

Sexuality education and resource management in the church setting

by

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Abstract

This study explores the link between resources and sexuality education within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Six churches were involved in this study representing small, medium, and large congregations based on the full-time employed staff.

Both church staff and volunteers were interviewed to learn the following:

- 1) What kind of sexuality education services does the church provide?
- 2) What are the sexuality education needs of the church membership?
- 3) What resources are necessary for providing sexuality education?
- 4) What are the barriers to providing sexuality education?

The findings indicate that all churches were providing sexuality education; however, there were great variations. Each church also had unique resources and barriers for providing additional sexuality education for parishioners in various life stages. It was found that resources have a huge impact on the availability of sexuality education within a church setting. These resources were found to be tangible and intangible along with internal and external to the church.

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To my parents, thanks for the wings.

To my husband, my rock.

To Amy, my companion on this journey.

To my God, I pray this brings You praise.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to church leadership as they strive to provide care, education and encouragement to their workers. To volunteers who give of themselves to further the Kingdom of God. To the parents who work to instill in their children, through the Holy Spirit, a saving faith in Jesus. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV)

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Family is a complex and changing entity. The definition of family to be used in this paper will be a mixture of blood, Biblical and secular law, and emotions. Throughout an individual's life, the type of family he or she experiences might change between genetic, legal, and emotional families, where the makeup is constantly changing. There are many aspects to family and being a family. In the end, family relies on the Biblical and secular law to support it, but the bonds between blood relatives and the emotions of the individuals involved also make up a family unit.

The family's main purpose is to function as a microcosm of society. This means providing education, a safe environment, services, care, support, and resources to its members. This can look different throughout the life stages, but the end result is the same: the members are trying to meet the needs of those within the family. The role of the family within society is to support various aspects of the larger community. The family is the basic building block of society and if the basic building block cannot support itself, then how will the society at large function? For the betterment of the society in which the family exists, the family needs to perform its basic functions. With this in mind, the purpose of Family Life Education (FLE) is to help build healthy families by giving them knowledge and tool to use within their own family context (Darling & Cassidy, 2014). By giving them these tool the family can change behaviors that negatively affect the family and to build upon those positive behaviors (Darling & Cassidy, 2014).

Because the family is in a constant state of flux within the life span, it is a lifelong learning process for both the educator and the family. As a family life educator who works for a Christian church, specifically the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), it is my ultimate

goal for the families under my care to uphold and educate them within that belief system. This was what I had vowed to do when I first came to work within the church setting.

Sexuality Education

The main purpose of this research paper is to explore whether or not sexuality education in any form with any age group is being conducted in a church setting, specifically the LCMS within the Midwest. The reason for this focus on the LCMS is twofold. First, because there is little research on how sexuality education is affected by resource management, in order to build a foundation for this research there needs to be some basic commonalities in beliefs, culture, and history between the subjects. While every church offers something different and is in itself unique, all LCMS congregations and its workers are held together by their belief in the inerrancy and authority of the Bible primarily and then the confessions stated in *The Book of Concord* (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). *The Book of Concord* is made up of 10 different parts the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord. Secondly, I have intimate knowledge of the LCMS which helped me when recruiting subjects on what could be considered a delicate subject, and also speaking the language of the interviewees and translating this for the general public to understand.

The main lens used in this study was resources, or lack thereof, that the church had at its disposal to provide sexuality education. These resources can take various forms, but in this study I examined paid staff, volunteers, budgets, and overall support of a sexuality education program from staff and worshipers. The sexuality education programs that will be examined will not be segregated by age of the target audience, length of the program, nor curriculum

used. This examination is meant to cast a wide net to encompass many different ways sexuality education might be taking place in a church setting. The reason for this is that the church is one of the last family-based institutions, and the possibility of FLE within the church can take many shapes.

Why This is Important

The full width and depth of sexuality education is not covered in school education programs. Sexuality education is more than pregnancy prevention, which is the typical topic for a school's program. Sexuality encompasses many different aspects of a person's life. Sexuality includes morals, values, interpersonal relationships, dating, and spouses. Sexuality can be used as a tool of violence and fear, but also of love and trust. This is a part of the void that the Church fills. The Church within its role has a unique position to allow the members of a family to explore and learn about the topic of sexuality.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Family

The three basic family distinctions are genetic, legal, and emotional. Looking at each of these types of families, there are benefits and shortcomings in each. An individual may combine family types to define his or her own personal idea of family, or may rather just adhere to one (Bernardes, 1997; Cowan, 1993; Darling & Cassidy, 2014, p. 305; Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 22-23). It is nevertheless important to remember that each family type plays a part in the other, helping to either support or deny the other. Through their own shortcoming and benefits, each family kind is to be considered when we explore the idea of family systems.

Blood families are bound together by a genetic relationship between individuals. This family type can be easily established, as all it takes is a genetic test. The blood family is recognized across cultures and time, which can only be said about this particular definition of family. “The biological parent is always seen by our society as the ‘real’ parents with whom a child should have the strongest ties and bonds...” (Ferguson, 2010, p. 11). This type of family could be the oldest and most recognized type. The extended family tends to play a large role in defining, aiding, and growing this family type (Bernardes, 1997, p. 8; Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 30). With this family type, however, it can be unclear to what extent someone is considered “family.” Does it include people five generations back, or just three? The genetically defined family can also contain what some would call ‘unsavory characters’. As the saying goes, “You can choose your friends but you can’t choose your family.” This is clear cut and easily established; however, sometimes it includes individuals that we would rather not have linked to us, and family connections can go on for generations.

With the legal family type, a third party decides who is a family and who is not. This would include things like adoption, marriage licenses, custody battles, church bodies, and divorces. The secular law, or the government, has the authority and backing to create a family or dissolve it. It has the authority to take a child from its mother and give it to another, as well as reprimand a party if the arrangement is not upheld. The law can legally join two people to create a family with government benefits, and also disband the family.

The Biblical law, if adhered to by a church, means that church can choose to deny or invite in a family. This, then, can mean a church has various options to either allow membership and allow the individuals to participate in all or some of its services, Sacraments, and ministries or not. The legal definition of family is the only type that can interfere with the other types of family. No matter how strong family member's' genetic or emotional bond, the government can still step in and change those bonds by removing or adding individuals.

Just the same, the church has the authority to allow or deny these bonds. Findings suggest that a created family, like a stepparent family, is structured and functions differently than an intact father-mother family (Hakvoort, Bos, Van Balen, & Hermanns 2011). Legally formed families have been the topic of many studies over the years. A possible benefit with this type is that the secular law is final. The government can enforce their view of family through the police and legal system. The Biblical law, within the LCMS, calls for ministering to families and individuals (A plan for ministry to homosexuals and their families, 1999; Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study, 1987; Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1981; Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). This ministering can involve administering the Law, which means calling for the repentance of sins, which can take various forms. Then administering and reaffirming the forgiveness of those sins,

also referred to as the Gospel (A plan for ministry to homosexuals and their families, 1999; Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1981.; Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study, 1987; Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). Extending Christian love and care through the pastor and church members keeping in mind that all sins are equal in the sight of God (A plan for ministry to homosexuals and their families, 1999; Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1981; Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study, 1987; Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). However, the difficulty with this secular and Biblical law is that the people involved are not the only ones making the decisions. The law may include or exclude families that other people do not see as family, like a cohabiting couple.

The emotional family is by far the most varied and fluid of the three family types. Instead of being systematically tested and following the letter of the law, this type is based solely on someone's emotional investment. As opposed to the other two types, the emotional family is decided only by the individuals involved. This family is established by care, sacrifice, and through emotions and commitment (Ferguson, 2010; Popenoe, 1993). These are the individuals that are relied on and form a support system. It can be established with people who have no blood relation or connection by law. This family kind, however, can be easily broken in the case of relocation or ill will, unlike the other kinds of family. Sometimes this family type can produce the strongest family, and becomes a replacement that the other family types could not fill (Ball, 1972 p. 305). The emotional family is the least thought of and most easily cast aside by our culture, yet it should not be, because it can form some of the most meaningful, fulfilling, and supportive families.

Roles of Family

The role of the family encompasses the entire life of its members. The family is meant to protect, teach, guide, support, and care for its members, and much more. Each member of the family cycles through these roles throughout their life. Parents move from protecting their children in their youth to guiding them through adulthood and receiving care from them in old age. Emotionally bonded families can go through similar cycles, where there are ebbs and flows of health, support, and protection. The family also serves as a gateway into the larger world. “Families are the key transmitters of cultural values and the main models of both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors” (Bernardes, 1997, p. 175). For those members who have the responsibility of teaching, guiding, and protecting the other members of the family, usually caretakers or parents to children, their role is pivotal. Parents are the ones who introduce the children to the wider society and teach them how to interact with the larger society (Bernardes, 1997, p 174-175; Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 21). This instruction can lay the foundation for the rest of the child’s life and dictate how the child then interacts and reacts to other people and the larger society.

The individual family unit is a building block that fits within the larger society. It is the most basic institution, and yet it serves as the foundation upon which the society is built (Coontz, 2016, p. 23; Ozment, 1993; Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 16). Just as with any building project, the strength of the building lies in its foundation; the same can be said about the strength of our society based on the strength of our families. The strength of family unity can be understood in terms of community, economic, and support within and outside the unit (Darling & Cassidy, 2014 p. 305, Skolnick & Skolnick 2011, p. 24 & 28). When the family unit is just surviving and

not thriving, it is up to the larger society to help. This is especially true in supporting parents in their role.

In order to build this solid foundation for the society, it takes commitment from its members towards the betterment of the family unit. This typically starts with the adults in the family unit (Bernardes, 1997, p. 149, O'Reggio, 2012, p. 196). With this commitment comes community and belonging. When the family unit offers community, there is a higher level of understanding and communication, which in turn builds the bonds even stronger between the members (Ball, 1972, p. 305; Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 24). This increase of communication and understanding of each other within the context of family becomes the glue that keeps the family a strong unit. There are additional benefits to this stream of communication that help create an undertow to parenting. This undertow of parenting is driven by parents influencing children, but also children influencing and changing parents (Bernardes, 1997, p. 153). Parents understand the enormous amount of pressure they face, and they desperately seek information about how to best raise their child (Coontz, 2016, p. 277; O'Reggio, 2012, p. 214-215). This desperation can be understandable, especially when you consider the magnitude of what the implications are for the greater society.

Family Support

Parents face the brunt of the burden when it comes to rearing children. This task is very complex and many mothers and fathers can be blamed if their child does not meet societal expectations (Coontz, 2016, p. 276). However, there is also great joy and satisfaction that can be gained from parenting. Parenting also is thought of with widespread respect and how rewarding parenting can be, which conveys maturity and respectability within society (Bernardes, 1997, p. 153; O'Reggio, 2012, p. 214-215). When viewed through a spiritual lens, parents enter into a

vocational calling to raise their children (O'Reggio, 2012, p. 196). What can summarize from this is that parenting can be vastly rewarding and greatly scrutinized. Parents, however, are not the only ones involved in raising children.

Parents have a larger network of support to draw on to help raise children. Usually the next ring of support comes in the form of extended family members. The role of extended relatives can play as important a role in the family as the parents (Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 30). Grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and friends can all play a role in the raising of children. This greater understanding of family provides a greater support system for parents to better equip them for raising children (Skolnick & Skolnick, 2011, p. 30) “Grandparents are in a unique position in the family network because they are not the parents of the younger generation but they have a vested interest in the development of the grandchild” (Bernardes, 1997, p. 165). The support for parents and children does not stop with just blood or legal ties. The Church has long understood the need for support for the family. One way the Church has done this is through sponsors (i.e., godparents). Since ancient days, the Church has observed the custom of appointing sponsors at Baptism for the purpose of supporting the family and helping with the raising of the children (Concordia Publishing House, 1991).

What this then leaves us with is a very broad view of the family and its support system. With this viewpoint, the family consists of many people filling many functions; each member of that family experiences changes in their roles (Cowan, 1993). This viewpoint also lends itself well to the notion of various types of families in the form of blood, legal, and emotional bonded families. This also opens the family up for support that takes various forms (Bernardes, 1997, p. 187; Skolnick & Skolnick 2011, p. 24). This support from the extended family in conjunction with organizations, government, and the greater society is the “crucial

difference between functional and dysfunctional families” (Coontz, 2016, p. 306). This building up of the family not only means the difference in individual families, but also the society as a whole, since this is strengthening the foundation of society.

Family Life Education

Support for the family comes in many ways. On a smaller scale, it can be anything from providing childcare to a single parent while they are at work to caring for a grandparent. Within a larger context, it can be policies that are more favorable to maternity leave or childcare provided onsite at work. On a local level, support for the family can come in the form of Family Life Education (FLE).

FLE can come in many forms and be presented in various ways. “As early as 1815, ‘maternal associations’ met regularly to discuss child rearing problems and improve child-rearing practices” (Doherty, Jacob, & Cutting, 2009, p. 304). Since then, FLE has grown into an entire field of study. The current definition of FLE comes from the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), which states that “Family Life Education focuses on healthy family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily preventive approach” (National Council on Family Relations, n.d.). FLE is about helping the family, primarily in the realm of education before major issues develop.

FLE also needs to be understood in reference to other family services, namely Family Therapy (FT) and Family Case Management (FCM); while all three aim to build healthier families, they go about this in different ways. Both FT and FCM work with families primarily when an issue has arisen; however, FLE works primarily with families before an issue has arisen. Both FLE and FT can interact with a family after problems or conflict have happened (Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, & Myers-Bowman, 2011). In terms of a family's past, present, and

future and the specialty of each, this is different as well. FLE works with the present and future and FT works with all three, whereas FCM only works in the present (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Finally, the content area that is presented to the family, called a needs assessment, is decided in different ways. With FLE both the professional and family have a say in topics covered, but there are some cases where the topic is ascribed by a governing third party (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). FT's content is equally decided by the professional, family, and the third party, and there are things that need to be covered in the sessions (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). Finally, FCM's content area is completely third party ruled; when a family enters this stage, their goal is to meet requirements so they can stay together as a family (Myers-Walls et al., 2011). This is the context of the family that FLE professionals serve. It is a context in the here and now and not yet, where the families and professionals together decide the content area where either none or some conflict has occurred inside the family. To help guide the professional and family in deciding on a topic, NCFR has suggested areas for the betterment of family life.

NCFR has identified 10 key areas of focus for FLE, and they are Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts, Internal Dynamics of Families, Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan, Human Sexuality, Interpersonal Relationships, Family Resource Management, Parent Education and Guidance, Family Law and Public Policy, Professional Ethics and Practice, and Family Life Education Methodology (National Council on Family Relations, n.d.). The way in which FLE takes place within these groups can present vastly differently. It can be anything from educating adults, to working with a family unit, to just working with children. These educational opportunities can take place as a seminar, in a classroom, or on a retreat. It may or may not be affiliated with a religious organization. For the purpose of this thesis, I will be

focusing on Human Sexuality in terms of FLE in a LCMS Christian context. With this context in mind, the point of FLE is not only to provide knowledge, but also change behavior if needed.

Why is Family Life Education Important?

Behavior change is not always an easy thing to accomplish, but with help, hard work, and encouragement, it can be accomplished. Changing behavior is what changes the future; after all, we hear about all positive long-term effects of healthy eating and exercising, so why should family life be any different? The entire point of FLE is about prevention and education that will prepare individuals within families and the family unit for the different aspects of life (Myers-Walls et al., 2011; National Council on Family Relations, n.d.). The family can always benefit from gaining more tools in their proverbial tool belt. This, however, does not mean that the educating process needs to be dull, formal, or authoritarian; rather, it is important to understand that families are doing this of their own volition. Therefore, it would be greatly encouraged that these educational opportunities be fun, age appropriate, interactive, and inviting for families.

Keeping NCFR's content areas in mind, FLE is meant to touch every aspect of a family's life, though, that cannot happen effectively in one class. Furthermore, the importance of FLE cannot be understated, especially when considering the role of the family. If the role of the family as the foundation to society, this then lays a burden on FLE professionals.

First, parents can influence the world in which their children are growing. Second, parent educators can partner with parents in naming and deliberating on challenges that arise in the public sphere and identify ways to address these challenges. Third, parent educators can promote the skills of democracy through facilitating conversations where all parents have a voice, diverse perspectives are respected, and public issues are examined and addressed collaboratively. Four,

providing this space and opportunity for parents requires an intentional educational process that goes beyond the traditional training of parent educators (Doherty et al., 2009, p. 305).

This is then the sphere of influence that FLEs have on the larger society. When building a foundation, first the land must be surveyed, then the right materials chosen, then a hole dug and finally the ground leveled; only then can the foundation be laid. While it is possible to lay a foundation on your own, it is a hard and arduous task if there is no help to be had. Parents are the primary participants in the process of raising a family, but others around them including extended family, friends, the community, the Church, and FLE professionals aid the families in constructing a strong foundation that is the family (Coontz, 2016, p. 306; O'Reggio, 2012). Parents do not have to lay the foundation by themselves.

How do Family Life Education, Families, and the Church Interact?

How does the family fit within the LCMS and FLE? Enter Martin Luther, a German monk who was born in 1483, who was a reformer not just in the realm of theology, but also sociology. Previous to the reformation, marriage and family were discouraged, sexual relations were condemned, and singleness was exalted as a higher and holier state of spirituality (O'Reggio, 2012, p. 196). With families in a level of low respect, they received little care. This is not to say that the Church did not care for people; on the contrary, churches ran humanitarian efforts akin to modern day orphanages or food pantries and the like. It was the value of the family as a unit that was in low esteem.

In his time Luther totally redefined the family and placed it at the center of the universe (Ozment, 1993; Lazareth, 1960, p. 134). Luther argued that marriage was the first institution of God and was honored by God, and that it was a “matter of divine seriousness” (Luther, 1529, para. 4). Now that marriage was put back in its proper place, the Church now had to

respond. Luther argued that forgiveness of sin was the most important of all for marriage and encouraged marital counseling (O'Reggio, 2012, p. 205). Luther would also argue that one of the purposes of marriage was companionship and care for the spouse and was an active place to live out faith through forgiveness, humility, and self-sacrifice (Luther, 1519). Another purpose in marriage was for childbearing.

Children have long held a special place in Christendom. Both in the Old and New Testament they are described as blessings from God and in need of care and guidance from their parents (Deuteronomy 11:19; Matthew 18:2-6, 10; Mark 10:13-16; Psalm 113:9; Psalm 127:3-5; ESV). Luther's views were no different and yet again he redefined what family meant. Luther saw the role of parents as a "spiritual vocation, greater than all the good works of the church" (O'Reggio, 2012 p. 202). Luther was quoted in a sermon saying "They can do no better work and do nothing more valuable for God, for Christendom, for all the world, for themselves, and for their children than to bring up their children well" (Luther, 1519, para. 13). Bringing up a child well meant that they lived out their Christian faith through loving and serving others, being a good and productive citizen and running the race of faith to see it to its completion (2 Timothy 4: 1-8, ESV). The endeavor of parenting was supposed to be an active process where parents were invested in their children. Luther championed marriage and family and restored it to a place of honor. Raising and teaching the child was the joy of the parents, they were primarily responsible (O'Reggio, 2012). As previously discussed this is still primarily the case. Parents are seen as responsible for their children. Who will help the parents with such an awesome responsibility? Enter the Church.

Now it is important at this point to understand what "the Church" means in this context. The Church does not mean a building, it does not mean church leadership, it does not

mean a business and it is not a place of hate. The Church is made up of all those who believe, teach, and confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The Church spans across time, space, race and culture. The Church is a place for the penitent sinner who is a saint of God. The Church is where the people of God are God's hands and feet here on earth doing the work of God's Church in many and various ways (1 Corinthians 12; Matthew 9:12–13 ESV). While the parent is called to raise their children, the Church is called to support the family along with the parents in their endeavor to raise their children. Now the Church often gathers in a building to provide its services to the community and it is often led in its endeavors by church leadership. What is important to understand is that the concept of the Church is much broader than most think.

I see the Church fulfilling this role in many ways from providing care for the family in the realm of childcare, outlets for parents and children in their social spheres, mentors for both children and parents, providing educational opportunities for children in an effort to support what they are learning at home. The Church also provides education to parents about various subjects from resource management, parenting classes, and Biblical insight on topics. The Church understand that “children are affected by who their parents are, what their parents know, what parents believe, what parents value, what parents expect of their children and what parents do” (Darling & Cassidy, 2014, p. 271). This is why not only Luther but now in our time, parenting is seen as a major task worthy of great attention because of the impact to the social, economic, and cultural landscape (Doherty et al., 2009; Luther, 1519). The Church is meant to care for the family whether this takes the form of a grandmother figure for a young family whose biological family does not live close or a space that provides guidance and support to a family that is struggling. Community is a fundamental to parent education and support because they affect the

parent's' capacity to raise their child and this is, in part, what the Church offers (Doherty et al., 2009). It is my opinion that NCFR should not have relegated the aspect of faith into just one content area. Instead, faith should have influence in every aspect of life for a believer. But this is an argument for another time.

History of the Church in Education

Ever since the beginning, the Word of God was meant to be taught to everyone. Everyone was meant to have full access to the Word of God. The people taught each other the Word of God (Joshua 8:33-35). Because the Word of God was shared with everyone, the Word was meant to be actively taught in the family (Joshua 24:15; Act 16 25-34, ESV). This has been the history of the Church from then until now. However, throughout Middle Ages and into the Renaissance the Word of God and the ability of the average person to learn God's word was limited (Sutton, 2016). This was one of the central issues that led Martin Luther to post his 95 Theses titled "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences" to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517 (Luther, 1517; Sutton, 2016). Of Dr. Martin Luther's theses, 14 dealt with the current state of the children of God being unable to neither read nor understand nor receive the full blessing given to them by their Heavenly Father. Luther said in the 62nd thesis "The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God" (Luther, 1517, para. 63). In Luther's day worship and the Bible were in Latin which meant the common person could not understand it (Sutton, 2016).

This lack of access to the Gospel left people very confused about their faith. The modern phrase "hocus-pocus" likely came out of this period in Church history. When speaking the Words of Institution for the Eucharist, the priest would turn his back to the congregation and speak in Latin "*Hoc est corpus meum*" This translates into English as "This is My body." The

average person assumed this was an incantation of sorts. The magic of *hoc est something-or-other* turned bread and wine into Jesus. The Gospel was closed to many people (Sutton, 2016, p. 10).

Because of his 95 Theses, Luther was brought before the Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521. Luther was subsequently excommunicated from the church and spent time in exile in Wartburg Castle in Germany. While in Wartburg Castle he translated the Bible from Latin into German, and in 1534, the Bible was printed in German for the very first time.

Luther highly valued educating all people about the Bible and the truths it held for their life. This was why he translated the Bible into a common language and also wrote *The Small Catechism*. In part, Luther wrote *The Small Catechism* so that it would provide a brief and clear summary of God's Word that allows individuals and families alike to use it (Luther, 1929). *The Small Catechism* explores the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine: The Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. It also includes daily prayers, a table of duties for Christians, and a guide for Christians to use as they prepare to receive Holy Communion. (Luther, 1929). These Chief Parts explained the way a child of God should live, told of God's grace and forgiveness, and the gifts He gives. The Small Catechism was in essence the first Family Life Education (FLE) book to be taken home. It provided the basis for what a family needed to know about what living a life of faith meant. Even just within the Ten Commandments part of the Catechism, most of the ten FLE content areas put out by The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) are addressed. Granted, they are not addressed in great detail, but keeping in mind that the population was just beginning to be able to read the Bible, they needed theological soup, not meat.

This desire to educate has stuck with Christendom, especially the Lutheran Church. For the LCMS, it is a cultural heritage. Currently the LCMS has 2,225 educational centers in the US and abroad, ranging from preschools to colleges and seminaries (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). Plus, the LCMS has a presence on 214 college campuses around the US (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). This can all be traced back to the reformation. Luther instilled the importance of educating everyone, making sure that everyone has access to information, especially information that dealt with the Christian life and salvation (Yaple, 1982). As I have explained, God's children have been devoted to the idea of education since the beginning. The educating of the masses was done by God Himself, church leadership, and the congregation. The church was infused with a new desire for education when the Gospel became closed and it was opened again by Martin Luther. The strong sense of responsibility to educate the family stayed with the Lutheran church throughout its 500-year history.

Role of the Church in Education

Given that the Church has a stake in education, it is important to understand the Church's role. Some Churches have chosen to use their resources to create education centers like preschools, schools, high schools, and colleges. The Church has expanded its reach beyond its steeple. Within this context, the Church teaches everything from geology to chemistry to English to history. However, not every Church has this educational opportunity. If a church does not have this opportunity then what does its role become? It could be argued that the Church's primary role in education is to teach theology, morals, and values. The Church also provides a unique opportunity to gather people of different ages, cultures, and backgrounds into one place to learn and discuss these topics. This aspect, especially the age variable, is not available in a school setting.

Another large difference between schools and churches when it comes to sexuality education is the ability to teach values in the lessons (Brown, 2009; Molock, Matlin, Barkdale, Puri, & Lyes, 2008). Even students felt like sexuality education needed to cover emotional or moral aspects of sex. They thought, however, that this should not be included in an education program, but should be taught by someone from outside the school setting (Bourton, 2006). Parents also felt threatened at the prospect of their children learning values in the public-school setting because of the values they want instilled in their children (Marsman & Herold, 1986). Both parents and students feel like the school is the wrong setting for anything other than anatomy as the subject matter. The Supreme Court agreed that parents have a fundamental right to control what is taught to their children. “This right, often referred to as the Meyer-Pierce right, is rooted in the substantive due process protections afforded by the Fourteenth Amendment” (Brown, 2009, p. 110). This is the need that the Church fills.

It needs to be remembered, however, that the parents themselves lay the groundwork. Without the support of the parents, the Church is fighting an uphill battle. Parents continue to be the primary source of knowledge about sexual behaviors (Brown, 2009; Moore, Raymond, Mittelstaedt, & Tanner, 2002; Torrence & Guidry, 2007). If parents are worried about the values and morals being taught to their children, then they themselves should be the ones teaching their children. For this reason, Concordia Publishing House (CPH), which is the official publishing house of the LCMS, has put out a sexuality education curriculum for both parents and children. CPH has put out two curricula called *Learning about Sex: A Series for the Christian Family* and *How to Talk Comfortably with Your Children about Sex...and Appreciate Your Own*. The primary goals of these curriculums are to help parents be the primary sexuality educators of their children and also understand the importance of their own personal

understanding of adult sexuality (Cole, 1997; Darling & Cassidy, 2014, p. 102). CPH also puts out curriculum for children ages 6 to young adulthood which is supposed to be utilized by parents within the home. This again emphasizes the LCMS understanding and commitment to aiding the parents in being the primary educators of their children (Concordia Publishing House, n.d.; Luther, 1529.). The role of the church in education does not end there.

The Church also recognizes that it is a place set within a community and the church leadership and volunteers have a role to fill as well. Therefore, the Church desires to get lay and church leadership prepared. Within the 10 universities associated with the LCMS, three (Concordia in Ann Arbor, Nebraska, and St Paul) offers either a bachelor's and/or masters where students can get their CFLE certification (Concordia University Ann Arbor, n.d.; Concordia University Nebraska, n.d.; Concordia University St Paul, n.d.). There is also another Concordia University in Chicago that offers a specialization in Family Ministry to their Directors of Christian Education students (Concordia University Chicago, n.d.). Going through Concordia University Chicago's Family Ministry specialization was the place that started my FLE trek.

Furthermore, the Church understands that it is a part of the community and that it is an extension and support for the family unit to help teach morals and values to children. In order to help with the learning process, it is more effective if the content is learned in multiple arenas for learning and this is another role the Church fulfills (Aggleton, de Wit, Myers, & Du Mont, 2014; Fonner, Armstrong, Kennedy, O'Reilly & Sweat, 2014). The church leadership has a role in keeping the programs sustainable and a coordination of resources is required to do this (Aggleton et al., 2014; Torrence & Guidry, 2007). The influence and importance the Church has to fulfill this supportive educational role does not go unnoticed in the community (Torrence & Guidry

2007; Hammaker, 1998). Thus, the Church needs to remember its role in education can be quiet pronounced in the community it serves, especially in the realm of sexuality education.

Why the Church Should Care About Sexuality Education

Churches have been thought of as a resource for the community in which they are located. Churches are unlike any other organization because they are one of the few places left where multiple generations can learn from and teach each other. It is a place where people from all kinds of backgrounds and experiences gather willingly because of a common belief. These individuals then have the opportunity to interact with, react to, and serve the individuals in their church and the surrounding community. Churches have been the driving force behind hospitals, orphanages, schools, and many charitable organizations (Sutton, 2016). However, the church's influence does not stop there. The church is able to offer educational information to people that other organizations may be unwilling or unable to provide; one example of this is sexuality education. The church is free to talk about sexuality in unique ways. They are able to bring together grandparents, parents, and children in one space to talk and learn about the values based in sexuality. The church provides a forum for youth to talk about the meaning of sexuality within the context of their spiritual beliefs. Churches are able to provide resources and learning environments to parents to help them broach the subject of sexuality with their children beyond saying, "Just do not do it."

In light of this, we need to define sexuality so that it is understood what this education within the Church could look like. Robert Farrar Capon (1965, p. 49) once wrote:

Suppose I wrote a book called *The Sexual Life of a Nun*. You know what people would think. They would be curious or shocked. They would expect to find it either a big joke or a compilation of a slightly prurient propaganda. How many would be able to see that, on the real

meaning of the word sexual, it is a perfectly proper title? For a nun's life, of course is utterly sexual. She thinks as a woman, prays as a woman, reacts as a woman and commits herself as a woman. No monk, no celibate, ever embraced his life for her kind of reasons. He couldn't if he wanted to. Of course, she omits, as an offering to God, one particular expression of her sexuality; but it is only one out of a hundred. The sexual congress she does not attend is not life's most important meeting, all the marriage manuals to the contrary notwithstanding.

This offers the perspective that there is much more to sexuality than the physical act of sex. Rather, sexuality is rooted in our identity as men and women. Understanding that it is a central aspect of our humanity; sexuality encompasses our sex, gender, roles, reproduction, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, n.d.; World Health Organization, n.d.). It also involves anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, societal, religious, ethics, and morals (& Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, n.d.; World Health Organization, n.d.). In essence, this means that everyone is sexual, within this broad sense (Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (CTCR), 1981; Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, n.d.). Sexuality, then, becomes how an individual interacts and reacts to their friends, family, community, and larger society. This, then, in the light of the Church means that Christians “seek to order their lives as sexual beings in ways which will honor both God and their neighbor” (CTCR, 1981, p. 5). Since it is understood that God created everything in Genesis chapter 1, then it is also to be understood that He has a plan and purpose for sexuality and that “it is quite impossible for us to know ourselves as God's good creation without a recognition of our identity

as sexual beings” (CTCR, 1981, p. 4). What then, would sexuality education look like in the Church?

Sexuality education can take many forms within the church, from the oldest to the youngest of its members. The account of creation is taught to children and adults that “God created man in his own image...male and female he created them...God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...” (Genesis 1:27-28, ESV). There could also be classes with teenagers or pre-marriage counseling that talk about the role of men and women within their relationships (Ephesians 5, ESV). There is also the discussion of sex before and after marriage (1 Corinthians 7; Hebrews 13, ESV). There is also the blessing of childbearing and the importance of parenting (Deuteronomy 6; Ephesians 6; Proverbs 22; Psalm 127, ESV). This is not to diminish the role of singleness in sexuality within the Church and how it could be taught within the realm of a small group (1 Corinthians 7, ESV; CTCR, 1981). Confirmation and new member classes are another place where sexuality education could take place when learning about the Ten Commandments. Something that might be the hardest to capture, however, is spontaneous learning and teaching when students raise questions. Real learning and conversation can and does happen in these situations

Churches have different resources at their disposal to accomplish these educational opportunities about sexuality. Churches have their membership, which is made up of a wide variety of individuals with different backgrounds, training, and gifts that can be utilized (Iannaccone, Olson, & Stark, 1995). Churches also have the staff they employ, either part time or full time. Finally, churches have the financial resources they are given from their membership (Iannaccone et al., 1995). In the interest of full disclosure, I and my family are a resource to their church in terms of membership, staff, and financing. With all the possibilities a church has

in which to reach and teach people about the topic of sexuality, what kind of resources does a church need in order to fulfill this tall order?

There is, however, very limited research regarding the resources a church needs to provide sexuality education. Because of this, I will first have to analyze schools and the resources they have in order to teach sexuality education. While the demographics, philosophy, and training of the educators might be different, we will focus on schools because they, like churches, deal in the realm of education, use curriculum, and require financial resources in order to have a sexuality education program.

Church and School

One of the major resources that public schools have that churches do not is federal funding. Funding can be imperative to successfully operating a sexuality education program. The funds can be used to retain and train teachers, acquire a facility to hold the classes, buy curriculum and various supplies for the class, provide advertising about the class, and much more. Funding by the federal government for sexuality education began in 1981 under the Reagan administration (SIECUS, n.d.). The Obama administration has also done its part to provide funding for sexuality education. In 2009, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010* included \$110 million for the President's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI). (SIECUS, n.d.). Then, with the passage of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, a total of \$75 million per year is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (SIECUS, n.d.). Of that \$75 million, just over \$55 million is dedicated to state grants which allow the states a minimum of \$250,000 for sexuality education and allows additional funding to states based on the number of low-income individuals in that state (SIECUS, n.d.). The remaining \$20 million is dedicated as grants for innovative approaches, and the first \$10

million is designated for innovative youth pregnancy prevention strategies and to target services to high-risk, vulnerable, and culturally underrepresented youth populations (SIECUS, n.d.). However, the funding does not stop there. In 2011, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided \$40 million to the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) for HIV/STD-prevention education (SIECUS, n.d.). Since 2010, the government has provided at least \$225 million dollars to sexuality education programs in the United States. The government has done its best to make sure that our sexuality education programs are well funded. However, looking at churches, there is no way a single denomination--let alone a single church--could touch that amount of money. But does a church really need that much funding in order to have a successful sexuality education program?

The next comparison that I can draw is between the training that the instructors received by teachers. One possible explanation about why a church does not offer sexuality education is because people do not feel adequately trained for the task. Even the professional teacher can be intimidated about the process of sexuality education in the classroom. The schools may not even provide training to the teachers. "One third of all sexuality education teachers had not received any training in sexual health education" (Woo, Soon, Thomas, Kaneshiro, 2011, p. 4). This lack of training was found to have an impact on the subject matter that was taught to the students. Woo et al. (2011) found that being trained in how to teach sexuality education was a strong predictor for whether the teacher taught a comprehensive sexuality education class. This lack of training had a greater impact on their teaching, more than other factors in the study. What was interesting is that they found the age of the teacher, the years they have been teaching, the years they had been teaching sexuality education, and if they were in a public or

private school did not have nearly the amount of impact as training did for teaching comprehensive sexuality education (Woo et al., 2011).

There is, however, with time and experience, a possibility for teachers to become more effective over time (Aggleton et al., 2014). If being prepared to teach this subject matter is having such a large impact on individuals who are educators by profession, what could this mean in a primarily volunteer-run organization? If the church provided training to its volunteers on how to teach sexuality education, would the volunteers be more willing to teach a sexuality education class? Would it be possible for volunteers to become more competent teachers with time and experience, just like with full time teachers?

Funding and training are not the only resources needed to teach a sexuality education class. The materials, program, or curriculum to help provide the information is also critical. Curriculum can vary greatly between schools and what the curriculum offers. A program called *It's Your Game: Keep It Real* designates parents as the primary sexuality educators of their children. There are two parts to this program, the school-based curriculum provides knowledge and skill-building, plus there are family activities which give parents the opportunity to transmit their values about sex and relationships (Grossman, Tracy, Charmaraman, Ceder, & Erkut, 2014). This program is theory-based and focuses on middle school students. It aims to provide developmentally appropriate information and build skills to negotiate healthy relationships to delay sexual debut (Grossman et al., 2014). Overall, this program was found to have delayed sexual debut, especially for boys, after completing a year of both the in school and family activities. (Grossman et al., 2014).

Another curriculum is *The World Starts With Me* (WSWM) which is a low tech, computer based, interactive sexuality education program for 12- to 19-year olds that is meant to

be accessible, non-judgmental, and responsive (Rijsdijk, Bos, Ruiter, Leerlooijer, de Haas, & Schaalma, 2011). It is an evidence-based sexuality education program aiming to empower and support young people making their own informed decision about sex (Rijsdijk et al., 2011). WSMW was an extracurricular activity with 14 lessons that students voluntarily participated in after school hours (Rijsdijk et al., 2011). The lessons consist of self-esteem, decision-making, identity, values and sexual development, the role of the social environment, gender equity, sexual and reproductive rights, sexuality as something beautiful and a vital source for life, sexual health, life skills, and goal setting (Rijsdijk et al., 2011). “The curriculum closes with an exhibition, at which young people show their parents and the community the results of the class efforts, such as slogans, posters and action plans” (Rijsdijk et al., 2011, para. 4). This program is also theory based, stemming largely from two psychological theories of individual behavior change: the theory of planned behavior and the health belief model (Rijsdijk et al., 2011).

Yet another program is Teen Prevention Education Program (PEP) where teachers train high school youth to become leaders and role models to their peers. The goal of Teen PEP is for youth leaders to educate younger teens through workshops on making healthy choices, avoiding risky behaviors, advocating healthy decisions, acting as role models, and being the culture change within their school community (Asheer, Kisker, & Keating, 2014). The curriculum addresses what it means to be sexually active, the reasons youth become sexually active, and the consequences of their behaviors, along with debunking myths, reducing stigma, and providing youth with accurate, age-appropriate information in a dynamic and appealing way (Asheer et al., 2014). No theory or outcome was directly linked with this program in the study.

Each of these three programs or curricula offered something different and unique in the realm of sexuality education. The mode in which the material is taught, the teachers who teach it, the medium used to convey the material, the setting in which it is taught, the goal of the program, and the subject matter covered are all different. Yet each of these programs was met with praise in their specific article. For as much diversity as there is in the school setting, there is an equal amount within the church setting. Elma Cole (1997) did a brief overview of some of the available sexuality education curricula put out by thirteen different religious groups, plus did a study group of four different religious groups' curriculum. According to Cole (1997), many religious groups and denominations are developing sexuality education curricula specifically for young people and their families. They are all based on the Bible, individual doctrine, and a shared belief that sexuality is God's good gift to use with reverence and joy (Cole, 1997). The church's curricula are also very diverse, just like the school's curricula, but with the major differences being involvement of parents on a higher level as well as theology.

The Current Study

Because the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) has roots in the Reformation started by Martin Luther, which ushered in not only a theological but also a societal shift within its culture, the LCMS then reflects this change through its theology and outlook on the family. The way in which this is expressed can vary from church to church, however, the basic importance of valuing and educating the family is the common thread. Understanding that sexuality is one subject of education to the family and knowing that the Church has more freedom to educate on various aspects of sexuality than do schools is an important topic that Church can cover. There have been many studies done on the resources a church has at its disposal along with various ways that sexuality education is performed in the church

setting. However, since little has been done to understand how resources affect family life education in the church, specifically sexuality education, grasping a better understanding of this will aid churches to using the resources they have to better their family life education. This is the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

In this needs assessment study, I examined how the LCMS within the Midwest provides sexuality education. The specific research questions were:

- 1) What kind of sexuality education services does the church provide?
- 2) What are the sexuality education needs of the church membership?
- 3) What resources are necessary for providing sexuality education?
- 4) What are the barriers to providing sexuality education?

A Pragmatic Study

This proposed study was designed to meet targeted needs of a specific population: sexuality education for the LCMS in the Midwest, which fits perfectly within the realm of an action study as described by Patton (2002). “Action research aims at solving specific problems within a program, organization, or community” (p. 221). A pragmatic methodology was used to gather data. This approach keeps the focus on practical questions and answers (Patton, 2002). This study assisted this bounded population in identifying their needs regarding sexuality education. It is not intended to be generalized or applied beyond the LCMS in the Midwest. It is useful to note that this method, along with any other method, is susceptible to researcher bias. Therefore, the next section will cover the influences that I can identify that might affect the results of the study.

Self as the Measurement Tool

According to Patton (2002), the researcher is the filter through which qualitative information is processed. Therefore, my cultural, political, and ideological views are filters for this study. I have a voice in this research, I have an interest in this research, and I have to own

my perspective. It is important for me to clearly describe my biases and experiences for the readers to use their own filters to understand and critique my research.

My family has a long history of working in the church. Both of my parents' families were and are very involved in their respective churches. They are both professional LCMS staff members. My father is a pastor and my mother taught at a Lutheran school. I chose to stay involved in the LCMS church because I felt it clung to the Bible and its teaching. The LCMS uses the Bible in everything from hermeneutics to worship and from the Sacraments to social norms. That is to say that the LCMS is a Bible-believing church that to be a Christian means that one's faith is expressed and lived out in every aspect of one's life. At the end of the day, all one has is because of God. This is what I understand faith in the Triune God to be. If I am going to call myself a Christian, then the Bible has the ultimate authority, whether I fully understand or agree with it or not. Otherwise, I am left with a shell of a book that does not contain the omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, holy, sovereign, infinite words of God to me and all people. A "holy" book without these things is not a holy book at all.

Since I was a little girl, I felt a calling from God to work for the church and use the gifts God had given me. In the LCMS, we call someone who has been theologically trained and vetted by the LCMS a called worker or as someone in a called position. After learning about the different call opportunities I had within the LCMS, and much prayer, I decided being a Director of Christian Education (DCE) would be the best use of the gifts God had given me, namely in the realm of leadership, administration, and teaching. "A Director of Christian Education (DCE) is a synodically certified, called, and commissioned life-span educational leader prepared for team ministry in a congregational setting" (Nadasdy, 2009, para. 2). A DCE is a trained parish-education specialist, is a team minister who works with the pastor, staff, and lay leaders of the

congregation, is a teacher of the faith and a trainer of the laity for service (Nadasdy, 2009). As a trained educator, I was able to critically examine the teaching methods that churches were employing for their sexuality education programs.

The DCE ministry has been described as a “Jack of all trades” and “cradle-to-grave ministry.” Depending on a congregation’s needs, a DCE can be very focused on a specific age group or ministry or it can be very broad in touching multiple areas of the church. Within my current position I am the latter; I work with five different boards within the church: Early Learning Center, Children’s, Youth, College, and Adult Ministries. My goal is to empower and equip the people of God for every good work. I work to train, teach, and be an example to people so they can be the hands and feet of God knowing that no task is too small. Because of my preexisting experience working with multiple generations, I am better prepared to critique churches as they provide services for different generations.

Because I work with multiple ages, I work in the realm of family ministry or Family Life Education (FLE) quite a bit. This takes the form of leading *Financial Peace University*, *Smart Money Smart Kids*, and *Legacy Journey* by Dave Ramsey as well as parent with youth devotions. I also facilitate a *Love and Logic* class, facilitate relationship building between non-parental adults and youth, create opportunities for fun family gatherings, and collaborate with multiple planning teams for a cohesive team effort in planning multi-generational events. My studies at KSU have broadened my understanding of FLE. Having KSU provide me with a better understanding of what FLE is and how is it done has allowed me to better identify various FLE practices in the church setting while interviewing that I would not have identified before.

Within my role as DCE I oversee or facilitate, sexuality education happens in the form of young men’s and young women’s small groups that last for a semester and include discussion

about subjects like manliness, singleness, and motherhood. There is also sexuality education within a lesson series with 3rd, 7th, and 8th graders. Sexuality also is talked about in a more intimate setting in the form of premarital and marital counseling. Sexuality is taught within the worship service in the forms of Bible readings and sermons. There are also learning opportunities for our high school youth when they attend youth gatherings that can last for a weekend or a week. There are also conversations that happen within our Junior High, 6th-8th grade, and Senior High, 9th-12th grade, at their youth nights and unstructured time with adults. These are the various ways I ensure that sexuality education is happening within my own church setting. Because I see sexuality being taught in such a wide variety in my own setting, I am able to have an insider perspective of the different ways sexuality education could be offered in the church setting. Also, while I was training to be a DCE, I learned about other churches' sexuality education endeavors. This included classes for parents with pre-teenagers, parents with teenagers, college students, confirmation classes, and adult small groups. These classes would range from a single class meeting that was devoted to the topic to a semester-long series. This means that there will be things that are counted as sexuality education that others may not see as such.

I know many Called Workers who serve their congregations the best that they can, but there are gaps between what they desire and what can be offered in reality. These church workers feel the weight of the eternal consequences of their line of work on their shoulders, and it can be a heavy burden (Ellison, Roalson, Guillory, Flannelly, & Marcum, 2010). However, the burden is a joy because there is hope and this hope for an eternal difference that is made through the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is the driving force (Romans 5:3-5, ESV). I have a very real empathy for the workers who are trying to do God's work. This empathy for the

worker influenced this study because I did not judge the worker as harshly. Usually when talking about leadership I included volunteers, not just staff, because I have the expectation of leadership from the laity. To put everyone on the church staff I feel is irresponsible and unfair.

In summary, the influences that I brought to the study are empathy for my subjects and being an insider of the LCMS system. I recognized that I needed to be very deliberate to be able to be an observer. I needed to examine what I know and how I know it in order to better provide a natural stance (Patton, 2002). The goal was to ask questions that compensate for this and allow for as neutral an examination of this topic as possible.

Participants

Churches come in all sizes, staff makeup, culture, settings and history. In order to get a good cross section for the variety of churches and how they conduct sexuality education, I chose to focus on the various church sizes. The way that large churches with multiple staff are able to provide services will be vastly different from how a small one staff member church does sexuality education. I used purposeful stratified sampling to identify participants for this study. I selected LCMS churches that are representative of the Midwest using my personal connections that I have with other church workers. I have known these workers through various contexts of school, conferences, and volunteering. From my preexisting knowledge of the churches, I was able to easily identify churches that would fit into the categories I set.

I created three categories based on the number of full-time staff: a) small: 0-2 full-time staff members, b) medium: 3-6 full-time staff members, and c) large: 7 or more full-time staff members. These staff members can be pastors, Directors of Christian Education, teachers, music directors, secretaries, and more. The number of full-time staff members also reflects the number of worshipers in the church. These are not-for-profit organizations and the larger the group, the

bigger the budget to support a larger full-time staff. This might not apply to churches that have an education center attached to the church. In this case, the teachers who are employed might bump the church into a different category; however, it still reflects potential resources that the church might have at its disposal.

Two small congregations were included in the sample and they were both located in primarily blue collar and agricultural communities. Each one had one full-time employee in the form of a pastor and neither had an education center. Each had an annual budget of less than \$150,000 and averaged fewer than 150 members in worship. Each pastor was in his/her first Call and neither of the churches had a vacancy in its Church Council or Board of Elders. One of the smaller congregations was located in a bedroom community where the majority of the residents work outside the town and was on the decline as far as attendance is concerned; it had a primarily elderly congregation, with almost one-fourth being widows. It did not offer Sunday School for children, and it joined with another LCMS congregation for confirmation. The other small congregation was growing with about one baptism a month. It also was starting the conversation of expanding their facilities.

Two medium-sized churches were included in the sample, and they both had five or fewer full-time staff in their congregations. Both had an attached educational center and teamed with other LCMS churches in ministry. Neither had any vacancies on its Church Council or Board of Elders, and both had an operating budget of around \$500,000 with fewer than 300 church members. Both senior pastors have had Calls to other churches; however, both had been at their current Call for over 20 years. One church was located in an agricultural, transient, blue-collar bedroom community and was experiencing a slight decline of worshipers, reflective of changes in the community population. This congregation's main missional outreach and

resource output was their educational center. The other medium-sized church had a younger congregation and was growing. It had more full-time staff in the parish than the educational center. This church was located in a metropolitan area and was built on small group ministry made up of both blue and white-collar workers. This church was in an expansion phase as far as facilities are concerned.

Two large churches were included in the sample, and both churches were set in upper-middle class to wealthier suburban areas and worship over 500 on a weekend and growing. Both had an educational center and an operating budget of over \$1,000,000. Both churches were not staffed to full capacity, but each had over 10 full-time staff members. One church has a large focus of their missional ministry incorporated in their school. The staff is also feeling the weight of the unfilled staff positions. The other church is also feeling growing pains and looking to expand their facilities. The school at this church is important, but does not seem to be the main form of missional ministry.

I looked up each church's information, which included a full list of staff, address, and phone number, on our church body's directory to identify who the senior pastor was. I put in a personal phone call to each senior pastor asking permission to interview the church's volunteers and staff. After permission was granted, a set of preliminary questions was emailed to the senior pastor of each church where he or, in the case of large staff, people he designated, filled out the questionnaire (This can be found in Appendix A.) Each senior pastor was asked to answer the questions involving the statistics of the church, like worship attendance and annual budget. Other questions pertained to potential sexuality education components, like who does premarital counseling and who teaches confirmation or who orders the curriculum. This helped identify the people involved in education highlighting those most involved so I would know who to

interview. Every church, except one, had at least one staff member and one volunteer who participated in the study. The larger the church, the more interviews were conducted. (See Appendix B a summary of the participating churches and staff/volunteers.)

Data Collection

Information was gathered using individual interviews. These interviews ranged from 60 to 150 minutes and were audio recorded. The interviews took place mainly in the individual's church campus, except for four that took place at other LCMS churches that were identified by the interviewee as more convenient meeting places than their own church campus. I asked participants to focus on the last three years of their congregation's programs. The three-year term is based on the idea that some churches run their programs in three-year cycles. Examples of this would include the LCMS's lectionary cycle, confirmation cycle, curriculum cycles, or small group cycles. This captured the full range of sexuality education programs. The interview questions can be found in Appendix C, understanding that emergent questions may have been used, and the main content questions are numbered in the outline. The questions have been divided into five sections to reflect the baseline and each research question.

Analyses

Eighteen interviews were conducted across the Midwest over the course of 3 months. Each church was assigned a letter (A – F) and each person interviewed was given a name that began with the letter associated with that church. The 27 hours of interviews were transcribed verbatim (totaling 371 pages), and the analyses were guided by the research questions. Each transcript was printed four different times on four different colored papers. Each colored paper was paired with a research question. I read the printed transcripts multiple times in order to answer the research question. As the transcripts were read, I focused on one research question at

a time, identifying codes relating to that question. I created a codebook and identified from which particular church/individual the code was identified.

Codes were then inputted into one document according to their research question, and the duplicates were deleted. A total of 4,286 different codes were then compared and grouped into 195 themes. The themes were further condensed into 32 categories. These 32 categories were used to answer the research questions. This research process from the interviews to final categories took five months. In order to keep the data analysis remaining neutral, I had a co-analyst in the form of my major professor. Together, we went over the data to verify the findings.

Theoretical Lens of Systems Theory

As I interpreted the findings, I viewed them through a theoretical lens. This theory is built on the understanding that systems are interconnected and interaction with other systems; in this case, the various LCMS Congregations. Some of the inputs that were investigated in this study were primarily resources, values, energy, and needs. The throughputs examined were the use of resources and their implementation along with decision for and implementation of education. Finally, the outputs were evaluated for the achieved goals, along with satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the program. This study focused on past negative or positive feedback into the system that affected the inputs. It is important to take into consideration how values and culture play a part in resource management and usage not just as available resources (Fine & Fincham, 2013, p. 79). It needs to be understood that resources come in various forms. Interpersonal relationships, money, time availability, experience, environment, reputation, and knowledge are just some resources (Goldsmith, 2013, p. 11). For example, a program might be initiated because a worker has a good interpersonal relationship with his membership, and is therefore able to not

only find a teacher for the class, but also readily recruit people to attend the class. Further still, it could be that there is just not enough money to purchase a curriculum, and the staff, volunteers, and students do not have enough time for a sexuality class.

Since this is a needs-assessment of churches for the purpose of sexuality education, the role of resources is vital to this study. This is especially evident when comparing the larger-staffed versus small-staffed churches and the amount of resources that result from that difference. For example, 1) a larger worship attendance means a larger number of volunteers; 2) a larger number of volunteers means a larger network of vast gifts and training to draw on for work within the church (Hoge, Zech, McNamara & Donahue, 1998; Vallier, 1962); 3) having a larger network means volunteers can fill aspects of their work within the church that will in turn free up a staff member to do different aspect of ministry; 4) a larger worship attendance usually means a larger amount of monetary resources; and 5) these monetary resources can be used to purchase needed supplies and resources for the church, which can include purchases like another full-time staff member or building (Hoge et al., 1998).

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

The following section includes the themes that emerged in this study of the identified needs and services provided by the churches. They are organized by the journalistic questions: why, what, how, for whom, and by whom.

What Kind of Sexuality Education Services Does the Church Provide?

The following are the results for the types of sexuality education provided by churches to minors and their parents along with other adults on the topics of purpose of sex, partner selection, pre-marriage, marriage, male and female sexuality, and roles. This education was done by a third party, professional, or at a conference in the form of mentoring, pastoral care, small groups, overnight events, or outreach activities.

Why?

Why would a church teach on sexuality? Because they see a purpose and a reason to educate on this part of the human life that God has created.

Sexuality education that is Biblically based. The first and the most important aspect participants supplied about the reason they provide sexuality education was to provide Biblical accounts and lessons. The teaching that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and the infallible Word of God is paramount.

One of my big deals is I think we have to help kids and adults understand that the word of God is the word of God. He gives some pretty good instructions there - not easy, but good. That includes for sexuality. If you don't believe the word of God is the word of God, then I feel like with sexuality it just goes out the window. (Fae)

The participants emphasized that, if this cornerstone is missing from the belief system of those being taught, then the lessons do not hold the same relevance – they are just good stories.

They remarked that if students are going to learn about a moral way to live, they have to hold the Bible as a moral standard.

This Biblical education then tied into the application of what they had been taught. For example, several participants discussed what we should learn from David and Bathsheba that we should not do. What do God-pleasing activities look like, and why should we do them?

The primary goal is to help our kids walk more closely and in a more Godly way with their Savior as they grow. Another goal is to provide warnings, research, and stories, and warnings in the scripture to back up why living a certain way is better and why this is how God set it up, because He loves us and He set the boundaries. (Daniel)

Daniel wanted to give his youth the wisdom behind the whys. This line of thinking can be followed up by a lens that the LCMS uses to understand the Biblical text: Law and Gospel. This understanding of the Bible lens filters the way students are taught to respond to different situations they encounter.

But with proper education they would know to flee to Christ for forgiveness, whereas if it is not done properly and it is not done with enough gospel application, this is something you have to be really careful with, law and gospel is so huge here because if you do too much law, then you are going to have either rebellion or you are going to have crippling guilt, in the instance of violating the 6th commandment, whereas if there is too much gospel, you risk antinomianism which is the idea of the law doesn't matter. (Anna)

This was a common vein within each church. “We know that, as Lutherans, the gospel is what brings life” (Frank). Using the Bible as the foundation and road map of how to respond to makes this type of education unique.

Counter-cultural. The next area of Biblical education was summarized in the common belief of being *in* the world but not *of* the world. At least one participant from every church mentioned that there was teaching in the realm of being counter-cultural in terms of abstinence and negative uses of sexuality, like using sexuality as pleasure-seeking and attention-getting. They also talked about social issues like abortion, gender issues, and same-sex marriage. For example, Fabio said,

One of the things we have covered in the last couple of years is this book, Can I Ask That? This is one of the curriculum that we went through and the questions on here. It is a series of questions. It actually doesn't have answers; it doesn't provide a specific position.... chapter four 'Does God discriminate against women?'...chapter five 'What does the Bible say about being gay?'

Each church addressed at least one of these counter-cultural ideas through education. The goal of this education is to show the wisdom in God's words and that He really does intend it for our good. *"I am just trying to educate people from the word of God, that this place is a hospital for sinners...We are not going to hurl bricks at anybody. That would be the last thing that we would want to happen"* (Chandler). Understanding this as the foundation for all the education that happens at these churches will help to understand the reasons why they choose particular topics for individuals in different life stages.

For Whom?

Those whom the most churches had educational serveries for were those within a family unit of children and adults that also included the extended family.

Jr. High. Jr. High was typically defined as the age group of 6th to 8th graders. Some had instruction in confirmation class with their pastor and possibly a parent. *"Confirmation is*

structured to where parents and students come for the first hour...then the students go with the small group leader...while the pastors get a chance to talk to the parents” (Delyn). Still others received instruction during their Sunday School class. “I also used a few portions of a curriculum series that we use on Sunday mornings during the school year from group publishing. It’s called Live” (Darcie). They also described formal settings such as a purity retreat that Erica’s church conducts.

The boys this past year talked about the sexual diseases and HPV that has come about and how you can get that. The girls talked most about your body isgoing to change and this is how it’s going to change.... We usually have a nurse that comes in to talk about all the different ways that the body changes for the girls and then the boys.

Sr. High. The participants indicated that the high schoolers, also called Sr. High youth, received sexuality education in various forms. For example, at one church, there was a lock-in done especially on the topic where boys and girls could ask the youth of the other sex questions anonymously.

I went in and told the girls, I said, ‘What would be your questions to ask a boy if you could ask the boys anonymously? They wouldn’t know who asked the question. Just do that.’ Then I did the same thing to the boys. Then I went over, I kind of worked through all their answers and stuff, and then I sat down with them and gave the girls the boys’ answers and boys the girls’ answers. Then we all came together and talked about it to a certain extent. (Fae)

Sexuality was also talked about on trips that the youth would take. Chandler described how the topics can come up spontaneously after a servant event Bible study.

[What] extended those youth servant event Bible studies so long is that something will spark them to ask another question...and we can kind of review that and the light clicks on and they say yeah, I remember talking about that.

Participants mentioned Sr. High youth the most often as those who need sexuality education. They had the widest range of educational possibilities of any age group.

Parents. Educating parents took on multiple roles in with the participants. The participants wanted parents to learn how to educate their child, also to educate the parents themselves along with extended family.

Educators to kids. Educating the parents of minors was commonly mentioned. For example, participants from half of the churches described providing parents with education along with their junior high youth in Confirmation. *“I’m up front with the parents and say, ‘I’m here to teach you, because, parents, you’re the primary faith teachers’”* (Delyn). Other students had sexuality education on a purity retreat with their parent or another important figure. *“For the purity retreats, the parents are there. So there are times that the mother-daughter or the father-son gets together and they talk about their own things within the whole group as we go through the sessions”* (Erica). There were other instances where the parents had their own class or small group on the topic of talking to their children about sex.

Educating parents. ‘How to talk to your kids about sex’ was a common idea in the interviews. Daniel was facilitating an educational opportunity for teens but then an unexpected outcome came with parents. *“We noticed the parents and kids weren’t having conversations, but we also had some parents who said ‘Ooh, could we watch that and discuss it [what the kids are learning]?’ We had 30 parents there every time. It was pretty successful.”* Parents wanted to learn what their kids were learning. Parents were expressing interest more than Daniel thought

they would have. Someone from every church identified the need for parental involvement in the raising of Christian children. The idea of parents being the faith educators of their children, along with the felt need from parents, helped to create these parent education opportunities. Having these parenting educational opportunities also had an additional benefit for parents. “[We] just encouraged each other to do what we could as parents to talk about even though it is hard” (Brittany). The participants noted that relationships and support developed among the parents.

Extended family. This was described as important by a participant who held a “How to talk to your kids about sex” class and had grandparents come who wanted to know how to talk to their grandkids about sex. *“I am sending out that it is not just for parents. It is for grandparents, too, and it’s for aunts and uncles. It is for everybody really”* (Fae). This was not something that Fae, the educator, intended; however, they stumbled upon this need and made it a service by making the class more welcoming to all. Church F was the only church that specifically had sexuality education for extended family in this type of setting.

What?

The subjects that most churches were teaching on involved the purpose of sex through a Biblical lens, partner selection, pre-marriage counseling, and marital discord along with male and female sexuality.

Purpose of sex. A content area described by the participants is in the purpose of our sexuality. They emphasized that it is important to understanding that sex was created by God as a blessing for the purpose of procreation plus intimacy and bonding between husband and wife. *“The focus was on what is God’s design for marriage and in our gender roles and the great blessing of sexuality”* (Darcie).

Partner selection. Another area of sexuality education revolved around marriage. The topic of what to look for in a spouse typically was included with sexuality education of the high school students, taking place in either a formal setting or in an informal emergent setting. *“I am not afraid to hold back in telling these kids what God's word says about sex, what it says about marriage, what they should look for in a date, in a future spouse, and things like that”* (Chandler).

Pre-marriage. Every church was described as providing premarital counseling; however, the way in which they went about it varied. For example, some used private meetings with the pastor to go over a pre-marriage curriculum. Church E matched married couples as mentors for engaged couples before the wedding, reflecting a relational ministry approach. *“Our pre-marriage mentors go through [the Zoe Score] over...six months. I think they have four meetings with the couple over a period”* (Emma). Instead of the pastors doing the pre-marital counseling other couples within the congregation act as their mentors and educators before their marriage to provide pre-marriage education. Usually the churches used either *PREPARE ENRICH* or *Zoe Score* for premarital curriculum.

Marriage. The pastors seemed to find themselves on the frontlines when it came to crises in marriage. The issues the pastors said they address are varied and they reported that some individuals have directly opened up about their dissatisfaction with their marital sex life. For example, Chandler said,

I guess my eyes really opened to this of how men will come to me and say to me that their marriage sex life sucks. The [bad] relationship with the wife obviously reduces the amount of sex or the willingness to have sex...Then from the ladies too, I have ladies who

have opened up to me about that [marriage sex life]. If the relationship is not right, communication is not right, they don't feel like having sex with their spouse.

Chandler talked about his surprise that people would open up to him about this intimate part of their marriage but glad that his parishioners trusted him with this intimate subject. The pastors interviewed were well aware that they are not trained as counselors. For the pastors of the three churches in less populated areas, being able to refer their parishioners to someone they trust within a reasonable driving distance was mentioned as a challenge. Only one church was described as offering any kind of formal marriage enrichment. It was noted by at least one person in each church as something that would be a good service to offer. However, again noting that pastors have no formal training in this area, some were left to wonder how to meet this need. *“I don't know how to make it happen”* (Brian).

Male and female sexuality. Another main area of sexuality education content described by participants was in the realm of gender. Like with biblical education, gender education happened in various capacities, from sermons to Bible study to personal interaction.

Male and female roles. A specific area within this topic was male and female roles. Delyn talked about male and female roles in marriage through a Bible study he does in his premarital counseling.

What I talk about is with a Genesis bible study, it's creation of man and woman and the purpose for man and woman. And in Ephesians, it's husband and wife and Christ in the church and the relationship of that.

Participants indicated that the way in which God has created man and woman to live together, whether in a romantic context or not, is an area that is addressed in their churches. This

then spilled over into the conversation about male-female interaction in the Bible study with teenagers.

It [the curriculum] taught as much about how to respect each other and what that means. I mean respect is more than just what we say and how we say it. It's how you treat people. Respect came out of that a lot. It clearly said that God made us and intended us to find a mate at the appropriate time; but until that point and time there is a certain amount of restraint that has to go on. (Forest)

This theme of respect was described by participants from four of the churches, and dealt with either by educating youth or educating all ages through a sermon series. For example, one church identified the issue of male sexuality as an area of need. They identified older males who wanted to mentor or teach younger males on how to be a husband and father. *“I'm seeing a group of guys develop an interest and a passion for passing on what they have learned to those younger men who have young families”* (Emma). This theme of male sexuality was talked about by every person interviewed at Church E, no other church talked in such direct terms about male sexuality.

Social issues. The churches interviewed had given a voice to cultural and social discussions that revolve around the topic of sexuality. These topics of sexuality that are being discussed both in the culture and the church is that of abortion and the LGBTQ community. These two sexuality topics were included in this section because they have become a talking point in almost every church.

Participants reported that legalized abortion is addressed in various forums, mainly in sermons and Bible study. The LCMS has been active in protesting *Roe v. Wade* and also works at a local level by having a Life Sunday.

There's emphasis made in the worship services and there's encouragement to hold signs and stand out here near Greenwich Road here and just to emphasize how much we value life, whether it's the unborn or not. That's one area. We talk about that as well and just how much God values life and choices that are available. We emphasize that we value life and we stand as a congregation that is pro-life; and in sermons, too, the pastors do address some of those topics throughout the year, as well as topics of homosexuality and of the sanctity of marriage and the sanctity of life. (Darcie)

This also carries over into the LGBTQ movement and the recent decision by the Supreme Court. Participants from all six of the churches said that they address the LGBTQ movement in various ways including sermons and Bible study. Church A had a Bible study series dedicated to exploring the original Biblical text to discover what exactly the Bible said about LGBTQ individuals. Church E was the only church that had a specific ministry, in the form of this book study, set up to educate their congregation about this topic. They did this through a book study called *Love is in Orientation* by Andrew Marin.

The Love is in Orientation; the author of that study did was encourage people to find a place where they could meet people who were living a LGBT lifestyle per se. Have you ever been to gay bar? Do you know people who are homosexual?...How can you find out what their life is like?...How can you talk to them about God and who God is and what that means to them? How can you engage with them and how can you build a bridge to relationship so that they can come back to the church, if they choose to do that? (Emma)

These educational opportunities revolved around educating the membership in how to minister to and do outreach to the LGBTQ community.

Married couples. Male and Female sexuality expressed in marriage was another way that churches were talking about sexuality. Marriage was mentioned by at least one individual from every church. For example, every pastor talked about meeting with married couples who were having trouble in their marriage. “...without exception, the goal is to strengthen the marriage and improve the marriage and to avoid divorce where possible.” (Andrew). Chandler talked about those struggling in their marriages at his church. “Right now, Satan has got his hands in a lot of marriages... so [I’m] doing a lot of marital counseling.” Healthy marriage was a big priority for churches. Churches want to help and support couples in their marriage.

How?

The vehicle churches are typically using to deliver sexuality education took the form of mentoring, pastoral care, small groups, overnight events, and outreach activities.

Mentoring. Several participants described providing sexuality education in the form of matching “junior” and “senior” parishioners in mentoring relationships. The education opportunities described were both formal and informal. Seven individuals over four churches talked about participating in mentoring relationships with others.

Formal. Mentoring was described by someone from every church, but only two (of the three largest churches) had a formal program set up. One was described as including three different mentorship programs. There were mentors for junior high youth, the youth in confirmation, and engaged couples. Erica talked about one formal mentorship program at their church: “We separate out into smaller groups; six to ten usually, on Wednesday night so that they can talk more in depth...5th and 6th grade go together...[with] two adults per group.”

Within the same congregation, Edward described his main motivator for being a mentor as being able to share the high priority he set on family and raising Christian children with other

married couples: *“My wife and I are real passionate about the family and the husband and wife; that relationship morphs out into everything that they do; whether it’s the relationship with their kids, their church, their extended family, their work.”* In Church E’s case, they hosted a Jr High and parent purity retreat. One goal of the retreat is to encourage communication and build relationships between child and parent. If a parent was not available, the Jr Higher has another adult figure come on the retreat to step in as a mentor figure. *“Each child is attending with a dad or in some cases an uncle or some kind of a male figure in their life”* (Edward). Typically it was the male mentor figure that was missing from the child’s life. In Church D’s case, a mentor-mentee relationship developed because they are involved in a class or program together. *“We actually have two young men... [that] do testimonies where we have them come in and share...They were involved in youth ministry”* (Daniel). These young men have relationships with the youth and Daniel. Because of this relationship these men are able to be mentors in a unique way to the youth they serve.

Informal. Mentoring was noted to be happening at all three of the smaller churches in informal fashions. Four participants described situations in which individuals informally stepped into a mentoring role, because they developed good relationships with the youth. Bob, a volunteer, described his relationship with the youth he works with, *“But these kids you know, I have raised them and a lot of their kids that aren’t my kids, half-raised them because they were always over at my farm.”* This theme of relational ministry in regards to education was referenced by at least 6 participants in 5 different churches. The aspect of relational education will also be addressed more in the results section. Other mentoring relationships were formed between adults. Edward noted, *“I’ve got two friends that have both felt comfortable enough to invite me into their world of sexual addictions and be an accountability partner.”* At one church,

there was someone who described himself as *“a crusader against broken families. I have seen it and it is awfu.”* (Bob). He was a volunteer who bought hundreds of dollars of pre-marriage curriculum to help counsel couples either preparing for marriage or those going through a rough patch in their marriage. This gentleman also developed relationships with the youth he taught so that they would seek him out for advice. *“A young man wanting to talk about dating a young woman and wanted to know what I thought about it.”* This one volunteer made a huge difference in this small church in the realm of sexuality education.

Pastoral care. Sexuality education was also described as being offered through pastoral care and counseling. This included individuals seeking a listening ear and guidance on a particular sexual topic. Often this would come up as a struggling marriage, struggling with children, and other topics. Every pastor except one mentioned doing pastoral care in the form of counseling married couples. The pastoral counseling did not seem to have a curriculum unless they were using a premarital curriculum. *“A lot of my marital counseling deals with premarital counseling concepts”* (Chandler). Because most of the pastors are not trained counselors, many would refer the couple at a licensed counselor. *“I am not a marriage counselor; I know that...There are no services here other than the pastors”* (Brian).

Preaching. Preaching from the pulpit was the most common form of education from pastors. Every pastor preached on sexuality about a variety of subjects ranging from marriage to sexual sin.

We would preach and teach for everyone to live toward the standards God calls us to in his word; whether that’s singles, married couples, those who have a propensity toward homosexuality or lesbianism. We would love each one equally and encourage and desire

and preach and teach that God has expectations for all of us. Every age in every stage of life with regard to sexuality and everything else. (David)

Preaching is the only teaching method that allows for all life stages to hear the same teaching at the same time in such a large group. Sermons are effective teaching tools in that they are the only form of teaching that reaches the largest group of people.

Confirmation. Confirmation, unlike all other teaching areas, is a rite of passage in this church body. Confirmation classes are for students in seventh and eighth grade. Confirmation focuses on teaching the six Chief Parts of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Within the six Chief Parts the participants identified the sixth Commandment as a place where sexuality would be taught. *"We do confirmation where we teach about the sixth commandment"* (Daniel). Participants all taught about the sixth Commandant using various teaching methods. Frank provides one example of how he teaching.

When I do catechesis talking about bible stories it's more than just talking about a story. It's letting them see the dynamics and how they work with that. Sex outside of marriage we view some of That the World May Know talking about the historic, why did they have these rules in the old testament. I get up there and we use multimedia to let them see that and we also bring in some families that have gone through divorce.

Frank's goal with teaching about sexuality in this way was to provide more real-life application for what the Bible was talking about. Confirmation, preaching and pre-marriage counseling were the only avenues that were consistent at teaching sexuality at every church interviewed.

Small groups. Small groups were mentioned by participants from half of the churches. Small group education typically occurred in an intimate setting with adults who have a good

relationship with each other. These groups could be for couples, men or women, age groups, or for any interested adults. The topic of discussion could be anything from Biblical marriage to how to parent or living a Christian life. Daniel, a full-time staff member, talks about a video based small group he led that was titled the *Indestructible Marriage*.

We did one of the Indestructible Marriage ones for the adults was on sex and he [the author] was talking about very intimate things about how often a normal couple have sex and things like that I think most couples haven't sat down and had a long conversation about or had it with anybody else. (Daniel)

The *Indestructible Marriage* focuses on intimacy, communication, romance, sex, and the Biblical view of married and roles within marriage.

Overnight events. One church did something unique: it held a women's retreat.

The age range was 23 or 24 up to late 70's probably. It was just kind of interesting. Some children and then there is everybody in between. Women with children and families, divorces, not divorced; all those family scenarios that go on." (Fae)

This was a first-time experience for this church. *"I hoped for 10 to 12. Then I said, 'God, if I could be so bold, can we have 15?' We had 24 attend"* (Fae). This was a huge step in the realm of sexuality education at this church.

It was really exciting, but – the planning committee - we just kind of smiled at the diversity of the group. There was a wide age variance and it was an interesting difference, so we weren't quite sure that was going to pan out but it was really good.

The church hit on a need that was bigger than they thought. This provided a long-term, relationship-building experience for these women.

Outreach. Outreach is an intentional activity that churches do in order to reach into the community, hoping to spread the Gospel, so that others might hear about Jesus and join the Church. Participants from half of the churches mentioned doing outreach in the form of parenting classes, pre-marriage counseling, and providing services to their community in a formal setting, which included sexuality education.

That was my main goal with working with youth, talking with youth in the community, they had opened up to me and confided a lot of things, especially when there was just one of them there and the other ones hadn't shown up yet. A girl confided to me that she had gotten into an abusive relationship and had attempted suicide. (Anna)

The other half of churches were not doing any intentional outreach that involved sexuality education except through their education center. The place where it seemed churches had the most need was finding ways to do outreach in a way that not only would they be able to support and maintain, but also something that would appeal to the part of the community they were trying to target.

We have a [ministry] at our church that caters to all ages, but it seems especially the youth...The intention of the [ministry] was to build relationships and create an environment where this kind of thing [relationship building] can happen. That way people would be comfortable talking with me. (Andrew)

Church A had found a way to do outreach, care for their community and engage in sexuality education with youth from their community through one ministry. Church A was the only church interviewed to have a ministry that accomplished its goal of creating relationships but it also other unforeseen positive effects, like the ability to engage in sexuality education.

By Whom?

Interestingly when churches talked about those who provided sexuality education, they seemed to focus on those things that were out of the norm for them. This included third parties coming to their church to do education, professionals with training to provide specialized service, and conferences put on by an organization outside their church. However, the professional staff and volunteers played a huge role in sexuality education within the church setting.

Volunteers. Volunteers are the main way in which the execution of educational activities happen in a church. Fae talks about the volunteers she has at her church

Our core group are just in there working pretty hard. Volunteering quite a bit of time... We're careful about who we put in front of the kids. They have to kind of prove themselves as godly people... We want to make sure that we got the best of the best. They have to have kind of a passion for it and an understanding. They have to be living their faith too. (Fae)

Forest is a financial controller and says that he spends “two to three hour a week” preparing and teaching his lesson. He has been in his role as a Sunday School teacher for the last 13 years. Even though teaching is not in his field of expertise and he has a high-powered career, Forest still makes time to volunteer at his church. Chandler talked about a Sunday School teacher who was spending her time volunteering in a capacity that was way above her pay grade: “One of our volunteers is actually a principal in a grade school and so she is very well educated, has a master’s degree, working on finishing up her PhD.” This volunteer has a full-time job, plus goes to school and finds time to volunteer at her church. This volunteer is over qualified for

being a Sunday School teacher. In the smallest churches, only volunteers were used when educating about sexuality.

Professionals. Medium and larger churches, on the other hand, had people resources to do education and support educational services on top of the printed resources, including doing outreach ministries to the community. *“We’re also starting a 12-step general recovery group that will be community outreach based and we’ve just piloted that over the last 10 months or so”* (Emma). This 12-step program serviced many people recovering from various addictions, including sexual addictions. Church E had a trained counselor on staff at their church, which is an added resource to allow for this unique sexuality education program. The larger churches had more professionally trained staff to draw upon along with even more printed materials than the smaller churches had to conduct sexuality education. Church D had a professional in the form of Daniel, who organized subject cycles within their education program *“We do [sexuality education] every two years in youth ministry, high school ministry and once every 3 years in middle school ministry.”* Daniel, because he was a trained DCE, was able to structure a two- to three-year rotation of sexuality education within youth ministry. This one of the things Daniel was trained to do.

Third party. Third parties were those outside of the church who brought learning onto the church’s campus. Participants from smaller churches indicated that they relied heavily on printed resources, more so than the larger churches. The smaller churches appeared more apt to use traditional media versus modern electronic formats.

We have bought from CPH what is called the “What About Sex” book series. We have actually purchased two of those book sets and we have those available to the congregation to check out through our church library that would give the parents, give

the children, an avenue to read and to study this and to open that door of communication together. (Chandler)

There were also outside resources, such as the YMCA, to provide some of their educational opportunities. *“We did a seminar last spring...the concern was about the [sexual abuse] reporting that we should be doing”* (Brian). While this type of resource is available to any church, Church B was the only church who referenced bringing in the YMCA or other organization to do education for their membership.

The services churches were providing were mainly for their own membership and revolved around the Biblical perspective of sexuality. The larger the church was, the more resources it had to provide diverse educational opportunities. Every church had the common thread of sermons, Bible studies, and premarital and marital counseling as ways that sexuality education was taught. The majority of churches had their own staff and volunteers serving as educators, however, some were able to have an entity outside of their church providing educational opportunities.

What are the Sexuality Education Needs of the Church Membership?

The following are the results for the needs that churches identified, but did not currently have a way to fill those needs.

By Whom?

Five interviewees indicated a desire of having a public speaker come to their church to talk to their youth. Brittany knew a nationally known speaker that she wanted to either take youth to see or bring to a youth event.

Pam Stenzel...She is a nationally known speaker...she was a product of a rape...whether it is a national youth gathering or some other kind of a youth event where they had

speakers on sexuality that can kind of talk to them in their own language, I think those are really helpful. (Brittany)

Brittany had seen the great impact this speaker had made and wanted the youth in her church to have the same experience. Resources, however, were not there to support such an endeavor. Churches did not have the financial resource to bring a speaker in, the facilities to support such a large teaching forum, or the money to reserve such a space.

For Whom?

Those who needed education, but did not have services provided at these churches, were wide and varied.

Training for volunteers. Only one volunteer and one part-time employee interviewed said they had formal education training. While each volunteer and part-time staff brought his or her own skillset to the table, the lack of sexuality education training left them feeling ill prepared. *“I don’t have any training or special knowledge. I am just saying that in general. I am not saying specifically sexuality; I mean that is the thing with volunteers, right? I am not a professor or anything”* (Fabio). Three volunteers noted that, even though they were not trained, they were willing to talk about sexuality because they were teaching a Biblical account. *“I do know that in those Bible studies that we do delve into those issues and it is topical...I know in Sunday School we talk about it”* (Chase). Training for volunteers and part-time staff might be a key these churches needs to unlock more sexuality conversations amongst their parishioners. If churches are going to be able to teach on the varying topics of sexuality, besides the Biblical accounts, they have to train their volunteers. They cannot afford to wait until their volunteers have been in their position for 13 years or hope they have a good enough relationship with staff.

Divorced parents. The need for education and services for divorce families was an unmet need. The first concern was over the impact that the divorce will have on the children and how that will affect their future marriage. The second concern was the example that the parents set as they are searching for a new spouse. Twelve of the 18 people interviewed referenced one of these two concerns when talking about divorce in their church.

Divorced parents who were starting to date again were of concern for participants. There was a felt need to be able to reach these divorced parents and communicate that their kids are watching what they are doing. What type of example would they be setting for their child?

After the divorce, she was talking about this guy she was dating and I am like, now you are not spending the night, are you?...She slept with the guy. That would be an example of, and I tried to explain her, that would just be destructive to both you and your children as an example...Trying to help her live a godly life, encourage her to live a godly life.

(Anna)

The concern from those interviewed was this: were the parents being parents or were they merely fulfilling their own needs and desires? Would the parents' actions be undermining the Biblical teaching from the Church?

Widows. The other single-again group that was not mentioned as receiving sexuality education was widows and widowers. For those who have lost a spouse of many years, there is a gap in basically every aspect of life. Many times, we forget that a part of sexuality in marriage is companionship. For churches that have people who have experienced loss, some kind of support group or just social group would need to be filled, even just in the way of companionship for the elderly. This need was addressed by only one participant.

Other interviewees had a narrow view of what single meant. *“A lot of the ladies are widowed but single and never married, I can only think of the one off hand...Single including widowed?...there would be 10 or 15”* (Andrew). Once widows were brought into the equation for Andrew, I saw his view was opened more to what singles ministry meant as the realization set in.

What Resources are Necessary and what Barriers are Present for Providing Sexuality Education?

In looking at the resources that participants said were needed and barriers that prevented sexuality education, a number of themes emerged. They were divided into two subsections: internal versus external barriers and tangible or intangible resources.

Tangible and Internal Resources

Tangible resources presented themselves as physical things that included materials, students, and leaders. All of these resources could be found inside a church’s pre-existing infrastructure. In order to have sexuality education, participants mentioned that they needed to have an infrastructure of support, including teaching materials and tools, funds, and a physical place to hold the class.

Financial resources. Financial resources for sexuality education came from two places either from the church’s budget or the individual’s pocket.

From the church. Because a church is a nonprofit organization, financial resources are not always stable. No participant said his or her church had a line item in its budget to purchase new sexuality education materials. *“There’s times when we can’t buy stuff. It just depends on how things are going and what’s going on”* (Fae). The barrier with creating a budget for sexuality education is convincing people that the education is necessary.

The congregation told us we couldn't access those funds anymore until we had a youth group with officers - like a treasurer, a president of a youth group and all of that.

Basically, they put a kibosh on any youth ministry that we could do. (Anna)

Participants from churches A and F were the only ones to talk about the lack of money having a direct impact on their ability to do ministry. All other churches had at least one person talk about the benefit of having material resources at their disposal to do their job. Half of the churches did say they had room in their budgets to purchase materials if they wanted.

Let's say that something came up and we did want to bring a speaker in for a topic or pursue some items that weren't budgeted that touched on these issues, I am sure that the congregation would get behind this and try to make it happen. (Chandler)

Examples of this can be seen in churches of all sizes, which means it did not seem to matter if the church was large or small. Being able to provide material support to staff and volunteers to do their job was a paramount need.

From the Teacher. The church was not the sole place that financial support could be obtained. People also willingly contributed to buying the materials needed.

Bob: It seems like all the DVDs were like \$200.00 and these are about \$27.00, the workbooks. We have several of those...I bought it.

Charity: So you bought it yourself?

Bob: I don't like to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing, or admonished in scripture. I don't not [feel] comfortable answering that. God owns it all anyway.

Bob was very hesitant and humble to talk about what he had bought for his church. He saw a need and filled it. Participants from Churches A, B, D and F had participants who said they

knew of people (including themselves) who spent money for sexuality education and did not bill the church.

Technology. Technology was another important resource mentioned by participants. “*We have flat screen TVs in every room with DVD players or Blu-ray players or ability to hook up to the WIFI or computer which are our tech resources*” (Daniel). The lack of technology was seen as a hindrance and that was most apparent in smaller churches.

Technology might be another thing that inhibits us too. We have a screen and projector, but it is something you have to set up manually and it is not mounted or readily available or we don't have a fancy speaker system. (Chandler)

Church D was the only church who had a high level of access to technology. This contrasts with smaller churches like Church A who did not seem to have a TV or projector with screen readily available.

Facility. Another aspect of resources is the ability to expand the church's facility. This comes with a huge price tag, requires longer time to rectify, and would benefit more than just sexuality education.

For the build...if we don't build we're capping growth. You can't grow as a congregation unless we do these things because the areas of ministry that are growing are the ones that need facility support...we're seeing a lot of growth through our care ministry...we would have the opportunity to engage people who are struggling with their sexuality and what that means. (Emma)

What is interesting to note is that the lack of facilities in which to host sexuality education opportunities was felt on all three sections of churches. Half of the churches interviewed needed more facility space. Of those three, each was in a different stage, one was building, one was

seeing how much they could build, and other had identified the need. Of the three churches that were experiencing a space crunch, only one had specific sexuality ministry education opportunities.

Curriculum. The need for curriculum was a large resource issue identified by participants. The curriculum used for pre-marriage counseling was the only example of consistent curriculum use on sexuality education in the church setting. The official publishing house for the LCMS, Concordia Publishing House (CPH), at the time of the study only had one curriculum on sexuality and it was designed for parents to teach their children at home. CPH, however, had more than a dozen books to choose from on the topic. Most of the churches were either self-writing curriculum or adapted from another publishing house that was not CPH. The curriculum that churches adapted proved to include a wide range from various publishing houses. Participants struggled to find curriculum that they thought would be age appropriate.

They were all slanted because either they were written for high schoolers or using it in middle school or it was written for high school and we are using it in young adult or it was written for adult and I am using it for high school. (Daniel)

Books were the primary consistent form of sexuality education that did not have to be modified. Six interviewees mentioned using books to teach about sexuality. There is a need for age appropriate, theologically correct, and engaging curriculum on multimedia platforms.

Lack of people resources. Students and teachers are a huge resource need. While this may sound so basic, it can make or break an activity in a volunteer organization.

Availability. Just the availability in the schedule can mean success or failure of a voluntary educational opportunity. When asked what he finds most challenging in his role, Daniel responded, *“Busy families. Too many good things to pick from in families. Whether it is*

sports or girlfriends or school stuff.” Being able to find a time and place that would benefit the highest number of people was a need workers at every church indicated they were struggling to fill. In addition to availability, the commitment to attend is needed. Because this education opportunity is not mandatory, there has to be a level of buy-in from students and teachers.

Leadership. In order to have a program, or create a new one, leadership is needed from either staff or volunteers. “[We] just need a leader, somebody who is energized about the topic” (Chase). This aspect of the people resource was most keenly felt by the three smallest churches. Effective leaders needed passion for the topic, a goal when teaching, training and experience with teaching on sexuality and they also needed to know a first step to take. Some leaders were passionate about the topic but did not have a goal for teaching; others had the experience of teaching but no formal training. No one person that I interviewed had every aspect of these key points of leadership for teaching sexuality.

Passion. The passion that someone brings about a topic can really set the stage for what kind of services a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization has. If a leader has passion for this topic, that will help to generate educational opportunities.

It’s kind of a passion for me. It’s just recently I have been more aware of how important it is for adults to continue conversations, not just for their kids’ sake, but for their sakes too. That’s kind of been a recent passion thing that’s come from me. (Fae)

The need for leaders to communicate their passion can then instill in others the same sense of passion. Daniel talked about the multiple people in his church who have a passion for teaching the topic of sexuality. “Mainly staff and then a few volunteers who are passionate about it. I have really got three. We have our teachers and our pastors and I and [my wife] and then we have about 3 passionate adults.” Each full-time and part-time staff member and five

volunteers expressed their passion to educate about sexuality. They recognized the need of this for family, marriages, and individuals. The ability of leadership to develop this passion into an educational program is a great resource. There were also those churches that had a leader, but they identified that they or their church did not have passion for the topic. “[*There*] isn’t a passion for this topic...I am never quite sure how to go about it more reactively” (Andrew). The need for passion in staff and volunteers was something that was noted by the researcher where four of those interviewed did not seem to have a passion for the topic.

Goal. The leader not only had to have a desire to teach about sexuality, but s/he also had to have a goal. Sometimes they had a passion, but did not have a goal. “*I know you are always supposed to have goals, right? (chuckles). I don’t know if we ever stated those goals*” (Brittany). Both of these factors play a role in having a leader, either volunteer or staff, to facilitate sexuality education. Daniel has a goal and plan for how he is going to execute sexuality education at his church.

We do it [sexuality education] every two years in youth ministry, high school ministry, and once every three years in middle school ministry...Because I would say it is probably the biggest, most relevant topic to middle school and high school students that they are either going to be blessed with or be faced with...to make sure we are trying to lift up God’s truth over the popular opinion in certain topics...God talked a lot about sexuality so I thought we should too.” (Daniel)

Being able to have a goal and work towards it is a big need to be filled within these churches. Only one church had a stated goal and known steps to fulfill that goal.

Training. For volunteers and part-time employees, training happened through a third party like at a conference that happened away from the church campus or training brought to the

church campus. This was described by one part-time employee: *“I have gone through KINDLE although I’m not a DCE or a roster worker...because it just seemed like such a great fit for adult discipling”* (Emma). Emma had going through KINDLE (The Karpenko Institute for Nurturing and Developing Leadership Excellence), which is an LCMS run program that trains both volunteers and church workers to multiply “Christ-like servant leaders to enhance the ministry of congregations in their communities and the world” (KINDLE, n.d.). Churches could also bring trained professionals to their campus from either the church or community. The three rural churches struggled in this area.

It is a very rural, very agricultural area and the congregation mostly resembles that, as being largely agricultural, lot of ranchers, lot of farmers and then there are a lot of people who work blue collar jobs in the surrounding area...I don’t think any of them have special training or I don’t think any of them are like former teachers or anything.

(Andrew)

The three suburban churches had professionals they could call on if necessary.

We have medical professional, psychology, we have counseling and folks. So, if we want to bring in somebody who has more expertise in terms of physiology or psychology of those types of things, we would have access to that; if not necessarily through our membership, through somebody who knows somebody in the community because it is a suburban/urban area with more of those types of resources. (Emma)

The ability to use these trained professionals could prove to be a very valuable resource in order to create a sexuality education specific opportunity. All full-time employees had training from a university or seminary that would aid them in educating others. *“The one has no*

training other than confirmation classes here as far as I know of” (Brian). No participant stated that s/he trained their volunteer teachers ahead of time.

Another aspect of sexuality education that larger churches had was in the realm of conferences and seminars. *“[I’ve] learned about how other churches are handling or how they’re engaging with the LGBT community, that was through some conferences I attended and hearing speakers there talk about how their church was engaging in that conversation”* (Emma). The larger churches were able to learn from third parties and how others were doing sexuality education. *“We’ve had lesbians...they’ve had conferences down in Oklahoma. My wife has taken one in specific down there that was struggling with being a lesbian and worked with her”* (Fae). These third parties were used mainly to educate staff, although some, were used to educate parishioners but in very small numbers. The printed materials, on the other hand, were meant to educate the parishioners primarily.

Experience. Some staff members had been working fewer than 5 years whereas other volunteers had been teaching for 20 years. The experience someone had in the realm of education meant a lot in terms of their view of their ability to teach on the topic of sexuality. We heard about a pastor’s experience:

I have performed two weddings since getting here and neither has broken up yet so there is I guess after 3 ½ years, I have a 100% success rate...I suppose as far as formal marriage counseling, that would make it a 0% success rate. As far as informal marriage counseling about 80% ish. (Andrew)

This is compared to a volunteer’s experience:

My husband and I have taught some parenting classes and hope to do a marriage retreat...I am just a volunteer at the church...We have been teaching different parenting classes probably for about the last 8 or 10 years off and on. (Brittany)

The years of experience are markedly different. Even though the pastor had a high rate of success, he had not had that many opportunities for real-life application, unlike the volunteer. The average experience of a full-time employee was 23 years. The average experience of a part-time employee in their role was 5 years. The volunteers averaged 16 years in various voluntary capacities.

I would love if it we could offer parenting classes, like marriage retreats, seminars, that kind of thing. But I don't feel that I have the qualifications for either of those....it is how to get started. Like what is the first step? (Andrew)

This translated into an understanding of how best to start and teach educational opportunities.

First Step. Not knowing where or how to start a sexuality education was another barrier the participants mentioned. Interviewees sometimes struggled with how to get a new educational opportunity started.

I don't know, I don't have a clue. I have never actually asked, "How many of you want to learn more about sex?" I don't know how to bring that up. That I would feel ill-equipped to deal with. I don't think that I can feel qualified there. (Brian)

When I asked, "How would you want to offer more sexuality education at your church?" Seven interviewees could not formulate an idea about who, why, or how to start to answer this question. The request to dream seemed too insurmountable; a first step could not be formulated in their mind's eye.

Another important aspect for leaders is their knowledge of and access to resources. The goal and desire might be there for leaders, but if they do not have the resources to create an educational opportunity, they will only get so far.

I don't think there are any impediments. I think somebody needs to come up with an idea and find what resources are available...If we could get something like this out there I am sure we would get support...If we could get it going, I think we could get all the resources we needed to do something like that. I think we just have to talk the right people."

(Chase)

Chase had a passion for working with youth and sexuality education. However, he said he does not have the knowledge of the resources to effectively create a new sexuality education opportunity. Of the seven volunteers interviewed, five were not married to a person on staff. Of those five, two served on a high leadership tier of the church's hierarchy. Those married to staff and those serving in the church's hierarchy exhibited greater knowledge of a resource base. If the need for a knowledge base of available resources at the church is provided, there is a greater potential for creating more opportunities.

Educating adults. Educating adults proved to have two separate barriers: imagined reality and actualized reality.

Imagined reality. A barrier was identified in the perception of educating adults. Potential educators seemed to have a preconceived notion of what educating adults would look like.

I wouldn't want to teach it to adults because...I think it would be difficult for me to teach it people, adults...I think it would be a waste of my time personally to try to teach older people what that means because they are already set in their ways (Bob).

Besides Bob, five other interviewees had a negative perception or experiences trying to educate adults. There was also an assumption that adults do not need to have sexuality education. *“By the time you get to the empty nester stage, it probably has a lot less bearing at that point. By that age you have already made all your mistakes.”*(Fabio). Fabio is making an assumption about the sexual life of adults in their older age. Only one church offered any kind of specific sexuality educational opportunity, in the form of marriage enrichment, for anyone who was an empty nester or older. This barrier of teachers’ perceptions of adult students makes creating or maintaining educational opportunities harder in a church.

Actualized reality. Adults are unlike minors and can make their own choices about whether or not they want to receive education. Adults were more willing to send their kids to receive education than themselves. Parents of adult children would come seeking help for their own child’s marriage because the adult child would not seek help willingly. Delyn notes,

People that have come in and said, “My son is not getting along with his wife and I sure wish he would come in and talk to you;” or “What can I say to him or what can I do?”

Delyn was the only one who referenced this particular scenario of parents of adult children seeking help. However, adults being their own barrier were a theme that was noted by others as well. *“They [adults] might not want to be involved because they do have problems and they don’t want anybody else to know that; see it as a sign of weakness”* (David). There were three other interviewees, all pastors, who referred to this same barrier David described. Seven interviewees noted difficulties having adults engage in educational opportunities. It was hard to find motivation to teach a group of people who you either think is not interested or will not benefit.

Intangible and Internal

In addition to tangible resources and internal needs, participants also identified intangible, internal barriers, which can be the hardest to address. The intangible resources the participants discussed included culture, attitudes, and relationships.

Culture of the church. The culture of a church is developed over the course of years, and once set, the culture can prove hard to change. The culture was influenced by the history of the church, the ministries it provides, and the staff it employs.

Church history. Participants from half of the churches indicated their congregation was younger than 75 years and the other half no older than 150 years. Those in the older bracket were much more set in their culture and ways. This can prove especially detrimental when a church is experiencing a decline.

The church has been of the opinion that it is mostly older for so long that I think it became a self-fulfilling prophecy and so we have younger members, but don't get them involved...the congregation has scheduled everything at a time when older people are available but the younger people are not. (Andrew)

In the case of Church A, the membership had a culture of the children's and youth programs running a certain way and the expectation was that it would continue within that system, as noted earlier by Anna. Church B also ran into this same type of barrier with regards to their culture. The barrier of the church's culture can hinder new and inventive ways to educate and reach out to people about sexuality.

Ministries. The church's culture also impacted the type of ministries it offered. One can see a church's value system by looking at its specific programs or ministries. These ministries can relate to caring for others, teaching, outreach, etc. It can also show how much value or need

is placed on the family, children, the elderly, outreach, or anything else. “*We put together a glomeration of people who really care....That’s what we have*” (Frank). These attitudes of the church’s membership can have a great bearing on the culture of the church. “*This is a family. That’s one of the primary scenarios I think we get as a report back when people leave is the thing they miss most about [this church] is the family*” (Frank). Church F has a specific ministry for sexual predators, allowing them a place to worship and grow their faith while protecting children who worship there. Specific ministries are those organized activities that are unique to that church. Each church had specific ministries to minister to the needs of their church or community. Half of the participants interviewed mentioned specific ministries that dealt in the realm of sexuality education. These ministries can sometimes be the pet projects of a staff member or volunteer.

Staff. The staff’s culture also played a large role in the type of ministries that were offered. For those staff working with other staff, the culture of the workplace can play a key role with intangible resources. When a person is not alone on staff, it can change the culture since teamwork is critical for such a small staff. Church D was the only church that I got the sense that the staff members were not all on the same page. “*Team ministry is always a challenge and it always has been and I know that it always will be*” (Delyn). The staff did not seem to have consistency in their understanding of each other’s ministries. This was contrasted with Brian’s summary of his team ministry setting. “*There has been some new energy within the school and the church because of that [new staff member.]*” At Church B, there was excitement for the future and an energy that this new staff member brought to the team. Only two churches did not work with any other full- or part-time staff.

This energy that staff brings can be translated into their church. They were energized and excited about the ministry they were doing and this excitement then translated to the volunteers in leadership.

I would say that we are trying to do or be more intentional with what we call family ministry...I am heavily influenced... [by] the model that Ben Freudenburg puts, is that the family faith life or the faith life begins in the home and that it is further nurtured here in the church. So that is really what we have been trying to do not only as a board of education but as a church...it [family ministry]. (Chandler)

While the excitement in his eyes and change of his voice's tone may not be translated to written word, I assure you it was there. Chandler was excited about his church and the ministry they were doing. Chandler was working to change the way his church does ministry and outreach, and his volunteers were buying in.

Support. Support shown and made available to those trying to attend and teach sexuality education is an important resource. Support from students in their interest to learn the topic, support from parents to have their children learn this topic. Also, there is support to teach the topic and support to teach the topic also needs to be felt by the teachers and leaders. Because the topic of sexuality can come with a taboo connotation, this along with other aspects can prove to be a barrier for support.

Student. The desire of students for the information can play a huge role in whether or not they will make themselves available for education. *“We had a middle school boy...hide out in the locker rooms all class. His parents thought he was going and the reason he didn't he just didn't want to talk about the subject”* (Daniel). Of the three churches who had specific sexuality education ministries, participants from two expressed running into issues of lack of desire from

participants. When asked if he or other Sunday School teachers felt driven to teach on sexuality Fabio said, *“I don’t know, because of their lack of interest or if it is not just something they feel comfortable in that setting.”* Showing participants why they should be interested in this subject can be hard, especially with an uncomfortable topic.

Parent. Parents’ support was of critical importance, not only because they were the physical means of transportation, but also because they had the most influence in directing and educating their children. The amount of religion taught and practiced in the home was a great resource when it came to involvement in the church. *“It is from their parents that the kids learn their faith”* (Andrew). At least one person from each church talked about the importance of parent support in order to facilitate the sexuality education of minors. There was a perception that parents of children were not always welcoming of sexuality education. *“I think they [parents] think the schools are doing it or, ‘My kids don’t need that type of thing. My kids are special, they won’t have these problems’”* (Daniel). Participants from two churches, including Church D, had parents who were a formidable barrier in educating the youth.

Topic. The discomfort of the topic, coupled with the privacy of the topic, made it a harder topic than others to educate about. *“It’s a topic that is difficult for parents and kids to have that conversation. It’s just an uncomfortable topic”* (Forest). Eight of the interviewees referenced the discomfort surrounding sexuality. Bob managed to say the terms “sex” or “sexuality” only 10 times in his two-hour interview. More often sex was referred to as “it” and once was referred to as “you know” in the interview.

An additional barrier with this topic was that there were other topics to teach. The some participants talked about teach on Biblical text, beyond the topic of sexuality. Erica talked about her church’s teaching rotation:

Old testament in the fall; new testament in the spring and then whatever Bible lessons that we do on Sunday morning. Then we have a subject lesson, theme lesson, that goes with that on Wednesday night to kind of tie Bible into everyday life...I think there is a social justice one or how we treat others. I know we talk about racial issues around Martin Luther King Day.

The need to look at the Biblical text through various aspects of life like sexuality were almost too numerous. Every person interviewed talked about the importance of teaching on other topics of life besides sexuality.

Sexuality education was unique because it was also taught in the church and the school setting. Schools also taught sexuality in which case minors got the topic from two different establishments. *“We also have in the school... they have to write a report about sexuality and the Lutheran view on pornography, same sex marriage, those are all talked about as well as some other topics”* (Daniel). This can lend itself to the idea that churches could hand the responsibility off to schools, including their own schools.

Support for the topic did come when it was found to be not as bad as people thought. Darcie talked about her initial discomfort with the topic. However, after she taught the topic she saw the positive outcome and she was uplifted to teach the topic again. Darcie said, *“We’ve done that [sexuality education] recently with middle school, high school, and some adults too and the parents of youth and we’ve gotten really good participation in those as well.”* She was encouraged that others were being helped by her teaching on this topic. It no longer had a negative connotation for her. Four other interviewees described a similar experience, where the topics used to be more uncomfortable; but after teaching it, it was less so.

Leaders and teachers. Leaders and teachers need to know that they would be supported when teaching about sexuality. Negative feedback, either realized or imagined, was a deterrent from teaching this topic. *“The previous principal really didn’t want to deal with it because he had a lot of parent fallout... [He wanted] to talk about sexuality in school in 2nd and 3rd grade”* (Brian). In Brian’s case, the negative feedback was not directed at him and had happened years ago, but the repercussions of this negative experience still acted as a barrier. Participants from Churches B and D reported negative feedback for teaching sexuality. In contrast, Chandler had the following reaction about his church: *“I think I have been here long enough that I have the trust of the people, that if they knew that I was going to do something like this [sexuality education]...they would accept it.”* Of the eight full-time staff members, four noted having negative experiences with either church members or other staff members that affected their outlook on sexuality education ministry. Generally, when talking about support to staff, it was in the realm of emotional support to help with either the realized or the supposed fear of backlash from the church’s membership.

The leaders and teachers needed support beyond just teaching this subject. Leadership’s lack of time to teach on the topic was a barrier. When asked about what was challenging in his role, David responded, *“The schedule. Just last night I left at 10:30 and then was in early this morning so I think the schedule would be one thing that’s always a challenge.”* Of the eight full-time staff members, six had a desire to teach more sexuality education, but of those six, three mentioned other time commitments at work taking priority over teaching sexuality education. These churches needed healthy leaders and volunteers, not ones that were burnt out, to be a great resource for the congregational ministries.

Positive Relationship. Within a volunteer-run organization, positive relationships are a key resource to be able to sustain and grow ministry. Without these positive relationships, open and honest communication between students and teachers and also between volunteers and staff, would be much less likely.

Minors. When trying to have meaningful conversations and education with minors, relationship was described as paramount.

My main goal with working with youth, talking with youth in the community, they had opened up to me and confided a lot of things...I think they respected me more because I would connect with them...One of the guys was saying that he went in there looking for like a cool T-shirt or something and figured they were like Hot Topic and stumbled into the row of vibrators and dildos.” (Anna)

While this may not seem like a huge discussion, it is important to remember the context. A male teenager was willingly talking to his female adult leader about sex toys, not in the context of bragging, but rather amazement and inquiry. Every person interviewed who worked with minors emphasized the importance of having a positive relationship with their students. They recognized that the relationships that form can mean more than anything that is taught in the classroom. Ultimately, a positive relationship between teachers and students allowed them to have genuine conversations about sexuality.

Volunteers. People who volunteered did so because they wanted to help and loved what they do. For a volunteer nonprofit organization, the role of positive relationships cannot be overstated. The relationship between staff and volunteers was very important. These relationships allowed for both parties to support each other and work together in education. “Even though I am the only paid person, we have a number of active people who are behind the

scenes that, you know, that make this place go and make my life easier so that is a joy, too” (Chandler). Each full-time staff member cited positive and supportive relationships with volunteers as central to providing sexuality education. I could tell that working with these volunteers brought them joy. This, in effect, generated team ministry, a ministry in which people have made the commitment to go forward and work towards a goal.

Intangible and External

Community. One of the purposes of a church is to provide services to the community. The more involved a church was in its community, the more potential it had for positively affecting those around them. *“The assistant pastor. One of his goals is for...[the] county for this church to provide premarital counseling to 10% of all marriages in...[the] county and he’s been just really active in that kind of thing”* (Edward). This support or outreach into the community increased not only the number of potential students, but also provided the opportunity to complete the church’s ultimate mission, which is to tell others about Jesus. Church E was the only church who had a specific outreach sexuality education program. While the others had outreach programs, none directly hit the area of sexuality education.

The culture of the community can become a barrier for the availability of sexuality education. Of the three rural churches, Churches A and B, which are in the smallest towns of less than 1,000, seemed to struggle with this the most. At Church A, the pastor reported having members encourage him not to perform his pastoral duties to certain families in town due to the reputation and rumor mill. Within this context, town gossip can damage the possibility of offering sexuality education. *“That is a thing you can say about any small town...We talk about our business and we talk about other people’s business as though it should be our business”* (Brian). In Church B’s town, an out-of-wedlock pregnancy made the town newspaper. Church

C, located in the largest small town with over 5,000 residents, did not report the culture of the town to interfere with sexuality education opportunities.

Summary of the Results

In summary, the findings indicate that LCMS churches were teaching about sexuality and were mainly focusing on education through the Biblical narrative to the members of a biological family with minors in the home. There were some things that churches desired to do, but did not have the resources to support. This included the finances and facility to bring in a public speaker. Training for volunteers to teach sexuality education was a need that volunteers expressed, but no church provided. Also, educating divorced parents and singles was a need churches had, but were not filling. Finally, lack of resources that took the form of tangible and intangible were needed; some examples are immediate funds, a leader, curriculum, and culture of these churches. Barriers were also found to be internal and external to these churches, the majority was internal. Internal consisted of support, staff, and positive relationships. The external barrier was specific to small towns, the stigma of sexuality and the lack of willingness to engage with the subject.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on the research questions, and how they interacted with each other. I also focus on the filter that I, as the interviewer, brought to this study as an insider – a member of and Director of Education in the LCMS.

Sexuality Education Services and Resources for Providing Sexuality Education

The services a church is able to provide depend a lot on the resources it has at its disposal. The efficiency with which churches are able transfer their resources into services revolves around the leadership both lay and staff.

Lay Leadership

Lay leadership proved to be a huge resource for churches. Volunteers proved invaluable to the church's staff. Within the Lutheran church, a volunteer's time cost the church \$610 annually, compared to the cost of a full-time worker of the church (Hoge et al., 1998). Instead of the church having to pay someone to fulfill a role, the volunteer saves the church money and fills a need. When taking into consideration the different skills that volunteers have based on their full-time job, this averages to be around \$940 annually (Hoge et al., 1998). Around half of the worshipers within the Lutheran church were found to volunteer at least some amount of time to the church, and at \$610 a year to compensate for full-time workers, the volunteers are a valuable resource for the church (Hoge et al., 1998). The level at which volunteers are involved in the church have a direct impact on the amount of activities a church can have but also effects the church's bottom line as far as finances are concerned.

Implications for practice. One resource that every church had was passionate, God-fearing, dedicated, and caring volunteers. I do not think that church staff members *forget* about

their volunteers; I think rather what volunteers do becomes a normal, part of everyday life for staff members. I had the privilege of interviewing people who were willingly giving of their time, talents, and treasures to see the church's mission completed. There were two churches, Churches E and F, where I was able to interview volunteers who held leadership roles in the church. These leaders were involved in multiple aspects of their churches. Each brought his/her own set of unique perspectives and skills from his/her work outside the church. Each showed a dedication to and knowledge of his/her church and its staff. Volunteer leadership like this is needed in the church. Staff who can multiply the amount of volunteers engaged at their church will amplify the ability of the church to maintain and create new sexuality education opportunities. Church staff should look into training and equipping these volunteers to enhance what they are already doing. Training options can include KINDLE, where they specialize in training both volunteers and staff for leadership.

Implications for research. One question that needs further exploration is what type of skill set the volunteers had. I realized that I had not interviewed a single teacher, even though four of the six participating churches had education centers. Because none of my interviewees were trained teachers, I assume they are using other skills they have learned. What skills are most beneficial to the church in sexuality education? Are personality and desire to teach the topic important? Future research could be done to investigate how volunteers' skills are being used in the church.

The three largest churches located in metropolitan areas were all experiencing growth in membership. Church F, however, seemed to be struggling with getting these new people resources plugged in to grow the services the church could provide. Three of the four people interviewed at Church F referenced the Pareto Principle. The Pareto Principle was developed by

Vilfredo Pareto in 1906 when he discovered the 80/20 Principle (Flaum, 2007). Within this setting that means that 20% of the people do 80% of the work (Flaum, 2007). Church F, I am sure, is not alone in having trouble connecting its people resources to its services. Seeing what churches can do with 20% of their volunteers in the realm of sexuality education leaves a great level of excitement and room for improvement. Future research should be done to determine how churches can pick the top 20% from their membership to serve as good resources to their sexuality education needs.

Staff Leadership

The church leadership who seemed the most effective at leading sexuality education included those who could communicate their vision and goals to their volunteers. Defined as “object or aim of action, goals set to attain specific standard or proficiency, usually within a specified time limit” (Locke & Latham, 2002, p. 705). Visions are defined as inspiring future-oriented goals that are established by the leader of an organization's purpose. The findings indicated that volunteers had good relationships with church leaders who were bought into their vision and goals and then worked to fulfill them. Church E was the only church where both a part-time staff and a volunteer talked about the goals and vision of the staff. This idea of communicating goals and purpose can be seen through the lens of construal-level theory which states that people “responding to an event that is increasingly distant on any dimension requires relying more on mental construal and less on direct experience of the event” (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 458). The ability for leaders to make the goal so vivid and real, high definition, that those following see it as vividly too and make the goal theirs as well is the basis of the construal level theory (Trope & Liberman, 2010). In other words, the leader has to create a mental

construct for the volunteers to see and understand. Lay leadership brings the vision for the church alive.

Implications for practice. The ability of staff to set goals and a vision as leaders in their congregations and get buy-in from the congregation is key to continuity and good leadership. *“[sexuality has] been a recent passion thing that’s come from me... you see crumbled marriages.”* Fae as a leader and worker for the church expressed her passion about teaching sexuality. For people in the caring profession, like church workers, it is important that leaders be both task-and people-oriented in order to be effective leaders. “The dynamic relationship between both task and people orientations reinforces effectiveness” (Adeyemi-Bello, 2001, p. 150). Also, there is a “moral dimension in management and especially leadership roles” (Kociatkeiwicz & Kostera, 2012, p. 862). Leadership includes crafting a vision for their church, getting buy-in from the lay leadership, and being task- and people-oriented to display a strong moral character. Fae in her role has been able to create sexuality education opportunities for women and teenagers at her church because of her ability to engage both people and tasks in a balanced and effective manner.

Implications for research. The area of research that would be beneficial for training future church staff is to discover what kind, if any, leadership training church workers are getting before they enter the parish. I had a class in my undergraduate career studying to be a Director of Christian Education (DCE) that dealt with leadership and how to craft a vision statement, but I did not learn about buy-in from stakeholders until my master’s career. I interviewed one full-time DCE; all other full-time church staff were pastors, except one. I am unaware of training that pastors receive in how to craft or get buy-in from members regarding vision casting. For such an uncomfortable topic as sexuality, church staff need to be properly educated on how to

create buy-in and cast visions so that they can build and grow the sexuality education opportunities within their church. The church membership and volunteers need to understand why this topic is important to teach. If pastors are going to be leaders in their church, how are they learning this skill? Would education at the seminary better prepare them for this vein of their Calling?

Sexuality Education Services and Sexuality Education Needs

At every church there was at least one person educating others about sexuality. The services that the church provides were the same across the board in some cases. Examples include Bible study, sermons, and pre-marriage counseling. The participants identified that these are the needs for sexuality education. The following are the three things that were emphasized as both a service the church was providing and also identifying that more was needed.

Male and Female Sexuality

Being a Christian organization, the LCMS uses the Bible as the authority dictating its practices and beliefs. Gender has been a topic of heated debate ever since Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden. Ever since the feminist movement, sexual revolution, and the gay rights activism movement, our current age has been struggling with this topic of gender. Within the LCMS, unlike with most of the other topical areas of education, this realm has its own branch within the synodical level, complete with dedicated staff, ministry alliances, legal aid, complete library of resources, congressional hearings, and more.

The participants brought up male and female sexuality to understand it through a Biblical lens. What does it mean to be a man, husband, father, and leader? What does it mean to be a woman, wife, mother, and caretaker? These look different and are seen as complementary through this lens. The LCMS believes that a woman and man cannot do the same things because

they were not created that way. The goals of the churches were celebrating and encouraging the uniqueness and complementary nature that God has created men and women to be. The churches are counter-cultural in this arena.

Each church addressed this topic of the maleness and femaleness of people. There is the expectation that both males and females will live out the morals and values of the faith (Sharma, 2008). In the realm of the roles of the sexes, the LCMS compares marriage to that of Christ's relationship with the Church.

As the church's Head devoted Himself totally to the needs of His church, so the husband is to devote himself to the needs of his wife. And as the church yields itself completely to the love, care and direction of the Lord, so the wife is to yield herself to her husband. (CTCR, 1981, p29)

This is an unpopular belief to hold nowadays, especially in male sexuality, so the church means to "resist harmful and corrosive masculinity types... [and] help create and endorse men and masculinities that embody integrated health, through respectful intimacy and human dignity" (van der Watt, 2016, p. 2).

LGBTQ Ministry

Church E was the only church that did specific education and provided outreach opportunities addressing the LGBTQ ministry question. They led a book study called *Love is in Orientation* by Andrew Marin. They focused on two parts: first, humanizing people of the LGBTQ community, and second, how to do outreach to this community. Every church had the same response to homosexuality: it was a sin that is not damnable, but the active lifestyle does cause separation from God, as all sin does. For the Church looking at LGBTQ through a systems

theory lens, there are negative feedbacks into the system because the belief is that sex outside of anything other than a heterosexual marriage creates a negative outcome.

Implications for practice. The need is there for outreach to the LGBTQ community; the other churches need to find ways to provide more services to fulfill this need. Church E was the only church that had a plan among its membership of how to appropriately respond if a member of the LGBTQ community walked into their church. Church F had also done ministry to LGBTQ individuals, but it seemed that had been done more between the staff and one individual. For a church to have a ministry plan for the LGBTQ individual would have the best outcome. The challenge for ministry to the LGBTQ community is the negative perception that the Church has in that community.

Implications for research. In the realm of the LGBTQ community, other churches besides the LCMS have had similar responses to the popular ideology regarding the matter. The research examined what LGBTQ individuals felt about being involved with a church that did not agree with their lifestyle. Individuals said they “still felt loved by [their] church, even though the church disagreed with their actions of being homosexual” (Jones, 2008, p. 156). Some “saw the religious leader as a source of guidance and support. In these occasions, the participants felt that they would still be respected as a person even if the religious doctrines condemned their actions.” (Jones, 2008, p. 156). These responses were related to when the individuals valued the ministerial response because the gentle condemnation came with a listening ear (Jones, 2008). This goes to reiterate the point that in all things, church staff has to have a listening ear when ministering to people, especially when administering the Law. What was said and how it was said by the staff to allow for this outcome would need to be investigated further. Continued research also needs to be done to how these church staff were able to communicate the

wrongness of the action of sexual sin or rejecting one's physical God-given gender, yet allowed LGBTQ individuals to feel able to continue worshiping at the church. Future research needs to be done in regards to the Christian's view of the male and female role. It would be advantageous for researchers to find out more of how this worldview positively impacts those who adhere to it.

The Bible

The LCMS is a church body that believes in the authority and inerrancy of the Bible. The LCMS uses the Bible in everything from its hermeneutics to worship and from the Sacraments to social norms. That is to say that the LCMS is a Bible-believing church and its members understand that to be a Christian means expressing one's faith, living it out in every aspect of one's life, and recognizing at the end of the day, all one has and is comes from God. All LCMS congregations and workers are held together by their belief in the inerrancy and authority of the Bible primarily. This means that within systems theory the primary input is values. The decision making and education based on these values act as the throughputs. Finally, the positive results of following this belief system cycles back into the system. Because of this, combined with the history of the Lutheran church for education, it would then make sense that one of the primary books used to educate people on sexuality is the Bible. Churches identified that there is still a need for more education on sexuality based in the Bible.

Implications for practice. The way in which a church does education needs to be examined. Every church taught sexuality via the Bible text and every church noted the need for more. Martin Luther wrote *The Small Catechism* so that it would provide a brief and clear summary of God's Word that allowed individuals and families alike to use it (Luther, 1929). Music along with multifaceted forms of teaching was Luther's strong suit. Luther wrote 36 hymns and *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* might be the most popular (Challies, 2013). It was

based on the 46th Psalm and was written with easy to sing musical bar arrangements (Challies, 2013). Almost every church noted the fear that their students were not retaining and internalizing the information being taught. Teachers should be like Luther, be creative, and use various teaching tools and multimedia avenues!

Future research. Research could help aid churches in developing an evaluation plan for students that will need to take into consideration retention rate and the ability for the material to be not only head but heart knowledge. I was unable to find research that addressed the latter. Again, systems theory can be applied to reasons why church leaders are not engaging in an evaluation process. Research that could find a way to address this fear of feedback and allow church leadership to see the benefit of evaluating the educational process that allows students to act the way that their faith dictates could be most helpful.

Sexuality Education Services and Barriers for Providing Sexuality Education

The service a church is able to provide must come to head against barriers: people, places, or things that hinder the ability to provide sexuality education services.

Adult Learners

The need for adult learners to be able to host a class is of course of the utmost importance. It is hard to have a class if one does not have any students. Participants from every church noted the necessity for adults to have continued learning opportunities. The adults were not done learning. The resource issue that churches were running into were willing adult learners. How would these leaders motivate adults to spend their time in “class” learning? Those who had the most success with engaging adult learners used the Adult Learning Theory, even though they did not know they were using this approach. Adult Learning Theory revolves around six statements and they are: self-directed, experience is resource for learning,

development of learner's social roles, application of knowledge, motivated to learn, and knowing why something should be learned (Clapper, 2010). Those who provided adult learning were able to engage the adults with real-life, applicable, and interesting learning. They were able to provide education about real-life issues like raising children or apologetics (Tekinarslan, 2004). They were also able to allow for active participation from the adults in the learning process (Tekinarslan, 2004). They did this through activities like group discussions and weekend retreats. The betterment of the family unit typically starts with the adults in the family unit (Bernardes, 1997, p. 149; O'Reggio, 2012, p. 196). The adults had the desire to better themselves and their household and the church staff was able to engage the adults learn with meaningful lessons.

Implications for practice. The ability for leaders to engage their adult learners in something they enjoy and are interested in and can use is the key for this resource of having adult learners. Adults do not want to be talked nor taught at. They want to engage in and direct their own learning. Leaders need to understand this about the resource of their adult learners. The closer a teacher can follow the adult learner theory, the better response they are likely to have. Being able to find a curriculum that accomplishes all aspects of this theory could be difficult; I have yet to see a religious adult curriculum that fulfills all aspects of the adult learning theory. This need for adult curriculum and using adult learning theory is a great example of how practice and research can come together to make improvements in everyday life. Teachers will most likely have to either write their own curriculum or adapt the curriculum they have to make it more enticing for adult learners. Also of note in my personal experience, adults respond better to personal invitations to education and service in the church. This is yet another layer to engaging adults in the church education system.

Implications for research. Research needs to be done to delve into the best practices with churches that have thriving adult ministries. What are these churches doing that is engaging their adult learners? Is this a result of the cultural identity of the church or a staff's vision? Does adult participation negatively or positively affect the youth's participation in education? And finally, what long term effects can be seen when adults engage in continued Christian education?

Research in identifying key ways to use the adult learning theory in regards to religious education would also be helpful. How are leaders and educators applying this theory to their education programs? If we are able to find out how to apply the theory in church, which is a non-profit, volunteer driven organization, hopefully this could open the door for other non-profit, volunteer education centers to allow for better success rates, like the YMCA or halfway house programs.

Resources for Providing Sexuality Education and Sexuality Education Needs

Each church has its own set of unique resources based on all types of variables from town size, church size, giving patterns of the membership, and much more. There are sexuality education needs that I believe are universal across all churches: mainly marital education and relational education. The resources churches have that will best address these needs are in some ways the same and in others different. The different resources that some churches had that others did not changed how they could address these needs.

Marriage

At every church, a pastor talked about sexuality education as providing support for struggling marriages by offering private counseling sessions. The thing that most congregations were lacking was marriage enrichment. Marriage enrichment is a great way to do preventative work. Staff and volunteers alike were seeing the need for support to marriages. The leadership

of the church, however, indicated they did not know how to take a first step to meet this identified need. Church E was the only church with a licensed counselor on staff. While I was unable to interview this staff member, it was clear to me that his/her expertise had influence over the type of ministry opportunities available at the church. Church F noted that at one time in the distant past they also had a licensed counselor on staff. The pastor mentioned that was good for him because he could focus his efforts other places. The pastors especially bore the load of caring for marriages in distress. The pastors knew they were not trained to properly help these couples. All the pastors talked about how they had a list of suggested places for these couples to go.

It is at these crossroads that Family Life Educators (FLE) need to take a step back and turn these couples over to Family Therapists (FT). The need is there, but for the majority of churches the resources are not appropriate for this level of care. This idea of limits to FLE and the need for collaboration between professions was discussed earlier in regards to Myers-Walls et al.'s (2011) domains and boundaries of the profession. The collaboration that has happened between professionals in churches like Church E has allowed them to expand their reach of care into their community and church.

Having a licensed counselor on staff allowed for the boundaries of FLE to be maintained and FT professionals to provide the best care to those who sought it. The church staff care deeply for their parishioners, it would make sense that they would want to help whenever they could. Pastors especially will need to remember to maintain the proper boundaries when it comes to marital counseling.

Implications for practice. It is apparent that not every church is going to have the resources available to have a counselor on staff full-time. For the other churches that are unable

to provide such services, it is important for them to be able to offer referrals to local FT professionals that they trust to care for their members. It would also be beneficial for church staff to find professionals that could help them create marriage enrichment opportunities at their church. Because marriage enrichment was not usually offered at churches, this would be a good thing for churches to start offering.

Implications for research. Research could be done to find out the percentage of churches that offer marital enrichment. Of those churches that offer marriage enrichment, the research should focus on the duration of the enrichment, what kind of professionals were present, and what topics are they focusing on and why. There should also be follow up done with those who participated in the marriage enrichment to see how their marriage was affected by the experience and how the enrichment can be improved.

There were unexpected results in the participant Bob who described himself as “a crusader against broken families. I have seen it and it is awful.” He was investing hundreds of dollars in pre-marriage curricula, leading his own class to help married couples, and had intimate conversations with people who were contemplating divorce to try to convince them otherwise. He experienced divorce himself and I believe that had a major impact on this life and his outspokenness against divorce. It would be hard to try and track down crusaders like Bob, but people like him could either be an added resource or detriment to helping marriages. He is not a school trained professional, but personal experience trained him. Being able to find people like Bob and finding out their impact on the marriages around them could shed new light on the possible hidden resources churches have that impact their needs.

Relational Learning

Relational learning was something that was found to be happening between students and teachers, mentors and mentees, and peers. “The basic tenet of the relational learning model is that learning occurs within relationships.” (Konrad, 2010, p. 16). When the relationships are formed over a topic like parenting, parents all know them having something in common in that they have children and are seeking tools to help them raise their children. Some of those interviewed noted how students would visit after class and provide insight and support. I have noticed this in classes that I have taught, a student able to communicate what I was unable to, to another student. This learning was happening because of the relationship between the two individuals. This ability to learn because of a positive relationship can be traced back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs simply states that learning does not occur unless basic needs are met (Hagerty, 1999). These positive relationships are fulfilling level three of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which calls for the fulfillment of “belongingness and love” (Hagerty, 1999). With this psychological need being fulfilled, it provides the opportunity for the best learning to take place. The numbers of staff members are small compared to those in worship. In some churches, the membership outnumbers the staff nearly 200:1. This means the staff’s reach to personally affect their membership’s lives can only go so far. The staff cannot meet each member’s psychological need of feeling belonging. Members become the hands and feet caring for and teaching each other. Seven of the volunteers interviewed talked about mentoring or having positive relationships with their students. Four of these seven volunteers talked about having a mentor relationship with their students. Relational learning is a key resource in churches for education it is the only way to make sure that the psychological needs of the membership are being met.

Implications for practice. Churches' ability to foster positive relationships and develop new ones will create a network of relational learning-based opportunities. A church's ability to be proactive in developing relationships between its members will lay the groundwork for relational learning. The next aspect of relational learning is to give people the opportunity to learn from each other. Small groups, discussion time in class, and breakout sessions are just some examples to more intimate conversations. If a church does not have the history of such activities, maybe they can start small by offering one small group or prayer group during the week.

Implications for research. In order to find out the contexts and reason behind relational learning, more research should be done in this area. Especially considering the extreme ratio of church staff to parishioners and the role that relational learning has in the church setting. This relational learning may be happening because of the lack of access to or relationship with the church staff. However, it could be an indicator that the church has a healthy relationship between its worshipers. Is the level of relational learning something that should be of concern or celebration in the church setting?

One outcome of this study that I did not expect to find was that of the level at which relational learning was happening. One example that sticks out to me is when Brittany was talking about parents who were going through a parenting class. Those with older children were offering advice to those with younger children and parents with the same aged children were swapping stories and ideas on raising children. The future research I would like to see is that of the long lasting effects of relational learning. Do those who engage in relational learning continue to do so throughout their lives or do life stages dictate more who they engage in

relational learning with? Is relational learning done more between people of different generations or life stages or is it done primarily between people in the same life stage?

Resources for Providing Sexuality Education and Barriers for Providing Sexuality Education

Resources and barriers tended to be different sides of the same coin. In this next section, I focus on barriers that I do not believe are insurmountable with the resources at hand.

Teaching Tools and Money

The results in this section can be explained using economic theory. The economic theory has eight points: a) use of resources are costly and therefore trade-offs are a must, b) choices are made purposefully, c) incentive matters, d) costs and benefits are weighed, e) information can be scarce, f) choices have consequences, g) people value things differently, and h) one can make predictions of the future based on research (Goldsmith, 2013, p. 57). The lack of immediate funds to provide teaching tools can be explained because there are limited financial resources and there are trades-offs when one teaching tool is brought over another. Also, incentive to teach a topic and the value people place on that topic plays a role as well.

Participants indicated that they needed various tools like videos, books, curricula, and general creative ideas. Immediate cash was something that people noted as a reason they could not purchase the teaching tool they would like. It is important to note how a church typically allocates funds. Leaders in the church present a budget to the other church members and create their budgets for the coming calendar year, typically in November or December. If someone is in need of teaching tools and is able to get permission to have a line item added or increased for the next calendar year, then the immediate funds would be available. This business aspect of the church does not always lend itself to the flexibility to make changes when needed. If the budget

does not include teaching tools, the person will have to wait another year and try again to get funding. While this seems to get in the way of immediate action, it is important to remember that just because something is not in the budget does not mean that people cannot donate money to be able to buy the teaching tools they want.

At least three people interviewed alluded that they paid for materials to use. They were not as ready to admit they had bought these materials, I think, because first they did not want the attention and second it was a small contribution in their mind. One pastor did not think that anyone in his church would contribute monetarily to sexuality education and not bill the church. When I interviewed a volunteer from that church, s/he had spent at least \$500 on supplies and curriculum for this very topic. It was wonderful for me to talk to volunteers who were passionate about the work of the church. I would guess that there were more than three who have purchased teaching tools and not been compensated. After all, they love their church and love what they do. Examples like this can also be explained using economic theory. People weighed the cost and benefits; they saw that others valued this less than they did and the incentive to teach was high. What is 15dollars compared to a new exciting tool for a not-for-profit organization that you love being a part of?

Implications for practice. Church leaders need to recognize the monetary gifts that their members give to the church in the form of unreimbursed donations. If at all possible, they should find out what people have donated for which they have not asked for reimbursement. When that person leaves the church, either by transfer or death, there will be a hole to fill, a hole that leadership did not know existed. I have experienced this in my own parish setting. Trying to fill the gaps was not insurmountable, but it would have been nice to know ahead of time so the budget would be adequately prepared to shoulder this new responsibility. Second, if leadership

is able to figure out what their members value based on what they are spending money on, this could give the leader great insight into a newly discovered need and be better able to organizationally provide a service.

Implications for research. Future research needs to be done involving the impact of volunteers giving their money without billing the church and the church leadership not getting the full picture of people's needs. Again using economic theory, clearly some people value things differently than others; these choices are made on purpose. The information that a church has about its budgetary needs are limited and these needs could predict future needs. I would be very excited to see this research because of the implications it could have for the church as a whole.

Culture of Outreach

Social Exchange Theory helps explain the culture of outreach described in this study. This theory is based on the premises that people organize to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs (Shiau & Luob, 2012). Providing outreach does not help the members of the congregation, instead it is a cost. They do not see the outreach as profiting their family or themselves. Instead, doing outreach costs their family in time, resources, and having to get outside their comfort zone.

Implications for practice. I was shocked at how little churches talked about purposeful outreach into their community. Two of the four churches that had education centers attached to them said that the school was their primary outreach tool to the community. It appeared they had put all their eggs in one basket. While I will not argue against Lutheran Schools, for I attended one and my mother taught at one, I am concerned for the people who are being excluded from this outreach because they cannot afford to attend a private school, are not in the life stage to

have connection to a school, or the aversion a non-Christian might have to send their child to that kind of establishment. There is any number of possibilities for outreach. There are not enough barriers to stop all creative outreach ideas. One church hosted a coffee house in their building because their town did not have a coffee house and the church was at the school's bus stop. Doing this coffee house allowed for this church to fulfill the physiological needs, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, of people from the community. The community did not have a place for people to gather to socialize in their small country town. By the church fulfilling this need, they are able to engage in learning with those gathered. They had relational learning about sexuality and other topics because they did outreach to the community to fill a need they saw. The outreach opportunities are endless; a church just has to examine the needs of their surrounding community.

Implications for research. The next research question that comes out of these findings is how does a church's age play a role in the culture and does this play a role in the willingness or ability to do outreach? I noticed the older a church was, the less willing it seemed to be to reach outside its doors and provide outreach and services to its community. These churches were over 80 years old and therefore had gone through multiple generations of always doing it a certain way. In my experience with churches, the older a church is, the more established it is in its culture. If a church's age does play a role in its willingness to try new things, how can leadership change this mindset?

Future research. Future research needs to be done to help identify ways that churches are uniquely meeting the needs of their community through an outreach program that government funding is not. In the example of the church's coffee house, they provided a safe and warm space for children to gather to wait for their school bus. They also provided breakfast

to the students because their town had a high poverty rate. Many of the children were being sent to school without breakfast. By doing this, the church was providing for children's basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. By fulfilling these needs, the church's volunteers were able to build relationships with the children, fulfilling their psychological needs of feeling belonging. Because both the basic and psychological needs of the children were being met, they were able to engage in learning about sexuality with the volunteers on almost a weekly basis, according to Andrew. This outreach ministry became so popular that kids from other bus stops would walk to the church for the services it provided. The Church has had a long and rich history of outreach through public services like charities, hospitals, education, slave abolishment, and more (Schmidt, 2001). The government has stepped into the role of caring for the populace, but I believe the Church is still caring for people. To get a better picture of how the Church is plugging the hole the government has left would be a better gauge to see the extent to which the Church still serves the communities around them.

Sexuality Education Needs and Barriers for Providing Sexuality Education

Additional needs for providing sexuality education were identified; however, these needs were met with particular barriers. I believe these barriers can be overcome, in major part, due to communication and preparation.

Support

There was an overall barrier of a perceived lack of support for sexuality. This lack of support came from the parents of minors, teachers, students, and the broader church. Systems theory would be used to explain these barriers. Systems theory functions under the idea that there are inputs into a system; in this case, a person's thought process, values, and information (Goldsmith, 2013). These inputs then are transformed into decision making and planning

(Goldsmith, 2013). Then the inputs become outputs in the form of satisfaction or dissatisfaction which in turn is fed back the system as either positive or negative results (Goldsmith, 2013). When parents rejected the idea of their minors receiving sexuality education it was because their system had determined it to be a negative outcome. As one parent said to an interviewee “*my son is not thinking that way*” (Darcie). This translated as a negative because they perceived it as trying to put thoughts in a teenage boy’s head. The system also applied to the leaders who thought they would experience negative feedback from their parishioners. This was especially true when talking about education for elementary aged children. This fear often kept leaders from approaching the subject of sexuality. Teachers experienced this negative feedback as well because they thought the topic was too uncomfortable and “*I would just as soon not talk about it*” (Fabio).

Implications for practice. In the church setting I believe using this theory that the positive output would understand the difference sexuality education can make. At least three interviewees talked about how they shied away from the topic, but after the system produced a positive outcome, they wanted to teach the topic. These positive outcomes came from encouragement from staff, seeing negative outcomes in other people’s lives, and other reasons. Everyone’s story was different, but someone introduced a positive input into the system, which in turn, led to a positive feedback. For practical application, this means that teachers and leaders need encouragement and positive reasons why they should teach sexuality. The more positives are known about teaching on sexuality, the less dirty and uncomfortable the topic becomes. Using more open-ended questions when discussing sexuality would be a good place to help alleviate the uncomfortableness (Nielsen, 1983).

Implications for research. The point at which someone's disposition changed towards the topic is something of note. Some said they had almost an epiphany that the Bible talked a lot about sexuality so they should too. Others said they were encouraged to teach the topic for years and when they finally did, it had a surprising positive response. If researchers are better able to pinpoint exactly when and how people start to have a positive disposition toward teaching this topic; this could allow for a more expedited process to get teachers and leaders comfortable with the topic and hence encourage more sexuality education.

Future research needs to be done to look into the role imagined negative inputs have on teachers. More than one teacher said they had never directly experienced a negative effect from teaching sexuality, not that they had taught the subject anyway. Their reason for the not starting was the imagined fear of the responses from students and parents. Some were able to rationalize how people could not get offended, by making the topic seem less direct, but it is undetermined if this changed their actual response to teaching sexuality. This research would need to target how much effect these imagined, but not actualized negative experiences have shaped people's outlook on teaching sexuality and, furthermore, how this can be combatted.

Training

Volunteers and staff members in this study did not feel adequately trained for teaching sexuality. Even professional teachers are intimidated about the process and are not always trained by their schools. "One third of all sexuality education teachers had not received any training in sexual health education" (Woo, Soon, Thomas, Kaneshiro, 2011, p. 4). Woo and colleagues found that being trained in how to teach sexuality education was a strong predictor for whether the teacher taught a comprehensive sexuality education class. This lack of training had a greater impact on their teaching, more than other factors in the study. If the church provided

training to its volunteers on how to teach sexuality education, would the volunteers be more willing to teach a sexuality education class?

Implications for practice. Training needs to be given to those who are asked to teach on sexuality. It will help increase their confidence level, ability to teach, and knowledge of the subject. Training can be provided by several organizations like YTH Live, Training Institute in Sexual Health Education, and the American Association of Sexual Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT) National Conference (Advocates for Youth, 2008). Churches should remember their Biblical foundation when attending these conferences. Other options for training would include things like interviewing a biology or PE teacher at a school or sitting in on a class to observe. Other avenues could be finding a local FLE professional to conduct training.

Implications for research. The area for research to investigate further is what kind of resources churches have to contribute to training those at their church who provide the sexuality education. Some churches may not have the money to send someone to a conference and others may not have a local FLE professional. Some may not know where to look and who to talk to. Being able to identify all the various resources that churches could use to train their staff and volunteers would be most helpful.

The lack of training for teachers is nothing new. The age of the teacher, the years they have been teaching, the years they had been teaching sexuality education, and if they were in a public or private school did not have nearly the amount of impact as training did for teaching comprehensive sexuality education (Woo et al., 2011). Churches are usually just excited to get willing and able people to help. The ability to equip people for the task they are willing to do for the best results is a good improvement aspect for any not-for-profit organization. Future research can be done to determine what, if any, training volunteers are receiving in a church

setting. Do they learn their task “on the job,” or does someone walk beside them for a time? Does this lack of training scare people away from volunteering, or if training was offered, would people be deterred because of the extra time commitment? A church’s ability to training its volunteers might lead to a better retention rate.

Evaluation.

The process of evaluating a program, ministry, teacher or staff member to identify ways to improve was not reported by any participant. Most of those interviewed did not seem to think of even the possibility of doing an evaluation. Daniel, however, was different; he did evaluations, but only when he wanted.

With the adults, there will probably be some informal evaluation discussion...I don’t do it every adult quarter, but I do try to do it every now and then on topics that I want to get their feedback on. Sometimes I don’t want their feedback. I don’t ask for it. (He chuckles).

Daniel followed at least the habit of doing informal evaluations with his adult learners. It was unclear why he might not want their feedback or what would cause him to ask for feedback. What was clear from the interviews was that process of using evaluations was not a common practice. Church E was the only other church that had done evaluation and that was on their Jr. High and parent retreat in the form of surveys filled out by the parents at the end of the weekend.

Implications for practice. More intentional evaluation processes must be put into place in the church setting. In order for church staff and volunteers to find out what is resonating most with their students and how best to encourage their engagement, evaluations are critical. There might be a fear of negative feedback and repercussions from the evaluations, but it is important

to stress that the positives greatly outweigh the negatives. Being able to be more effective is the greatest benefit evaluations have to offer.

Future research. Future research needs to be done to find out if the fear of negative feedback is what is keeping church staff and volunteers from engaging in an evaluation process. If it is not fear then maybe it is lack of time, teaching just do not feel like they have time to put together an evaluation, digest the information and make the appropriate changes. Perhaps the facilitator felt like they got feedback from the students in the form of unsolicited concerns, comments and compliments that they do not feel the need for more. Maybe being able to identify the reason and show how evaluations are helpful could turn the tide and allow for churches to see the benefit in doing evaluations more regularly.

The Family and Sexuality Education

The family was the only topic to come up in all four research questions. Services were being provided to families and needs were identified with the family. Families were described as both a great resource and a barrier for providing sexuality education. The family was the central focus for these participants, because, like Bernardes (1997), they understand that “Families are the key transmitters of cultural values and the main models of both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors” (p. 175). If the faith is to be passed from one generation to another, it is understandable that parents be a major piece in this puzzle. Parents are seen as the gateway by which anything is let into the home. When viewed through a spiritual lens, parents enter into a vocational calling to raise their children (O'Reggio, 2012, p. 196). Parents understand the enormous amount of pressure they face, and they desperately seek information about how to best raise their child (Coontz, 2016, p. 277; O'Reggio, 2012, p. 214-215). Churches are serving families and working to support parents in their role.

Implications for practice. Workers in the church should keep in mind that the family unit is controlled by the parents. The reach that a church can have on a family is largely dictated by the parents. Parents need to understand why they need these services and how they can help their children. In order to better help families, workers should consider looking into the National Council of Family Relations (NCFR) and how to get certified as a Family Life Educator. My caution with going through NCFR is that there is no religious framework or foundation. Individuals will need to take what they have learned and try to apply it to their own context. Another option is to look at Concordia University in Nebraska (CUNE). They are listed on the NCFR website www.ncfr.org as being a university with a program that has Approved Program status for CFLE. CUNE will be able to offer the religious framework and foundation that will be better applicable to the parish setting.

Implications for research. What makes parents more willing to allow their families to receive education from the church? Do they feel like they needed help? Do they hope the church will take the responsibility for teaching their children about sexuality? Do they know that sexuality is a part of the instruction their children receive at church? Do they have a good relationship with the volunteer, staff member, or teacher, and this is why they send their children? Finding out what is driving parents to make the decisions that they do about education for their family could provide churches with the knowledge to help encourage families in pursuing more education.

Future research also needs to be done to determine what topics of education would most resonate with parents about sexuality for their children. Using the teaching method Hook, Book, Look, Took created by Lawrence Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt (1976) from Moody Press in Chicago would be helpful. Their teaching method is based on the idea that first you need a hook,

something that will get your students interested in the subject matter. The book is the main lesson or point of the lesson. The look goal is to get the students to investigate what they are learning. Finally, the took is the takeaway from the lesson. We are missing the hook to get parents' attention, drawing them in. Determining how to best resonate with parents to allow their family to be educated by the church would be a great first step in helping churches help families.

Something is Missing

As I reflected on all the various ways churches are offering sexuality education, I noticed there was potential for services that were not brought up as an identified need. No participants mentioned doing any intentional sexuality education on these topics: menopause, infertility, miscarriage, developing positive self-image and self-esteem, care after abortion, adoption, foster parents, young children, empty nesters, the elderly, singles, single again, sexual assault and abuse, giving consent and sex trafficking. I am sure there are other sexuality topics that I had not thought of, but these were the most pronounced.

Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, Gallagher, Smith, & Hedberg (2013) investigated sex trafficking in cities including Kansas City, the heart of the Midwest. "Kansas City contacts [for online sex ads] were made via call or voicemail (i.e., no texts) and had the highest rate of local area codes (88.6%); they were also the most persistent, with 50% being repeat callers" (p. 8). This lack of acknowledgment for the darker side of sexuality in the church setting raises serious concern. I wonder if people in the Midwest, in their small towns and quiet communities, think this does not happen around them. It could be that some of these topics are too personal and shameful, so people choose not to disclose.

Another area no one mentioned is the lack of education for the elderly about sexuality. More than 10% of people with AIDS in the US are over the age of 50 and are less likely to practice safe sex (Zelenetz & Epstein, 1998). The elderly are greatly underserved in the area of sexuality education. There are other aspects of ministry to the elderly that also went unanswered, for example, long-term support after the death of a spouse or how to help a married couple redefine their relationship once they are empty nesters. There are various aspects to this life stage that churches can address.

The final area of sexuality education that was not touched on is that of loss and pain. This can be through the experience of losing a child, the inability to have children, or situations in which children are not able to be raised by their biological parents. The March of Dimes Foundation (2012) says that 10 to 15 % of pregnant women experience a miscarriage. Just miscarriage alone affects many people. The church has an opportunity to care for people who are hurting, people looking for hope. This is an area that the church could have monumental impact.

Implications for research. The number of LCMS churches that are currently offering these types of services that were not offered by the six that I interviewed would be very interesting to know. How are they providing these services, what does that look like? Are there other non-LCMS churches that are offering these services and what can we learn from them? What organizations do or could churches partner with to help provide these services? These are all great research options for researchers to find out what churches are currently doing to provide these services.

My original answer to the question asked by a colleague of how to start this type of care ministry might not have been correct. Maybe it takes a team of dedicated people to get

something started. Maybe there needs to be a meeting space available in the church or room in the church's budget to support this care ministry. Maybe they need a trained professional and not a person who has personal experience in the area to lead the care ministry. If someone is going to start a care ministry revolving around the topic of sexuality what are the resources they should have in place beforehand? Having this kind of checklist would be a great resource for churches so they cover all their bases and make sure they are able to provide the best care possible.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The choices that I made in regards to how I conducted this research led to both strengths and limitations. For example, I chose to interview just those who provided the education so that I could understand the reasoning behind the education and the bigger picture of the education programs. However, I chose not to interview students. This meant I do not have an idea of the impact or effectiveness of the education programs. Even though some interviewees talked about the impact they thought the education was having on their students, this is still left up for debate.

Another tradeoff I made was interviewing members of churches that were only a part of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). I did this because, to my knowledge, this is the first research of its kind. There was no foundation on which to base this research. I also limited my research to just the Midwest, according to the United States Census Bureau, that includes 12 states which translates to 3,263 congregations (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, n.d.). These findings cannot be as reliably applied to churches outside of the LCMS or to LCMS churches in the other 38 states. I determined that I needed some foundation and some commonality between participants to better draw reliable conclusions from my research.

For each participating church, I was able to interview multiple people that allowed me multiple points of view from the different leadership levels within the church. For the two largest churches, I was unable to get comparable comparison level for various leadership cross-sections. In Church D, I was unable to interview volunteers. In Church E, I was unable to interview full-time staff. The largest churches, because of their size, incorporate many people in various levels of leadership. I could have spent days interviewing at both of these churches. While the information that I gained from these churches were very insightful, they were not equally complete in the perspectives I obtained from the smaller churches.

My goal in interviewing churches of different sizes was to get a glimpse of the different resources between small, medium, and large churches. I chose to include participants from two churches in each category so that all sizes of churches were represented. However, I did not gain enough data from each category to compare based on size. More research will need to be done with a greater number of churches in each size parameter to better draw conclusions in regards to resource differences between small, medium, and large churches.

As the researcher and measurement tool, I was a strength and a limitation for this research. First, this was my first time conducting qualitative research; therefore, I am beginning to learn interviewing skills. Second, I am very connected to the LCMS and Biblical teaching. I work for the LCMS and hold a conservative view about Biblical teaching. I know that I have blind spots and my inspiration for the research is slanted toward my perspective and bias. This is why I had a co-analyst help look at my interviews and findings. I also included a section about myself as the measuring tool so that readers can be able to apply their own filters while reading my research. There is a level of comradery that comes with being a worker in the LCMS. Because of this, I was able to find churches to agree to be interviewed in short order. I also felt

this comradery allowed for a level of trust and comfort to develop faster between the interviewees and myself. I feel as though their answers were very genuine which allowed me a good glimpse into their world of ministry.

Self-Reflection

Spiritual and Metaphysical Reflection

I believe that people are sinners, they do wrong, and that is in their nature. I believe that Christians cling to the forgiveness given by Jesus on the cross. In light of this forgiveness and being called a child of God, they respond by serving the Lord and his people. I believe that sin still interferes with living out this response to God's actions. I believe that the Christian's life is a daily struggle to live out one's faith in service to one's neighbor. I believe the devil is at work in the world, and he strives in various ways for the destruction of this world. I believe that this spiritual realm is more than a part of a person's life, it touches every aspect, whether acknowledged or not.

I believe all this because of my foundation being held in the Biblical Scriptures. I believe this because I have seen Christians behave in a way that can only be described as despicable sin. I have seen the cleansing flood that forgiveness brings to the life of a person. I have seen the devil at work in God's church by turning friend against friend or planting the seed of doubt in the heart of a believer. I have seen people deny the spiritual realm and I fear for those eternal souls.

My perspective of these things has been shaped by the immersion of the Christian church into my life for my entire life. My perspective comes from living within the fishbowl of church leadership. The data that I have collected has been affected by these perceptions, because I bring more than the traditional scientific analytical view. I bring a metaphysical and spiritual view. Because I work in the church, my perception has been influenced by the practical application of

the data. Therefore, when I collected and analyzed my data I saw Christians in their sinful state trying to work with other sinful people to create an opportunity for other sinful people to grow in their faith and understanding of their Creator. These Christians reveled in the new life they have been given through Jesus' work on the cross. They are determined not to let the devil have his way in their church.

Using what I have found, I plan to apply it to my own church where I work, but also make sure my wider church body has access to the this research – especially the application portion. When I presented my finding with practical application to our statewide church body's conference to over 20 of my peers, I had pastors, DCEs, and school teachers interested in how they could use what I learned in their churches. Being able to provide other church workers with the tools to continue their work is what I will do with my findings. They are down in the trenches striving to be about the Lord's work.

Reflecting on Those Studied

When I first decided to conduct research on this topic, I had prepared myself to be disappointed, thinking that few people would approach this subject. I was proven incorrect. Those who I studied were also in the trenches working to bring the Word of God to those around them. All had direct hands-on experience teaching sexuality in their churches in various capacities. Although not all had a direct impact or access to all the resources that their churches could provide, they did what they could with what they had. Those interviewed, like me, hold to the Christian faith and live it out in their daily lives. Like me, they have seen sin and the devil at work and they too understand that spirituality is a fact of life; though not all have lived in the fishbowl of the church, the other church workers do. Knowing that I work for the same church body, I think gave them a more comfortable sense with me. However, I am sure that the fact that

I'm asking them questions about their performance at the church was intimidating. One person told me as much.

Reflection on the Audience

To those who are practitioners reading my findings, I believe they will have steps they could apply to better their sexuality education availability at their church. If they understand their resources and have others who are dedicated to the same end, they will be able to improve the way that they utilize their resources. They will need to remember that every church is different and there are many ways to teach sexuality education in the church setting. To those who are researchers reading my findings, I believe they will find a wide variety of theories in play. I hope they are energized with this new view of resources and services interconnectedness in a not for profit, volunteer run organization.

The practitioners' perspective can bring a different theology than my own and if they are in a different church body than the LCMS, their resources could be different along with church leadership and governance. Their outlook on if, how, and why sexuality should be taught in their church setting could be different. The researchers could bring a more analytical and less spiritual lens to this research. The more supernatural realm of this may not be appealing to them. However, I believe they will see the rigorous effort I have put into this research and that it can be taken seriously. The continued research into this area I believe researchers could take into other realms of society and into other not for profit organizations. My perception of the practitioners have affected me the most because I wish to provide them the most with something that they can take back and apply at their organization. I believe the topic of sexuality needs to be addressed in as many places as possible.

Conclusion

The realm of sexuality education is an important topic to address in a church setting. The Church is free to address any topic within sexuality it wishes. The Church is able to provide family units with education they could receive few other places. However, churches have limited resources. These resources are varied and some are easier to attain than others. In order for churches to fulfill their mission of spreading the good news of Jesus, even within the context of sexuality, they need to understand their resources and how best use them. The family unit is a key factor in the ability for churches to do sexuality education. The Church's ability to communicate with families the importance of this topic can mean the difference between the ability to provide this education and not.

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APPENDIX A - BASELINE

1. What is your average attendance on a weekend?
2. What is your annual budget?
3. Please describe the community surrounding your church.
4. Please describe the culture of your church.
5. Please breakdown the age makeup of your church.
6. How many Sunday School volunteers do you have for your children/youth?
7. How many Sunday School volunteers do you have for your adults?
8. If you have midweek education opportunity for your children/youth how many volunteers do you have?
9. Do you have a JR/SR high youth group? If so what is the average attendance of your youth night?
10. Do you have other activities or educational opportunities?
11. Do you have an educational center or school associated with your church?
12. Do you offer any adult small groups? If so how many volunteer leaders do you have?
13. How many positions are there on your Council and Elders boards or similar boards?
14. How many Council and Elders board positions are currently vacant?
15. How many full-time called staff does your church have?
16. How many synodically trained but not called full-time or part-time employees does your church have?
17. Does your church have any professionally trained church workers volunteering at your church? If so what is their professional background?
18. Who does premarital counseling at your church? How long have they been in this role?
19. Who does marital counseling at your church? How long have they been in this role?
20. Who teaches confirmation at your church? How long have they been in this role?
21. Who orders the curriculum for your various education programs like school, children's, youth and adult ministries? How long have they been in this role?

APPENDIX B - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

	Small Church	Medium Church	Large Church
Code Name Assigned by Interview Timeline	Church A & C	Church B & F	Church D & E
Those Interviewed	2 Full Time Staff 2 Volunteers	3 Full Time Staff 4 Volunteers	3 Full Time Staff 3 Part Time Staff 1 Volunteer
Number of Full Time Staff	1	3-5	10 or more
Education Center	No	Yes	Yes
Annual Budget	< \$150,000	Around \$500,000	\$1,000,000 or more
Average Worship	<150	<300	500+
Community	Blue collar and agricultural	Agricultural, transient and blue collar; the other a metropolitan area	Upper middle class or wealthier suburban areas
Growth in Membership	1 Yes, 1 No	1 Yes, 1 No	Yes
Vacancy in Lay Church Leadership	No	No	No
Vacancy in Church Staff	No	No	Yes
The Participants	Andrew - Full Time Staff Anna - Volunteer Chase - Volunteer Chandler - Full Time Staff	Brian - Full Time Staff Brittany - Volunteer Bob - Volunteer Fae - Full Time Staff Fabio - Volunteer Forest - Volunteer Frank - Full Time Staff	David - Full Time Staff Daniel - Full Time Staff Darcie - Part Time Staff Delyn - Full Time Staff Emma - Part Time Staff Edward - Volunteer Erica - Part Time Staff

APPENDIX C - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Hi, my name is Charity Smith. I am a graduate student at KSU and I'm getting my Masters in Family Studies, this means that my degree focuses primarily on educating the family in a wide range of areas. This study is focusing on the sexuality education available in LCMS churches in the Midwest.

First, I'd like to learn a bit about you and your role at the church.

1. How would you describe your role?
 1. Are you a volunteer, full or part time staff of this congregation?
 2. What do you do in your role? (If I followed you to work throughout a week, what would I see you doing?)
 3. How long have you been in this role?
 4. How did you get here?
 5. Have you held another other role within this congregation, past or present?
2. What are some of the aspects of your role that you most enjoy?
3. What aspects do you find challenging?

Can you help me learn more about your specific congregation as it has looked in the last 3 years?

1. How would you describe your congregation?
 1. How many members do you have?
 2. What is your average attendance over the past 3 years?
 3. How would you describe your parishioners?
 1. What is the average age breakdown?
 2. Please describe the average family at your church?
 3. Would you say there are more males or females actively involved in your church?
 4. How would you describe your worship service(s)?
 1. How many worship services do you have?
 2. When are the worship services?
 3. Are the services contemporary, traditional or a mix?
 4. Describe the personality of the services.
 5. How would you describe your church?
 1. How would you describe the personality of your church?

Thank you for the overall picture of your congregation. I would like to switch gears and talk about some other services your church provides. We will focus on the last 3 years.

1. How would you describe the kind of services does your church provide beyond worship?
2. How would you describe the educational services your church provides?
 1. How are these chosen?
 2. Who leads them?
 3. What is the attendance?

4. What are their ages?

Human sexuality in a church setting includes things like gender roles, dating, marriage, single living, response to homosexuality, polygamy, sex outside of marriage, learning about the 6th Commandment, pregnancy prevention, morals and values associated with sexuality, premarital and marital counseling, parenting classes, adult small group discussion and Bible study are some examples. I'd like to learn more about how your church meets the needs of your members in this area. I would also like to focus specifically on everything done in the last 3 years.

1. How would you describe the services or programs your church offer that address human sexuality as I defined it?
 1. What kind of pregnancy or STI prevention education does your church provide?
 2. What kind of sexuality education does your church provide?
 3. Describe any sexuality education in the form of intervention you church offers?
 4. Describe any sexuality counseling you church offers.
 5. Does your church do any sexuality advocacy?
 6. Why do you offer sexuality education at your church?
2. How would you describe the goals of your sexuality education programs?
3. How would you describe the objectives of your sexuality education programs?
4. How would you describe the specific groups that are the focus of these sexuality education efforts?
 1. Age groups
 2. Status (married, premarital, etc.)
 3. How would you describe the students in the sexuality education class?
 4. How do you think your worshipers would benefit from sexuality education?
 1. What aspects of sexuality education would they resonate with the most?
5. How would you describe those who provide these services?
 1. Staff or volunteer
 2. What, if any, kind of training do they receive before the program?
6. Where do these services usually take place?
 1. A home
 2. At Church
 3. A school
7. When do these programs usually take place?
 1. Weekday or Weekend or both
 2. Does this occur during normal work hours or after work hours?
8. How would you describe the content area of these programs been in the last 3 years?
 1. Is sexuality a lesson within a larger topic or it is the main topic of the class?
 1. What are the titles of the classes that sexuality education can be found within?
 2. What other topics are taught in the larger class?
 3. How many classes are in this course?
 2. Is the curriculum from a publishing house?

1. Which publishing house?
2. What is the program called?
3. Is the curriculum self-written?
 1. Who wrote it?
 2. How long ago was it written?
 3. When was the last time it was updated?
4. Has an evaluation of the curriculum used been completed in the last 3 years?
5. If you had to guess, how often do conversations or learning about sexuality happen in an emergent way?
 1. What programs do you see this happening the most in?
 1. Why do you think that is the case?
6. How would you describe the topics covered in your sexuality education programs?
 1. Are different topics addressed with different age groups?
 1. Why do these ages cover these topics?
 2. Are different marital status addressed with different topics?
 1. Why do these marital statuses cover these topics?
 3. How are these topics decided?
 4. What is the goal of educating about sexuality on these topics?
 1. Are the goals different for the different topics?
 2. Are the goals different for the different ages?
 3. Are the goals different for marital status?
7. How has your sexuality education been either reactive or proactive?
 1. Why would you classify it that way?

We are going to move onto the idea of resources. Within a church resources can take many forms from professional training of staff and volunteers, time that volunteers are able and willing to give, the availability of staff, where the passions of membership and staff lie, the amount of financial resources both recorded and unrecorded, the location and facility of the church building, the reach of the church into the surrounding community and the community's view of the church among many other things.

1. How would you describe the resources your church has had at its disposal in order to have these sexuality education programs in the last 3 years?
 1. The volunteers that you have teaching sexuality education, what are their full-time jobs?
 2. Do the volunteers who feel driven to teach sexuality education?
 3. How much time do volunteers spend teaching sexuality education at your church?
 4. Do you have any full or part time staff teaching sexuality education at your church?
 1. What is the role of this person at the church?
 5. If you have purchased sexuality education curriculum, do you feel it is fairly priced?
 6. Do you know how much you have spent on sexuality education curriculum?

7. Do you feel there is room in your church's budget to buy sexuality education curriculum?
8. Do you know if volunteers contribute monetarily to the sexuality education classes? This can include buying materials like pencils, pens, paper, books, advertisements, childcare etc. without billing the church.
 1. Can you guess at how much this amounts to?
9. How would you want to offer more sexuality education at your church?
 1. Describe the additional education you would like to offer
 1. Who would the target audience be?
 2. What would be the goal of the class?
 3. What would be the topic of the class?
 4. What do you see impeding these classes from being realized?
2. How would you describe the barriers you perceive for conducting more sexuality education at the church?
 1. Do you think there is support from the pastor(s)?
 2. Do you think there is support from other called workers?
 3. Do you think there is support from the elders?
 4. Do you think there is support from the board chairs?
 5. Do you think there is support from the congregation at large?
 6. Do you think parents would support sexuality education for the children at the church?
 7. Do you think youth would be willing to attend a sexuality education course at the church?
 8. Do you think adults would be willing to attend a sexuality education course at the church?
 9. What kind of resistance you do perceive you will encounter when creating a sexuality education program?
 10. What kind of resistance have you encountered when creating a sexuality education program?
 1. What ages did this happen with?
 1. If adults what was their marital status?
 2. What was the goal of the course?
 3. Did the course get completed?
 4. Would you try running the course again?
3. How would you describe any positive effects from offering sexuality education at your church?
4. How would you describe any negative effects from offering sexuality education at your church?