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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE PSYCHOLOGY EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST:

PETER J. BOWES, ED.D.,
RESPONDENT

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
LS010207PSY

The parties to this action for the purposes of § 227.53, Stats., are:

Peter J. Bowes, Ed.D.
1227 N. Cass St. #1
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Wisconsin Psychology Examining Board
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Department of Regulation and Licensing
Division of Enforcement
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

The parties in this matter agree to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final decision of this matter, subject to the approval of the Psychology Examining Board. The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Peter J. Bowes, Ed.D., Respondent, date of birth December 23, 1951, is licensed by the Wisconsin Psychology Examining Board as a psychologist in the state of Wisconsin pursuant to license number 1786, which was first granted July 20, 1993.
2. Respondent's last address reported to the Department of Regulation and Licensing is 1227 N. Cass St. #1, Milwaukee, WI 53202. The most recent address at which Respondent provides professional services is Psychotherapies, Inc., 231 Buffalo St. #201C, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

IMPROPER DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

3. During the events of this matter, Respondent practiced psychology at his private offices located in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area.
4. In addition to practicing as a psychologist, Respondent has had a lifelong interest in religious and spiritual matters, particularly Christian mysticism. In the 1970's, Respondent was a member of the Holy Order of Mans. Later he became ordained as a priest in the Brotherhood of Christ.

5. Beginning in early 1999, Respondent and a psychotherapist from Boston presented a series of seminars on Christian meditation and related topics as "The Sophia Gatherings." In April 1999, Respondent formed and incorporated the Order of Christ/Sophia, which describes itself as:

"The order of Christ/Sophia is a Christian Order of women and men, called together to further the work of Jesus Christ and Mary upon this earth. We are not a sect; we are not a denomination. By "Christian" we mean that which contains the whole, essential Truth of the Christ. The Order of Christ/Sophia is a spiritual school created and sustained by Devine Revelation."

6. Respondent became an ordained priest in the Order of Christ/Sophia and is its spiritual leader. The "Order House" is presently located at 231 E. Buffalo St., Suite 201, Milwaukee, WI 53202, part of the same suite of offices in which Respondent now has his professional practice.

Ms. A

7. Respondent provided psychotherapy and psychological services to Ms. A from 1995 through June 25, 1997. Respondent diagnosed Ms. A as having clinical depression.

8. On October 29, 1996, Ms. A and her spouse commenced a divorce action that was completed on December 9, 1997.

9. Respondent has contended to the Division of Enforcement (DOE) that after the professional relationship with Ms. A ended on June 25, 1997, he had no contact with Ms. A until he invited her to, and she attended, one of The Sophia Gatherings in early 1999. Respondent contends that it was only after that time that Ms. A became interested in, and a member of, the Order of Christ/Sophia.

10. However, Ms. A's son has advised DOE that shortly following the termination of the professional relationship, Respondent and Ms. A had continuing personal contacts and that he witnessed:

a. In January 1998, Respondent had contact with Ms. A and advised Ms. A to make certain financial investments. Respondent did not profit from those investments.

b. In early 1998, Respondent began providing Ms. A with religious books and paraphernalia regarding the religious beliefs held by Respondent.

c. Respondent convinced Ms. A to have a Christmas mass in her home in December 1998.

11. Ms. A sold her home, which had been awarded to her in the divorce action. In the fall of 1999, she used a portion of the money from that sale to purchase a one third interest in a house located at 2716 E. Bellevue Pl., Milwaukee, WI, as tenants in common with Respondent and another member of the Order of Christ/Sophia.

12. The three individuals who purchased the house then resided in that house. The house was also the Christ/Sophia Center of Milwaukee and served as the "Order House," until the Order was found to be in violation of zoning ordinances in mid-2000. At that time, the house was sold.

13. Ms. A has continued to be a member of the Order of Christ/Sophia and on January 12, 2001, Ms. A was ordained as a priest in the Order of Christ/Sophia. Ms. A has told DOE that she does not believe that she was harmed by her relationships with Respondent.

Ms. B.

14. Respondent began providing professional services to Ms. B in late 1994 or early 1995 and provided Ms. B with psychotherapy at various times until October 1999. Early in the professional relationship, Ms. B related having been sexually abused as a child and Respondent diagnosed post traumatic stress disorder.

15. While in therapy with Respondent, Ms. B and Respondent discussed spiritual issues in the context of her past abuse.

16. In mid-1998, while Ms. B was still in therapy with Respondent, he invited Ms. B to attend meditation classes he was beginning to teach. Ms. B and her spouse began attending. The classes consisted of "hands on blessings" and Respondent reading teachings about Christian mysticism to the group. After a few months, the meetings included communion services, hymns and sermons by Respondent. The group attending the meetings became the Order of Christ/Sophia in April 1999.

17. Ms. B and her spouse ceased contact with the Order during 1999, when it began seeking financial commitments from its members so that it could purchase a building as its "Order House."

18. By letter dated December 22, 2000, Ms. B told DOE of the impact on her of Respondent's dual-relationships:

"I found [Respondent] capable of being a good therapist, earning the authority I invested in him to help heal from childhood traumas. He did this by offering the empathy, support and professional insight necessary to earn a client's trust.

However, by asking me to expand my trust in his authority to include the role of spiritual director and intermediary, he abused his role as therapist. He claimed the authority to speak for God in my life, demanded obedience to his direction, and became angry and verbally abusive (he called it being 'intense' and 'chastising') when I asked questions he didn't like, or dared to testify to spiritual experiences that differed from those he prescribed for me. This abuse took place in front of others on at least one occasion, and many other times in private.

It's for this very reason that the state prohibits therapists from having dual relationships with clients: Trust in the judgment and authority of the therapist is necessary to the therapeutic process, yet that trust also leaves clients vulnerable to abuse. I am joining the complaint against [Respondent] because I experienced a pattern of emotional and spiritual abuse, and witnessed the same pattern in his relationships with other current and former clients. I have no reason to believe that this pattern has ended, or will as long as he practices psychotherapy."

Ms. C

19. Ms. C, who was a pastor in a Protestant denomination, first met with Respondent on June 13, 1998. She went to him for spiritual direction after having read his book about mystical Christianity, The Word Within. During that session, Ms. C related having been sexually abused as a child. Respondent diagnosed depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. Respondent and Ms. C agreed that Respondent would provide her with psychotherapy to resolve those issues before addressing spiritual matters.

20. Respondent began providing professional services to Ms. C on June 13, 1998, the date they first met, and continued to provide psychotherapy to Ms. C until June 1999.

21. Beginning in July 1998, at Respondent's invitation, Ms. C attended classes Respondent taught on healing and Christian mysticism. On July 19, 1998, Ms. C attended a communion service performed by Respondent in another office in the building where Respondent's professional office was located at that time.

22. Through the course of treatment, Ms. C decided to leave her parish. In approximately September of 1998, Ms. C submitted her resignation to the parish. Ms. C was baptized by Respondent, at about that same time.

23. Ms. C joined the Order of Christ/Sophia and during 1999, contributed \$1,800 to the Order, which money was used primarily for improvements to the "Order House" referred to in finding of fact 12, above. Ms. C left the Order of Christ/Sophia on April 5, 2000.

24. Ms. C has told DOE that she believes that she was harmed by her relationships with Respondent.

INAPPROPRIATE RECORD KEEPING

25. On July 31, 2000, DOE sent Respondent a consent for release of information form signed by Ms. C and requested Respondent's records of Ms. C's treatment.

26. Respondent responded to DOE's request for Ms. C's records with a letter dated September 3, 2000, and enclosed what he purported to be his contemporaneous case notes regarding Ms. C's treatment.

27. Ms. C told DOE that Respondent had not kept records of the treatment sessions. DOE sent Ms. C the purported records that Respondent had provided. Ms. C reviewed the purported treatment records and told DOE that the records must have been created in response to a records request. As an example, Ms. C cited an event which had not yet occurred on the date Respondent made reference to the event in the records.

28. In a subsequent letter, DOE asked Respondent to respond to the contention that the records were recreated. Respondent told DOE: "I sometimes waited a few days at times to write the progress notes due to being quite busy, but I did not recreate them."

29. On January 10, 2001, the Division of Enforcement (DOE) sent Respondent a consent for release of information form signed by Ms. B and requested Respondent's records of Ms. B's treatment.

30. Respondent responded to DOE's request for Ms. B's records with a letter dated January 20, 2001, in which he wrote: "I failed to keep adequate records on [Ms. B] and do not have any case notes for her. I know that this is very poor record keeping, so all I have is a summary to the best of my recollection of what the psychotherapy consisted."

REMEDIATION

31. In January 2000, DOE originally contacted Respondent about the allegations of an inappropriate dual

relationship with Ms. A. Subsequent to that contact, Respondent has voluntarily attended three workshops on professional ethics in which the nature of dual relationships was discussed.

32. Respondent agrees that, prior to attending the ethics workshops, he had entered into inappropriate dual relationships with 13 current or former professional clients by including them in some aspect of his religious order.

33. Respondent has told DOE that he now understands the nature of dual relationships.

34. Respondent has also advised DOE that Respondent's work as a priest requires him to minister to the Order and that he is increasingly serving in that capacity. For that reason, Respondent has agreed to surrender his license to practice psychology in the state of Wisconsin.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Psychology Examining Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to § 455.09, Stats.

2. The Wisconsin Psychology Examining Board has authority to enter into this stipulated resolution of this matter pursuant to § 227.44(5), Stats.

3. Respondent's conduct, as set out above, constituted a failure to avoid dual relationships or relationships that may impair a psychologist's objectivity or create a conflict of interest, which was in violation of Wis. Adm. Code § PSY 5.01(17) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to §455.09(g), Stats.

4. Respondent, by failing to make and maintain adequate records of the treatment of some of his clients, has performed professional services inconsistent with training, education, or experience, which constitutes a violation of Wis. Adm. Code § PSY 5.01(4) and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to §455.09(g), Stats.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The surrender by Peter J. Bowes, Ed.D., Respondent, of his license to practice psychology in the state of Wisconsin is hereby accepted, effective March 1, 2001.

2. If Respondent ever petitions the Board for a license to practice psychology:

a. Respondent shall notify the Division of Enforcement (Division) of the request and the Division shall have the opportunity to apprise the Board of all allegations contained in these investigations pending at the time the attached stipulation was executed.

b. Following the presentation of information by the Division, the Board may in its sole discretion elect to license Respondent, with or without limitations, or to deny Respondent's petition.

c. If Respondent believes that the Board's denial of license is inappropriate or that any limitation imposed by the Board is inappropriate, Respondent may seek a class 1 hearing pursuant to § 227.01(3)(a), Stats., in which the burden shall be on Respondent to show that the Board's decision is arbitrary or capricious. The denial of license or limitations on Respondent's license shall remain in effect until there is a final decision in Respondent's favor on the issue.

The rights of a party aggrieved by this Decision to petition the Board for rehearing and to petition for judicial review are set forth on the attached "Notice of Appeal Information".

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 7th day of February, 2001.

Barbara A. Van Horne, Ph.D.

Chairperson

Psychology Examining Board