



# GUIDELINES TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN SCOM FAMILY

For Use in SCOMAF Zones, SCOM UCS and Secondary  
School SCOM Branches

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS USED**

SCOM	-	Student Christian Organization of Malawi
SCOM UCS	-	SCOM Universities and Colleges Section
SCOMAF	-	SCOM- Associates Fellowship
VCT	-	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
HIV	-	Human Immune Virus
AIDS	-	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
NEC	-	(SCOM) National Executive Committee
NAC	-	(SCOM) National Associates Committee

### *And where referred*

- *Member* refers to the registered member in Secondary School, University and College branches and SCOMAF zone,
- *.Constitution* refers to the Constitution of SCOM
- *Politics* refers to the act of direct or indirect involvement in the process of visibly yielding or exercising of *power in public* domain at various levels in politically charged groupings such as political parties and political pressure groups.
- *Human rights* refer to rights as recognised in Bill of rights in Malawi.
- *Freedoms* refer to freedoms as recognised in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi

### *And in this document*

- *Ministry* and SCOM are used interchangeably

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## **PREFACE**

*Pursuance of similar objectives, cherishing of uniform values, homogeneous visualization of societal destiny, congruent aspirations and general consensus on the means of fulfilling the objectives are the core tenets that differentiate one group from another. Corollary, they are also the pillars on which the formation and survival of any organization firmly rests. As organizations grow, an impartial stander-by will rate its level of success based on how each of these tenets together are embraced by the members of the organization. As organizations grow in years, membership and resource base, the litmus test of their continued survival is on the same tenets.*

*SCOM is one such organization which has geometrically grown in membership in all its structures. The enormous responsibility bestowed upon us by God continues to be a humble honor to us. All eyes of SCOM members now see the same thing: the harvest is too plenty. Notwithstanding the wide membership base, the 'annual harvest' is too huge as well. The challenge of SCOM therefore is twofold: inside and outside. Internally, the ministry has to deal with the diversity of its membership, in terms of ages, social-economic status, sex, generational gaps, denominational parities and different cultural and tribal orientations. Externally, the environment is changing everyday as some segments of the world are preaching a seemingly strange message on what it means to be happy in this world. A SCOM member is thus faced with challenges from these two dimensions and has to move on faithfully uprightly in the eyes of God in such environments. SCOM believes in the word of God contained in the Bible entirely. Thus the word of God as espoused in the Bible is SCOM's supreme guide on how its members should conduct themselves.*

*That granted, any prescribed guidelines of how SCOM members should conduct themselves may not be exhaustive. However, in a fast cruising world, it serves greatly to agree on a few areas as put and implied by the Bible that the world has labeled as controversies to avoid the constant and perpetual incidences of putting the name of God in shame and tarnishing the innocent image of SCOM (deliberate or unintentional). Thus the guidelines to the code of conduct provided here do not in any way add or intend to impose any new prescriptions on top of those provided in the Bible. To the contrary, these guidelines strive to remind, reinforce, accentuate and underscore our commitments to the Biblical principles in how we, as Christians foremost should conduct ourselves as we achieve the objectives of SCOM. Put differently, the guidelines inculcably repeat our commitments to live in concordance with the Biblical principles. Equally, the guidelines do not even in trivial sense replace, amend and modify the existing SCOM constitution but enables the latter to be upheld operationally. It is obvious that the possibility of incorporating extra guidelines to signify SCOM's standards on emerging issues in this fast cruising world is highly likely. Finally, as Philippians 2: 14-16a implores us, let us "do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. There is a lot of stake in our society and unless Christians begin to look at things from the biblical point of view, they will be swallowed by the world.*

**Dr. Alfred Maluwa**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Being part of a global village in the fast permeating global order, third world countries continue to face the quagmire of controlling the rate of erosion in their societal values, courtesy of Western orchestrated 'free-life' campaign. The Church in Africa is consequently under pressure to relinquish its tightly embraced Biblical values that the very West irresistibly and passionately preached to our open minded ancestors, not long ago. As the world order is uncontrollably taking roots, the once seemingly consensus on the universal standard for Christian conduct has unnoticeably evaporated. The major reason is that human philosophy is using the same Bible to propagate doctrines which are standing parallel to the 'orthodox truth'. Unsurprisingly, Christians rarely easily agree on Christian 'norms'. Fueling the Church's crisis is the third wave of democratization, mainly with its twin features of freedoms and rights. Rights and freedoms by their very nature are *a/ways* individualistic in nature, at least to a greater extent. The Biblical notion of being 'a brother's keeper' thus striking runs counter to the concept of human rights and freedoms substantially and can hardly be married. Pressure emanating from these two fronts continues to erase the once and a 'supposed-to-be' visible line between believers and non-believers. Where such boundaries exist, there are undeniably conscious efforts by believers to live as such and display the undiluted Biblical values in their entirety. It is the need for the latter option which gave birth to the initiative of compiling these guidelines to the code of conduct in SCOM family.

The guidelines are meant to be used in SCOM's three structures, SCOMAF, SCOM UCS and Secondary School SCOM branches. Deliberate efforts have been made to touch on all areas that affect the lives of diverse members in all the structures. Emphasis has been placed on issues of relationships, fellowship, responsibility in the ministry, disciplinary processes, involvement in politics, human rights and freedom, dressing and integrity in places of one's trade. The guidelines cannot claim to having exhaustively dealt with all issues. Being the

first version, there is likelihood therefore that additional areas will be incorporated at appropriate later stages.

Patrick Reuben Kaudzu  
SCOM General Secretary

## **1.0 RELATIONSHIIPS**

SCOM believes and recognizes that life revolves around relationships and that we are all borne out of relationships. Relationships are the heart that pumps the blood of life. The ten commandments are about relationships.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.1 Relationship with Parents, Guardians and Elders**

- 1.1.1 SCOM members should respect their parents, guardians and elders at all times both in actions and speaking
- 1.1.2 SCOM members are required to respect and honor their parents, elders and guardians even if they are not Christians.<sup>2</sup>

### **1.2 Relationship with Wards and Youngsters**

- 1.2.1 SCOM members who are parents, elders or guardians should treat their wards and youngsters in a dignified manner in order to foster a bond that will be conducive to fruitful relationship between guardians and wards as long as both sides do not compromise on Christians standards<sup>3</sup>
- 1.2.2 In their interaction with wards, SCOM members should strive to lead by good example both in actions and speech.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.3 Relationships with those in Authority**

- 1.3.1 SCOM members must be submissive to all forms of authority that have been instituted such as patrons, teachers, school administrators, and the government.
- 1.3.2 SCOM Members must strive to maintain a good and healthy working relationship with authorities as long this does not compromise SCOM's core values.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.3.3 SCOM members must exercise wisdom and maturity to judge between submitting to authority and submitting to sin.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.4 Relationship with the Opposite Sex

- 1.4.1 SCOM recognizes the fact that marriage starts with courtship but the general rule is that marriage is for those that are mature emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.4.2 SCOM discourages relationships between boys and girls still in secondary schools.
- 1.4.3 SCOM Associates must not get into relationship with SCOM students because the latter still have significant life goals to achieve such as attaining education, earning a stable income and living.
- 1.4.4 SCOM encourages senior members (in the UCS) who want to embark on a relationship to be yoked with fellow believers.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.4.5 Senior SCOM students (in the UCS) who embark on a relationship should observe sexual purity and must handle themselves in a manner that does not put the name of God in shame before they get married.<sup>9</sup>
- 1.4.6 Unmarried SCOM members who impregnates or is found pregnant shall be liable for a disciplinary action to be administered by an internal disciplinary committee.

## 1.5 Marriage

- 1.5.1 SCOM encourages married Associates to continuously seek God's face, guidance and bond in their married lives.
- 1.5.2 SCOM encourages married couples to love and be submissive to each other both in times of happiness and sorrow.<sup>a</sup>
- 1.5.3 SCOM encourages married associates to develop the habit of resolving their issues amicably and without resorting to public judicial-forums such as courts and police.<sup>b</sup>
- 1.5.4 SCOM encourages married couples to share their family struggles with Church brethren or close confidants within the ministry.<sup>c</sup>
- 1.5.5 Married associates should **live by biblical standard of marital faithfulness to one spouse and thus** should not have extra marital status. If evidence is established on misconduct such associates must be approached and should repent. If this does not work, they must cease to operate under SCOM and schools must be informed of this.
- 1.5.6 Married associates who impregnate or is impregnated by somebody (other than his/her spouse) will be subjected to disciplinary action.
- 1.5.7 At all times, married associates should act ethically and with the integrity before God and towards the opposite sex and the general public/society so as to honor the sanctity of marriage and not to bring shame to the Lord's name.
- 1.5.8 Married couples living in conflicts caused by or resulting into battling, alcoholism, adultery, communication breakdown must be approached as above.



## **1.6 Divorce and Separation**

- 1.6.1 SCOM appreciates the various interpretation of scriptures pertaining to divorces and separation by different churches and theological schools of thought.
- 1.6.2 However, in view of the fact that married SCOM members are supposed to be role models to students and the society at large, SCOM members who have divorced and separated on the grounds stated below should be excused and relieved from the ministry:
- i) Adultery
  - ii) Witchcraft
  - iii) Misunderstanding
  - iv) Departure of spouse
- 1.6.3 In a case where one spouse is dead and the surviving spouse decides to marry, SCOM encourages such members to maintain Christian standards in course of planning to re-marry.
- 1.6.4 In a case 1.6.3 above holds, the member will be allowed to discharge his roles as any member.

## **2.0 FELLOWSHIP<sup>d</sup>**

- 2.1 SCOM cherishes the need to strengthen our bonds of relationships as we live for the others
- 2.2 SCOM members must live to promote the interest of others as long as those interests are in line with scriptures.
- 2.3 SCOM members are encouraged to assist each other in times of need and sorrow.
- 2.4 SCOM members are encouraged to celebrate each other's success, achievements and any form of breakthrough through sharing of personal strides.
- 2.5 SCOM members are encouraged to be open to each other so they have a safety vent through which to share their experiences and struggles.
- 2.6 SCOM members must treat each other with respect and dignity regardless of their social divides .
- 2.7 No SCOM member should be segregated on the basis of social divide such as education prowess, income, and position in society, outward looks and disability.
- 2.8 SCOM members who, in terms of social divide such as income and education prowess are above others are encouraged to try their best to open up to those below them so that true and meaningful fellowship in SCOM is sustained.
- 2.9 SCOM members must desist from indulging in gossiping, backbiting and spreading rumors in order to foster unity and be a source of blessing and joy to each other.

- 2.10 SCOM members must be sensitive to the way they speak to each other to avoid being a thorn in the fellowship.
- 2.11 SCOM members who, in terms of social divide such as income and education thinks are less advantaged than others should not feel inferior to those who are seemingly well to do, but they should mix freely for healthy fellowship.

### **2.11 Treatment of Singles in the Ministry**

SCOM realizes that marital status can either be a choice or circumstantial and whichever of the case, all members deserve respect regardless of their marital status. SCOM also cherishes the enormous contribution that has been made and continues to be made by both married and single associates. It is in this vein that SCOM:

- 2.11.1 Encourages its members to respect and treat each other in dignified manner regardless of their marital status.
- 2.11.2 Encourages both married and single members to be open to each other in order to enable both categories understand and appreciate each other's struggles and feelings.

### **3.0 RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MINISTRY<sup>e</sup>**

- 3.1 SCOM members should strive to support the ministry at all times either through prayers, resources or emotional support.
- 3.2 SCOM members should strive to attend SCOM meetings where possible and are encouraged to develop a habit of notifying the leadership of their absence in advance where possible.
- 3.3 Those entrusted with leadership positions must at all times be accountable and transparent in the manner in which they make decisions and use resources for the ministry to the upper committees and those under their jurisdiction
- 3.4 SCOM encourages those in leadership committees to regularly initiate independent financial audits exercises of accounts – done by qualified accountants, auditors and firms – where capacity allows, to ensure transparency, financial prudence and cultivate the trust of members. In the same vein, SCOM encourages its members to constantly access copies of audited accounts and where the need warrants, objectively raise questions to the responsible leaders.
- 3.5 SCOM members are encouraged time and again to bring forth substantial and constructive ideas and suggestions on how the ministry can progress further. In the same vein, SCOM members are encouraged to pool in their various expertise/skills/gifted talents in the undertaking of SCOM operations.
- 3.6 SCOM members should be pro-active in seeking information, clarification and guidance in areas where they are not clear from leaders in relevant structures and the secretariat in order

to reduce antagonisms that arise because of asymmetric information and divisive speculations.

- 3.7 SCOM members should ensure that they are supportive and submissive to those in SCOM leadership positions in order to ensure that SCOM objectives are accomplished.
- 3.8 SCOM members should strive at all times to present a good image of the ministry to other people who are not members of SCOM
- 3.9 SCOM members are strongly encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas **of** education, business and career by constantly upgrading their respective attainments through further studies, business seminars and career development programs.

#### **4.0 DOING BUSINESS WITH SCOM MINISTRY**

4.1 In the spirit of integrity, SCOM members shall declare their interest when dealing with SCOM in any monetary business.

**4.2 SCOM members should strive to deliver the same or an even better quality of service that they would provide in a professional capacity to any other client in the marketplace**

#### **5.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTERGRITY IN PLACES OTHER THAN SCOM<sup>f</sup>**

- 5.1 The ministry expects all its members to be people of integrity and handle any resources entrusted to them with the fear of the Lord.
- 5.2 It is for this reason that SCOM expects its members not to indulge in acts of theft, embezzlement of resources, violent demonstrations, misuse of resources and people, money laundering and sexual harassment at their work places or any other place where they are entrusted with resources and power. Such actions will meet disciplinary actions.

#### **6.0 DRESSING<sup>g</sup>**

6.1 SCOM is cognizant of controversy that surrounds the issue of dressing in society as well as in the church but is also aware that Christians dressing goes beyond the covering of one's nakedness and looking presentable to glorifying God and His temple which is our bodies. SCOM also **realizes** that **society** will always embrace **its own definitions** of what is acceptable and even the limits of freedom of dressing but Christians **must be guided** by the biblical principles. While the desire for SCOM is **not to provide a list of dos and don'ts** SCOM cherishes the following principles:

- (a) The body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body.
- (b) Whatever you put on, wear it as unto the Lord giving thanks to God through Him.
- (c) Dressing must reflect our appreciation to God for creating us in His image.

- (d) Jesus must be the Lord of our every choice we make even of clothes.
- (e) Freedom of dressing must be defined by what is beneficial to us and the body of Christ in general
- (f) Fashions must not enslave us, we must determine what is good for us as guided by the Word of God.
- (g) Associates and SCOM members should be cautious that God first provided clothes to Adam and Eve so that they cover their nakedness and any clothes that exposes hidden parts of the body are not recommended for the SCOM family

6.2 It is on account of the above principles that SCOM members are encouraged at all times to:

- (a) Dress with modesty and decency
- (b) Cover all parts of the body that can stimulate others sexually and desist from clothes that make others to stumble by avoiding buggy trousers that go so low (kukhwefula), see-throughs, suggestive tight skirts and trousers that depict the body contours, mini-skirts that expose thighs, tops that expose the base of breasts and large portions of the back.

## **7.0 ALCOHOL INTAKE, SMOKING, ABORTION AND HOMOSEXUALITY<sup>h</sup>**

SCOM perceives itself and its members to be playing a key role in the spiritual lives of its members and the community at large. SCOM members are expected to be examples and a shining light to the world. Guidelines with regard to abortion, homosexuality and alcohol and substance abuse have thus been developed in order to let SCOM members live a life that is above reproach and worthy of their calling. SCOM therefore encourages its members to separate themselves from habits and practices that would bring shame to the Lord's name and are asked to live by a higher stand of moral practice by following these recommendations as follows

### **6.1 Alcohol and substance abuse**

6.1.1.1 Alcohol and substance abuse (antidepressants such as marijuana and cocaine) lead to several negative consequences such as putting the Lord's name to shame, causing a stumbling block in other people's faith, health problems, family and other varied social problems and may even result in deaths related to substance and alcohol abuse, SCOM Members must **therefore abstain from these (alcohol and substance abuse)** in order to successfully achieve its mission. The Bible lists these as the fruit of the fresh (Gal 5:19).

## 6.2 Homosexuality and abortion

- 6.2.1 SCOM prohibits marriage of same sex in its entirety. In the beginning God created them male and female. Homosexuality is prohibited and condemned in the Bible.
- 6.2.2 SCOM respects the sanctity of life and strongly prohibits abortion in any form. It believes that life begins at conception so killing the fetus is murder and brings punishment from God. The way out of pregnancy is to repent the sin and carry on rather than aborting.

## 8.0 HIV AIDS PANDEMIC<sup>1</sup>

8.1 SCOM acknowledges the untold misery that HIV/AIDS pandemic has caused in the world and how its members have been infected and affected by the pandemic. SCOM also believes that those infected by the virus are full human beings fully capable of contributing meaningfully to socio-economic development and in the preaching of the Gospel. In this vein SCOM:

8.1.1 Strongly encourages its members to go for Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) in order to know their sero status. Knowledge of one's sero status ensures that proper care is taken regarding ones health after receiving proper counseling.

8.1.2 Prohibits members for discriminating and stigmatizing against members or non-members who are HIV positive and/or are suffering from AIDS.

8.1.3 Prohibits members from publicizing or disclosing the sero-status of fellow members who are positive without their prior permission or consent.

8.1.4 Prohibits members from forcing anybody to declare his/her sero-status.

## 9 PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS<sup>L</sup>

9.1 SCOM understands politics as the process of yielding power in order to run or influence the government for the benefit of general citizenry. SCOM therefore does not perceive politics as a dirty game. It is in this vein that interested SCOM members are encouraged, where possible to take part in public affairs.

9.2 SCOM members involved in politics are advised not to use SCOM structures, slogans and resources in the pursuance of their political interests.

9.3 SCOM members who are involved in politics should observe integrity in politics and where there is evidence to the contrary, disciplinary measures shall be taken.

#### **10.0 HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS<sup>J</sup>**

SCOM is cautiously aware that while human rights and freedoms are meant to stimulate the attainment of maximum material, spiritual and socio-economic aspiration, not all human rights and freedoms are permissible from a Biblical perspective. It is for this reason that SCOM:

- 10.1 Encourages its members to be civic educated in order to be conversant of their respective human rights
- 10.2 Encourages members to routinely check if some of the rights are in line with God's word.
- 10.3 Discourages members from exercising the rights that do not edify or build the body of Christ.
- 10.4 Discourages members against causing confusion, divisions and anarchy in the ministry under the pretext of exercising their rights
- 10.5 Prohibits members against championing and advocating for rights or pervasions that are not in concordance with the word of God.

#### **11.0 DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES AND ISSUES OF DISCIPLINE**

- 11.1 There shall be disciplinary committees in SCOMAF Zones, UCS and at NAC level which shall be responsible for handling disciplinary cases in SCOMAF Zones, Secondary Schools and UCS.
- 11.2 Among the cases that will be handled by the disciplinary Committee include beer drinking, smoking, adultery, pregnancies, theft, extra marital affairs, among others. Besides, disciplinary Committees shall have powers to determine if a case warrants disciplinary process.
- 11.3 Disciplinary Committees shall have powers to receive complaints, investigate submissions/allegations, approach a concerned member, summon a member concerned (or for evidence), and recommend a disciplinary action to the relevant Committee be taken against a member.
- 11.4 The Disciplinary Committee shall, in discharging its duties and excising its powers, operate within the bounds of Biblical and Spiritual principles, take due recognition of the need for impartiality, maturity and shall strive as much as possible get the side of the all persons under the disciplinary processes.
- 11.5 Each SCOMAF Zone (and Sub-Zone) shall have a disciplinary Committee to administer disciplinary processes at Zonal and Secondary School levels while each UCS branch shall have its own Disciplinary Committee. At NAC level, there shall be an overall Disciplinary

Committee which shall have powers to preside over disciplinary cases referred to it by Zonal, Secondary and UCS Disciplinary Committees.

11.6 The Disciplinary Committees shall be constituted by Zonal Executive Committees and UCS Branch committees.

11.7 The Disciplinary Committee shall be composed of mature and dedicated, men and women of observed wisdom and sober minded.

*Footnotes refer below for some scriptural backing to some of the above stand when applied in our context.*

1-Exodus 20:1-17.                      6-Eph 6:9.  
2-Exodus 20:12,Eph 6:1-4.    7-Gen 24,2:21-23,Heb 4:13.  
3-James 2:8,3,Eph 4:25,29.    8-2 Cor 6:14-16.  
4-ITimothy 4:12.                      9-Rom 2:21-24.  
5-Rom 13:1-4,Eph 6:5-8.    a-Eph 5:21-23. h-Eph 5:18.  
b-1Cor 6 :1-11.                      e-1Thess 2:6-9. i-James:1:27,2:1-5,Gal 4:28-29  
c-Heb 10:24-25.                      f-1 Sam 12:1-5    L-Math 5:13-16,John 17:15,18  
d-1 John 1:1-5,Ps 133:1-3.    g-1 Pet 3:1-4,ITim 2:9-10. J-Phil 2:3,Gal 5:1-6,1Cor:12-13,ICor  
8:9