

## **FIRST AND CENTER**

### **Pastor's Blog**

**October 18, 2017**

Me, too. By a clergyman in a supervisory relationship over me when I was 23. That was the sexual misconduct. Then, there's harassment from time to time over the course of my life, more than once by clergymen or church members.



If you follow Facebook or Twitter, you know what “me, too” means. In the wake of the Harvey Weinstein-as-sexual-predator revelations, a hashtag invented years ago was revived. Someone posted on Twitter and Facebook a note suggesting that if all women who had been raped, harassed, or were victims of any kind of sexual misconduct posted the words “me, too,” we would begin to understand the scope of the problem. Overnight both social media platforms abounded in women (and some men and gender fluid folk) simply writing “me, too,” or going into detail; some, for the first time in their lives.

I was undone seeing post after post like this. So much pain, so often unspoken. and with perpetrators never held accountable. “No one believed me,” we wrote, or “I thought it was my fault,” or “I felt I had no choice or I would lose my job.” Too many people I know, including too many clergy, suffered this treatment at the hands of those in the church.

We need to say over and over again, louder and louder and louder, that this is not right. Not in the church. Not outside the church. Not in the White House. Not anywhere. It is not “joking.” It is definitely not funny. It is not a “compliment.” In unequal power relationships, it is never consensual. And it is most certainly not behavior that gives God delight or honors the divine image in each human being.

Anyone who has done this to someone, any of it, needs to repent, personally, to those you have wounded if possible, and if your victims want to receive your communication. They may not. That is their right. It's not about your rights in this case. Anyone who has been a victim of this behavior, please seek help. Call your local Rape Crisis Hotline (even if you would not describe what happened as rape, and even if it happened long ago; they can help you). Don't think you have to tolerate this for any reason.

Our bodies are temples of the Spirit of the Living God. Our bodies are temples of the Spirit of the Living God. Let us remind one another, especially in the church, that this is truth, and then treat each other as though we believed this.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,  
Pastor