

REPORT OF THE BISHOP'S TASK FORCE FOR A SAFE CHURCH

FOCUS:

This group continues to expand our work in offering resources for the entire church to be a safer, more just place. Those who serve on this team work at providing basic education in the prevention of misconduct. Some of our team members are especially trained in responding to situations where misconduct is alleged to have taken place. It should be noticed that increasingly there is a connection between the work of this task force and the efforts of the Volunteer Screening and Development Group, under the excellent guidance of Joyce Wilton, as we work together to create a safer, healthier church environment.

ACTIVITIES:

Our primary activity continues to be the provision of basic orientation the policy *Sexual Misconduct Policy: Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Assault 2000* which currently governs clergy and lay workers licensed for professional ministry within the Diocese. Our training extends far beyond acquainting people with the policy *per se* and deals beyond that to help individuals identify circumstances, behaviors and practices which create the potential for unwholesome interactions to occur. This year, in our two basic orientation training sessions, we trained over 30 clergy and lay people.

We exist as well, to respond to, (and at the Bishop's invitation investigate) situations where there is a concern that misconduct may have taken place and where individuals have felt that because of something specific, that the church is not a "safe place" for them.

Members of the committee are also available for parishes, deanery groups and Clericus group both to educate people around the nature of harassment, abuse and the misuse of power. In such settings, we assist people in understanding the policy as it currently exists. In the past year, I personally visited two Clericus groups to provide Safe Church training.

The creation of a "safer church" is of concern in denominations throughout the world. The Church of England, for example has just published a paper on bullying, entitled *Dignity at Work*. Resources such as this from throughout the world are being included as we continue to redevelop Niagara's current policy in concert with the national church, other Dioceses and other denominations.

MEMBERSHIP:

This committee includes clergy, pastoral specialists, lawyers and professionals with counseling and child welfare expertise.

This year, we said farewell to two of our long time members, the Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence, retired Bishop of Niagara and Canon David Long, who up until his retirement served as the Diocesan Director of Human Resources including serving as staff liaison for this committee. We are pleased to welcome to our midst, Bishop Michael Bird, our new Diocesan Bishop and have appreciated his support and guidance in the tasks that are before us.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP'S TASK FORCE FOR A SAFE CHURCH (continued)

Members:

The Rt. Reverend Michael Bird
The Rt. Reverend Ralph Spence (retired)
Mr. Graeme Leach
Canon David Long (retired)

The Reverend Rod McDowell, Deacon
Canon Marni Nancekivell (Chair)
The Venerable Jim Sandilands
Ms. Joyce Wilton

Respectfully submitted,
Canon Marni Nancekivell, Chair