

**C&MA Guidelines for Sensitive Issues Consultative Group**  
**Evaluation by Vivian Palmer/Harvey**  
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1. Sensitive Issues Consultative Group (SICG)

*From David Briggs article:* The Alliance has pledged to set up by September 2000 an advocacy network for missionary children designed to provide safe places to report abuse and is setting up a Sensitive Issues Consultative Group to care for abuse victims.

*Who makes up the SICG? Answer from C&MA policy:*

The Sensitive Issues Consultative Group (SICG) is a committee created by the Board of Directors in order to support an orderly response to reported incidents of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in a manner which consistently seeks to promote healing and restoration for both victims and perpetrators of abuse. Currently, the language in the bylaws regulating the makeup of Board committees requires that all committees must include at least two Board members. Because of the expertise and independence needed in the composition of SICG, the Board believes an exception is needed to the current requirement. Therefore, a revision to make SICG an exception is being proposed which will provide more flexibility within SICG. SICG is not a committee that makes decisions for the Board, but submits its recommendations to the Board as needed.

*Comment:* This is not an independent group. It is appointed by the C&MA Board which establishes the rules by which this group operates. If leadership does not like the findings, they can dismiss SICG members and ignore any recommendations. These are obvious conflicts of interest.

*Comment:* Essentially nothing has changed within C&MA's mode of operation. There remains the reluctance of this denomination in refusing an independent committee to operate. Squelching the testimony that could be a threat to the status quo of Board leadership is one more act of denial and stonewalling.

2. Payment for therapy

The guidelines for the SICG limits therapy to \$2500 and requires any therapist to sign a statement of agreement before C&MA gives its approval. There has to be C&MA agreement before any extension is granted. The document also restricts the type of therapy and will only pay 80% of the costs after all of the victim's insurance is used up. Twenty-five visits for fifty minutes each is the maximum that will be covered. The rate for a PhD therapist is not to exceed \$90 per 50 minutes. Phone sessions will not be compensated.

*Comment:* C&MA seeks to minimize their liability. \$90 per hour for a PhD therapist seems rather low. A quick Internet search shows that \$150 per hour is more reasonable. The tone of the document is that C&MA is attempting to maintain control.

These policies don't reflect an organization that understands the gravity of criminal child abuse that happened under its watch. When I read it, it seems like C&MA is saying, "We'll pay \$2,500, you forgive us, and it is business as usual."

Not all victims want therapy; my guess is they mainly want C&MA to admit that it is their policies that led to sexual crimes, and to show their sincerity by guaranteeing through tough, clear policy changes that these things *never* happen to another child. If C&MA is confident enough to give victims this assurance, then they should be willing to be accountable to outside entities, and they should make themselves subject to those outside rulings. Without these things, C&MA's efforts are shallow.

*Comment:* Minimization of dollar amount for counseling and therapy reflects the spirit of reluctance to help in-house victims that exists in this denomination. While some Mk's may not desire to have therapy, those who do should be provided with all they need.

What value does C&MA leadership place on the lives of children who belong to in-house families? Children who have suffered at the hands of abusive in-house caretakers, staff of C&MA, deserve much better treatment than this denomination wants to pay.

3. SICG is a volunteer service. If this group is responsible to ensure that child abuse and spiritual abuse never happens again, it is insufficient. C&MA must have a paid staff of professionals that proactively make sure that these serious crimes do not happen.

*Comment:* The only way to ensure that abuse of the magnitude that exists currently in boarding schools worldwide comes to an end is through the closure of boarding schools. C&MA and other missionary sending denominations need a complete tear-down of mission policy that requires innocent children to be *the sacrifice on the alter of missions*. Child sacrifice is not God glorifying or the least bit needful.

New missionary families should be given the option to maintain their little ones at home, raising them as God dictates in the Scripture, in conjunction with their mission work. Older families should have the option to remove their children from boarding school and pursue other forms of education, or even to quit mission work until their children are grown and in secure life situations. If children remain in boarding school, then child/parent communication by letter or other forms must not be censored or inhibited in any way. That censorship is a violation of parent/child relationship. Missionary families must be accountable to God alone for their children. C&MA cannot dictate how families are to raise their God-given babies.

4. There is a phrase “recovered memories” in the sensitivity document. The SICG has used recovered memories to call into question the experiences of MK’s who do not have continuous memories.

*Comment:* My personal experience with MK memories testifies to the truth that they are cyclical in nature. I have had a span of up to ten years at a time pass between episodes of memory recall. As I raised four young children in New Jersey, those memories returned without warning. I knew what they were about, but with four youngsters at home, and running a home business, I had *no time* to engage with painful and unexpected memories and I squelched them time after time. As I aged, the return cycle shortened to five year spans. The act of suppression could not delay their appearance any longer. Finally at age fifty-five I had to turn and face them one by one.

The term “recovered memories” is used by some to imply that some memories might have been fabricated. This is yet another callous means of belittling of and re-victimizing the victim.

5. There is a question regarding the “role of forgiveness” in the healing process. It is important for C&MA to realize that they can never demand or expect forgiveness. Perhaps after a measure of

healing, forgiveness is possible. But these are soul-wounds that in some cases last a lifetime. C&MA must grapple with the long-term effects of abuse, and understand that they are obligated under God to do the right thing, whether forgiveness comes or not.

*Comment:* C&MA, the missionary-sending denomination which is ultimately responsible for enabling the pernicious abuses to take place on their grounds. They refused to be accountable to the reports from some who dared to tell, and continue to stonewall after twenty years of hard work by alumni of Mamou Academy. C&MA must understand without question that they are the abuser.

C&MA does *not have the right* to speak of or demand forgiveness from alumni who were and who still are victimized through their organization. Forgiveness is not enforceable through therapy. It is the victim's personal journey that takes as long as it will take. It is an act of utmost arrogance to include the suggestion that the one in therapy must *pay their due* of forgiveness.

6. The guidelines say that policies can be modified and revised as appropriate. The document does not explain the process for these revisions, or who has input before changes are made.