

**The Committee on Sexual Exploitation
(1994-1997)**

MEMBERSHIP

The Rt. Rev. Robert M. Anderson (Los Angeles)
The Rev. Alcena Boozer (Oregon)
Mrs. Marjorie A. Burke (Massachusetts) *Co-chair*
The Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews (Virginia)
The Rev. Canon Margo E. Maris (Minnesota) *Co-chair*
Dr. Mary Meader (Massachusetts)
The Rev. John P. Streit, Jr. (Massachusetts)
Mr. J. Patrick Waddell (El Camino Real) *Secretary*
The Rt. Rev. Arthur E. Walmsley (Connecticut)
Sr. Helena Marie, Office of Women in Mission and Ministry, *Staff*
The Rt. Rev. Harold A. Hopkins, Jr., Office of Pastoral Development, *Staff*

Committee representatives at General Convention

Bishop F. Clayton Matthews and Deputy Donald E. Burke are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

Introduction

This Committee was created by Resolution B052a of the 70th General Convention, and renewed by Resolution A063 of the 71st General Convention. Resolution A063 reads:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church declares that sexual abuse, coercion, and harassment of adults and minors, known collectively as sexual misconduct, by clergy and church employees remains a problem in this Church, despite much work done in the past triennium, and be it further

Resolved, That the Committee on Sexual Exploitation established by the 70th General Convention (in Resolution B052a) be continued for another triennium, and that the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies be asked to maintain the same standards of membership established by the 70th General Convention, and be it further

Resolved, That the Committee on Sexual Exploitation be directed to complete their work presented to this Convention, to closely examine the issues related to sexual misconduct by lay employees and volunteers, and to provide themselves as a resource for the entire Church to draw from in dealing with these issues.

Background

Holy Scripture records a history of covenants, both between God and humankind, and among the people. It also recounts instances of broken covenants, of the failure of people to keep trust or to honor commitments. Scripture is also clear that when covenants are broken and trust betrayed, pain, hurt, and mistrust ripple outward, often far beyond the original situation or relationship.

While our faith does not insure perfection, it calls us to action when the covenant is broken. For example, the prophet Nathan confronted King David, named his betrayal and pronounced God's judgment. In this way Nathan not only reminded David of the ultimate source of David's authority and power, but also helped restore the covenant of trust within the community. The people saw there were consequences of David's behavior and that God was ultimately in charge. As a result trust could be rebuilt and healing could begin.

In 1991, the 70th General Convention took seriously the issue of the sexual misconduct of some of its ordained leaders and created an Interim Body charged with dealing with these problems on a churchwide level. The Committee on Sexual Exploitation was the result, and during its first meeting prayerfully considered the problem and its roots.

The Committee came quickly to realize that the basis of the church's response must spring from the Baptismal Covenant stated in the *Book of Common Prayer*. In this Covenant, the People of God promise to "... respect the dignity of every human being." We also recognized that the whole history of our faith is covenantal, and that God established a new covenant in Jesus, which reached out to those not included in the original covenant with Israel. As a result, the focus of our work was on healing and reconciliation.

As this Committee, along with a number of dioceses, began to address the issues of sexual misconduct, the Church Insurance Group also started to realize the potential for major financial losses due to lawsuits resulting from the sexual misconduct of those in leadership positions. As a result, they began to place requirements upon those dioceses and congregations they insure to provide a certain standard of training, documentation, and background checking its leaders.

As a result, the work of the Committee on Sexual Exploitation has become confused and entangled with that of the Church Insurance Group. This is unfortunate, since the approach taken by each of us reflects very different goals, though both are fully legitimate. The Insurance Group has focused primarily upon financial loss control. The Committee has focused primarily upon the proper pastoral response to these instances.

The Committee is working to establish an environment where people who have been harmed can be helped to feel whole and safe, and healing and the restoration of trust in the larger community can be rebuilt. Further, the Committee is working to prevent further instances of sexual misconduct through information, coordination, suggested guidelines, and written training materials.

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Summary

The Committee on Sexual Exploitation has worked in the past triennium to address the problem of sexual misconduct by church leaders, and to develop resources to help bishops, dioceses, congregations, and individuals as they work to address these issues.

The Committee has met five times, twice at Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA, once at the Virginia Theological Seminary, and once at Kanuga Center in Hendersonville, NC. We also met during the Joint Interim Bodies Conference in Minneapolis, MN. There we met and conferred with the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Church, and the Committee on Continuing the Dialogue on Human Sexuality.

Developments during the Triennium

The passage of a revised Title IV by the 71st General Convention confronted the church with new challenges. Dioceses were faced with changes in the implementing diocesan canons, the election and training of trial courts, as well as a revisiting of their procedures for responding to complaints. To meet these needs, the Committee produced a series of pamphlets pointed towards the needs of various individuals or groups:

For Persons with Complaints: Information of Episcopal Church Discipline
A Diocesan Guide to Understanding Title IV
A Clergy Guide to Understanding Title IV
What a Congregation (and Vestry) Should Know about the Revised Disciplinary Canons of the Episcopal Church

In each case, there was consultation with the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons, and we express appreciation to members of the Commission for their assistance.

With the active participation of the House of Bishops, the first of four additional pamphlets was released in the Spring of 1996:

Guidelines for Bishops Meeting with Complainants in Accordance with Title IV

Two parallel pamphlets are being drafted: *Guidelines for Bishops Meeting with A Respondent in Accordance with Title IV* and *Suggested Standards for the Restoration of Rehabilitated Sexual Exploitative Clerics*

The first new pamphlet outlines the preparation for a bishop's first meeting with a member of the clergy accused of misconduct. The second will outline standards for the Restoration to the Ministry for a cleric convicted of misconduct and who has undergone treatment and rehabilitation.

The bishops who are drafting these intend to work with future meetings of the House of Bishops towards refining these important resources.

In our work, we recognize the care which dioceses now bring to the needs of the various parties involved in a misconduct charge - complainants, the respondent, the congregation involved. As our work proceeded, we recognized that the spouse and families of an accused cleric also have needs, and we expect to complete an additional (and fourth) pamphlet on this subject completed prior to the 72nd General Convention.

Training Materials

During its first triennium, the Committee concentrated on producing a set of model diocesan policies and procedures, along with training materials covering both adult sexual misconduct issues and child sexual abuse. These, along with a number of background papers, were distributed in a binder to bishops, deputies, and Triennial delegates at the 71st General Convention. The 71st General Convention approved this material and commended it to the entire church for use (1994 Resolution B022a).

The Committee is gratified at the widespread use of this material and have prepared some minor revisions for distribution at the 72nd General Convention.

“800 Number” Hotline

One goal for the triennium that we relinquished was the establishment of a national toll-free hotline (Resolution A064a), available to anyone throughout the country who might need help, information, or support with an issue of sexual misconduct. The hotline was to be strictly limited to referral (and not to counseling services), connecting people with appropriate local diocesan persons and resources.

After some initial investigation, we determined that such a hotline was unfeasible for the following reasons:

1. Cost (in both time and money) in staffing, training, and supervising such a hotline.
2. Cost (in both time and money) in keeping such a hotline current so that callers would not be given outdated or erroneous information.
3. The recognition that the original focus of the hotline as a referral service and not a counseling service could not be maintained and callers would likely present needs requiring far more than just referrals.

For these reasons we concluded that it was better not to proceed, reasoning that no hotline was better than an inadequate hotline.

Training Events

The Committee is very much aware and grateful for the hard work and commitment of many individuals and groups in the church who now form a growing body of sensitive, trained, compassionate people willing and able to respond to incidents of sexual misconduct by clergy and lay professionals in our community of faith.

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It is these groups and individuals which in a real sense collaborate with us in our work, to whom we are indebted, and for whom we are both a resource and support. First among these is the Office of Pastoral Development of the House of Bishops, which through its annual "Instruments of Thy Peace" conferences, begun in 1989, have educated and trained over 200 bishops, priests, and lay professionals. It is through the efforts of the Office of Pastoral Development, that we now, with great pleasure, acknowledge and celebrate the creation of a churchwide network of victim's advocates, pastoral response teams trained to work with congregations, and pastoral support persons trained to work with the accused and/or their families in need.

It is through the work of many that we can now imagine today the building of a different church than when we first began, a church in which silence is being replaced with voice, and fear with hope.

Results of a Survey of Bishops

During one of the meetings of the House of Bishops, the episcopal members of the Committee presented a questionnaire to the other bishops who chose to participate. There were responses from 59 bishops, representing at least 47 different dioceses (roughly 50% of the entire church). Of these respondents, over the past five years, they had aggregately dealt with 66 charges of sexual harassment, 99 charges of sexual exploitation, and 105 charges of sexual abuse (which totals 270 in all). Of these, approximately 25 had been found groundless after investigation, a less than 10% rate. While not every bishop reported that their diocese had an ongoing group charged with responding to cases of alleged sexual misconduct, almost all reported that their diocese had a formal training program dealing with issues of sexual misconduct. However, we were alarmed to discover that at least two dioceses have done little or nothing to address these issues.

This questionnaire was not intended as a scientific or rigorous study of the prevalence of misconduct within our church, but rather to permit the Committee to gather baseline data and comments. More study is necessary.

What should be evident from the results, however, is that this is a non-trivial problem within our church. The Episcopal Church has, however, begun to deal with it in a manner that is exemplary among other churches, at least in the United States.

Sexual Misconduct by Lay Employees and Volunteers

The immediacy of responding to changes in Title IV made at the 1994 General Convention (i.e. the pamphlets), delayed our work on addressing issues of sexual misconduct by lay employees and volunteers until our February 1997 meeting. Since this work has just begun, it will require more time and effort during the next triennium, gathering and reviewing data, reviewing existing policies, and so forth. Our goal is to produce suggested policies and procedures as we did for issues of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 1994-97 TRIENNIUM

	1995	1996	1997
<i>Income</i>			
Budget	\$26,500	\$26,500	\$26,500
<i>Expenses</i>			
Meetings	\$8,236	\$10,257	\$18,500
Consultants	3,334	1,900	5,000
Administration	3,845	2,564	3,000
Printing and Mailing			1,185
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<i>Total</i>	\$15,415	\$15,903	\$26,500 (estimated)

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING TRIENNIUM

Goal: We plan to complete the work assigned to us by the preceding two General Conventions during this next triennium. This includes assisting the development of a churchwide network so that this work of reconciliation, prevention, and healing can be fully integrated into the life of the church and our Committee can be disbanded.

Objectives:**1. Additional Pamphlets**

- *Guidelines for Bishops Meeting with Respondents*
- *Suggested Standards for the Restoration of Rehabilitated Sexual Exploitative Clerics*
- *Guidelines for Communicators in reporting about Sexual Misconduct*
- *Story Telling about Sexual Misconduct* (personal stories from survivors, rehabilitated offenders, congregations, and families which reflect our theological grounding)
- *Envisioning the Church's Holiness* (both darkness and light)

2. Monitor Progress

- assist dioceses in developing training for the ministry of reconciliation and healing
- revise - update training manual policies and procedures in light of new understandings
- gather additional data from individuals, congregations, dioceses, and the House of Bishops

3. Examine Issues Related to sexual misconduct by lay employees and volunteers**4. Network**

- bring together diocesan practitioners and other diocesan officials working in the field of sexual misconduct to create an ongoing and self-renewing system that will carry on this important reconciling ministry.

5. Respond to any resolutions from the 72nd General Convention.

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BUDGET APPROPRIATION

	1998	1999	2000
<i>Expenses</i>			
Meetings	\$18,500	\$19,000	\$19,500
Consultants	5,000	5,000	5,000
Administration	3,000	3,100	3,200
Networking Meeting		5,000	
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<i>Total Annual Expenditures</i>	\$31,500	\$27,100	\$27,700

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution A123 Committee on Sexual Exploitation Budget Appropriation

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the sum of \$86,300 be appropriated for the
2 work of the Committee on Sexual Exploitation during the next triennium.

Resolution A124 Continuation of Committee on Sexual Exploitation

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal
2 Church acknowledges and applauds the progress being made throughout the Church in
3 confronting instances of sexual misconduct by clergy and other church employees, and the strides
4 in developing a climate of sensitivity to issues of health and wholeness through churchwide
5 programs of awareness training; and be it further
6 *Resolved*, That the adoption by the 71st General Convention of revised disciplinary canons has
7 called dioceses and other church agencies to study and revise their implementing procedures and
8 structures, and has led the Committee on Sexual Exploitation to develop and circulate a series of
9 educational pamphlets and training events to facilitate church wide understanding and
10 implementation of Title IV; and be it further
11 *Resolved*, That this 72nd General Convention authorizes the continuation of the Committee on
12 Sexual Exploitation for a final triennium to complete the tasks outlined in its report, and to assure
13 that at the diocesan and provincial levels an outgoing network of leadership will continue both
14 preventative and remedial measures leading to a healthier, holier Church.