. The page features a large banner image of children in a forest with the title "Child Protection". A text box on the banner explains the importance of child protection in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Below the banner is a filter menu with options for Church, Camp, Children And Youth, and School. The "Downloadable Infosheets" section lists six resources: Starting a Child Protection Plan, Check-In/Check-Out Policy, Sex Offenders In The Church: A Legal Guide, Appropriate Touch, Youth Supervision, and Consent Form for Working with Children Online.

Home Contact Us Login USA - English

Adventist Risk Management Inc.

ABOUT US INSURANCE EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS RISK MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES SAFETY RESOURCES FILE YOUR CLAIM

## Child Protection

Children and youth represent a large percentage of the ministry that happens in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including Sabbath School, VBS, Pathfinders, summer camps, and the educational system. This is why having an effective child-protection program is so critical.

An effective child-protection plan starts with screening and regular training for anyone who works with young people. Consideration must be given to your facilities as well as proper supervision protocols to minimize accidents and prevent incidents of abuse.

Church Camp Children And Youth School

### Downloadable Infosheets

- Starting a Child Protection Plan PDF
- Check-In/Check-Out Policy PDF
- Sex Offenders In The Church: A Legal Guide PDF
- Appropriate Touch PDF
- Youth Supervision PDF
- Consent Form for Working with Children Online PDF





# Are you subscribing to *Solutions*, yet?

Don't miss out on our bi-weekly newsletter that focuses on all things risk management. You can't afford to miss out on fresh, relevant articles on safety, emergency preparedness, cybersecurity, and so much more.



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[adventistrisk.org/solutions](https://adventistrisk.org/solutions)

A collage of newsletter content from Adventist Risk Management. It features several article thumbnails and a webinar announcement. The articles include: 'Preventing Distracted Driving Church and School Outings', 'Protecting Students While on Field Trips', and 'Who is Verisk and How They Help Maintain Your Property'. The webinar is titled 'NEW LIVE WEBINAR' and is about Verisk property surveys. The layout includes the company logo, social media icons, and 'READ NOW' buttons.

## Preventing Distracted Driving Church and School Outings

Anything that takes your awareness away from driving can be detrimental. Distractions can be visual (taking your eyes off the road), auditory (taking your hands off the wheel), or mental (taking your mind off driving). Unfortunately, distracted driving accounts for about 9% of all fatal crashes, killing more than 3,000 people annually and leaving over 400,000 injured.

This article will provide you with additional key ways to reduce risk and prevent accidents. We will also discuss maintaining adequate insurance limits if an accident occurs.

READ NOW

## MINISTRY LINKS

**CHURCH**  
SAFETY RESOURCES

**SCHOOL**  
SAFETY RESOURCES

**CAMP**  
SAFETY RESOURCES

**CHILDREN & YOUTH**  
SAFETY RESOURCES

## Prepare, Respond, and Recover

Each year the NAD designates a sabbath as Safety Sabbath because individuals and families need to be prepared for possible emergency situations. If your church or school doesn't have an emergency response committee or hasn't developed an emergency plan, now is the time to do so.

The thought of making a plan can be a daunting task. You may think a quick Google search will provide you with the best emergency plan. It is critical that a well-constructed plan is customized for your ministry location. The value is in the process.

READ NOW

## NEW LIVE WEBINAR

### Who is Verisk and How They Help Maintain Your Property



This free webinar will be held Thursday, April 27 from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Register below to reserve your spot.

## MINISTRY LINKS

**CHURCH**  
SAFETY RESOURCES

## Protecting Students While on Field Trips

Field trips present a complex set of risks for Seventh-day Adventist schools. Traveling into unknown areas can bring unexpected safety challenges, and these challenges can injure students, funds, and reputation. As followers of Christ, we have a clear biblical mandate to protect the little ones. Further, state-by-state jurisdictions present different liability issues for schools, and the highest precautions should be taken to ensure student safety.

Whether you are traveling with a class for a field trip, an athletic event, a retreat, or any other school-related event, planning and proper supervision is the cornerstone of a safe and enjoyable trip. Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) has developed many resources to help you stay ahead of the curve. In this article, I will address the essentials for school-related travel. We will review researching and planning the location and activities, supervision requirements, background checks for chaperones, transportation, permission slips, and situational awareness.

“His master replied, ‘**Well done, good and faithful servant!** You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

MATTHEW 25:21



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Our ministry  
is to *protect*  
your ministry.

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