

Report to Church Council
Public Policy/Church and Society Working Group
February 14-16, 1997

Members of the Interim Working Group

1. Roger Petry (Sask.), Chairperson
2. Paul Gehrs (MNO)
3. Michael Mills (Eastern)
4. Darlene Johnson (BC)
5. Carl Rausch for Beth Lange (AB & Terr.)

Staff: David Pfrimmer - Lutheran Office for Public Policy

A. Mandate:

The focus of this Working Group is to address issues in Church and Society by developing contributions to Public Policy discussions, overseeing the work of the ecumenical coalitions, and coordinating and sharing the social ministry programmatic work of the Synodical Church and Society committees.

B. Major Initiatives:

- 1) ***Sustainable Social Economics Statement*** -- This statement is now in the process of being revised for presentation to the ELCIC Convention in July 1997. The Statement was distributed across the church and responses have been received. Through the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, the IWG is supportive of the training program -- ***Building a Moral Economy*** -- which is training people to lead workshops on economic issues. These training events are being held across the country during the next two years.
- 2) ***Decisions-at-the-End-of-Life*** -- This resolution was referred to the IWG from the 1995 Winnipeg Convention. A study document was prepared and distributed to congregations, seminaries and those in special ministries. Based upon the responses, the resolution will be edited. The IWG has changed the tone from a legalistic one to more pastoral. It will reflect the perspective of the previous resolution.
- 3) ***Support for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)*** -- The IWG was briefed by the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC) about the Report of the RCAP. This follows upon the ELCIC participation in the RCAP process and the Sacred Assembly. Bishops agreed to participate in a cross country initiative to meet with Aboriginal Leaders.

C. Initiatives in Progress:

- 1) ***Continuing support for the Ecumenical Coalitions.*** This includes research and advocacy and distributing resources to congregations and synods (e.g. ***Solidarity with Uprooted Peoples*** kit which was mailed to every congregation with the help of GHDA). The IWG wants to encourage greater use of the Ten Days development education materials across the ELCIC.

- 2) Working to develop adult education materials on the *Sustainable Social Economics* Social Statement to be used in follow up to the convention. The IWG has developed an *AIDS/HIV Information* resource that has been distributed to Bishops/Synod Offices and Synodical Church and Society Committees.
- 3) Received the final report of the *Taskforce on the Study of Human Sexuality*. (see Appendix I)

D. Recommendations for Future Work in this Area of Church Life:

- 1) Strengthen support for the work of the Ecumenical Coalitions.
- 2) Commend the ELCIC Bishops for previous initiatives (e.g. their support of regional meetings between Church leaders and Aboriginal leaders concerning the RCAP) and to continue to be proactive in speaking in a timely manner on social issues. The IWG has resources to support these initiatives.
- 3) Encourage the structures of the national church to incorporate Public Policy/Church and Society considerations in their activities.

E. Items for Church Council Action:

- 1) To Commend Janet Morley, ELCIC Vice President for her work in support of Human Rights.
- 2) To thank the Members of the *Taskforce on the Study of Human Sexuality* for their work by asking the ELCIC Bishop to send a letter of appreciation.
- 3) To ensure space on the Convention Agenda for forums and convention action on the Resolution "*Decisions-At-The-End-Of-Life*" and the Social Statement "*Sustainable Social Economics*." To ensure space on the Convention agenda for the Resolution in support of education about the "*Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*."

F. Items for Convention Action:

- 1) Action on *Statement on Sustainable Social Economics*. (Forum Requested)
- 2) Action on *Decisions-at-the-End-of-Life*. (Forum Requested)
- 3) Action on Resolution in Support of Education about RCAP.
- 4) Receiving Report of the *Taskforce on Study of Human Sexuality*.

G. IWG Members Planning to Attend Convention:

Delegates:	Paul Gehrs
Visitors:	Mike Mills
Staff:	David Pfrimmer

Study of Human Sexuality

Final Report of the Task Force

August, 1996

INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

This report will summarize the mandate given by the 1989 church convention. The preliminary study consultation will be described, as well as the design, the development of resources, the training of leadership, and the relationship of the national Task Force to synod working groups.

Many forces hindered the completion of the study as it was originally envisioned. These will be described in detail.

Nevertheless, while the study has not achieved the originally desired ends, many accomplishments will be described.

The study, as originally conceived, is being stopped at this point. However further recommendations are made for continued reflection and action by the church.

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MANDATE

The 1989 national convention called upon the church "to initiate a study of human sexuality encompassing physical, emotional and spiritual intimacy in human relationships and to include people often marginalized in the church and in society." This initiative was given to the Division for Church and Society.

PRELIMINARY STUDY

In order to begin to understand the scope of this study a Division for Church and Society consultation was held when the Division Board met at the Lutheran Seminary in Saskatoon. Persons involved represented theologians, pastors, educators in matters of sexuality, gays and lesbians, disabled, and natives. Issues involved were grouped into what would become the central themes of the study: Sex and Sexuality, Sexuality Education, Power and Compassion, Diversity, Decision Making, and Empowering Relationships. These issues ranged from knowing who we are as male and female, to teaching our children about sexuality, to bio-reproductive technology, to dating and friendships, to marriage, to cultural and historical differences in attitudes toward sexuality and sexual practice.

The issues were to be studied in a context of faith and worship, and discussion would be based on the foundation of the authority of scripture. Central values were affirmed:

1. Sex is a gift of God;
2. Christian life should support all aspects of a person's life;
3. Sexuality is not dualistic - we are embodied persons;
4. We are responsible beings - responsible to God, ourselves and others;
5. Various other values underpin our efforts together: commitment, equality, mutuality, respect, wholeness, caring, love, playfulness, ambiguity/diversity, openness.

The goals of the study were defined as follows:

- ▶ To explore as the people of God;
- ▶ To explore primarily from experience (a discovery process);
- ▶ To explore our identity, experiences, biases, and prejudices as sexual beings;
- ▶ To support people as they make personal decisions about sexuality;
- ▶ To provide opportunities to think about issues of sexuality;
- ▶ To develop a supportive community;
- ▶ To provide a knowledge base for decision-making;
- ▶ To develop a resource list/base for further study and reflection;
- ▶ To nurture a more inclusive faith community.

There would be no intention to develop any statements or policies for the church within the study. It was hoped that the study would be a valuable resource for further work in developing statements and policies.

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PROCESS

The Design

To accomplish these goals the Division for Church and Society made some radical decisions about the design.

Issues of sexuality are about people. This study would need to bring people together to talk, to learn, to witness and to grow. The design could not be in paper and ink, it needed to be designed around opportunities for dialog.

This design approach has been somewhat problematic for some, but highly effective also. Our church has been accustomed to studies being submitted as documents which were reviewed, discussed, critiqued and shaped, until they could become position papers for the church. Because of this expectation, people were asking for copies of the material. They wanted to know who authored it. They expected the study to have a bias and to take a position which would or could become the position of the church. Gradually people have discovered that this study is more like a research project than a position paper-in-progress. Opportunities for dialog have been meant to identify issues, to bring our faith backgrounds and faith experiences to bear, and to identify implications for ministry. This study was not intended to result in a paper which would identify our church's position on matters of sexuality; it was intended to identify implications which would call our church to mission and ministry around these matters.

The Development of Resources

A design which brought people face to face required the development of materials that would engage the participants in dialog. It was hoped that each of the six themes would have approximately twelve modules. Modules would be written to be appropriate for a variety of audiences: married and single; children, youth and adults; and a variety of settings: Bible camps, Sunday Schools, congregations, retreats, and conferences. Modules could be an experience lasting as little as fifteen minutes or a retreat of three days. The design concept allowed for a "tool box" with a variety of tools. A particular setting or gathering could select, in consultation with trained leadership, the resource "tools" that would be needed to meet their needs and accomplish their particular objectives.

A variety of authors have contributed to the discussion materials. It was decided by the Division that the authorship of particular modules would not be disclosed; the material belonged to the church and would be used by the church. All contributions have been examined by the Division, its staff and Board or Task Force. Materials have been solicited and edited according to the values and design goals outlined above. All contributions have been submitted at the request of the Division and have been written without remuneration.

Sample resources for devotions and worship have also been distributed.

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The Establishment of a Structure

A study of human sexuality has inherent to it many risks. Facilitating such a discussion requires great skill in establishing a setting of trust, safety and respect. Leaders must be able to handle conflict. They must be prepared to responsibly handle the possibility of deep pain or disclosures of abuse. They must be aware of their own attitudes and biases toward sexual matters and be able to respect the experience, attitudes and values of others. This is not material that could simply be purchased from Augsburg/Fortress and discussed without adequate preparation.

To this end, a system was established whereby resource people were invited together from each synod and trained in the philosophy and approach of this study. They were encouraged to return to their own synods and train other resource people who would act on their own territory in a variety of settings.

Because of the lengthy timeline for the study, from concept to design to training to implementation, it became necessary to establish a Task Force that would continue beyond the terms of elected representatives to the Division. This would allow for continuity of leadership and philosophy.

The membership of the Task Force consisted of one representative from each synod. This person would relate both to the synod resource people and to the national church through the Division.

Each synod was asked to create its own working group. This working group would be responsible for the implementation of the study in the synod. This would include matters such as:

- ▶ the recruitment and training of resource people;
- ▶ the encouragement of the study, selection of sites and budgeting of the study within the synod;
- ▶ the supervision and encouragement of the resource people;
- ▶ any refinements or creation of further resources;
- ▶ the gathering of implications for ministry, which would be forwarded to the national church.

In some synods the working groups have been sub-committees of the synodical Committee for Church and Society. In other synods the working group has been the Committee as a whole. Working groups have been as small as one lone individual and as large as six.

It was the responsibility of the Task Force to insure that required materials for all themes are prepared and disseminated to the working groups. The Task Force was also responsible for gathering the implications for ministry and for preparing regular reports to the working groups and a final report to the national church in convention. The Task Force recommends a budget to the Division for expenses in the development, publication and distribution of materials and for the preparation of a final report.

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The Training of Resource People

The budget of the national church provided for one training event in Edmonton. Further training of resource people within the synod has been the responsibility of the synods themselves. Recommendations have been made for the qualifications necessary for resource people as well as models for training.

Further Implementation of the Study

The original timeline anticipated that the final report of the study would be made to the church in its 1995 convention. However, because of the time required to design the study, prepare materials, train appropriate resource people and promote interest within the synods and congregations, it was recommended that the timeline of the study be extended until 1997. Materials for the themes of Empowering Relationships, Decision-Making, and Power and Compassion were to be completed by the summer of 1995 and were to be distributed at that time.

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HINDRANCES TO THE PROCESS

This study of human sexuality was mandated by the church in convention. The design was created in response to a consultation with relevant groups about the issues before the church requiring reflection and response. The design was created by a Division of the church, enabling the training of leadership, the development of resources, the encouragement of cooperation by synod governance with congregations and institutions within their boundaries. The original timeline was from 1989-1993; it was extended to 1995. And in 1997 the study still has not accomplished much of its purposes.

The following pages describe some of the hindrances to the study process. They reveal learnings unexpected in the design of the study, but valid learnings nevertheless.

Discussion of the hindrances to the study will revolve around three themes: the receptivity of the church; the structure of the study; and the nature of the issues themselves.

The Receptivity of the Church

Different Expectations

It can be said that the church in the 1989 convention adopted this mandate, and the church in the 1995 convention extended that mandate, but the church as a whole did not receive the study process as a its own.

Part of the resistance involved different expectations about what "a study" means. To "study," in the minds of some, meant to work through a set curriculum, to study what the church has to say about sexuality and sexual ethics. Such expectations required clear statements about what the church is saying or needs to say. From this perspective, the curriculum then came under scrutiny for its validity in expressing what participants wanted it to say. There was to be an expected orthodoxy. This approach to a study wanted to explore what the Bible and church tradition really have to say about sex and sexuality. However the open-endedness of this study as designed caused great consternation, suspicion and despair about the future and faithfulness of the church.

A different understanding of "study" could be seen in those who wanted to research what the issues around faith and sexuality are in the church. This approach wanted the data available from social and scientific research. This approach wanted to study the world first, and then would reflect biblicly and theologically around the discoveries.

A third approach, the approach of this study design, was more process-oriented. This approach did not want to study a curriculum; it wanted to talk, to discover, to identify, to reflect, to analyze and recommend. Leaders would not then bring a content to a group for discussion; leaders would bring a process, a method; the group itself would bring the content. The assumption was that people were already living with issues of faith and sexuality. The study identified areas of concern and then invi people to explore those areas more explicitly. People would be bringing to the process their

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experiences and their choices and their reasons for their choices. "Liberal" positions would be in dialog with "conservative" approaches, potentially informing and challenging one another in a lively and creative process.

This study approach was a departure from other approaches in the recent past. Previously, a small representative group within the church would research and write and then a "study" would be released for discussion, analysis, and criticism by the broader church membership. Rather than letting the church "do the work" over several years, others had done the work and presented papers for critique. If these papers were readily accepted, they then became ratified as positions of the church.

This study process stated clearly that it was a process. That it would bring participants together for dialog and reflection, and "implications" for further reflection and ministry would be gathered for later action. No position, no statement, would arise immediately from the study.

A Hidden Agenda

However, given people's trained expectations, the study became suspect by some for that very reason. What was the position of the church? Why didn't the church have a position on homosexuality, pre-marital sex, bio-reproductive technology, and all the rest? If the church had no position, then it was neither being faithful to the scriptures nor to tradition.

The fear of a "hidden agenda" created suspicion, which helped to solidify into small but very vocal groups who called and wrote and challenged members of the Task Force, synod and national church leadership, and trained trainers.

Some of this suspicion and criticism is further grounded in the context of the study with respect to other events in the ecumenical church. This study process was designed after the United Church had released a study of the issue of homosexuality and the ordination of homosexuals. This design of the ELCIC was adopted in respect of the furore in the United Church. The ELCIC did not want to create dissention by floating what might be a minority position and inviting conflict. Rather, this study was to allow the people to discuss at the grassroots, so a direction and a position would emerge more gradually and authentically from the actions and reflections of the membership.

At the same time, the ELCA released a study, in the more traditional sense, a paper dealing with broader issues, but a paper nevertheless, written by a few and challenged by the many. This ELCA study was circulated among Canadian congregations even before the ELCA acted upon it.

This context of controversy in the United Church and the ELCA early in the process had two negative effects on the process. First, it diverted significant amounts of time and emotional energy away from the implementation of the study and into explaining and defending the process, not to mention the personal positions and reputations of the leadership individually. Secondly, the resistance created some anxieties for persons who might have contributed to the process, either in writing or by a physical presence. Potentially well-qualified resource people declined to write or participate because they did not want to expose themselves to the tension. A few groups invited to host discussions declined because of the controversial nature of the topic.

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The Structure of the Study

Voluntary Personnel

The church is a voluntary organization. That is both a strength and a weakness. This study depended upon a huge network of trained, motivated and organized volunteers. And the study was hampered because of its size.

From the beginning, the study was assigned to the Division for Church and Society. The Division had many many issues and responsibilities and further delegated the study to the Committee for Health Care and Healing. As members of this committee completed their terms of office it became clear that continuity required that these people continue in some fashion to implement, monitor and bring to completion the study. Therefore the Task Force for the Study of Human Sexuality was struck.

Establishing this Task Force allowed for the continuity of vision and design. But it also meant that people who had already completed four or eight years with the Division were being asked to commit another two years to this study. Yet they did accept. The risk, which proved itself to be true, was that these people would be attracted, called and committed to other involvements.

At the same time, it was acknowledged that while the Division met and drew people together from across the country, to work and dialog face to face in powerful relationships that developed and deepened over time, this Task Force would have no budget to meet. It was stated that because of the already established relationships, perhaps the work could be handled for this project by conference call and mail. This proved to be ineffective.

Volunteers need relationships. They need the motivation of belonging, and they need the motivation of accomplishment. The lack of opportunity for sustaining relationships, combined with the lengthy timeline, complicated further by other demands in individual settings weakened the effectiveness of the Task Force.

Volunteers function best when expectations are clear and communication is open. The expectations of the Task Force were stated to be matters of oversight. In reality the responsibility came to include creative writing, recruitment, motivating, and handling a wide range of conflict. Communication among members was taxed by distance, time, and home responsibilities. Communication between the Task Force, the synod working groups and the national church was taxed by the many changes that happened structurally during the time of the study.

Expanded Timeline

Further to the timeline, the establishment of the Task Force was for two years. This was expanded two more years and then again two more years. Participants resigned or dropped out as other interests required.

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There were expectations that the writing and preparation of materials needed for the process would be readily available. This did not prove to be the case. It also became clear that synods had varying rates of response to both organizing and promoting the study. Meanwhile the national church structurally changed: the Executive Director left; support staff became overtaxed and less available for oversight, revisions and material preparation; budgets became uncertain; synod committees no longer related to a national Division.

Ownership of the Issue

From the outset, funding for this study was limited and ambiguous. The mandate was given by the national church. But the implementation of the study became a synod responsibility. Budgets were set nationally allowing for an initial consultation, production of first materials, and training of leadership personnel. However operational expenses for conducting work within the synod borders were left to the synods. The national commitment did not fit with synodical commitments, at least initially.

And this difference in financial commitment reflects the varied commitments to owning the study itself. Again, the mandate came from the national church. The direction was given for the study nationally. The responsibility for the work of the study was assigned regionally through synods, with varying degrees of acceptance and priority. Within synods the Synod Working Groups then attempted to motivate congregations, Bible Camps, schools, ELW's, and various other organizations to undertake elements of the study. These organizations did not own the issue and prioritize for the study in their budgets, timetables, or leadership. The problem was that the study belonged to the national church in convention but did not belong to the synod or the congregations to the same degree.

Identifiable Resource People

One of the discoveries of the study was that there were few resource people within our church who had reflected on faith and sexuality and were prepared to become involved in leadership. It was not difficult to identify specific areas of involvement, such as the gay-lesbian community, sexual ethics, sexuality education, sexual health. And it was not hard to identify people within those fields with some very good qualifications. But, as has been noted elsewhere in this report, either theological reflection had not been done upon this work, or they were not interested or available for development. Partly this is a matter of stewardship, busy people allocating the resources of their time and energy as they need. But partly this is also a matter of safety and acceptability. People contacted were too busy or were afraid of the controversy.

Restructuring

As noted earlier, the restructuring of the church became a higher priority, within the national office, and at the synodical level. Restructuring removed a contact person, the Executive Director, who had national mobility and oversight and could have related to the Task Force volunteers within their

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synods. The particular person serving also had expertise in social studies that helped to motivate and to craft the study. Materials and communication funnelled through the national office, and there were significant time delays and projects were "lost" in the backlogs. Lines of accountability became confused and communication stopped when it became unclear to members of the Task Force to whom they were accountable.

The Nature of the Issue

A third hindrance to the completion of the study may be described in considering the very nature of the issue of sexuality itself.

Classic Dualism

What business is it of the church to discuss matters of sexuality anyway? This is not a prudish question; it is an academic one. It reflects deep roots back to the first and second century church and a dualistic approach to body and spirit. Matters of the body and matters sexual are earthly, vulgar, distracting. Matters of the soul, matters of the spirit, matters of salvation are to be separated from earthly distraction in a disciplined way. Classic dualism makes the study of sexuality suspicious. And yet classic dualism is precisely at the root of the alienation of male and female and the shame that feeds various sexual problems. This resistance to the study confirmed the need for the study. This dualism needs to be the content for reflection and revision theologically.

Secrecy and Privacy

So much of our culture, at least church culture, still expects sexual matters to be private. The prevalence of sexually explicit material, while now pervasive, is still relatively new, an explosion within the lifetime of our senior members. We don't talk about sex. "Nice" people don't talk about sex. The church is assumed to speak quite loudly a "No" to sex; but to what is the church saying "Yes"? Certain denominational statements, notably Catholic, but not exclusively, denounce specific sexual behaviors but do not celebrate or affirm what is healthy and good.

Much of what church members seem to be experiencing is shame based rather than affirming. They are either embarrassed to talk about sex or guilty of something the church does, or is assumed to, condemn.

People are wounded in their sexuality. Much of our attitudes about gender wounds women. Men are wounded too, also limited, in different ways, by the same restrictive expectations.

Sexual violence is rampant. Whether the exploitive material of the media, entertainment and advertising; the abuse of children and women; patriarchal exploitation; violence in the home; infidelity in marriage.... The woundedness of people makes the study of sexuality a delicate matter. This is not a subject that can be examined dispassionately. People have been wounded and are mistrustful

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and afraid and feeling somehow responsible for their own victimization. Perpetrators of sexual violence deny and minimize their responsibility. Defensiveness in matters of sexuality is very high.

The study wisely assumed that implications for further action by the church would arise and would require renewed commitments. Issues cannot simply be reviewed without a call to act. This study would have political implications. And those implications again raise resistance.

Pastoral Sensitivity

The study required pastors and lay leaders to become more astutely aware of people in their own congregations. How would the church respond to sexual abuse? What policy would a congregation or camp need to assure the safety of its children and the accountability of its staff? How will a congregation minister to the infertile couple, or the couple that pursues fertility by extraordinary means? What will the local church do with the gay and lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people in their neighbourhoods and in their own membership? What policy will a campus ministry take to support gay and lesbian students? What stand will a congregation take with the video store on the corner and the convenience store across the street? What choices will medical personnel make with seniors and disabled people in long-term care? How will youth groups support young people in dating safely and making wise choices about permanent relationships?

This study has the potential of helping congregations to see their members in new ways and to respond with greater sensitivity and faithfulness. But parishes are already busy. Pastors' schedules are full. Program timelines are crammed. In some ways the study, while virtuous in its intentions, created more work than could be managed. It is easier to deny, to delay, and to defer.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE STUDY

When this study was begun, very few resources were known. During the course of the study a very good bibliography of books has been compiled and is attached for future reference.

While there has been scepticism among some people about the approach of the study, reports of actual events have been tremendously positive. Participants young and old have enjoyed the methods, the insights and the opportunities for discussion.

The training event for resource people was well appreciated. People appreciated the method and felt equipped to take the process home. New awarenesses were created in the complexity of the issues and the needs of people.

A very good manual of exercises has been prepared that could still be used in a variety of ways. This material could be expanded with additional revisions and new material in all themes.

The basic underlying principle of studying faith and sexuality face to face, person to person, rather than on paper has been applauded by representatives of other church bodies, sexual health and education personnel, therapists and counsellors in Canada and the U.S.. While slower and more cumbersome, it allows for the greatest grassroots, bottom-up response and honestly reflects the very enfleshment of the subject matter.

An unexpected but very important result of the study to this point has been the discovery of the current morale within the church. There are concerns about leadership and direction that need further attention. Members of the ELCIC need help understanding the scriptures and how to use the scriptures in their ethical and relational decision-making. There are widely divergent approaches to faith and life within our church. A vocal minority, if such it is, can sap the energies of volunteers and create significant dissension. At the same time, creative and courageous people can expand understandings and deepen faithful commitments by taking risks and trying new ventures.

A motion to initiate the study was passed seven years ago. The recorded rationale for that motion has long been lost. However, those who have been intimately involved in the study have discovered that the need for study and response within and by the church remains strong. The questions and needs within the identified themes are not yet answered.

Sex and Sexuality - Who are we as spiritual people with physical bodies? How do we correct the dualism of older theological traditions? What can we value and celebrate as male and female, men and women?

Diversity - How do we understand and accept the varying traditions within church history and the sexual attitudes and behaviors across times and cultures? How will the church respond to matters of homosexuality and transexuality? What ministry is needed to encourage, even redeem, heterosexuality?

Sexuality Education - How do we help families, schools and communities handle this sensitive but crucial responsibility?

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Power and Compassion - Violence toward women and children occurs throughout our culture and around the world. How does the church understand this problem? How will the church respond justly and redemptively? What will the church do with pornography, with exploitive entertainment, with prostitution? How will the church respond to the victims and the perpetrators of violence? Including those victimized within and by the church?

Decision-making - Understanding requires action. How will the church act politically in matters of sexuality? What will be the church's moral response to rapidly changing technology and the choices that must be made about fertility, the human genome, abortion, and other bio-reproductive matters?

Empowering Relationships - The church has often been understood to say simply "no" to sex. What does the church have to affirm about God's created and sexual order? What direction will the church offer for marriage, for dating, for single people, the never married, the widowed and divorced?

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

While the mandate for this study in its present form must end, clearly further work must continue in new forms.

The study attempted to be all inclusive of the church, being implemented across the country in all synods. Perhaps the scope of the study could be reduced. Perhaps a particular synod, or region within a synod, in a representational approach, could continue to create opportunities for dialog, to collect and digest responses and to report implications for ministry to the broader church.

The ownership for further study of faith and sexuality must be grounded in some fashion. Perhaps attention could be given these issues in seminary, at pastors' conferences and at conventions at all levels. Perhaps further work could be done to identify writers not only of curricula for groups of all ages, but also for articles in the church's popular journals and media.

Perhaps representative groups within the church could address individual themes, creating opportunities for reflection and action within that theme.

Decentralization through restructuring has re-assigned responsibilities to the synods and groups within synods. The opportunity for identifying and equipping resource people may be enhanced but the need for sharing information and resources is also greater. The mandate of this study was given in convention to a Division of the church. Part of the collapse of the study is due to the restructuring. No Division is now responsible. The synods did not take ownership in a way that could bring this to completion. Attempting to network across the country without a supporting budget and structure failed. To whom is now given the responsibility for response?

Clearly the themes remain. The issues within these themes remain and are growing increasingly complex. The church continues to discover much about itself and how it works, and about the needs and resources of flesh and spirit.

Let this study not end but be a beginning.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Task Force on the Study of Human Sexuality

David M. Saude

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ... STUDY OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

The following texts are suggested readings, categorized according to themes of the study. It must be noted however that there may be considerable overlap, and readers are encouraged to cross reference other themes.

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