



**United
Brethren**
ALL FOR CHRIST

The Human Sexuality Task Force

Background on the Members and Work of the Task Force

Mandate of the Task Force

- Review United Brethren Discipline statements related to marriage (para. 122) and illicit sexual relations (para. 125) in light of National Conference 2015 Proposal 10, “Same Sex Marriage,” and Proposal 11. “Illicit Sexual Relations.”
- Prepare theological position statements regarding human sexuality which preserve the biblical view of marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman while taking seriously the role of the Body of Christ (i.e. evangelism, service, spiritual care) in our social context.
- Consider legal implications for local churches and church-affiliated institutions.
- Propose Discipline revisions to National Conference 2017.

Task Force Members

- *Dr. Luke Fetters* is the chairperson. Luke is professor of ministry and missions at Huntington University, an ordained United Brethren minister, and a former UB missionary, pastor, and church planter.
- *Dr. Anthony Blair*, president of Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown, Pa. Anthony is an ordained United Brethren minister, and former UB pastor, church planter, and superintendent.
- *Matt McKeown*, associate pastor of First UB church in Holly Hill, Fla., with a degree in Christian counseling.
- *Joni Michaud*, an attorney practicing in the areas of criminal law, family law, and immigration law. A graduate of Huntington University and Notre Dame Law School, Joni is a member of Pleasant Valley UB church in Lake Odessa, Mich., and was a delegate to the 2015 US National Conference.
- *Beth Pictor*, a counselor from Emmanuel UB church in Fort Wayne, Ind. Beth graduated from Huntington University in 2015 with a Masters in Counseling.
- *Andy Sikora*, pastor of Renew Communities, a UB church in Berea, Ohio, which he started in 2011. Andy graduated from Huntington University in 2001, was ordained in 2014, and is a current member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- *Mark Vincenti*, youth pastor of College Park UB church in Huntington, Ind. Mark graduated from Huntington University in 1999, and served 11 years as youth pastor of King Street Church (Chambersburg, Pa.) before coming to College Park. He was ordained in 2015.
- *Trevor Maggart*, a 2015 graduate of Huntington University, is currently associate pastor of The Pointe in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Notes about the Task Force

- Average age: 41 years old.
- Members of the Task Force have undergraduate degrees in Youth Ministry (3), Christian Counseling, History, Recreational Therapy, Bible & Religion (2). Members of the Task Force have graduate degrees in Law, Mental Health Counseling, Biblical Studies, Missional Leadership, Christian Ministry (2), Religious Studies, History, Intercultural Studies, Adult & Community Education, Leadership & Emerging Culture.

- At the first meeting, each member of the Task Force presented several of their own “default” statements on human sexuality. They realized immediately that they shared a commitment to a traditional view of marriage, and that they had a heart to minister with grace to all who experience brokenness in their sexuality.
- As the Task Force shared their perspectives at the first meeting, it became clear that each member had one or more personal connections to these issues that made the work more than an academic exercise. Each member of the Task Force was personally and relationally invested in a biblically-faithful and grace-filled outcome.

Task Force Meetings & Procedure

- The Task Force met on six occasions: March 3, 2016, May 24, 2016, June 9, 2016, September 22, 2016, November 22, 2016, and May, 1, 2017. All members were physically present at United Brethren National Offices for the first meeting.
- The ELT reviewed the work of the Task Force on April 19, 2016, October 18, 2016 and April 25, 2017.
- The Task Force identified key issues which needed to be addressed and assigned sub-groups to create statements on those issues. The statements were reviewed by the entire Task Force in subsequent meetings.
- The Task Force created recommendations for revising the Family Standards section of the Discipline.
- The Task Force collaboratively created a white paper exploring the theological rationale for each revision proposal.

Six Recommendations from the Task Force

- Singleness – new statement.
- Illicit Sexual Relations – expansion of former statement under existing heading.
- The Local Congregation & Human Sexuality – new statement.
- Marriage – modestly revised statement under existing heading
- Pornography – complete replacement of statement under existing heading.
- Sex & Gender Distinctions – new statement.

National Conference 2017

- Because of prior summer commitments in China for Huntington University, Luke Fetters is unable to participate in National Conference 2017. Mark Vincenti has agreed to facilitate responses to questions addressed to the Task Force during discussion on the floor of National Conference 2017.
- The Task Force will lead a panel discussion during each of the seminar sessions at National Conference 2017 focusing on scenarios related to human sexuality which local churches may face.
- The Task Force is preparing a list of resources to be distributed at National Conference 2017 for pastors and local churches who wish to learn more about Christian responses to issues of human sexuality.