



Dear Friends and Colleagues -

The Synod Council, meeting last Friday (Nov. 28), gave approval for the draft of the document on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality in the Alberta Context to be circulated to the Synod for discussion, reflection and response. I am anticipating a longer period of discernment and response - to the end of June 2009, at least. If it is warranted by virtue of the responses received in the Synod office, the preparation of another draft of the document will be considered.

It was important that we see this project through to at least this conclusion. In so doing we have honored the commitment to serve, as well as the hard committee work, of the Task Force members. They could not bring the work to conclusion, but they did bear the burden of the bulk of the work - for which I once again offer them my thanks. Likewise, I thank the blue ribbon panel who took the document to this next stage. The document is not "excellent" - but it is "very good". It will serve its intended purpose of generating discussion and response. Most importantly, it talks about the realities of marriage, family and sexuality "here and now" - in our time and place. Our Synod, its congregations and rostered workers, need to come to terms with these realities.

This document is rather lengthy - 24 pages in all. It would not be good stewardship for the Synod office to make hard copies for every rostered worker and congregation, or to incur the costs of a major mailing like this. Therefore, the document is being sent to you electronically in PDF format. We will try to have the document posted in MSWord format later today or early next week. There are glitches when you move documents between programs. Thanks to Lorraine Kalis and Kathy Budgell for their work in preparing the final versions of the text. Feel free to print your own copies as you see fit. This is now a public document. For your information, the document will also be posted on the Synod website later today (December 5). You can direct people to www.albertasynod.ca. Should you require a hard copy, simply request one from Kathy Budgell in the Edmonton office at 1-866-430-2636 (toll free) or kbudgell@elcic.ca, and we will see to it that a copy is prepared and sent.

On a personal note, I really enjoyed the opportunity to work on this document. It was a good challenge, and fitting the various pieces together became almost a deed of love. On behalf of the Task Force, the Blue Ribbon Panel, and the Synod Council I urge you to receive this document in that spirit.

Blessings!

+Ron